



# Crisis in the USA

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## A: Introduction

1. The USA today is facing a combined series of social crises on a scale not witnessed since the Second World War ? the deeply interrelated coronavirus and economic crises, the climate crisis and a deep political crisis of Trump?s presidency, related to his inciting the police and white racists against the country?s black citizens and immigrant communities to boost his chances of winning a second term. However, the November election is not going to resolve any of these and may indeed plunge the country into a period of civil strife not witnessed for fifty years.
2. Most explosive is the war being waged by a racist police force and white supremacists encouraged by a billionaire in the White House who pays less taxes than a US worker. But this is not a one-sided war - except in terms of the weaponry in the hands of the cops, systemically immune from prosecution. In cities and towns across the USA ,a mass anti-racist movement is fighting back. Initiated by people of colour and white anti-racists, who have joined in large numbers. This movement, using the slogan Black Lives Matter, has been copied all over the world, exposing the racist roots of ?Western?, ?democratic? politics economics and culture.
3. On the other side of the barricades, we have a President who calls peaceful protestors terrorists, praises fascistic militias who attack them and incites his supporters not to accept any defeat for him in the elections. If this were to happen, November 3 could open up a period of radical breakdown in US institutions and huge social conflict.
4. The undemocratic provisions of the American Constitution are now plain for all to see; Presidents, who deploy incredible powers can be (and are) elected with a minority of the popular vote, an unelected Supreme Court can overrule laws passed by the more democratic ?lower house?, the Senate, elected on a scandalously unequal franchise, can block the will of the majority. A significant part of the electorate is disenfranchised, because of racial and class inequality that has never been overcome, despite emancipation and civil rights.
5. Women, too, face major attacks on hard won rights such as abortion because a reactionary majority on the Supreme Court can reverse the Roe v Wade judgement, showing how the constitution fails to protect the rights of woman. In many states, ?right to work" legislation effectively illegalises the right to organise and to strike. Trump has promised, if re-elected, to finally get rid of the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care) and this in the middle of the worst health emergency for a century.
6. The main problem is that there is no mass political party that dares to defend ordinary Americans against these attacks and has a programme that targets the undemocratic institutions and presents a strategy to overthrow them. Thus, to all these interlinked crises, crises of capitalism itself, is added a chronic crisis of leadership. This is reflected in the subordination of the official movements of the racially and sexually oppressed, the labour unions and even ?democratic socialists?, to the Democrats, the second party of imperialist capital. Freeing the many fighting forces in the US from this straitjacket and building an anti-capitalist, revolutionary socialist workers' party is a vital necessity in today's combined crises.

## B; The USA?s hegemony challenged

1. The USA is facing a challenge to its global hegemony not witnessed since the end of the Cold War. It comes from a

dynamic imperialist rival, that US politicians still like to call "Communist China". In fact, in the first two globalisation decades, synergy with US capital allowed Chinese capitalism to develop into an imperialist power, albeit within a state capitalist framework and preserving a totalitarian bureaucracy led by a party that still calls itself the Communist Party of China. In the period since the Great Recession, both Democrats and Republicans have increasingly seen it as a dangerous rival. Trump's "good friend", Xi Jinping, rapidly turned into the villain in an all-out trade war focusing on each country's high-tech industries.

2) This is not a matter of an absolute decline in US power and a corresponding increase in that of China. Rather, America's power, relative to newer centres of capital accumulation, has been declining for decades; first with Germany and the EU and then, in the 1980s, with Japan. At that time, however, this did not entail any serious geo-strategic rivalry as they were largely disarmed or Nato-subordinated powers.

3) The US, with its world reserve currency and New York the centre of global finance and the regulation of trade, is still far more powerful than China. Militarily, China is weaker than the USA, even in its Asia Pacific region. Nevertheless, China is increasingly able to stand up to America in trade disputes and to make alliances with other regional and global powers. Its capital now penetrates countries not just in Asia (the Belt and Road), but in Africa and Latin America, which were hitherto the preserve of the US and its allies. Xi's greater assertiveness reflects China's increasing potential to challenge the US for world hegemony.

4) Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's eternal capital, and the "deal of the century" being pushed by Jared Kushner, are not so radically different from the policies of previous US administrations, which allowed the Israelis to veto the two state "solution". Even if Joe Biden were to win by a landslide, we should not expect America's global strategy to change in substance. Likewise, a Democrat in the White House would continue to target Iran and Venezuela.

