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January 6 Events in the United States

Counterrevolution Within the Counterrevolution

- *Pauline Easton* -



Given the evidence available at this time, what took place at the Capitol building in Washington, DC on January 6 is a counterrevolution within the counterrevolution. It becomes increasingly evident that President Donald Trump staged a coup to keep the presidency in his own hands but this failed due to the defection of Vice President Mike Pence followed by others. Furthermore, due to the way things unfolded with the images of destruction, intimidation and hooliganism within the Capital building, Senate Chamber and House Speaker Pelosi's office broadcast across the world, Trump could not maintain the military united behind him either. The failed coup was then used by President-Elect Joe Biden, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and others in an effort to unite the federal policing and military bureaucracies behind Biden to preserve the union and avert civil war. Pence and other Republicans, including those like Senator Ted Cruz who stuck to their stand of questioning the validity of the election, disassociated themselves from the violence and Trump and have moved to preserve their own careers and the Republican Party to fight another day.

Biden has deliberately called the rampage which took place at the Capitol, an insurrection. Social media footage is revealing the extent of the damage caused by the rampage. Five people died, including a protestor killed by police and a policeman who was bludgeoned while on duty. It was certainly no small matter but how does calling it an insurrection account for the President of the United States assaulting Congress?



Donald Trump received some 73 million votes in the election, to Biden's 81 million votes. This is thus more than a criminal "mob" or armed militia on a rampage. When Biden calls it an "insurrection," he does not define what that is or what makes it so, or the consequences. He is defining his presidency as the one which will restore law and order and the values the U.S. stands for, which is exactly what Trump says. Furthermore, many in the top echelons of the Democratic Party and media who have long despised Donald Trump are calling for retribution through impeachment.

The FBI are identifying those who broke the law, with federal charges to date limited to 15 people, for "violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds" and "intent to impede government business." About 40 others face lesser charges of unlawful entry and curfew violations. Interestingly, despite a Trump executive order imposing a mandatory 10-year sentence for any action that "destroys, damages, vandalizes, or desecrates" government property, no such charges are being made. The indication is that the FBI, like those in Congress, are not yet pursuing more serious charges, including those of insurrection or sedition. This is likely part of an effort to lessen conflicts among the ruling factions and avert violent civil war.

The word rampage describes violent or excited behaviour that is reckless, uncontrolled, or destructive; a state of violent anger or agitation. In a limited way it seems to aptly describe what took place on January 6. The reason we call it a counterrevolution within the counterrevolution is because we are not just dealing with two sides -- one side which engaged in an insurrection and another which defends democracy. The whole picture is greater than the sum of its parts which cannot be aggregated in any case.

The counterrevolution against the standards and levels societies had hitherto achieved in the post-World War II period got underway under U.S. President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) when they unleashed neo-conservatism and claims that there is no society, just families, family values and individual right. This put the

nail in the coffin of social welfare states and their institutions and organizations and set the course to restructure the state to eliminate any vestiges of public right, the public good or public authority. It was accompanied by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the counterrevolution initiated there by Mikhail Gorbachev in the name of *glasnost* and *perestroika* -- openness and restructuring. Counterrevolution and retrogression took place in quick succession in the former peoples' democracies of eastern Europe (1989-1990) and the Soviet Union itself collapsed in 1991. An anti-social offensive and retrogression became the consequence of counterrevolution and capitalist restoration in those countries. In the U.S., Britain, countries of western Europe, Canada and others the trappings of the social welfare state were dismantled in favour of rule by decree. An anti-social offensive and retrogression also occurred and continues, often using justifications to pay the rich.



In the U.S., the military-industrial complex that emerged after World War II and further developed in this period is the merger of the military-industrial complex with the public authority. There is a war government, with the development of massive military and federal policing bureaucracies. Private interests are increasingly taking over government functions and institutions. Notions of serving the public good are eliminated. This is part of the counterrevolution of the period. It also means

the problem of uniting the military and policing bureaucracies as part of preserving the union and preventing civil war takes on great significance.

The concerted assault by the rulers on U.S. institutions of democratic governance was further advanced with the election of Bill Clinton on a platform of change in 1992. Ronald Reagan introduced a direction for the economy to pay the rich. This included the war profiteers and energy moguls. The Soviet Union's collapse unleashed the U.S. imperialist striving for world domination. By the time Clinton came to power this policy was well entrenched.

