The political theater of the Democratic Party National Convention begins

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The opening of the Democratic National Convention on Monday will kick off four days of political theater. All the skill of the advertising and media industries, and all the money that billionaire donors can supply, will be devoted to creating an image of the Democratic Party, its presidential ticket of Kamala Harris and Tim Walz and the administration of President Joe Biden that is entirely unreal.

No doubt many tears will be shed by the assembled delegates for Biden, who will deliver the keynote address on the first evening of the convention. Biden will stagger to the podium to receive a long ovation, mainly for his reluctant decision to step down.

The remaining three days of the convention will be devoted to the coronation of Kamala Harris, with this right-wing former prosecutor, whose 2020 presidential campaign collapsed before a single vote had been cast in a primary, portrayed as some sort of a political titan. Harris will be presented as a seasoned, tested leader, thanks to her three years in the vice presidency, while she will at the same time seek to avoid taking responsibility for the policies of war, social austerity and constant conciliation with the Republican right in which she acted as Biden's chief deputy.

Appropriate leading roles will be given to various celebrities, the stars of stage and screen. Much praise will be conferred upon former presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, and former Secretary of State and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, all of them with decades of experience in packaging right-wing, pro-war and pro-corporate policies as populist and even "progressive."

Everything, in other words, will be lies and fraud. The real issues confronting working people in 2024 will be covered up.

Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joseph Kishore remarked of the DNC on Sunday, "Reality will, necessarily, be completely excluded. The convention takes place as NATO tanks have been deployed by Ukraine inside Russia's borders, and there will be no discussion of the disastrous consequences of a direct war between the two largest nuclear-armed states.

"Nor will there be much time spent in reviewing the role of the Democrats, with Biden and Harris at their head, in financing and politically justifying the genocide in Gaza. All of them, and the Republicans as well, are dripping in blood they can't wash clean."

The purpose is not only to whitewash the right-wing record of the Democratic Party but to give a fundamentally false picture of American society as a whole.

It is safe to predict that none of the various speakers will declare that the urgent task in the 2024 election is to defeat the threat of an American-style fascism. Since the switch from Biden to Harris as the party's presidential candidate, they have effectively dropped all talk of Trump as a major threat to democracy, in favor of banal social media messages, trivializing the Trump-Vance ticket as "weird" and hailing the Harris-Walz ticket as practicing the politics of "joy."

For all their mutual diatribes, both the Republicans and the Democrats represent and defend the capitalist system. Their conflict revolves around rival tactics and methods for defending the interests of the corporate bosses at home and American imperialism around the world.

The Republican Party, as demonstrated by its fascistic national convention last month and the subsequent campaign of the Trump-Vance ticket, aims to intensify the attacks on democratic rights initiated during Trump's previous term of office. All the while it is

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stepping up the policy of robbing the working class to benefit the super-rich, symbolized by Trump's tax cut for the wealthy, which the billionaire candidate has vowed to extend and even expand before it expires next year.

As reported Sunday by the *New York Times*, Trump and his closest aides are developing plans for the widespread use of the American military on the streets of the United States, to suppress popular opposition to the right-wing rampage that a second Trump term would represent. The *Times* wrote:

> During his time out of power, allies of Mr. Trump have worked on policy papers to provide legal justifications for the former president's intent to use the military to enforce the law domestically. In public, they have talked about this in the context of border states and undocumented immigrants. But an internal email from a group closely aligned with Mr. Trump, obtained by *The Times*, shows that, privately, the group was also exploring using troops to "stop riots" by protesters.

This would involve invoking the 1807 Insurrection Act, which Trump threatened to do in 2020 during the mass protests against the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. He only backed off after military leaders made clear they did not want to be drawn into the social conflict at home—at least at that point.

Any notion that the fight against fascism and authoritarianism can be waged through the Democratic Party is a dangerous illusion.

The Biden administration managed to revive both the Republican Party and the presidential aspirations of Trump, even after the spectacle of January 6, 2021, when Trump instigated a violent attack on the US Capitol in a failed effort to stay in power. The majority of congressional Republicans voted to oppose certification of the election results only hours after the mob, which threatened their lives, had been cleared out.

The central priority of the Democratic Party has been and is the escalation of war, for which it has sought bipartisan unity with the Republicans.

Under these conditions, the most bankrupt of all policies is that promoted by pseudo-left groups like the Democratic Socialists of America and the various "left" and independent upper-middle-class candidates in the orbit of the Democratic Party, like Dr. Jill Stein of the Green Party and Professor Cornel West. They are backing protest actions in Chicago whose aim is to put pressure on the Democratic Party and supposedly push it to the left.

As the WSWS has consistently warned, the function of the pseudo-left has been to turn leftward-moving layers of the population back to the Democratic Party. With the election now less than three months away, they will join forces with the trade unions, the corporate media, and the Democratic Party in a combined effort to pressure working people to back Harris, as the "lesser evil" to the fascist Trump.

The truth is, however, that the threat of fascist dictatorship will not be dispelled by a Democratic Party victory on November 5, 2024. The policies of a Harris-Walz administration would only fuel the fire for the fascist right. The expansion of imperialist wars and social attacks on the living standards and jobs of the working class will further alienate working people and leave them more vulnerable to the demagogic populism of the far-right.

The danger of dictatorship arises not merely from the sociopathic persona of Donald Trump, but from the crisis of American and world capitalism and, above all, the conditions of expanding world war. A Harris-Walz administration, unbreakably committed to imperialist war, will take drastic measures at home to suppress mass antiwar sentiment.

The only guarantee of the democratic rights of the working class is an independent political struggle against both parties of the ruling class, through a frontal assault on the wealth and power of the financial oligarchy and in the fight for socialism.

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