5) All genuine socialists in the USA must be anti-imperialists and should warn those around the world fighting for democracy and human rights that "Western" imperialism will prove a false friend. They must oppose any call for US military interventions or economic blockades and adopt a defeatist position vis-a-vis their own country's military adventures and, therefore, defend semi-colonial countries attacked by it, no matter their regimes.

6) Socialists in the US should call for the withdrawal of all bases, fleets and service personnel from around the globe. This does not mean that there is a "progressive camp" out there in the world, made up of Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, China or even Russia, as some US radicals seem to imagine. China and Russia, though weaker by far than the US, are also imperialist powers that conduct their own brutal oppressive policies both internally and abroad. Revolutionaries must support those who fight for democracy, national rights, workers' freedom within these countries.

### C: A Deepening Recession

1) At the roots of this political crisis is a historic crisis of the economic system - both US and world capitalism. A decade after the Great Recession, millions are once again being thrown out of work. Even before the coronavirus pandemic forced the closure of many companies, a second Great Recession was already looming. The crisis of 2008 and the ensuing depression began the process of destabilisation by slashing growth rates by half. The Covid 19 shutdown of 2020 accelerated the process to today's edge of collapse and/or the adoption of even more drastic and unprecedented measures than the bailouts and quantitative easing of 2008-9 to "save" the system from that collapse.

2) Trump's launching of a trade war with China has done nothing to strengthen the US let alone restore the prosperity of workers in the old industrial areas. The US is having bigger problems in foreign trade in 2020 than ever. July showed the biggest jump in the US trade deficit with the world for twelve years and the main beneficiary was China. From June to July, the deficit with China surged by almost 11%, to \$31.6 billion.

3. China is the biggest source of US consumer goods outside of the North American continent. Its cheap consumer goods underpin the stagnant or falling wage levels of US workers and the middle class. Trump's tariffs on steel increase the costs of US manufacturers and retaliation shrinks their exports.

4) Under Biden, the destructive effects of neoliberal capitalism on US jobs will continue. Under Clinton, Bush and Obama, these were the policies that created the soil on which Trump's pro-(white) workers demagoguery grew. They would further fuel the far right, especially if the workers' movement, labour and socialist left, failed to fight Biden because they had just voted for him as 'the lesser evil'.

5. It is clear from the content of their campaign promises that neither candidate will do anything of major significance for the hard-pressed US working class, while lavishing governmental largesse on the capitalist owners of society. US workers and the oppressed should give no confidence to the two parties of their exploiters and there is no other party or candidate in serious contention that deserves their vote. Trump has only made America great again for a thin layer of speculators and hedge fund CEOs.

6) Despite the recent decline in the jobless figures, the US economy has lost 11 million jobs in this 'Greater Recession'. In sectors such as retail, hospitality and leisure, and travel, it is widely recognised that it will take years for them to recover.

7) Wages continue to stagnate or fall, despite a very low rate of inflation. Real average hourly and weekly earnings fell in July by 0.04%. Trump now holds the dubious distinction of being the president with the worst jobless numbers since World War Two. These totals do not reflect the clear disparity in unemployment by ethnicity and skin colour. The 'white' rate stands at 7.3%, while the rate for people of colour is 10%. And, as usual, Black unemployment comes in at the highest rate at 13%.

#### D: The movement against state racism

1) The killing of George Floyd, and the mass protests that rocked the US in 2020, woke up the world to the scale of American racism (again), as the killings of Mike Brown, Eric Garner and Tamir Rice had in 2014, when the slogan Black Lives Matter first spread nationwide. Already facing disparities in access to wealth, education, and healthcare; discrimination in criminal justice, housing, and employment, Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous Americans have felt the brunt of the Corona Crisis and its ensuing economic ramifications. Not only are they statistically more likely to contract the virus and die of it, they have felt the greatest impact of job loss and the lack of safety protection at work. Meanwhile, Black women face criminally high maternal and infant mortality rates, exacerbated by coronavirus. Responding to the murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, thousands of protesters have been arrested, hundreds injured. Every time the movement has started to lose steam, another death or escalation occurs, bringing thousands back into the streets

2) As the protests continue, the number of clashes with Trump supporters and armed far-right groups rises. Numerous injuries and deaths have been caused by BLM opponents driving vehicles through crowds and there have been a number of lynchings across the country. Violent hate crimes rose precipitously in 2017, reaching a 16-year high by the end of 2018 and the number of anti-Hispanic, and anti-Jewish hate crimes has also risen dramatically.

