

The political issues confronting workers on Labor Day

WSWS Editorial Board
1 September 2024

Today is Labor Day in the United States, which traditionally marks the beginning of the final stage of the presidential election. In the final two months of their campaigns, both parties, the Democrats and Republicans, are engaged in a massive political deception.

The campaign of Kamala Harris is doing everything it can to avoid discussing its real agenda, which is centered on the escalation of imperialist war. The Trump campaign is couching its fascist policies, which express the interests of ruthless sections of the corporate and financial oligarchy, in an onslaught of populist demagoguery.

The official Labor Day events organized by the trade union apparatus make a mockery of any idea of working class power. The union apparatus is attempting to present Harris as the candidate of the working class, under conditions where the apparatus itself is helping to implement a major assault on jobs and wages.

The UAW will host Harris in Detroit one month prior to the mass layoff of over 2,000 workers at Stellantis' Warren Truck Assembly on October 8, which the UAW is helping to implement. At the Dackota auto parts plant in Chicago, the UAW forced workers to vote five times on the same UAW-backed concessions contract, which was finally rammed through under threats and blackmail on Saturday.

Central to the political strategy of the Democratic Party is the utilization of the trade union apparatus to subordinate workers to war. This is what President Biden meant when he referred to the AFL-CIO as his "domestic NATO."

It can be said with certainty that in her Labor Day remarks Harris will say nothing about the fact that an enormous escalation is presently underway in the war against Russia, including the deployment of NATO

tanks on Russian territory, and, on Sunday, coordinated drone strikes on Moscow and other Russian cities. On Friday, the foreign minister of Turkey, a NATO member, warned that the war in Ukraine "risks escalating into a war involving the use of nuclear weapons."

At the same time, the direct participation of the Biden-Harris administration in Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza has provoked mass revulsion and outrage. While Harris talks of a "ceasefire," the Netanyahu regime in Israel, with US support, is expanding the genocide into the West Bank, while threatening a regional war targeted at Iran.

Everything is to be subordinated to this war agenda. The Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street, the military-intelligence agencies and privileged sections of the upper-middle class, is incapable of speaking to or advancing policies that address the social catastrophe confronting masses of workers and youth.

This is what provides Trump and the Republicans the ability to exploit social anger. Workers must be warned, however: Trump and his MAGA movement are a new form of American-style fascism.

Trump, modeling himself on Hitler and Mussolini, claims he will "save American jobs" and even end the war against Russia in Ukraine. Trump's real program, however, is the ruthless implementation of the dictates of the financial oligarchy.

In the Republicans' "Project 2025" and Trump's own "America First" agenda, this policy is spelled out: The removal of all regulations on corporate exploitation, massive cuts in social programs, and further tax cuts for the super-wealthy. This is why Trump's campaign is bankrolled by significant sections of the financial aristocracy, like Blackstone CEO Stephen Schwarzman (net worth \$43.2 billion) and

Tesla boss and owner of X Elon Musk (net worth \$243.7 billion).

The focus of Trump's fascist demagoguery is on immigrants and refugees, whom he seeks to scapegoat for the social crisis in the United States, distracting attention from the corporate and financial elite that exploits workers of all races and nationalities for profit. He has threatened to deploy the National Guard to round up and deport millions of immigrant workers.

That is, he is threatening military dictatorship. The main target of the evisceration of basic democratic rights is the working class.

This is the "choice" that the population is offered in the elections. The entire process is itself deeply undemocratic. The two parties—the Democrats in particular—are engaged in an effort to prevent any candidates besides Harris and Trump from even appearing on the ballot, exploiting ballot access rules that often require tens of thousands of signatures or more in each state. Everything is done to exclude any political articulation of the interests of the working class.

Regardless of which of these candidates wins, the election will be followed by the expansion of war, which threatens nuclear annihilation, as well as an intensification of the assault on democratic rights and an escalation of attacks on living conditions. Moreover, both parties are absolutely committed to a policy of "forever COVID," amidst a major new wave of infections and deaths.

In the broad mass of the working class and youth, there is rising social anger and discontent. However, the transformation of this opposition into a conscious movement for socialism is not automatic.

In announcing the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) election campaign of Joseph Kishore for president and Jerry White for vice president, SEP National Chairman David North wrote that the purpose of the campaign 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.

This is the basic task that confronts workers and youth in the two months until the election and beyond.



To contact the WSW and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)