Clinton defeated George H.W. Bush who had launched the first Iraq war with the stated intent to remove "a regime that developed and used weapons of mass destruction, that harboured and supported terrorists, committed outrageous human rights abuses, and defied the just demands of the United Nations and the world." This and subsequent wars were no longer politics through other means which would eventually be settled through negotiations and peace accords. They became desperate efforts to bring spheres of interest under U.S. control and, failing ready submission through bribery, threats and killer sanctions, then by means of wars of destruction. This policy abroad has been combined with increasing repression at home, including a massive prison and detention apparatus and efforts to split the polity on the basis of race, religion or gender to impede the people uniting in action to achieve their own empowerment.

The assault on the democratic institutions has led to the destruction of the political parties which have become cartels and operate as coalitions. They spend billions and engage in disinformation to control the police powers of the presidency and other positions of power. The Congress has consequently also degenerated, as have elections, with neither serving to unite the massive military bureaucracy and contending factions vying for



power, with wars no longer serving that purpose. Now we are witnessing one wing of government, the presidency, attacking another, Congress, for purposes of strengthening executive power. Biden, in speaking about the events, has not defended Congress as a legislative body with powers. He says how he, as President, will restore law and order, not permit the Justice Department to act like his personal law firm, and the like. The aim is to further strengthen the Office of the President and his ability to use police powers. It is not to provide the change demanded by the people for rights and empowerment but rather to further the counterrevolution against the people.

It shows that narrow private interests have seized control of the decision-making powers at both the federal and state levels. Since Clinton's presidency and call for change, change which favours the people has been the casualty in the U.S. One president after another has perfected the use of police powers, using the office of the president to surpass the bounds of all hitherto permitted conduct. With 9/11 President George W. Bush declared a permanent state of exception following which justifications for violating civil liberties have become the norm. Torture, wars of aggression and killer sanctions go hand in hand with the perpetuation of police killings with impunity, mainly of Black people, the inhuman treatment of refugees, undocumented workers, immigrants and children, the incarceration of ever-larger numbers of people who are criminalized as a matter of course, along with other crimes the U.S. regularly commits. The entire Department of Homeland Security is established with its massive police forces and bureaucracy, all for purposes of repression and impunity to use force. Only those who seek to appease the U.S. imperialists repeat the mantra that the United States is a democracy or a civil society with democratic institutions.

For 30 years, all of this has constituted a counterrevolution whose results can be seen in the state of the U.S. economy, the private health care and insurance systems and inability to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic (with one death for every 1,000 people), the length of the food lines, the treatment of veterans, seniors, the homeless, women and children, besides Blacks, Puerto Ricans, peoples of the Americas and Asians as well as the violations of the inherent rights of Indigenous nations. Now, there is a crisis of confidence in U.S. governing institutions. The many millions who voted for Trump as well as those voting for Biden are angry with government failures and express their lack of confidence that problems will be solved in their favour.

The crisis of confidence in U.S. governing institutions means that the vast majority of people are angry and not in agreement with the direction of the country. Some 20 million held protests for more than 100 days after George Floyd was killed, all viciously attacked by police forces. Many millions more supported these actions, as they had previously joined and supported demonstrations defending immigrants and refugees and their children. There is a drive among the people to have control over policing, budgets and for a new direction for the economy and politics, which will no doubt continue.

The counterrevolutionary forces organized this rampage on the Capitol building on January 6, including using armed militias, to try and subvert this drive and divide the people. The failed coup attempt on the part of Donald Trump and his attack on Congress is a counterrevolution within the counterrevolution which has now unleashed a wave of revenge-seeking among the rulers, which will polarize their factions even further.

None of their efforts, including those by Biden, will unite the federal policing and military bureaucracies, let alone the people of the United States, or solve a single problem facing the U.S. democracy still touted as the greatest in the world. Only a modern nation-building project will set the United States on a course which can unite the people behind a common cause. Led by the U.S. working class, such a project requires that the democratic renewal of the political decision-making process be put at the centre of its concern. It must strive to bring into being a government and institutions of governance which have a modern democratic anti-war

personality and respect the sovereignty and equality of the peoples of the world. A modern constitution is required to replace all remnants of the present constitution which was a compromise with slavery and maintains the rule of the propertied elite and institutions which favour narrow private interests over the masses of the people.

