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United States:

Trump's slow coup? The crisis of bourgeois democracy

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Tens of thousands of Donald Trump supporters rallied in Washington, DC on November 14.

President Trump drove his motorcade through the marchers, expressing his support, on his way to Trump National golf course to play a round.

The mainly white crowd waved flags, sang the national anthem and called Democrat Joseph Biden's election to the presidency a "theft". Prominent signs read: "Stop the steal".

The march began at Freedom Plaza then headed towards the US Supreme Court. The protesters attacked "big media" for calling state elections for Biden. When a reporter pointed out to a demonstrator that the media called North Carolina for Trump, the reply was "that's different".

Welcomed by the crowd was domestic fascist group the Proud Boys and other white supremacists. A separate march by "Women for America First" also took place.

The protests were built on right-wing social media and by Fox News commentators. The theme was the "Million MAGA [Make America Great Again] March".

Trump has never accepted the rules, norms and traditions of office. The "Imperial Presidency" Richard Nixon sought but didn't attain in the 1970s is what Trump also seeks.

He continues to refuse to accept the results of the November 3 election. He says the popular vote and his apparent Electoral College loss to Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris, the first woman and Black person to win that position, was rigged.

The electoral system in the US is far from fully democratic, from the Electoral College down to the fact that there is no federal provision for how elections are conducted. These are left to the states, including who gets the right to vote. Each state has its own laws, which are set up to be dominated by politicians, who gerrymander electoral districts in their favour.

An international ranking of how democratic the 47 countries considered to be "democracies" are, puts the US at 46, just ahead of Albania.

The Constitution was written to keep power in the hands of the wealthy property owners and out of the hands of the common people.

The ruling class, nevertheless, understands that to rule the country means convincing working people they actually have the power, even if it is not true.

Pressuring the states

Every time the people rise up demanding change, the norm has been that a legal relief valve must be opened without threatening the rule of wealthy property owners.

Trump rejects that approach to ruling. He openly declares the only "real Americans" are those who support him.

Trump is using his mass base to pressure Republican state legislators, where they have the majority, not to approve certification of state electoral results.

Another path he is pursuing is legal challenges to the voting results in certain states. So far, not a single state court has upheld his bogus challenges. All 50 state electoral officials have declared the elections fair and no fraud has been found.

The government's own security officials released a report challenging Trump's charge of fraudulent election results. The New York Times reported: "A group of federal, state and local officials working with a Department of Homeland Security agency declared flatly that the election was the most secure in the nation's history."

The November 12 official statement of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) said: "When states have close elections, many will recount ballots. All of the states with close results in the 2020 presidential race have paper records of each vote, allowing the ability to go back and count each ballot if necessary.

"This is an added benefit for security and resilience. This process allows for the identification and correction of any mistakes or errors. There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised.

"Other security measures like pre-election testing, state certification of voting equipment, and the US Election Assistance Commission's (EAC) certification of voting equipment help to build additional confidence in the voting systems used in 2020."

[Update: Trump sacked CISA Director Christopher Krebs via Twitter on November 17.]

Trump still hopes one of his legal challenges gets approved and finds its way to the Supreme Court. He has said that his most recent appointee to the court, Amy Coney Barrett, will move to get him elected.

Soft coup?

Either legal path — having state legislatures overturn their state's election results and appoint enough Trump electors, or election by the Supreme Court — would amount to a legal coup.

Those who believe Trump will eventually recognise that Biden won have not been watching his career and his presidency.

Some left commentators are calling Trump's declarations and actions a "slow coup". This is not far-fetched. Almost all Republican Senators continue to back up Trump's claims that the election was stolen from him. The same is true of the members of his cabinet.

Tens of millions of his followers, backed up by more than 70 million votes, believe that the election was stolen from Trump. This puts great pressure on Republican politicians to back him.

A test for them will come if the states confirm the results and then the Electoral College, which will vote on December

14, votes to elect Biden.

As long as Trump continues to refuse to accept the results, the danger of a coup, legal or not, remains.

Another danger is that Biden becomes president, but Trump continues to not recognise the election. He has continued to play to his base, whose members feel stabbed in the back by "the establishment" and are enraged. He may remain in politics as the leader of this base, and use their grievances to move further to the right, in preparation for a future move.

Bourgeois democracy is much weaker than many believed. The facts — Biden has a majority of popular and electoral votes — are irrelevant to Trump.

The current system is facing deep fissures. It is too soon to know whether it will move toward open authoritarian rule or a new type of bourgeois democracy. Those who say everything will go back to the way it was are really just hoping it will.

Trump is serious about staying in or regaining power by any means necessary.

Mass response needed

There must be a mass response to stop him, whether he is in or out of office. As a beginning, that would mean a remobilisation of Black Lives Matter, Latinx, climate activists, women, and, hopefully, the labour movements.

They will face an obstacle in the Biden administration. The establishments of both capitalist parties fear mass actions, and seek to blunt them and/or use repression. Right now, that is evident in a fierce attack by the Democratic establishment against the progressive wing of the party, whose most public representatives have been Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

In particular, they say the latter's support for the demands of the BLM movement, such as defunding the police, cost establishment Democrats in losses in both the Senate and House. However, the opposite is true.

Sanders has noted that all but one progressive won re-election across the country and demands like Medicare for all are supported by a majority of voters.

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Source: [Green Left](#).

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