3). Despite the big labour unions restricting themselves to verbal expressions of support, rank and file workers in a wide variety of sectors have taken action. On both coronavirus issues and the George Floyd protests, strikes, walkouts, and sick outs have taken place, with bus workers, dockers, nurses, teachers, food service and Amazon workers, being just a few of those. In addition to class solidarity, white Americans have joined the protests at a rate not seen since the 1960s and Black Lives Matter vigils have been held for the white protesters who have lost their lives in the protests.

4) The diversity of this support has made it powerful but could also make it vulnerable to those sowing discord. Identity politics and the cult of leaderlessness and spontaneity increase this danger. There is an urgent need for central organising bodies and political leadership, in other words a party, rooted not only in all the sectors of the racially and gender oppressed but in the working class, the majority, without whom the production of capital itself would cease.

#### E: Trump's offensive on Women's rights

1) Because of Trump's notorious sexism and his dependence on right wing evangelicals and anti-abortionists, women

were first out on the streets in mass demonstrations in the first years of his presidency. Unfortunately, this movement was captured by the Democrats and faded away. It will have to be rebuilt, and quickly. For Trump's second term, high on the agenda is repeal of Roe v Wade, i.e. the right to terminate unwanted pregnancies. With his nomination of Amy Coney Barret to replace Ruth Bader Ginsberg, the Supreme Court could be the instrument to do this. At the federal level, access to family planning for millions of Americans has been ended, coverage under Obamacare has been slashed and countless pro-life federal judges have been appointed and confirmed.

2) Following the President's lead, pro-life governors and state legislatures throughout the country have launched efforts to de-fund family planning providers and passed blatantly unconstitutional laws in an effort to prepare a case to overturn Roe v. Wade. Yet, most Americans strongly support access to birth control and do not believe the decision to have an abortion should be illegal; nearly 80% think birth control should be considered a basic part of women's health care and over three-quarters support Roe v Wade and the protections it has provided since its passage in 1973.

3) In 2016, much of the women's movement rallied to the Democrats and Hillary Clinton's candidacy, hoping she would be the first woman to be elected president. Of course, there was a more radical women's movement, but it was fragmented into radical identity-based fragments, or dominated by academic theorists, whose post-modernist 'discourse', despite the good intentions of 'intersectionalists', was unable to overcome these divisions. Momentarily, the shocking election of an outspoken sexist and brazen molester of women provoked the massive women's marches against Trump, starting with that on January 21, 2017. The fact that many of the gains of previous decades would come under attack, unified the movement for the time being and showed that women could and would fight back

4). Then came the explosion of the #MeToo movement in October 2017, which not only targeted the issue of sexual harassment but the exclusion of women from positions of power and leadership. One major result was to significantly increase the aspirations of women to take leading roles in politics. By the 2018 mid-term elections, there was a record number of women standing as Democratic candidates, some of them, like the so-called Squad, as 'democratic socialists, too. Women of colour played a major, indeed a leading, role, in the Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders campaigns for the Democratic primaries and in the 2020 BLM movement. Were Trump to again be the POTUS with the Supreme Court firmly in the hands of anti-abortionists, a major conflict on this issue would be inevitable. Even if Biden wins, the attacks of the SCOTUS and other federal courts stuffed with right-wingers will present the need for a major fight back.

5) In 2020, across the general population, US women make only \$0.81 for every dollar a man makes, and the difference has only decreased by \$0.07 since 2015. The gender pay gap is wider for women of colour, women in executive level roles, women in certain occupations and industries, and in some US states. Covid-19 is creating an even bigger financial toll for women than men. With higher unemployment rates than men, women are more likely to work in the service/hospitality/retail sectors (76% of the workforce) which do not offer paid time off or health insurance and have been hardest hit by mandatory shutdowns.

6) Even though Congress allocated \$3.5 billion in funding for emergency child-care, which helped 23 states offer grants to child-care providers during the pandemic, more than 40% of child-care centres remain closed in some states and most report the funds are already gone. Along with the devastating fallout of the Coronavirus pandemic, there has been a surge in domestic violence, DV. Stay-at-home orders, essential to slowing the spread of the virus, have forced DV survivors already at risk of domestic abuse into even more vulnerable and dangerous positions.

