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By Joseph Kishore—SEP candidate for US president
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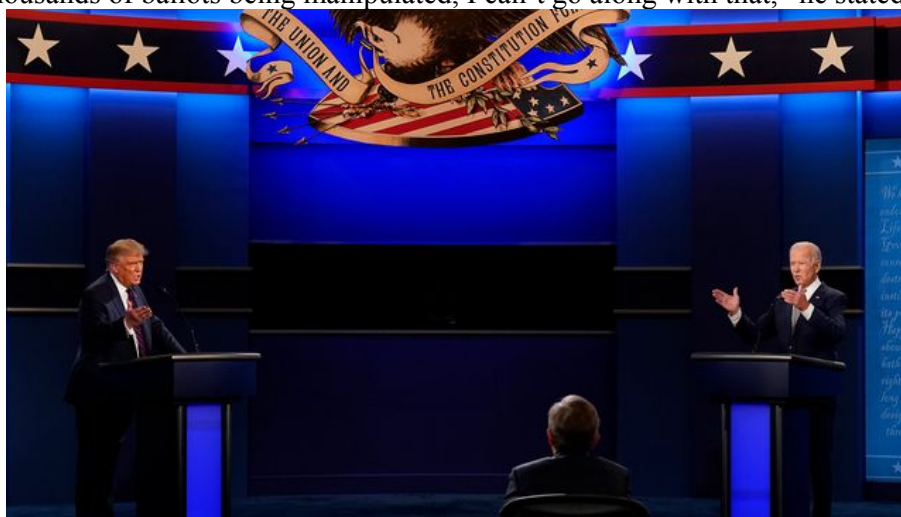
Trump uses debate to incite fascist violence

US President Donald Trump used the platform provided by Tuesday night's debate with Democratic candidate Joe Biden to incite fascist violence against voters and make clear that he would not accept the outcome of the election, now just over one month away.

Asked by Chris Wallace of Fox News whether he was willing "to condemn white supremacists and groups" who have instigated violence, Trump responded with a hysterical denunciation of socialism and left-wing politics and an open call for the extra-constitutional mobilization of paramilitary organizations. "Almost everything I see is from the left-wing," he proclaimed. "Not from the right-wing."

"Proud Boys, stand back and stand by," Trump said, referring to a fascist, racist and anti-Semitic organization that has terrorized protests against police violence throughout the country with armed patrols. "I'll tell you what," Trump added, "Somebody has to do something about Antifa and the left. This is not a right-wing problem. This is left-wing."

Trump concluded the debate by renewing his call for supporters—that is, right-wing vigilante organizations—to monitor polling places and not accept the results of the election. "If I see tens of thousands of ballots being manipulated, I can't go along with that," he stated.



President Donald Trump and Democratic candidate former Vice President Joe Biden both speak during the first presidential debate. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)

As polls show he is heading for a massive defeat in the popular vote, Trump is not guided by any sort of conventional electoral strategy. He is inciting as much havoc as possible, using it to lay the foundations for a violent repudiation of the election results.

In the course of the debate, Trump repeated his declaration that the election would be characterized by “fraud like you’ve never seen” and that ballots were being thrown into rivers and destroyed. He added that he was “counting” on the Supreme Court to “look at the ballots” in the election, that is, that he sees the court as central in legitimizing a coup d’état.

This is the language of civil war. Trump is an out-and-out fascist who is conspiring to erect a presidential dictatorship. He is inciting violent reprisals against all those who would oppose him. If the debate made one thing clear, it is that he will not accept the outcome of the election.

The response of Biden epitomized the breakdown of the entire political system. He attempted to parry Trump’s hysterics with conventional responses whose effect was to downplay the obvious seriousness of Trump’s threats.

The Democrats have selected as their representative an aged reactionary who is unable to speak truthfully about anything. Biden’s only response to Trump’s threats of violence was to urge his supporters to vote, ignoring the fact that Trump is planning on repudiating the results. In response to the attempt by Trump to ram through the appointment to the Supreme Court of Amy Coney Barrett in an effort to pack the court ahead of a contested election, Biden declared, “I’m not opposed to the justice. She seems like a very fine person.”

The Democrats have already given up any effort to block Senate confirmation of Barrett. Biden did not even note that Barrett played a central role in the Supreme Court’s intervention in the 2000 election, which handed the presidency to George W. Bush.

In the face of Trump’s open declaration he would not accept the results of the election and calls for violence, Biden was anxious to express his commitment to accept the outcome of the ballot. “I will accept it,” Biden said, “and [Trump] will too... If it is me, in fact fine. If it is not me, I’ll support the outcome. And I will be a president not just for the Democrats; I’ll be a president for Democrats and Republicans too.”

Toward the end of the debate, when asked why voters should choose him over Trump, Biden seized on the opportunity to attack Trump for being weak on Russia, the central theme of the Democrats’ opposition to Trump for the past four years: “I’ve gone head to head with Putin and made clear we aren’t going to take any of his stuff,” Biden said. “He’s Putin’s puppy.”

As Trump attempts to transform the election into a coup d’état, the Democrats’ overriding concern is to prevent any popular mobilization that would threaten the interests of Wall Street and the geopolitical imperatives of American imperialism.

What happened Tuesday night was not so much a debate. It was a portrait of political degeneration. What is playing out in real time is the collapse of American democracy under all the putrefaction and filth of American capitalism.

Trump’s diatribes set the tone for an event whose degrading character shocked even the media.

“That was the worst debate that I have ever seen,” one commenter on CNN said. “It wasn’t even a debate. It was a disgrace.” Others called it a “complete disaster on all fronts.”

The debased character of Tuesday night’s spectacle was clear to everyone, and much commented on. But what is being avoided in the media is the clear political import of what is in fact unfolding. Trump is seeking to establish a presidential dictatorship, and the White House is now the political nerve center of a conspiracy to carry out a coup d’état.

One statement by Trump on Tuesday night will prove to be true: “This will not end well.” No, it certainly will not. This crisis is not going to be resolved on election day, and will not be resolved in any conventional manner.

Against the backdrop of the pandemic, which has already killed 200,000 people, what is required is a mass political mobilization of the population to defend its social and democratic rights.

In the final analysis, Trump speaks for the most ruthless section of the financial oligarchy, determined to protect its wealth at any cost. What is exposed, however, is not just Trump. Tuesday's filthy spectacle is a portrait of American capitalism and its political system. Decades of growing inequality and endless war, vastly accelerated by the coronavirus pandemic, have vomited up the political underworld.

Workers and young people must wake up to the gravity of the political situation. They must break free of the stranglehold of the Democratic Party, which fears the mobilization of popular opposition to capitalism much more than it fears the imposition of a fascistic dictatorship under Trump.

The American ruling class has forfeited its right to rule. The only thing that people should be thinking about after Tuesday night is how to put an end to this dysfunctional system.

30 September 2020