



USA: Election Day Statement

International Secretariat, League for the Fifth International Tue, 03/11/2020 - 17:33

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Millions of US citizens vote today in an election which the whole world is watching. Almost 100 million have already voted, either in person or by post.

Donald Trump, faced with opinion polls giving his Democratic Party challenger a lead in double figures, has worked overtime to call the result of the vote into question ? if he loses. He has claimed postal ballots will lead to a massive fraud and that millions of fake voters are on the rolls. He has called his far right supporters to gather at voting stations to "observe", in other words, to intimidate voters in areas they believe will vote for Joe Biden, including ones where there is a strong demographic of people of colour.

US democracy, which has always been a good deal short of a democracy for black workers, even after the Civil Rights Acts of the 1960s, and no democracy at all for millions of migrant and undocumented workers, faces a huge crisis of legitimacy.

But this crisis is not only the fault of Trump; it is a crisis caused by the inability of the capitalist economy to address the fundamental needs of workers.

Bernie Sanders has worked to channel the anger into the capitalist Democrat party despite the fact that Biden has made it clear he will block any attempt by left wing Democrats, calling themselves Democratic Socialists, to introduce Medicare for All, that is, a universal healthcare system such as exists in nearly all European countries. In the USA, however, Republican and many Democratic legislators regard all aspects of the welfare state as downright socialism, if not communism.

The lack of an independent workers' party leaves millions of workers feeling they have no choice but to vote Democrat to kick out Donald Trump.

But a vote for the Democrats, even if it does succeed in kicking out Trump, does nothing to challenge the policy and system which fuelled the rise of Trump and his movement. This is all the more so given the scale of the coronavirus epidemic and the mass unemployment, homelessness, and insecurity that is being generated by it and the underlying return of a major recession. Biden, like Obama before him, will compensate big business and unload the debts that the federal state has incurred onto the backs of workers.

The outcome of the election depends on a number of contingencies.

Clearly, if Trump loses the popular vote but tries to claim victory and gets incumbent Republican state authorities and right wing judges to suspend vote counts, or suppress ballots, workers should immediately take up the appeal issued by Central Labor Councils in Rochester, N.Y., Seattle and Western Massachusetts for a general strike, and mobilise in massive numbers on the streets.

There is clearly a real likelihood, especially if Trump loses, that his reactionary supporters, stiffened by the far right gangs and militias, will mutate into a real mass fascist movement capable of a terrorising campaign against workers and all progressive forces. The deep social, economic and political crisis of US society makes this possible and a militant response by all working people necessary.

Even if either candidate can claim a clear victory, the policy they will pursue pursued is not yet finally decided ? it

depends on whether workers, black people, youth, women, and undocumented workers mobilise in a powerful, united front of the working class, of people of colour, of women fighting for their rights, to impose their own agenda.

This must include:

- ? An end to police killings with impunity and the terrorising of communities with mass raids arrests.
- ? The immediate release of all those arrested in protests against racist and police violence
- ? An end to the ?carceral state?, the ?war on drugs? and the release of the huge numbers imprisoned and disenfranchised for petty offences

It must mean the inalienable right of women to birth control and abortion. It must mean full citizenship rights for all ?illegal? immigrants, the closure of the concentration camps and no ?wall? on the borders.

It must mean the right to strike, the right to organise in every state and city, an end to ?right to work" laws.

Addressing the coronavirus crisis means:

- Full furlough pay at \$15 an hour.
- Occupation of all workplaces and companies declaring redundancies.
- The nationalisation of healthcare, and the implementation of a test, track and trace system under workers' control.
- A covid levy on big business and the rich to ensure workers don?t pay for the crisis.

In order to carry the fight for this programme to the end, we need to establish a real workers? party based on labour, the militant wing of the BLM and women?s movements, and migrant workers.

Fight for a workers' party that fights for workers? power.

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