1 month of the Trump administration: The oligarchy vs. the working class

Statement of the Socialist Equality Party
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Today marks one month since the second inauguration of Donald Trump. The events of the past four weeks have confirmed the analysis made by the *World Socialist Web Site* the day after the election, that Trump's return to power represents "the violent realignment of the American political superstructure to correspond with the real social relations that exist in the United States."

The main elements of the first month of the Trump administration are:

1. Assertion of unlimited presidential powers and the assault on immigrant workers

Beginning on his first day in the White House, Trump signed a series of executive orders establishing the framework for mass deportations and police state measures. Under the pretense of responding to a non-existent "invasion" at the Southern border, the administration has asserted unlimited powers that will be directed at all opposition to the policies of the corporate and financial oligarchy.

The initial executive orders seek to abolish birthright citizenship, guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment; eliminate free speech rights for all immigrants in the US; massively expand the role of the military in domestic affairs; and lay the groundwork for mass deportations on an unprecedented scale. These measures establish a framework for stripping millions of people of their rights and authorizing the president to override legal and constitutional constraints at will.

2. Global expansion of US militarism

Over the past month, Trump has significantly escalated US militarism, deepening the ongoing genocide in Gaza and laying the groundwork for broader wars in the Middle East. He has openly endorsed the ethnic cleansing of Gaza, declaring that the territory must be "cleared out," a policy Israel has embraced and begun implementing.

At the same time, Trump is reorienting US imperialism's global strategy to secure critical resources and trade routes. He has revived proposals to annex Greenland and assert control over the Panama Canal, both vital for global trade and military logistics. Washington is ramping up economic and military pressure on Canada and Latin America, in an effort to establish US domination over the entire Western Hemisphere. These actions are all preparations for a direct confrontation with China, as the administration intensifies economic warfare, expands trade war measures and seeks to dominate global supply chains, particularly in rare earth minerals and semiconductors.

3. Assault on the working class and the destruction of social programs

While the Trump administration expands war abroad, it is carrying out a social counterrevolution at home. Through Elon Musk and the "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE), the administration is implementing a restructuring of the state in the interests of the financial oligarchy. The goal is the complete destruction of social programs, the elimination of all constraints on corporate profit-making and the consolidation of a surveillance regime to suppress opposition.

The first major step in this process has been the mass firing of federal workers, targeting agencies that provide essential public services. Tens of thousands have already been purged, with entire agencies shut down overnight. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have been among the first to face deep cuts.

Through DOGE, Musk is spearheading a plan to slash $2 trillion in federal spending, eliminating programs that benefit the working class while transferring even greater wealth to the super-rich. A key component of this process is the establishment of an AI-driven surveillance system. Musk is integrating data from the IRS, Social Security Administration, and other federal agencies to construct a modern-day blacklist. This system will be used to target political opponents, criminalize dissent and carry out economic retaliation against workers who resist.

Ever more openly, Trump is declaring that he is acting as a dictator. On Tuesday, the White House's official social media account posted an image of Trump wearing a crown, accompanied by the declaration "LONG LIVE THE KING!" This came just days after his assertion that "He who saves his Country does not violate any Law."

The Trump administration does not simply reflect the ambitions of corrupt individuals. It is the political expression of the American corporate and financial oligarchy, which has concentrated unprecedented levels of wealth.

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At the same time, the policies of the Trump White House are not a demonstration of strength but of crisis and desperation. The oligarchy confronts the long-term decline of its global economic position, a massive mountain of debt built up through a series of bailouts of Wall Street, the catastrophic consequences of its own reckless militarism and growing opposition in the United States and throughout the world.

The Democratic Party is not an opponent of this process but one of its chief architects. It is not a party of social opposition but a pillar of the capitalist state, fully complicit in the destruction of democratic rights and social programs.

While the Democrats present themselves as critics of Trump, their opposition is entirely from the standpoint of ruling class strategy. Their greatest concern is not his dictatorial ambitions but that his policies are undermining the US-led war in Ukraine and weakening Washington's hegemony in Europe. This is why, after one month of Trump's presidency, their loudest protests are not against the gutting of Social Security or the use of military force against immigrants but against the supposed "appeasement" of Russia.

