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New York Times, Democratic Party seek to smother the struggle against Trump



Thousands protested against oligarchy and fascism in Oakland, California, April 5, 2025.

Just over 100 days into the Trump administration, there is mounting anger over the government's assault on immigrants, its sweeping attacks on workers and social programs and its efforts to establish a right-wing dictatorship in the United States. Trump's poll numbers are falling sharply, and recent weeks have seen demonstrations involving millions of people in cities throughout the United States.

The response of the Democratic Party is to smother this opposition and prevent it from challenging the domination of the corporate-financial oligarchy and the two-party system, through which the ruling class carries out its policies of imperialist war and social reaction.

This perspective was clearly articulated by the *New York Times*, speaking for the Democrats, in its lead editorial published on May 1, under the headline, "Fight Like Our Democracy

Depends on It.” While purporting to lay out a strategy for opposing Trump, the editorial is primarily concerned with the dangers posed by a mass anti-Trump movement.

It is necessary, the *Times* writes, to develop a “patriotic response” to the Trump administration. This opposition must be developed “soberly and strategically, not reflexively or performatively.” The editorial cautions against “maximalist” opposition, which might “prioritize emotion over effectiveness.”

By a “patriotic” and non-“maximalist” opposition to Trump, the *Times* means an opposition that is based on support for American imperialism and the profit interests of the gigantic corporations. And behind the concern over “emotion” lies a deep and abiding fear of explosive social opposition, above all, from the working class.

Thus the *Times* calls for a

coalition of Americans who disagree about many other subjects—who span conservative and progressive, internationalist and isolationist, religious and secular, business-friendly and labor-friendly, pro-immigration and restrictionist, laissez-faire and pro-government, pro-life and pro-choice—yet who believe that these subjects must be decided through democratic debate and constitutional processes rather than the dictates of a single man.

What the *Times* is proposing is a political alliance between factions of the capitalist class as a bulwark against growing social anger and opposition. In any such “coalition,” it is the far right that will set the political agenda. There must be no fight to defend jobs, living standards and democratic rights because such struggles would risk “sending conservatives back into Mr. Trump’s camp.”

After outlining the right-wing basis of its “coalition,” the editorial declares that it must “start with an acknowledgment that Mr. Trump is the legitimate president and many of his actions are legal. Some may even prove effective.”

Never mind that Trump sought to overthrow the Constitution in a fascist coup and is presently erecting the apparatus of a police state in the United States. His “legitimacy” cannot be questioned because this would call into question the legitimacy of the capitalist state. And heaven forbid anyone resort to “maximalism” against the fascist threat!

As for what policies it considers “effective,” the *Times* goes on to describe Trump’s anti-immigrant measures as “legal and popular”—a lie on both fronts that tacitly accepts the mass roundups, detentions and deportations now underway, including the deportation of children and the arrest of immigrant students who speak out against genocide.

When it details the policies upon which it is necessary to oppose Trump, the *Times* outlines the concerns of factions of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus. The

newspaper cites Trump's "cozying up to Vladimir Putin of Russia and undermining Ukraine," his "chaotic tariffs," his sowing "doubt about the dollar and the Federal Reserve's independence."

The editorial says nothing about the massive cuts in social spending being prepared by the White House and the Republican Congress, including an assault on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, because this is a consensus policy of the US ruling elite as a whole: Working people must pay for the explosive growth of military spending, the bailout of the super-rich and the trillions of dollars in debt.

In the lengthy commentary, there is no mention of the socio-economic structure of the United States which has given rise to Trump and his fascist administration: "Oligarchy" and "billionaires" are words that do not appear in the *Times* editorial. There is no mention of the mass protests of millions of working people and youth on April 5, April 19 and May 1 against the policies of Trump.

Instead, the editors instruct the opposition to Trump to mind its manners and not drive the right wing back into the arms of the would-be dictator, while they hail university administrators—who carried out widespread repression against anti-genocide protesters—as a model of "principled opposition."

It is precisely the basic class issues that the *Times* seeks to suppress with its portrayal of the threat to democracy emerging from "the dictates of a single man," Donald Trump (while hailing previous war criminals in the White House, from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush to Barack Obama to Joe Biden, as democratic stalwarts).

To anyone who might want to carry out a serious fight against the efforts to establish a fascist dictatorship in the United States, the *Times* urges: Just stay calm, rely on the courts to curb Trump's worst excesses, and vote for the Democrats in the handful of state elections this year and in the congressional elections now set for November 2026. That assumes elections will still be held in America by then, rather than gunpoint plebiscites overseen by the military, immigration agents and fascist Republican thugs.

In their appeals against "reflexive" opposition to Trump, the *Times* is articulating the perspective of the leading faction of the Democratic Party, represented by the congressional leadership and most state governors. Earlier this week, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer—a Democrat whose name is often floated as a potential future presidential candidate—appeared at an event with Trump to jointly celebrate a new military initiative.

Less than five years after Trump-aligned fascists plotted her kidnapping, Whitmer smiled and shook Trump's hand as they announced the "recapitalization" of Selfridge Air Force Base, which will now host a fleet of F-15 fighter jets.

Speaking at the event in military fatigues, Whitmer declared:

I am really damn happy we are here to celebrate this recapitalization. ... It's crucial for the Michigan economy, for our homeland security, and our future.

This groveling before the fascist-in-chief is a reflection of the Democrats' role as co-managers of the war drive and co-conspirators in the social counterrevolution.

As the WSWS remarked two months ago, as the Democrats were seeking to divert opposition to Trump behind anti-Russia warmongering:

There exist two fundamentally different forms of opposition to the Trump administration. There is the growing opposition of the working class to his attacks on bedrock social programs, his destruction of democratic rights, his persecution of immigrants and his support for the Gaza genocide. And there is the opposition of significant sections of the ruling class, which are opposed to Trump's foreign policy shifts, particularly on Ukraine.

Genuine opposition to the Trump administration, dictatorship and fascism can only be waged in intransigent opposition to the Democratic Party. This includes, one must add, figures like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who use different rhetoric, talking about "oligarchy," while directing all opposition behind the Democratic Party, a party of oligarchy and imperialism.

The only viable path forward is through the development of a politically independent movement of the working class, armed with a socialist and internationalist program. Such a movement must reject the fraudulent "unity" peddled by the *Times* and instead base itself on the class interests of workers, students and youth—against capitalism, against war and against dictatorship.

This Saturday, the International Committee of the Fourth International is holding its annual International May Day Online Rally, uniting workers around the world in a common struggle for socialism. We urge all those who wish to seriously oppose Trump—not just as a man but as the embodiment of a diseased political and economic order—to attend this rally and take up the fight for a revolutionary alternative.