(With files from Voice of Revolution, the Hardial Bains Resource Centre and TML Archives. Photos: T. Jane, W. Jennings)

What Is Relevant and What Is Not

- Kathleen Chandler -



Looking at what took place at the Congress in Washington, DC on January 6, there appears to be both a failed coup on the part of U.S. President Donald Trump and an effort by President-Elect Joe Biden to use the events to further strengthen the presidency by uniting the federal policing and military bureaucracies behind him. Vice President Mike Pence and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi are acting as enablers in this effort. Pelosi for example, even though Trump is still Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. armed forces, has publicly said she is speaking with the military so they keep Trump from the "nuclear button," as it is called. This is an effort to line the military up behind Biden. We are witnessing a counterrevolution within the long-standing counterrevolution that has been ongoing since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

What took place was not Trump vs. democracy, as it is being portrayed, as Trump also said he was acting to save the Republic and its democracy. Rather it was the powers of the presidency vs. the powers of Congress. It is an effort to further weaken Congress, which already is dysfunctional and has conceded many of its powers, such as declaring war and getting significant legislation passed. All of the presidents since World War II have been increasing the strength and powers of the presidency against those of Congress. This greatly increased under Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama and has reached the point with Trump where a government of police powers has been consolidated. Such a government has little regard for legislation and laws and instead uses the Office to act with impunity, through use of force, executive orders, etc. This is evident at home and abroad, where Trump has repeatedly acted with impunity. Thus, crucial to understanding what took place is how the use of force was deployed -- both the initial absence of police forces and their subsequent deployment.

People in the U.S. and worldwide saw thousands of protesters carrying Trump and U.S. flags

and paraphernalia flood the steps of the Capitol building and go inside, relatively unimpeded, while Congress was in session to certify the Electoral College vote of the states. Despite the plan for rallies at the Capitol and White House being known and in fact permitted, there was an exceptionally small police presence.

Commonly for DC demonstrations there is a large police presence, with DC riot police lining the streets, and streets near the rally points blocked off. At the Capitol they would be present in lines two deep -- likely armed with automatic rifles -- with more and heavier barricades, police tanks, police on bicycles and horseback, a command centre, helicopters and so forth. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other federal forces from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are also usually present. All were absent at the time of the rally on January 6, even though both Houses of Congress were in session to certify the Electoral College vote -- something known to be in contention. The relatively small Capitol Police force (numbering about 2,000) had responsibility to protect all the Congresspeople inside as well as the building and other matters.



DC police, federal forces, and in this case the National Guard as well, could only be absent by design. A decision is made in advance by those with authority. All of the federal forces are put in action either by the president himself, or by the head of DHS and FBI, Trump appointees. For DC, the National Guard is also put in action by Trump, who for many hours blocked their deployment, and they were finally called for by Pence, not Trump. Orders go via the head of the Department of Defense who, in this case, *then* orders the Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy. McCarthy reported, "We are in close contact with local and federal law enforcement agencies to review potential additional support requirements for the DC National Guard." All of these federal forces can act, and commonly do, independent of the Capitol Police.

When the surge of Trump supporters breached the building, each House was in their chamber in the process of debating the vote from Arizona, which had been challenged by Senate and House members, led by Senators Ted Cruz of Texas and Josh Hawley of Missouri. Vice President Pence, as president of the Senate, was presiding over the Senate debate. Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris was also present. Both were quickly removed, likely by their own Secret Service details. Other representatives were escorted out, many resorting to the "doomsday" corridors -- the name referring to their intended use in the event of a nuclear attack. Others were trapped inside the House chamber or their offices with their staff. Video footage shows hundreds of protesters wandering the chambers and halls, occupying offices, taking selfies with police and seizing trophies. Still, reinforcements were nowhere to be seen.

Coup Attempt Unravels

Earlier that morning, thousands had rallied at the White House, where Trump spoke. He said those present were "American patriots ... committed to the honesty of our elections and the integrity of our glorious Republic... We will never give up. We will never concede." He called on Pence to act, saying "All Vice President Pence has to do is send it back to the States to recertify, and we become president." He told protesters "You have to show strength" and then urged everyone to march on the Capitol.