7) Here, as in the case of all the major struggles of the oppressed, separate movements composed of all classes is not the answer. Firstly, this is because of the contradiction between the classes makes this either a utopia or an invitation to women of the privileged and exploiting classes (like Clinton or Pelosi) to dominate it and conservatize its programme. In addition, a huge number of (white, middle class and 'Christian') women voted and campaigned for Trump 'truly 'enemy sisters' (Clara Zetkin). Secondly, because to really liberate women, capitalism and domestic servitude need to be targeted with a programme to socialise both the spheres of production and reproduction. To fight for these goals something more than trade unions or campaigns against specific attacks are needed. Women need to play a leading and integral role in a new working class and socialist party as part of a new International.

## F: Forces of Resistance

### The Unions

- 1) Of the 36 OECD countries, the USA is fifth from the bottom in terms of union density 10.3%. (2019 figure). Only 6.2% in the private sector are unionised. The number of union members is 14.6 million, three million less than in 1989. Union density varies enormously from 21% in New York to 2.2 % in South Carolina. Nevertheless, there are signs that there is growing rank-and-file sentiment to use their 'strike' option more than in the past and to use it over political issues, rather than just economic concerns.
- 2) However, most union leaders, both nationally and locally, have long adopted a 'collaborationist' position with the owners, often in direct opposition to the needs of their own members. Givebacks and concessions have been common practice for decades now and thus these bureaucrats are directly implicated in the obscene inequality in the US today, including that between their own salaries and those of their members. The only check on this betrayal is an active and confrontational membership that will take militant action in spite of their leadership whenever necessary.
- 3) A rise in union militancy and strike actions did, indeed, precede the Trump administration and can be traced to the Great Recession of 2008. The Wisconsin uprising of 2011, under Obama, began this most recent stage of union fightback that has culminated in an estimated figure of over 600 actions this year, many from the hitherto unorganised sectors, or workers prevented from striking by state 'right to work' laws, hence their 'wildcat' nature.
- 4) Many of this year's actions are related to the Covid 19 crisis that has led to unsafe working conditions for low waged workers who interact with the public. The most recent example of union involvement in political issues is a declaration released in early September from associated union locals with AFSCME (government workers), SEIU (service workers), and the NEA (teachers) threatening strike actions in support of the BLM movement by forcing federal lawmakers to pass police reform measures and the dismantling of systemic racism.
- 5) The presence of the police in local, regional and national union councils and federations, especially in times of heightened class struggle, means having bitter enemies take part in our meetings and decision-making. These 'unions' are in no sense a part of the labour movement. Rather, they are the protectors of the 'private property' of the capitalists, intimidators of strikes and front-line fighters against people of colour, 'illegal' immigrants and indeed anyone struggling for basic human and democratic rights. They must be expelled from all bodies of the workers' movement.

### Political Parties

- 6) The primary, nominally socialist, grouping in the US is the Democratic Socialists of America, which has grown from 20,000 members to 70,000, with an influx of 10,000 since Bernie Sanders was defeated in the Democratic Party primaries. The DSA had been consistently moving leftwards from the social democracy of Michael Harrington, with its total commitment to the Democratic Party, to the position adopted in the national convention of 2019, that it would support no candidate except Bernie.
- 7) However, on the local level, with the exit of Sanders from the presidential race, DSA branches have been focusing on support for the Democratic Party's candidates. Although it should be noted that there isn't any strong urge to elect Joe Biden, the structure of DSA allows individuals and individual chapters great leeway either to endorse Biden/Harris officially, or to work for their election even if they don't officially endorse them.
- 8) This 'localised' strategy has been successful in electing DSA candidates to city councils and even a few nominal and avowed 'socialists' to state houses, but without any clear national strategy. Even the famous 'Squad', led by Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), elected in 2016, were not really avowed 'socialists'. They all won their primaries in safe Democratic districts and are likely to be re-elected in November. In general, we see that DSA tacitly supports the Democrats as the 'lesser evil than Trump' choice. Once again, despite all the Marxist articles in Jacobin, they have shown themselves, in practice, to be the 'left wing' of the bourgeois Democratic Party.

9) In short, the DSA is hamstrung by its reliance on electoralism, its general focus on 'identity' issues over class issues, and by its organisational model of decentralisation, leading to no national strategy and having no unified programme of action. Also, the DSA has very little in the way of outreach to organised labour., despite the fact that the 2019 DSA convention passed important resolutions to do this. Though many in the DSA claim to be Marxists, very few seem to want to do the work to influence the working class in a socialist direction. This is at the root of the refusal to consider anything better than a 'dirty break strategy?', that is, using the Democratic ticket supposedly to build up the forces for a break from them.