While Trump represents a shift, he also arises out of a broader process, overseen by both Democrats and Republicans. The destruction of welfare programs for the poor, which accelerated under Clinton, continued under Obama and Biden, who oversaw the greatest transfer of wealth to the rich in history. The central priority of the Biden administration was the escalation of a global imperialist war, including the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and the genocide in Gaza.

Now, with the return of Trump, the Democrats have no intention of mobilizing mass opposition to his administration. Their fear is not of Trump but of the working class.

The Trump administration's violent realignment of the state is not occurring in a vacuum. It is a response to the growth of class struggle within the United States and internationally, as the ruling class seeks to preempt and suppress mass opposition to its policies.

But the realignment of politics does not take place on one side alone. The past two years have seen a significant increase in working class struggles, including among aerospace workers, logistics workers, educators, autoworkers, healthcare workers and service workers. Opposition is already emerging among federal workers and government scientists resisting the Trump-Musk wrecking operation. There is enormous anger among postal workers over the administration's plans to privatize the postal service, which would result in mass layoffs and the destruction of a critical public institution.

The Trump administration's policies are being implemented under conditions of staggering social crisis, with millions already facing poverty, homelessness and lack of access to healthcare. Last week, two homeless children froze to death in Detroit in their car after repeatedly seeking assistance—a horrific preview of the consequences of Trump's agenda. At the same time, public health programs are being gutted, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread and new disease threats, such as H5N1 "bird flu," emerge unchecked. The dismantling of public education and mass cuts to social programs will have devastating consequences for millions, including many workers who voted for Trump.

The scale and speed of these attacks will provoke an immense movement of opposition, including calls for a general strike. A principal obstacle to this developing movement is the pro-corporate trade union bureaucracy, which has worked systematically to suppress workers' struggles. During the Biden administration, the union apparatus played a key role in enforcing corporate interests, including the imposition of a government-backed contract on railroad workers that they had overwhelmingly rejected.

With the return of Trump, the union apparatus is adapting itself to the new regime, just as it did under his first administration. Teamsters President Sean O'Brien has positioned himself as an adviser for the White House, while UAW President Shawn Fain has pledged his willingness to "work with" Trump on nationalist economic policy. AFGE (American Federation of Government Employees), which represents hundreds of thousands of government workers, is doing nothing to oppose mass firings. It is telling workers to rely on the courts or make futile appeals to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

The pseudo-left organizations, which operate in and around the Democratic Party, also bear direct responsibility for the rise of Trump. Over the past decade, these forces have sought to divide the working class along racial and gender lines.

The Socialist Equality Party is spearheading the fight to organize the working class against the Trump administration, uniting workers in a struggle against dictatorship, war and capitalist exploitation. Central to this effort is the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), established by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) to provide workers with the organizational means to coordinate their struggles across industries and national borders.

The IWA-RFC is actively fighting to build rank-and-file committees in workplaces, schools and neighborhoods—independent organizations of struggle that will serve as centers of resistance. These committees will unify all sections of the working class in defense of their social and democratic rights, linking the fight against mass firings and social cuts to the defense of immigrants and the struggle against war.

Through a powerful network of correspondence and collaboration, the IWA-RFC will provide workers with the guidance and support needed to coordinate strikes, protests and mass actions in the United States and internationally.

The fight against dictatorship is inseparable from the fight against capitalism. The Socialist Equality Party advances a socialist program to reorganize society in the interests of the working class. The wealth of the financial oligarchy must be expropriated and used to fund universal healthcare, education and secure, well-paying jobs. The imperialist war machine must be dismantled, ending US-led wars and redirecting military spending toward rebuilding society. A workers' government must be established to place political and economic power in the hands of the working class, not the capitalist oligarchy.

We urge all workers and young people who want to take up this fight to join and build the Socialist Equality Party. The working class is the only social force capable of stopping the drive to dictatorship, but it must be armed with a revolutionary leadership and program. The SEP is committed to building this leadership, preparing the working class for the immense struggles ahead and fighting for a socialist future.

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