

Trump continues assault on democratic norms at Republican convention

By Barry Grey
26 August 2020

The second day of the Republican National Convention continued the fascistic politics that dominated the opening session on Monday.

The event marks the evolution of one of the two major parties of American capitalism into an instrument for the development of a personalist and authoritarian movement around the figure of the “leader,” Donald Trump, with increasingly fascistic characteristics. Monday’s open appeals to racism and xenophobia in the name of defending “Western civilization” against the supposed “socialist” campaign of Democratic right-wingers Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were joined on Tuesday with belligerent calls to confront Beijing and the Chinese Communist Party.

The convention has dispensed with the traditional trappings of democracy, effacing any distinction between the office of president and Trump’s reelection campaign. The Republicans even decided to forgo the formality of adopting a platform to present to the electorate, instead merely declaring its “strong support” for Trump.

Trump family members are being paraded before the TV cameras, joining dozens of other nonentities in a degrading spectacle of ignorance and political reaction. Monday night featured Donald Trump, Jr. Day two included his brother and sister, Eric and Tiffany, and First Lady Melania Trump.

Trump used the White House as the backdrop for a video showing him pardoning a convicted bank robber and a separate ceremony granting naturalization papers to a group of immigrants. He plans to give his acceptance speech Thursday night from the White House.

The overall result is something akin to a coronation.

The racist and anti-Semitic character of the forces being mobilized by Trump and the Republicans was underscored by the last-minute removal from Tuesday’s speakers list of Mary Ann Mendoza, a member of the Trump campaign advisory board. Her removal followed a *Daily Beast* report that earlier in the day she had retweeted and recommended a post by a QAnon conspiracy theorist citing *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and warning of a conspiracy headed by the Rothschilds to enslave and destroy all non-Jews.

This followed Monday’s appearance by Mark and Patricia McCloskey, the wealthy lawyers who emerged from their mansion in a gated St. Louis community in June to point a rifle and pistol at young people who were marching to a peaceful protest against police violence outside the mayor’s home in the same community. Mark McCloskey claimed he and his wife acted to defend their home “as a mob of protesters descended on our neighborhood.”

In an overt appeal to racism, his wife declared, “They’re not satisfied with spreading the violence and chaos into our communities, they want to abolish the suburbs altogether, by ending single-family home zoning. This forced rezoning would bring crime, lawlessness and low-quality apartments into now thriving suburban neighborhoods... So, make no mistake, no matter where you live, your family will not be safe in the radical Democrats’ America.”

The featured speaker on Tuesday was Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, whose remarks were taped Monday following a meeting in Jerusalem with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Pompeo’s appearance was a break with a longstanding protocol of American politics requiring the chief foreign policy officer to avoid involvement in partisan politics. It was in keeping with the reshaping of the Republican Party and the movement toward a presidential dictatorship based on the military, the police and far-right paramilitary forces.

In his meeting with Netanyahu, Pompeo discussed stepping up the two countries’ joint attacks on Iran and countering the growing influence of China in the region. Following the meeting, Pompeo said they had discussed “the challenge that the Chinese Communist Party presents to the entire world.”

In his remarks to the convention, Pompeo praised Trump for “pulling back the curtain on the predatory aggression of the Chinese Communist Party.” He repeated the lie, now a Trump administration mantra, that China was guilty of a coverup that caused the global spread of the coronavirus. He hailed Washington’s withdrawal from the INF Treaty with Russia and arming of Ukraine, the scrapping of the nuclear

deal with Iran, the assassinations of ISIS leader al-Baghdadi and Iranian General Soleimani, the transfer of the US embassy to Jerusalem, and this month's peace deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, directed in the first place against Iran.

On Tuesday morning, Trump's Secretary of Defense Mark Esper published a column in the *Wall Street Journal* headlined "The Pentagon Is Prepared for China." In part responding to attacks on Trump's foreign policy record by the Democrats and a long list of Republican former military, intelligence and foreign policy officials who are supporting Biden, Esper penned a belligerent piece that defined the People's Liberation Army (PLA) as the instrument of the Chinese Communist Party.

Citing the 2018 National Defense Strategy, which announced a shift in the central focus of the US military from the "war on terror" to "great power" competition with China and Russia, Esper said that Washington was countering China's plans to upgrade the PLA by strengthening its military coordination with Australia, Japan and other nations in the Indo-Pacific region.

Accusing the Chinese Communist Party of seeking to "coerce other countries and impede their sovereignty," Esper wrote, "First and foremost, long-term competition with China demands that we have a force that is able to compete, deter and win across all domains: air, land, sea, space and cyberspace."

The drive both to war abroad and dictatorship at home is rooted in an unprecedented crisis of American capitalism. The coronavirus pandemic has triggered a public health catastrophe and economic collapse, with infections in the US racing toward six million and deaths toward 200,000, unemployment at 30 million and millions of Americans facing hunger and homelessness.

The sheer incompetence, callousness and indifference to death on the part of the government, including both parties, and the ruling class as a whole have exposed the failure of the capitalist system. Notwithstanding their criticisms of Trump's handling of the pandemic, the Democrats have joined in carrying out the basic policies demanded by Wall Street, beginning with the multitrillion-dollar bailout of the financial oligarchs in March and continuing with the homicidal campaigns to force workers back onto the job and teachers and students back into the schools, without any protection against the raging pandemic.

Trump speaks for those sections of the ruling class and the state that seek to create a fascist movement to suppress social opposition by brute force. The Democrats appeal for support not to the working class that is being impoverished, but to the CIA, the military, Wall Street and the foreign policy establishment. Both camps support new and more

disastrous wars, differing mainly on which nations to target first. Both are petrified by the growth of working-class opposition and desperate to block and suppress it.

American democracy is collapsing, and whatever the outcome of the election, the working class will face mounting social attacks and attacks on democratic rights. The great danger does not lie in some inherent strength of the Trump camp. It is in crisis and its fascistic policies have the support of only a small fraction of the population, which is broadly moving to the left in opposition to capitalism.

The danger rather stems mainly from the dead weight of the Democratic Party and the efforts of the bulk of the media, the pro-corporate unions and the ex-radical organizations that orbit the Democrats to channel social opposition behind this right-wing party and its right-wing candidates. The Democrats are utterly feckless in responding to Trump, fearful of encouraging popular opposition by warning of his fascistic politics.

They devote their efforts to blocking and suppressing an independent movement of the working class against capitalism. They work tirelessly to split the working class by concealing the basic class divisions in society and instead defining all issues on the basis of race—a conflict between an irredeemably racist "white America" and "black America." In fact, the source of racism and discrimination is the capitalist system that they defend.

The working class needs not an electoral strategy to fight the pandemic, defend jobs and social rights, prevent the installation of a dictatorship and stop the drive to war, but rather a strategy based on the class struggle and guided by a revolutionary socialist program.

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