

# After Democrats' bailout of Trump to end government shutdown *Jacobin* calls for union leaders, Democrats to pressure Trump, Republicans

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The publications of the pseudo-left organizations have been remarkably silent on the Democratic Party's bailout of the crisis-ridden Trump administration. This week, eight senators who caucus with the Democrats voted to end the government shutdown on terms dictated by Trump and the Republicans.

Not a single article has appeared to date on the websites of Left Voice, Socialist Alternative, the Party for Socialism and Liberation or the Revolutionary Communists of America. These organizations of the privileged middle class prefer to ignore the fact that the Democrats have yet again demonstrated their essential unity with the fascist Trump and his Republican co-conspirators in their war against the democratic and social rights of the working class. The Democrats' claim to be fighting to defend health care by extending Affordable Care Act subsidies and blocking the doubling, tripling and even quadrupling of insurance premiums for tens of millions of people has been exposed as a fraud.

By their silence, the pseudo-left organizations themselves are complicit in the lurch to dictatorship of the financial oligarchy, which controls both parties.

*Jacobin*, the unofficial publication of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), has published two articles. But the content of these articles, promoting illusions that the Democrats and trade union bureaucracies can be pressured to the left and the capitalist system can be reformed, make the DSA no less complicit in the war against the working class. Without a trace of a class analysis, and employing the most banal tropes of protest politics, *Jacobin* seeks to channel the growing revolt of workers and youth against dictatorship, war, genocide and inequality back

behind the Democratic Party.

The more significant of the two *Jacobin* articles, written by Eric Blanc, was posted November 10 under the headline "Democrats Caved in the Shutdown Fight. Unions Let Them." As always in articles by the pseudo-left, as noteworthy as what is said is what is not said. There is no mention of capitalism or socialism. There is no call for an independent mobilization of the working class, including strike action, to bring down Trump. The would-be dictator is portrayed merely as an individual, not the representative of a criminal ruling oligarchy.

Blanc deplores the "weakness" of "most" union leaders and the Democrats. He writes:

This shutdown fight was a "structure test" showing where we're strong and where we're weak. The results are in: most top union leaders are failing to meet the moment. Despite a widespread desire from below to fight, institutional inertia and risk-aversion up top remain the norm. As Sanders noted last night, what last Tuesday's "election showed is that the American people want us to stand up to Trumpism, to his war against working class people, to his authoritarianism — that is what the American people want us to do. But tonight that is not what happened."

Blanc does not mention that Sanders, along with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, opposed calls by a handful of Democrats to force Senate Minority Leader Chuck

Schumer, widely known as the “senator from Wall Street,” to resign his post as leader of the Senate Democrats.

As to the source of this “weakness,” Blanc has nothing to say. It is not, according to him, lodged in objective class relations or the crisis of American and world capitalism, but rather in the subjective proclivities of various union leaders and Democratic politicians.

After approvingly citing Sanders on the consequences of soaring health care costs, the article criticizes the October 27 decision of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) leadership to call on the Democrats to end the shutdown without any guarantees on Obamacare subsidies. Blanc hastens to add, “I do not doubt the sincerity of [AFGE President Everett] Kelley’s commitment to his membership,” but complains that he should have pressured the Republicans rather than the Democrats.

He then criticizes the Culinary Union leadership for tacitly backing the Democratic vote to end the shutdown, saying it could have organized protests in front of lawmakers’ offices. The AFL-CIO and “big progressive unions” should have protested daily against those senators who “refused to commit” to defending healthcare, Blanc adds.

He writes: “Part of the reason Democratic politicians don’t fight is that most union leaders don’t fight either—at least not in a way that meets the urgency of this authoritarian and oligarchic moment.”

As to *why* neither the union bureaucrats nor the Democratic politicians fight, Blanc and *Jacobin* are silent. That is because they are covering up the reality that the Democratic Party is a party of the financial oligarchy and the military-intelligence apparatus, and the trade union leadership is an agency of the corporations and the capitalist state, which derives its fat salaries and perks by serving as the industrial police of the ruling class to impose layoffs, speedup, and low wages and suppress the class struggle.

What is denied is the necessity for the working class to break with the Democrats and establish new, democratic organizations of working class resistance independent of the union bureaucrats—rank-and-file committees—to unite workers nationally and internationally against the capitalist system.

Blanc’s reformist delusions reach their high point

when he writes that going forward workers should launch “ambitious campaigns to pressure the regime’s pillars of support — businesses, media outlets, school administrations, and the rest — to break from Trump.”

He concludes by declaring that a new leadership must be built in the Democratic Party and the trade union apparatus, once again promoting the fatal illusion that these instruments of the capitalist class can be made to fight for the working class.

In opposition to such attempts to divert and politically disarm the working class, the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote on November 10 of the Democrats’ vote to end the shutdown:

This action is not merely a capitulation to Trump but deliberate collaboration with the Republican administration under conditions of deepening political, social and economic crises for American capitalism. It is a calculated decision to save the fascist administration as its position becomes more and more precarious...

The Democrats have enabled Trump because they support the fundamental pillars of his domestic agenda, and they are terrified of anything that could trigger a mass movement from below.



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