

Three weeks before the US elections: The political issues confronting the working class

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It is just three weeks until the US presidential election, a contest that has plumbed the depths of political reaction.

In the final weeks of the campaign, Trump is making statements that are absolutely fascistic. In advance of a visit to Aurora, Colorado on Friday, Trump posted a statement declaring that he would “invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798” to arrest and expel immigrants who have “invaded and conquered the country.”

On Sunday, in an interview with Fox News’ Maria Bartiromo, Trump declared that, even more than immigrants and refugees, “the bigger problem is the enemy from within... sick people, radical left lunatics.” He declared that this “enemy” should “be easily handled by, if necessary, by National Guard, or if really necessary, by the military.” That is, he is threatening a military dictatorship.

Trump’s fascist ravings express the fact that a significant section of the ruling class is for dictatorship. This finds its most open form in the public campaign for his election by Elon Musk, the world’s richest man. They are aligned with Trump’s ever more open and deranged attacks on the left, on socialism, on all protests against the policies of the ruling class.

Under these conditions, and four years after the attempted fascist coup of January 6, 2021, Trump could well win the election, with polls showing a near even race. This is not because there is a mass constituency for fascist dictatorship, or even great enthusiasm for Trump. Rather, it expresses the deep alienation of the broad mass of the population from the entire political system. It is, above all, a staggering indictment of the Democratic Party.

The Democratic Party cannot respond to the deep social frustration that exists in the United States. The Biden-Harris administration’s response to Trump’s

fascist agitation is to shift further to the right. Harris has repeatedly stated that she would consider including Republicans in her cabinet, and she has touted endorsements from war criminals like Dick Cheney and Alberto Gonzales.

The Democrats’ central concerns are: 1) defending the wealth and privileges of the rich, and 2) defending the global interests of American imperialism.

For the past four years, the focus of the Biden administration has been on provoking and now waging war against Russia in Ukraine and, over the past year, the genocide in Gaza, which has sparked mass protests in the United States and throughout the world.

Demonstrating its contempt for the anti-war movement, on the very eve of the election, as Israel is intensifying its genocide in Gaza and bombardment of Lebanon—with each day bringing new horrors—the White House announced that it would deploy 100 troops to Israel to operate a missile system targeting Iran. This is the first direct deployment of the US military to Israel since the genocide began one year ago.

A significant poll from the *New York Times* on Sunday shows that Harris is losing ground among Latino and black voters. While the Democrats still have a substantial majority, 78 percent to 15 percent among black voters and 56 percent to 37 percent among Hispanic voters, this is a sharp decline even from the last election.

For decades, the Democrats have constructed their electoral strategy around building a “coalition” based on different identity groups, primarily through appeals to more privileged sections of the middle class along the lines of race and gender. This has created conditions in which Trump is able to exploit social anger, and not only among white workers.

Last week, the Democrats brought president Barack Obama to stop the hemorrhaging of votes by haranguing black men for not backing Harris, demanding that black workers support the Democrats not on the basis of their economic interests but their racial identity.

The Democrats are indifferent to the social distress in the United States. Prices are rising, wages have stagnated, and mass layoffs are sweeping through industries. Boeing just announced plans to lay off 17,000 workers, the company's response to the ongoing strike of Boeing workers. Stellantis cut over 2,000 jobs at the Warren Truck Assembly plant, and General Motors will begin laying off hundreds of workers at its Fairfax Assembly plant in Kansas City next month.

The Democratic Party will not and cannot respond with even reformist policies to the social crisis. It is a party of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus, buttressed by an affluent upper-middle class that is obsessively fixated on issues of race and gender.

This is the outcome and culmination of an extended political process. It has now been more than a half-century since the Democratic Party was associated with any significant social reforms. The period of the "New Deal" of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the "New Frontier" of John F. Kennedy, and the "Great Society" of Lyndon B. Johnson belongs to the distant past.

As for Obama, the candidate of "hope and change," the central policy of his presidency was the bailout of the banks following the 2008 financial crisis, handing out trillions to Wall Street while millions of Americans lost their homes and jobs. It was the eight years of the Obama administration, which marked a new stage in the socially destructive financialization of the US and world economy, and the reactionary character of the campaign of Hillary Clinton (denouncing workers as a "basket of deplorables") that created the conditions for the victory of Trump in 2016.

The main priority of the Biden administration, and of a future Harris administration, is an immense escalation of war. Following Trump's attempted fascist coup of January 6, Biden expressed his desire for a "strong" Republican Party in order to wage war abroad.

The reactionary, right-wing program of the Democrats allows Trump to exploit social frustrations and anger, under conditions in which there is no real

out articulation of the ~~interests~~ of the vast majority of the population within the political and economic structures of capitalist rule.

The politics of "lesser evilism," the claim that workers must support the Democrats to stop fascism, is based on a political lie and has only deepened the danger of reaction and dictatorship. Not only will the Democrats intensify a war abroad that threatens nuclear annihilation, the ongoing assault on students throughout the country, aimed at suppressing opposition to the Gaza genocide, demonstrates that a Harris administration will continue the attack on democratic rights.

The election process has laid bare a diseased political system, controlled by a corporate-financial oligarchy of mega-millionaires and billionaires. The deep social anger and opposition growing throughout the working class finds no genuine and viable outlet in the current institutionalized two-party capitalist political system.

The strikes at Boeing, among dockworkers and other sections of the working class are clear signs of this rising discontent, which is striving to break free of the control of the trade union apparatus.

It is necessary to put aside the search for half-measures and false solutions that do not address the root cause of the crisis: the capitalist system. It is necessary to build a socialist movement, based on the working class, to take power out of the hands of the capitalist oligarchy and chart a new path forward, in the US and internationally. This is the historic task confronting the working class and youth in the elections and the period that follows.



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