10) Nevertheless, with its flourishing internationally prestigious Jacobin website/journal, the DSA is a forum for an avowedly Marxist, but actually non-revolutionary, left. Its 'Marxism' is denatured by Kautskyism and Gramscianism, whose most prominent advocate is Eric Blanc, who heads a tendency around the magazine, The Call. This approach offers neither strategic nor tactical leadership in the class struggle or the battles of the racially and gender oppressed. Nevertheless, the call for an independent workers' party has been raised in DSA conventions and it is the largest national body capable of giving the call any traction. Revolutionaries can best get a hearing for this in the DSA as well as in the more militant sectors of the union movement and amongst antiracist activists. The DSA has flourished in part because of the failure of the largest self-proclaimed Trotskyist organisations.

11) In the period since the beginning of the century, the largest groups on the Trotskyist left, the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) and the Socialist Alternative have not only failed to take a leadership role in the creation of a mass working class party independent of the Democrats, they have suffered splits and disintegration. The ISO, for a long time the largest far left group in the USA, veered away from its earlier project of rank and file organising in the labour movement towards a concentration on students, and on the 'social movements?'. In the latter, it did not fight for Marxist leadership. Its concentration on socialist propaganda included running a prolific publishing house. Tactically, it has supported a non-working-class party, the Greens, in elections rather than fighting for a workers' party. A massive crisis in 2019 rooted in the former leadership's cover-up of a rape case in 2013, led to its self-liquidation. Many of the refugees from the ISO falsely identify Leninism or Bolshevik party methods as the cause of the bureaucratic regime in the group.

12) Socialist Alternative (until the recent split the Committee for a Workers' International's section in the United States) has concentrated on standing candidates in local, state and city elections, with its biggest success being the election of Kshama Sawant to the Seattle city council. The programme on which she was elected was not a revolutionary one and this was soon revealed. On August 13, Sawant voted to confirm Carmen Best as Chief of the Seattle Police Department, because community members, "overwhelmingly have urged me not to stand in the way (of a black woman candidate)?". This unprincipled reformist electoralism was not new, since SA had long supported Bernie Sanders' campaign to be the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, even forming their own 'Movement4Bernie?'. Although they carried banners with Sanders' slogan 'We Need a Political Revolution?', they tried to maintain a veneer of Marxist respectability by explaining that, if he won the nomination, he should then break with the Democrats.

13) In the course of the CWI's split, the UK-based leadership suddenly started to criticise this line as opportunist, and SA's politics as marred by 'identity politics?', though they had previously supported and boasted of SA's successes. After the split down the middle of the CWI, SA is now one of the largest groups in the International Socialist Alternative. Other, newer, groupings to the left of the two above are Socialist Resurgence, a split from Socialist Action in 2016, and Left Voice, linked to the Argentine-based Trotskyist Fraction-Fourth International. If the problem of the ISO and SA was their gross opportunism, the danger with the two latter is a failure to deploy united front tactics and to participate in the struggle to break the unions and the DSA away from the Democrats. Without that, the road to independent class politics will remain blocked and that in the deepest political crisis the USA has witnessed since the 1960s.

## G: The Diversion of Populism

1. The Green Party in the US is best described as the 'ecosocialist' conscience of the Democratic Party. It appeals to Bernie Sanders' supporters, disgruntled by his turn to supporting Biden, plus refugees from various Trotskyist groups.

Its campaign platform lacks any criticism of policies enacted or supported by the Democrats. This is even more obvious now, with the Howie Hawkins and Angela Walker campaign platform, than it was with Jill Stein and Ajamu Baraka back in 2016. In the 2020 election, the Greens are off the ballots in more swing states than Stein was, for example, in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, ensuring they won't 'spoil' the election.

2. Being a bourgeois party, their demands consist of calls for reform within the capitalist system, mostly centred on an 'Ecosocialist Green New Deal'. However, there is nothing socialist about the reforms proposed. There is no talk of expropriation and nationalisation of industries, no mention of a living wage instead of a minimum wage, no serious call for the redistribution of wealth among the American people. Progressive taxation is all they have, and even there, details are scarce.

3. To pretend that the US can reform its way towards a sustainable relationship between humans and nature is a pipe dream. The Green Party is fishing for feel-good votes when announcing that they hope to push Biden to the Left. As much as a break of the two-party system is desperately needed, one can only hope that workers don't fall for this wolf in Green's clothing.

