

# One year of Democratic sabotage of opposition to Trump

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One year ago, on January 20, 2017, Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 45th president of the United States. Even as he was delivering his fascistic “America First” rant from the steps of the Capitol, thousands were protesting nearby.

The next day, the largest and most widespread protest demonstrations in US history were held in opposition to the new president. They involved between three million and five million people in more than 500 US cities, and were joined by protests in more than 100 cities outside the US.

The following weekend, demonstrations broke out at airports and cities across the US against Trump’s anti-Muslim travel ban.

Since then, the mass hatred for Trump has only intensified. Recent polls show that his approval rating is the lowest for any modern president after one year in office. Large majorities consider him a racist and oppose his foreign policy and his policies on health care and immigration.

Trump won the 2016 elections by taking advantage of disgust with the Democrats after eight years of Barack Obama and hatred for Wall Street’s favored candidate, Hillary Clinton. He exploited the anger over rising inequality and the destruction of jobs and living standards that Clinton ignored.

But one year later, all the causes of popular outrage persist. The past year has seen a series of hurricanes, wildfires and other disasters—Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, California—that have exposed the collapse of basic infrastructure. Major indices of social wellbeing—opioid deaths, life expectancy, infant mortality, hunger, homelessness—all show a deepening of the disaster confronting working people and youth.

The plundering of society by the financial oligarchy has proceeded apace. Even before the impact of Trump’s tax cut for the rich, America’s 159

billionaires added \$315 billion to their combined wealth in 2017, bringing their collective net worth to \$2 trillion. Trump’s major achievement since taking office has been a 31 percent rise in the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

Nevertheless, the Trump administration has survived its first year and implemented large parts of its reactionary economic and social agenda. There are two basic reasons for this. First, despite bitter differences within the ruling class over foreign policy issues, Trump has largely retained the support of the financial-corporate elite on the basis of his economic policies.

But what has kept him in power more than anything else is the suppression of popular opposition by the Democratic Party. The Democrats have spent the entire year sabotaging resistance to Trump and working to divert it along reactionary, pro-war lines.

The Democrats’ neo-McCarthyite anti-Russia campaign has been aimed at preventing any retreat from the belligerent anti-Russia policies of the Obama administration and demanding a more aggressive war in Syria. It has borne fruit in the administration’s announcement this week of a permanent US troop presence in Syria and de facto American control over a large part of the country, a highly reckless escalation directed above all against Moscow.

The anti-Russia hysteria is combined with a crackdown on the Internet and an assault on free speech and oppositional views under the banner of fighting “fake news.” The Democrats have led the way in demanding that social media companies implement aggressive censorship protocols. Just this month, the Democrats supplied the votes needed to extend the government’s illegal mass surveillance programs.

These antidemocratic actions have been joined by the Democrats’ right-wing feminist #MeToo witch hunt,

which tramples on democratic principles such as due process and the presumption of innocence.

The Democrats' posture of opposition to Trump is shot through with deceit and hypocrisy. Whatever their tactical differences over foreign policy, they support the anti-working class social and economic policies of the administration. They back the lifting of regulations on corporations and the banks. They say nothing about the imposition of work requirements and fees on Medicaid recipients. They made sure the tax cut for corporations and the rich would pass, refusing to call a single demonstration to mobilize the broad popular opposition to the measure. The huge increase in budget deficits will be used, as the Democrats well know, as a pretext to lay siege to Medicare and Social Security.

Now the Democrats are collaborating with Trump and the Republicans to build Trump's wall and further militarize the US-Mexico border, while carrying out historic attacks on legal immigration.

This year, an election year, will no doubt witness yet another campaign by sections of the media and the pseudo-left organizations that orbit the Democratic Party to elect Democrats as the supposed alternative to the Republicans. What a fraud!

The lesson of the past year is that the fight against Trump is at the same time a fight against the Democratic Party. It can develop only based on an independent social and political movement of the working class.

Social opposition in the US will continue to grow in the course of the new year, just as it is growing across Europe and internationally. Already, 2018 has seen an outbreak of working-class protests in Iran, social upheavals in Tunisia, wildcat auto strikes in Romania and strikes by metal workers and rail workers in Germany and Britain.

This growing movement of the working class requires a conscious program—a socialist program directed against the source of war, social inequality and repression—the capitalist system.

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