Trump’s Republican Party primary victory: A new stage in the crisis of American democracy

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Former US President Donald Trump has all but secured the nomination for the Republican Party, following his victories in the “Super Tuesday” primaries and the exit of Nikki Haley from the race on Wednesday morning.

The outcome of the Republican primaries lays bare the staggering crisis of the entire American political system. It is just over three years since the attempted coup of January 6, 2021. Then-President Trump mobilized a fascistic mob that stormed the US Capitol building in an attempt to stop the certification of the election for Biden, who had won the popular vote and the vote in the Electoral College, both by substantial margins.

As the election proceeds, Trump is utilizing ever more openly violent rhetoric directed at his political opponents, while stating that he intends to operate as a “dictator” on Day One of his return to office. Not only is he the absolutely dominant figure in one of the two major capitalist parties in the United States, he has received millions of votes and, at this point, has a significant lead over Biden in the polls.

The capitalist media and Democratic Party-aligned press are at a complete loss to give any coherent explanation as to how this has happened. Numerous commentaries speak of an economy that has been “*rocketing* along for more than a year,” in the words of the *Washington Post*, expressing bewilderment that this has not benefited Biden.

In fact, the broad hatred for Biden and the Democrats is not a mystery. In the three years since the attempted coup, the Democrats have been incapable not only of making a case against Trump, but of enacting policies that raise the living standards or expand the democratic rights of the working people who comprise the vast majority of the population.

In his State of the Union address this evening, Biden is expected to tout the “economic successes” of the past three years. The vast majority of the population, however, confronts increasing social distress, brought on by rising inflation and stagnant or declining wages. Household debt has increased to $17.5 trillion, including a record $1.13 trillion in credit card debt. Social inequality has reached record levels, with the collective wealth of billionaires in the US reaching $5.2 trillion last year.

The central priority for the Biden administration since coming to power has been the escalation of the US-NATO war with Russia over Ukraine and the reckless pursuit of American global hegemony. To pursue this policy of global war, he has sought to revive the Republican Party and cover up the significance of the January 6 coup. The limited investigations into the January 6 coup, which proceeded in fits and starts, were based on shielding and covering up Trump’s co-conspirators in the Republican Party and the military-intelligence apparatus.

Biden began his presidency three years ago with a call for bipartisan unity, insisting on the need for a “strong” Republican Party, above all to wage imperialist war abroad. The Democrats would willingly turn over the White House to the Republicans, and even to Trump himself, if they could secure a commitment on Ukraine.

Even the media has been compelled to acknowledge the political consequences of Biden’s full support for the Israeli assault on Gaza, which has condemned him for all time as a supporter of genocide.

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As for Biden's occasional proclamations to be the last hope for "democracy" against Trump, this is fiction. Two weeks ago, he appealed directly to Trump to "join me" in backing legislation that would authorize the most repressive crackdown in history on migrants at the US-Mexico border. The Biden administration is actively pursuing the persecution of Julian Assange, seeking his extradition from the UK to face charges under the Espionage Act for exposing the crimes of American imperialism. The entire political establishment, moreover, has waged a vicious campaign against mass opposition to Israel's genocide.

The Democratic Party has long since repudiated any association with social reform and therefore any ability to make an appeal to broader sections of the working class. It is a party of the CIA and Wall Street. Its political platform is centered on building a constituency among sections of the upper-middle class based on "identity" issues, in which white workers are presented as the embodiment of racism and "privilege."

All of this is exploited by Trump and the Republicans. While Trump is himself a fascist, there is not a mass fascist movement in America. The millions of people who are voting for him, including significant sections of the working class, are not doing so because they want a dictatorship. Rather, Trump benefits from the fact that the nominal opposition to him is thoroughly right-wing and reactionary, justly despised and hated. Like every right-wing demagogue, he capitalizes on confusion and anger that finds no progressive outlet.

The extreme crisis of American democracy did not come out of the blue or out of the mind of Donald Trump. It can be traced over the past quarter-century from the impeachment of Bill Clinton through to the theft of the 2000 election and the "war on terror," under first Bush and then Obama.

Throughout this period, social inequality has grown to historically unprecedented levels, while unending war has been transformed into an escalating global conflict that poses the risk of nuclear annihilation. These are the conditions that drive the ruling elites to dictatorship.

The re-election of Trump would be a direct threat to the working class, in the United States and internationally. The unanimous Supreme Court ruling to ensure Trump's place on the ballot exposes the lie that democratic rights can be defended and the danger of fascism averted by relying on the parties and institutions of the capitalist state. And the longer that opposition to the far right remains tied to the political corpse of the Democratic Party, the greater the danger of fascist dictatorship will become.

The critical question is the turn of the working class to revolutionary socialist politics. The Socialist Equality Party is intervening in the presidential elections, with its candidates Joseph Kishore for president and Jerry White for vice president, to advance and fight to provide a socialist alternative for the working class.

In announcing the SEP election campaign, the party's national chairman, David North, explained that its purpose is "to raise the political consciousness of the working class, to develop its understanding that no solution can be found to any of the problems confronting working people except through the ending of the capitalist system and its replacement with socialism, and that this great historical task can only be achieved by adopting a global strategy aimed at the mobilization of the power of the American and international working class in a unified struggle against the world capitalist system."

The development of this understanding is not automatic. It requires a persistent and determined struggle to break through the lies and propaganda of the capitalist parties. At the same time, however, socialism corresponds to the objective interests of the working class, a massive international social force, the vast majority of the population, whose interests find no expression in the sclerotic and bankrupt US political system.

Armed with a socialist program and leadership, it is the working class that will prove capable of stopping the escalating world war, opposing the ruling class descent into fascism and dictatorship, ending capitalist exploitation, restructuring social and economic life and resuming the march of human progress—on the basis of equality and socialism.

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