4. The latest iteration in the 'third party progressive' sweepstakes is the Movement for a People's Party. On August 30, they had an on-line 'convention' attended by 400k people with speakers like academic Dr. Cornell West, left pundit Chris Hedges, left podcast star Jimmy Dore, activist Cindy Sheehan, and filmmaker Oliver Stone, among others. As the name suggests, this is not a party of labour, but rather a cross-class attempt at organising a party to the left of the Democrats, what they openly dub a 'progressive populist party' picking up Sanders' discarded slogans - Medicare for All, free public college education, getting big money out of politics, an infrastructure jobs programme, \$15 per hour minimum wage, the Green New Deal, and other things on the reformist left's 'wish list'. Their current plans call for using the rest of this year and into 2021 to plan for a national organising convention to draft a party platform and decide on a name for the party. Until then, they claim to have organising teams all over the country working to build local hubs, establishing a presence and gaining ballot access.

5. The problem with this initiative is that it is a populist and cross-class formation, which means it will gravitate towards the bourgeoisie. It is obviously only interested, at this point, in elections and electoral solutions and the listed endorsers are all capitalist. Indeed, there is very little organised working-class support, with only one union leader as an endorser, Al Rojas of the United Farm Workers. Labour is only listed in the 'Coalitions' section of the web site, as are the listed goals, all achievable under capitalism. They are left capitalists to be sure, but still capitalist. And it's still up in the air whether they will succeed in their primary mission of getting on the ballot in enough states to actually begin to break the political duopoly of the capitalist ruling class in 2020.

H: A unique Election?

1. Trump's campaign is a grotesque satire of his Presidency, standing as the candidate of law and order and the controller of chaos, whilst doing all in his power to foment social chaos. The country faces the greatest social uprising in generations and an anti-racist movement which involves not only black people but the whole spectrum of people of colour and white antiracists. The Democrats on the other hand, have returned to their 2016 strategy of framing the 2020 election as a battle to prevent the 'End of Democracy' as we know it. The vote for Biden is overwhelmingly a vote to stop Trump. The Democratic Party platform is heavily targeted toward winning the working class and Black American vote. While blue-collar workers and Black Americans are mentioned in nearly every portion of its platform, the goals of the platform can basically be boiled down to this: Get Americans back to work, and back to spending.

2. There is no doubt that, if the Democratic platform were to be enacted, it would bring some immediate relief to millions of Americans. But it would leave millions more behind in the wake of ever-encroaching poverty, reliant on charity and food banks and insecure in their housing and employment. Most importantly, it would ensure the capitalists continue to get the lion's share of any production gains that would be made in working America. Biden's platform is littered with toothless 'crack downs' on big business and abusive state governments, particularly in his environmental, worker rights, and criminal justice reforms. He leaves many of his promises in the hands of capitalists whose only

motivation to comply with the reforms is the loss of federal grants and contracts, which we saw fail spectacularly during the Obama Administration. In addition, his olive branch to progressive and Black voters is essentially debt, disguised as relief. His healthcare and housing policies both rely heavily on welfare, individual tax credits, low-interest loans, and high-interest debt-pay-off plans, all of which leave the American worker footing the bill

3. Meanwhile, a sword of Damocles hangs over the election. Even if he were to lose the election, in terms of the popular vote, Trump has made it clear that he will cry foul. The Republican states that count the ballots could well support his contention that the result has been interfered with and is invalid. As in 2000, this could go to the Supreme Court which is now firmly in the hands of Trump supporters. Biden could be robbed of any victory, even a large one, and the country plunged into chaos with Trump occupying the White House. On the other hand, even if the Electoral College were to confirm Biden, the reaction of the 'Trump movement', with its QAnon-deluded masses, could still refuse to accept defeat. All this in the midst of a second wave of the coronavirus plague and wildfires and hurricanes that testify to the impending climate catastrophe.

4. Trump has threatened to use courts he has stuffed with right-wingers to invalidate results in states that go against him. There has been an increase in Republican actions in red states to invalidate huge numbers of votes by people of colour. Trump calls on his supporters to 'supervise' the polling stations and, last but perhaps not least, for the fascist militias to "stand by" with their guns if Biden wins. The working class, trade unions, the BLM movement, the women's and LBGTQ+ movements will also need to stand ready if Trump tries to steal the election. The moment an electorally defeated Trump tries to launch his constitutional coup to cling on to power, all of these movements need to take to the streets in overwhelming force, ready to drive his armed fascists off the streets and to prevent the police intervening on his side. The labour federations, the new unions, and the unorganised too, need to be called upon to launch a mass political strike to drive Trump from power.

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