

Less than two years after January 6 coup, why are the Republicans surging?

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Less than two years after Trump and the bulk of the Republican Party attempted a fascistic coup to overturn the elections and establish a presidential dictatorship, the Republicans are running neck and neck with the Democrats in the US midterm elections.

According to the endless barrage of polls, it is increasingly likely that the Republican Party will win control of the House of Representatives and possibly the Senate as well. They may also take control of state governments previously held by Democrats.

That this is even possible, after the violent assault on the Capitol and Congress on January 6, 2021, by a mob of Trump supporters, is a massive indictment of Biden and the Democrats.

Working people are trapped within a political system that does not allow them any way to express their interests. A majority of Republican candidates have embraced the bogus “stolen election” claims of Donald Trump, defeated and thrown out of office in 2020 by near-landslide margins.

Poorly attended campaign rallies addressed by Trump now incorporate the fascistic and anti-Semitic language of the delusional QAnon movement and the white supremacist “Great Replacement” theory (that immigration across the US-Mexico border is part of a Jewish conspiracy to “replace” whites with black and brown people from Asia, Africa and Latin America).

Meanwhile, Democratic leaders cracked down this week on an extremely timid suggestion by 30 members of Congress that the administration move towards negotiations with Russia rather than pursue a strategy of essentially endless war over Ukraine that could escalate into the use of nuclear weapons. Within 24 hours, the Progressive Caucus had withdrawn the letter to the White House and issued a call for further escalation.

It was Biden who opposed any effort to hold the Republican Party responsible for Trump’s attempt to overthrow the government and remain in power as president-dictator. Far from meting out any punishment to the senators and representatives who openly encouraged the violent attack, Biden declared that the country needed a “strong Republican Party.” He pursued a political strategy of seeking bipartisan agreement with “my Republican friends,” above all, on foreign policy issues as the US goaded Putin into invading Ukraine and then seized on the invasion for a US-NATO military intervention.

After January 6, 2021, the Department of Justice (DOJ), under Biden’s Attorney General Merrick Garland, has proceeded at a snail’s pace in its investigation of the attempted coup. The only charges brought against the high-level coup plotters—as opposed to their violent foot soldiers—has been a single charge of contempt of Congress for Trump adviser Steve Bannon. Trump himself, the coup plotter-in-chief, was only subpoenaed by the House committee investigating January 6 last week. He has never been questioned by the DOJ.

Biden has limited his personal involvement in response to the attempted coup to a single speech in September, in which he declared that American democracy faced its greatest threat since the Civil War—and then dropped the subject entirely.

In a commentary published Tuesday on CNN.com, Biden reiterated what is in effect his “closing argument” in the election campaign, with no mention of January 6 or of the takeover of the Republican Party by fascists and anti-Semites. The gulf between the privileged capitalist elite and the working class was stark, as Biden hailed the “enormous progress” made under his administration in building a better and fairer

economy.

He blamed inflation on the pandemic and “Vladimir Putin’s war in Ukraine,” without referring to the actual driving force of the global financial crisis, the outlay of trillions of dollars, euros, pounds and other currencies to bail out the banks, hedge funds and other financial institutions, allowing them to escape the crisis in March 2020 triggered by the onset of COVID-19. Since then, the billionaires have seen their wealth multiply, while working class families face runaway inflation and now a looming recession.

Biden sought to portray a handful of minor gestures, such as allowing Medicare to negotiate some drug prices and a cap on insulin payments for seniors, as major reforms in an effort to disguise the dropping of virtually all significant measures on education, health care, police violence, voting rights and an extended and expanded child tax credit—mainly because of opposition within his own party.

In the midterm elections, the Democrats have given the Republicans a gift by their full-throated support for war and the fact that they are proposing nothing to address the social and economic crisis confronting the vast majority of the population. This is combined with the obsession of the Democrats with issues of race and gender, aimed at appealing to and mobilizing a section of the upper-middle class that is ferociously pro-war and anti-working class.

If the Republican Party wins the midterm elections or control of the House or Senate, it is not an indication of mass popular support either for its right-wing, pro-corporate program or for the fascists and racists who increasingly dominate it.

As the WSWS wrote in response to Biden’s speech in September, “In America’s entrenched two-party system, sections of workers and the middle class back the Republican Party not out of conviction but by default. To the extent that Trump has a base, it is because the Democrats have nothing to offer, and the Republicans are expert at manipulating real grievances and discontent.”

Whichever party wins, American imperialism will press ahead with its program of war abroad and social counterrevolution at home. And this under conditions where the post-election period is likely to be dominated by a new and massive surge in the COVID-19 pandemic, as new variants, some already detected and

identified, display both greater infectiousness and greater ability to evade the limited immunity produced by vaccines.

There is an alternative to this political nightmare of war and reaction, but it will not come from either of the two corporate-controlled parties. The vast majority of the American population, the working class, is entirely unrepresented in the electoral system.

Tens of millions of working people confront the daily reality of a struggle to maintain their standard of living in the face of corporate profit-gouging, job-cutting and relentless inflation. There is a growing wave of strikes, largely in rebellion against the oppressive weight of the trade unions, which seek to suppress the class struggle.

These struggles require independent forms of organization and an independent political axis. The Socialist Equality Party is fighting for the establishment of rank-and-file committees in workplaces and neighborhoods to take forward the class struggle and break the stranglehold of the union officialdom.

It is not an accident that the only political campaign that is raising the central issues facing working people, including the danger of war and dictatorship, is not taking place in any of the contests on the ballot November 8. It is the campaign by socialist Will Lehman in the United Auto Workers presidential election, where voting has already begun and continues into mid-November.

The entry of the American working class into independent political struggle, on the basis of a revolutionary socialist program, is the way forward to defend jobs, living standards and democratic rights and stop the drive to World War III.



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