

# Donald Trump “celebrates” Black History Month with the black elite

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On February 20, Donald Trump held what has become a traditional White House reception for Black History Month. He signed a proclamation that called for “public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.”

Addressing the affluent audience at the White House, Trump said, “Today, we pay tribute to the generations of black legends, champions, warriors, and patriots who have driven our country forward to greatness,” Trump stated. “And you truly are great, great people.”

Trump’s criteria for “African American greatness,” however, is right-wing politics and wealth, as the event demonstrated. Among the five black people named in the Proclamation as “great American patriots” was Trump ally Clarence Thomas, the fascist Supreme Court justice known for his corruption and for his wife’s pivotal role in Trump’s January 6 attempted coup. Also named was extreme right-wing economist Thomas Sowell and golf legend Tiger Woods (net worth \$1.3 billion).

Woods was the guest of honor for the White House event. Other attendees were similarly chosen. They included rappers Kodak Black (\$5 million, pardoned by Trump in 2020), Lil Wayne (\$170 million, pardoned by Trump), Lil Boosie (\$10 million, requesting a pardon from Trump), Rod Wave (\$4 million), ESPN host Sage Steele (\$1.5 million), and ex-NFL player Jack Brewer (\$7 million). Senator Tim Scott-R. SC (\$1 million), Rep. John James -R. MI (\$9.2 million), and former NFL player Herschel Walker (\$29-\$65 million).

Kodak Black had criticized Trump’s attacks on Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, but opportunistically shelved his disagreements. In a rap released shortly after he was discharged from prison, he wrote, “Trump just freed me, but my favorite president

is on the money.”

At the “celebration,” this right-wing coterie of the wealthy greeted Trump with chants of “Four More Years,” knowing that another term for Trump is illegal under the Constitution and aware of the trillions of dollars he plans to strip from Medicaid, Medicare, education and social programs affecting millions of workers, black and white.

The group could not be unaware of Trump’s further turn to dictatorship in the aftermath of the George Floyd protests. When the country erupted in mass protests over the violent police murder of African American George Floyd in May 2020, Trump sought to invoke the Insurrection Act and use the military to suppress protesting youth and workers. Over 13,600 people were arrested between May 25 and June 6, 2020. Trump was only prevented from declaring martial law by opposition within in the military, a problem he is correcting by placing cronies who will answer to him personally in this administration.

But what brought this degraded group together was Trump’s naked defense of a decaying capitalist system and the promotion of black capitalism. Those in attendance agree that black history is really all about personal aggrandizement, not common sacrifice and struggle.

In this sense, the gathering was itself an admission that class, not race, is the essential category driving politics.

The grotesque and craven behavior of this layer fawning over the fascist Trump speaks to the vast social and income disparity between the vast majority of black workers and a tiny black elite. Recent studies have shown that the income divide among African Americans is now larger than the class divide between white households. Forbes reports there are presently a

dozen black billionaires in the US, and 1.79 million black millionaires.

Meanwhile, on the same day this elite group was praising Trump, an African American mother of five who was homeless buried two of her children, aged 2 and 9 years-old, who froze to death while parked in a casino parking lot for protection from the harsh weather. The mother, 29-year-old Tateona Williams, who lost her job at a medical facility, desperately tried to get help but was turned away.

In 1960 socialist sociologist E. Franklin Frazier published his *Black Bourgeoisie*, a scathing critique of the black elite in which he castigates it for embracing a culture of “conspicuous consumption” and for perpetuating myths about black life—something that many of the rappers invited to the White House know a good deal about.

When Frazier wrote that book, there were only 25 black millionaires in the whole country. That number has grown 76,000 times. Meanwhile, over one-quarter of black households have negative net worth.

As for Black History Month, it has long been confined to a sanitized myth-making that makes black history “fit in” with a celebratory account of the “progress” of American democracy and the success of American capitalism. Meanwhile, it blotted out the long and bloody struggle for equality, including the centrality of African American history to the struggles of labor movement and the impact of the Russian Revolution on “the freedom struggle” in the 20th century.

The current struggles of the working class, which require above all its unity across all social, racial, linguistic and national divisions, will bring forward the heroic traditions and struggles of the African American working class as part of abolishing the capitalist profit system globally.



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