

Media, Democrats cover up Trump's fascistic politics

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The corporate-controlled media and the Hillary Clinton campaign have chosen to downplay the political significance of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's appointment of a figure with close ties to "white nationalist" and other ultra-right tendencies as his new campaign chief. They are deliberately covering up the orientation of the Trump campaign toward the consolidation of a fascist-type movement in the United States.

Stephen K. Bannon, the new Trump campaign CEO, is the executive chairman of Breitbart News, an on-line publication that celebrates the rise of the neo-fascist right in Europe, including the National Front in France, the Alternative for Germany, and the UK Independence Party (UKIP) in Britain, and seeks to create a similar movement in the United States. Bannon hosted then-UKIP leader Nigel Farage during a recent visit to Washington, introducing him to Republican Party bigwigs.

In one of the few serious commentaries in the US media, *Chicago Tribune* columnist Rex Huppke, in an August 19 article, cited several recent hysterical, bigoted headlines on Breitbart.com, which he described as a "right-wing lunatic-fringe website." The site regularly denounces supporters of gay rights as the "Gaystapo"—a peculiar inversion for a publication whose readers frequently leave anti-Semitic comments, such as a reference to the movie industry as "Jewlywood."

Huppke cites other comments posted on Breitbart News by readers who threaten violence against immigrants, liberals, Muslims, Democrats, Hillary Clinton, etc. He notes that Bannon himself, on his radio program, interviewed Joseph Schmitz, a Trump foreign policy adviser (and anti-Semite, according to complaints filed by other Pentagon officials during his tenure in the Bush administration). Bannon asked the

former Pentagon inspector-general if the Obama administration was using the Muslim Brotherhood to shape US foreign policy. Schmitz replied, "No, I don't think it. I know it."

Bannon's influence was made apparent in the first general election television commercial broadcast by the Trump campaign, appearing Friday night. It is a vitriolic, racist attack on immigrants, suggesting that unless Trump is elected they will "flood in," and immigrant criminals will "get to stay, collecting Social Security."

The tone for the media response to Bannon's appointment was set, as usual, by the *New York Times*, whose lead editorial Sunday posed the question, "How Can America Recover From Donald Trump?"

It notes the appointment of Bannon, identifying him as "Breitbart's chief purveyor of conspiracy theories and anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant venom."

Far from drawing any political conclusions, or issuing a warning, the *Times* merely expresses the hope that after Trump's expected defeat in November, "responsible leaders" of the Republican Party "will try to separate the economic discontent from the bigotry and paranoia that are the key to the Trump phenomenon."

The *Times* presents the Trump phenomenon as a bolt from the blue, something completely unanticipated and foreign to American politics. This is a deliberate and dishonest cover-up.

Trump himself is a well-known quantity, promoted and encouraged for years by both big-business parties and the corporate media. He has enjoyed the closest relations with Democrats no less than Republicans, including the Clintons. He was built up as the celebrity CEO par excellence and given television shows to promote the Trump brand. He emerged from the corrupt and super-wealthy circles of New York real

estate speculators and embodies the accumulated political reaction of decades of unending war, ever-greater social inequality and the rise of a new, parasitical financial aristocracy.

His candidacy and the ultra-right character of his campaign represent a turn by sections of the American capitalist class, in the face of intractable contradictions and the growth of social opposition, to more authoritarian and violent methods of rule.

As for the Republican Party, it was exploiting economic discontent to foment bigotry and paranoia for decades before Trump came onto the political scene. At every point, the Democratic Party and its liberal defenders like the *Times* have capitulated to the rise of the ultra-right while embracing the policies of austerity, wage-cutting and war demanded by Wall Street.

The four television interview programs broadcast Sunday morning all made reference to the reshuffle in the leadership of the Trump campaign, and ABC and CNN interviewed Kellyanne Conway, the new campaign manager. She was never asked about the ultra-right views of the new campaign CEO (her boss).

One CBS panelist described Bannon as an “eyebrow-raising hire... more confrontational, very tied to anti-immigrant voices,” but the subject was not further pursued. On Fox News, of course, there was only praise, with one panelist describing him as “very competent” and “tapped into this populist energy that Donald Trump has.”

Most remarkable was the appearance on the ABC program “This Week” of Clinton campaign manager Robby Mook. He noted that Trump had appointed a new campaign CEO from Breitbart News, a media outlet that has “defended white supremacists” and has been “sexist, racist, the worst of our politics.”

But this was not Mook’s real concern. He shifted instead to the bogus allegations that Trump is a stooge of Russian President Vladimir Putin. “The hand of the Kremlin has been at work in this campaign for some time,” Mook said. “It’s clear that they are supporting Donald Trump... there are real questions being raised about whether Donald Trump himself is just a puppet for the Kremlin in this race.”

Clinton campaign supporters also released a new campaign ad featuring choreographer Mikhail Baryshnikov associating Trump with the Stalinist dictatorship in the Soviet Union.

The Clinton campaign manager prefers to attack Trump from the right, with a McCarthy-style smear about “the Kremlin,” rather than explore Trump’s very real connections with neo-fascist elements. Mook’s intervention was a devastating exposure of the class orientation of the Clinton campaign, which seeks to curry favor with Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus by arguing that Clinton, not Trump, is the more reliable defender of the interests of American imperialism.

Even if, as current polls now suggest, Trump is defeated by Clinton, the result will be the most right-wing government in American history, committed to a policy of imperialist war abroad and attacks on democratic rights and the social position of the working class at home. Clinton will be compelled to rely on precisely the political forces cultivated by Trump—chauvinistic and militaristic—to support this reactionary course of action.

Tens of millions of working people and youth are sickened by the prospect of choosing between Clinton, the personification of the corporate status quo, and Trump, the fascistic billionaire. According to the most recent Pew poll, only 22 percent say they will vote for Clinton because they actually support her (as opposed to fearing Trump), and only 16 percent support Trump (rather than hating Clinton).

The official two-party system provides no outlet for the mass sentiments of working people and youth, who are moving to the left and seeking a way to fight in defense of their jobs and living standards and oppose the growing drive to war. Only the campaign of the Socialist Equality Party and our candidates, Jerry White for president and Niles Niemuth for vice president, offers a genuine political alternative.

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