

Two years on, the January 6 coup continues

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6 January 2023

Today marks two years since then-President Donald Trump and a majority of Republicans in Congress attempted to reverse the 2020 presidential election, overturn the Constitution and establish a dictatorship.

What information has come out since—in hearings, memoirs and other forms—has confirmed both the far-reaching character of the conspiracy and the fact that it came very close to succeeding. Yet no one, aside from a handful of foot soldiers, has been held accountable, let alone arrested.

The anniversary of the January 6 coup is being marked by its continuation, in the form of a crisis over the nomination for Speaker of the House of Representatives. For the third straight day on Thursday, a core of fascistic representatives in the Republican Party blocked the election of a Speaker, demanding far-reaching procedural changes to shift the entire political system violently to the right.

After 11 rounds of voting, the nominal Republican leader, California Representative Kevin McCarthy, has failed to achieve the necessary 218 votes for a majority. The last time the US House of Representatives failed to elect a Speaker after more than nine rounds of voting was in 1859, two years before the Civil War.

Paul Gosar, Andy Biggs, Scott Perry and other members of the far-right House Freedom Caucus, which was co-founded by top Trump co-conspirator Mark Meadows, are demanding unprecedented control over committees and the Speaker himself. This includes seats on the powerful Rules Committee, which sets the parameters for how the entire House operates until the next election.

McCarthy, who is himself backed by Trump and voted against the certification of the 2020 presidential election, has responded with a series of concessions. Whatever emerges out of the backroom dealings, if there is a resolution at all, will be at the expense of the

broad mass of the population. The aim is to create the best conditions for a massive assault on social programs, attacks on immigrants, increased military and police spending, and tax cuts for the financial oligarchy.

While the January 6 coup did not succeed in overturning the election, two years later the forces behind it are emboldened and pressing the offensive. This fact achieved symbolic expression in Representative Matt Gaetz's nomination of Trump himself to be Speaker of the House during voting yesterday. The coup plotters speak for a significant section of the ruling class and military-intelligence apparatus that is preparing to impose authoritarian forms of rule.

As for the Democrats and the Biden administration, their reaction to the conflict in the House of Representatives is in line with their entire response to the January 6 coup. As Trump's mob sacked the Capitol, Biden sat by for hours, and eventually appealed to the would-be dictator himself to go on national television and order an end to the insurrection.

In the two years that followed the coup, the Biden administration has devoted itself to rehabilitating the Republican Party, insisting on the need for a "strong" opposition and calling for "bipartisanship," above all in the prosecution of the war against Russia.

In response to the conflict over the House Speaker, spearheaded by individuals who should be in prison, the Democrats are doing nothing. There is no attempt to mobilize opposition. The whole issue is being treated as a joke, something with no real significance. But, as the WSWWS has noted, the Speaker of the House is not a ceremonial position. He or she is the chief political and administrative officer of the House of Representatives and is second in line of succession to the presidency.

In order to present a facade of national unity, on Friday Biden will mark the two-year anniversary of the

coup with a speech and a ceremony in which he will bestow the presidential Citizens Medal of Freedom on 12 people, over half of whom are current or former police.

In keeping with the January 6 House Select Committee's whitewash Final Report, Biden will also award medals to "good Republicans" who resisted some aspects of Trump's coup, including former Speaker of the Arizona House Russell "Rusty" Bowers.

On Thursday, the White House made a major policy concession to the Republican Party and the fascist right, announcing a massive expansion of deportations of Cuban, Haitian and Nicaraguan immigrants on the US-Mexico border, in addition to the already existing ban on Venezuelan asylum seekers. The escalating assault on immigrants is being carried out under the framework of Title 42, first invoked by Trump in March of 2020.

The Democratic Party represents a faction of the ruling elite whose opposition to Trump was always centered on foreign policy. The Biden administration's primary concern is that nothing be done to disrupt the nearly year-long war against Russia, which it enormously escalated yesterday with the announcement that it will be sending tanks to Ukraine.

The Democrats are acutely aware of the explosive growth of social opposition from below, which they are determined to smother, contain or repress. Among the chief results of their "bipartisanship" last year was the passage of legislation banning a strike by more than 100,000 railroad workers.

One day after the January 6 attack, the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote that the "fascist insurrection" was "a turning point in the history of the United States."

The hoary glorifications of the invincibility and timelessness of American democracy have been totally exposed and discredited as a hollow political myth. The popular phrase "It Can't Happen Here," taken from the title of Sinclair Lewis' justly famous fictional account of the rise of American fascism, has been decisively overtaken by events. Not only can a fascist coup happen here. It has happened here, on the

afternoon of January 6, 2021.

Two years later, none of the social and political conditions that produced the coup have gone away. The existing institutions of the ruling class are breaking down under the impact of extreme social inequality, the consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a deepening economic and financial crisis, and unending war that has now developed into a global conflict.

The defense of democratic rights in the United States cannot be left to the Democrats and the sclerotic US political establishment. It requires the mobilization of the working class on the basis of opposition to the capitalist system that is the root of social inequality and dictatorship.



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