

4 years after failed January 6 coup: Trump prepares return to power

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Today, January 6, 2025, the US Congress will certify the victory of Donald Trump in the 2024 presidential election, the final procedural step before the fascist ex-president returns to the White House on Inauguration Day, January 20.

Democrats and Republicans in Congress will near-unanimously certify Trump's victory, at a formal ceremony presided over by Vice President Kamala Harris, Trump's defeated opponent in the election, on the fourth anniversary of the failed coup attempt of January 6, 2021.

On that day, forever etched into American history, a president defeated at the polls incited a violent rebellion to stay in office in defiance of the votes of the American people. This was not a spontaneous protest but a coordinated effort to kidnap and kill Trump's political opponents, disrupt the certification of electoral votes and impose Trump as an unelected dictator.

The coup failed, not because of any resistance from Biden and the Democrats but because of the inexperience and incompetence of his would-be storm troopers in militias like the Proud Boys and Oathkeepers.

When his Nazi party staged an abortive coup in Munich, the "beer hall putsch" in 1923, it took Adolf Hitler 10 years to recover from the failure and rise to power. In January 1933, he was the chancellor chosen by the capitalist class to destroy the organizations of the powerful German working class and establish the fascist dictatorship that went on to launch World War II and perpetrate the Holocaust and other genocidal crimes.

Trump has required only four years to move from political humiliation and disgrace to returning to power as the unchallenged leader of a Republican Party that controls both houses of Congress, the Supreme Court and now the executive branch.

This debacle for American democracy is not due to superiority on the part of Trump in cunning, ruthlessness or political foresight. The American fascist leader owes his rapid recovery entirely to the spinelessness of his nominal opposition—the capitalist Democratic Party, and its servants

in the trade unions, as well as the pseudo-left groups like the Democratic Socialists of America, which masquerade as socialist while providing a "left" fig leaf for the Democrats.

The Democratic Party has paved the way for Trump's reentry into the White House. During its four years in office, the Biden administration protected Trump from any serious effort to hold him accountable for the failed coup. Instead, he has been given the opportunity to assemble the personnel and political base to carry out a far more consistent and brutal onslaught on the democratic rights and social gains of the working class.

Throughout this period, the main priority of Biden and the Democrats has been to fuel the fires of imperialist war around the world: particularly by provoking war against Russia in Ukraine, but also in arming Israel and enabling its genocidal rampage in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon, and in building up US military power in the Indo-Pacific region, in preparation for war against China.

To obtain bipartisan support for this program of imperialist world war, Biden has repeatedly declared his desire to maintain a strong Republican Party, even as the Republicans rallied to Trump and his fascistic denunciations of the "stolen election" of 2020 and his threats of political retribution if he returned to power in 2024.

Biden pursued a bipartisan socio-economic agenda that has left the vast majority of working people worse off economically than they were even under Trump—thanks to rampant inflation, wage suppression and social cuts—thus creating the political basis for Trump to win in 2024, not merely with an Electoral College majority but with the largest share of the popular vote.

Trump will use the staggering powers of the presidential office for dictatorial purposes, beginning, as he has repeatedly threatened, with the issuance of executive orders to round up and imprison millions of immigrants and their families, including American citizen children, and carry out mass deportations on a scale not seen in American history.

Within the ruling elite, the opposition to Trump will only arise in the form of conspiracies on the part of the military-

intelligence apparatus, in the event that Trump's political priorities come into conflict with the global policy of aggression being pursued by American imperialism. Not one prominent Democrat has stood up and said he or she was opposed to any collaboration with Trump because he is a political gangster who has already once sought to overthrow the Constitution and is the enemy of the democratic rights of the American people.

They have all followed in the footsteps of President Biden, who welcomed Trump to the White House after his victory on November 5 and promised the "smoothest transition" in history to the presidency of a man whom only a few days before he had been denouncing as a fascist.

It is revealing that the week which will begin with Kamala Harris presiding over the congressional certification of Trump's election victory will end with a Manhattan judge sentencing Trump on 34 counts of filing fraudulent business documents to cover up his payment of hush money to a porn star. Even by the standards of American capitalism, in which billionaires ordinarily get away with anything, Trump is a convicted felon.

Those who will certify Trump's election Monday include nearly 150 Republican members of Congress, both senators and representatives, who voted against certifying Biden's larger victory in 2020, even after they had been forced to flee the Capitol by the mob assembled and instigated by Trump.

Trump himself has made clear that one of his first acts upon returning to office will be to pardon the lower-level foot soldiers who have faced prosecution for their actions that day. One rioter recently laughed in the face of the judge who handed down a jail sentence against him, confidently predicting that Trump would pardon him.

What happened on January 6 was not an aberration. As the WSWS New Year Statement explains:

The re-election of the would-be American Führer demonstrates that his initial victory in 2016, and for that matter the January 6, 2021, attempted coup d'état, were not aberrations, but rather expressions of a fundamental realignment of politics in the United States and throughout the world.

The Democratic Party's response to January 6 and Trump's re-election is a testament to its impotence and complicity.

On the third anniversary of the coup, just after announcing his 2024 re-election campaign, President Joe Biden declared that the attackers had "held a dagger at the throat of

American democracy." Yet less than a year later, after Trump's re-election, Biden and leading Democrats rushed to proclaim their willingness to collaborate with the incoming administration.

In interviews on the Sunday morning talk shows, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, newly sworn-in Senator Adam Schiff, a former member of the House special investigation into January 6, 2021, and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi all downplayed the prospect of political repression and violent assaults on democratic rights under a second Trump administration.

Schumer said he would seek bipartisan agreement where possible. Schiff deplored the possibility of pardons for the 2021 attackers, presenting it as an affront to the Capitol Police who were injured in the violence, and would "send a terrible message about our democracy." Pelosi, whose own husband was violently attacked and nearly killed by a pro-Trump assailant in 2022, said only that Trump's continued focus on the supposed theft of the 2020 election "is really sad."

After observing, "it's really a strange person who's going to be president of the United States who thinks that it's OK to pardon people who were engaged in an attack," Pelosi went on to agree with the suggestion that those convicted only of trespassing into the Capitol, rather than violent assault on the police, could perhaps be pardoned.

The Democrats' refusal to oppose Trump expresses the fundamental class character of this party, one of the two main political instruments of the capitalist ruling elite. Their overriding fear is not of Trump but of the emergence of an independent, politically radicalized working class.

The working class, mobilized against both capitalist parties and organized on the basis of a socialist program, is the only force capable of defending democratic rights.



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