It is evident that to be successful, Trump needed the support of Pence and other Republicans,

who he also urged to not certify the vote, as well as the armed forces to not intervene. It is also evident that he and his cabinet provided conditions for the protesters to march on the Capitol and enter it and remain for several hours. The live test of support for the coup and a readiness to use force as Trump commands unravelled throughout the day, beginning with Pence declaring he could not use his position in the Senate to call the election in Trump's favour, following which various defections took place of those who, instead of supporting Trump, joined Biden in calling on the President to re-establish order. This included Chad Wolf, head of DHS, and National Security Adviser O'Brien, as well as Senator Cruz and more and more Congresspeople. O'Brien said, speaking of the protesters, "Violence has absolutely no place in our democracy. Our country is better than what we saw today at our Capitol."

The Governor of Texas and the Texas District Attorney, both major backers of Trump's efforts to overturn the elections, also opposed. Former President George W. Bush represented the views of many elected officials saying, "This is how election results are disputed in a banana republic, not our democratic republic. I am appalled by the reckless behaviour of some political leaders since the election and by the lack of respect shown today for our institutions, our traditions and our law enforcement." He emphasized that it is the "fundamental responsibility of every patriotic citizen to support the rule of law."

Texas has significance in that the Governor has sizable policing forces of his own and it is considered the tenth largest economy in the world. The Bush family still has significant influence. For Bush, the Governor and Senator Cruz to oppose Trump's action, alongside Wolf of DHS, meant Trump could not succeed. The facts would indicate that the military began coordinating with Pence. Acting Defense Secretary Miller said, "Chairman Milley [of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] and I just spoke separately with the Vice President and with Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Senator Schumer and Representative Hoyer about the situation at the U.S. Capitol. [...] We have fully activated the DC National Guard to assist federal and local law enforcement as they work to peacefully address the situation."

For any coup effort, the monopoly on the use of force is essential. Trump made use of this and attempted to stage the coup with the backing of the military and DHS, who coordinated with the DC police, who follow federal commands in these situations. DC police are not the ones in charge. This was evident when Police Chief Robert Contee spoke hours after protesters were inside, with Army Secretary McCarthy also present. As well, Contee reported that the DC police responded to federal requests for support. That indicates the same federal forces told them support was not initially needed.

The Demand to End All Police Violence and Put Control in the People's Hands

There is a deliberate effort to promote the problem with policing as a double standard by police. Media repeatedly showed pictures of the National Guard in full military gear guarding the Lincoln monument during protests against police killings and impunity over the summer, along with shots of tear gas and other state violence being used against Black Lives Matter protesters and their allies. They also kept repeating that the police were "caught by surprise" and were "unprepared" while others said they should not have been unprepared given foreknowledge of the rally.

This approach to the problem of double standards ignores that the key problem is the monopoly on the use of force by state authorities to act or not act -- and do both with impunity. While the people's movement for justice is opposed to police impunity, the problem of police violence is not that pro-Trump protesters should be treated with the same violence as those fighting for justice.

There was a double standard evident with racist police violence against resistance over the summer. Indeed, there is a double standard whenever the state is protecting private interests while repressing those resisting, whether African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Indigenous peoples, workers, women or youth. The answer is not "equal" use of more police state violence but an end to all such violence and control of policing and monopoly on the use of force, and to put decision-making power in the hands of the people themselves.

Crucial Issues of Who Decides and How Decision-Making Power Is Wielded

Increasing and ever more brutal use of police powers has characterized one presidency after another, culminating with the Trump presidency, which has gone beyond the pale for even his own supporters. What is at stake in the current situation is who decides and how the decision-making power is wielded. This is what is in dire crisis in the United States. That private propertied interests control the use of force and all the police powers that reside with the presidency is being systematically revealed.



It is notable that "both sides" -- Trump and the forces coming forward to oppose those involved in the rampage -- all claim to be defending the Constitution and put it forward as a solution to the present crisis. Far from it, the Constitution and all its governing arrangements are what have failed. U.S.-style democracy no longer functions to hold anyone or anything to account. This is more than evident with this immediate situation as well as government failures concerning COVID-19, widespread unemployment, growing poverty

and homelessness with more evictions and job losses coming. U.S. democracy does not and cannot provide for the rights of the people, including these most basic human rights to housing, health care and a livelihood. Solutions cannot lie with the governing arrangements that gave rise to the crisis in the first place and that guarantee inequality and a lack of control over decisions impacting the lives of the vast majority.

It is also worrisome that Trump and Biden both try to define who is and who is not a patriot. Such efforts in the U.S. have a long history as a means to target people fighting for rights as being "unAmerican" and unpatriotic, words often used as synonyms to describe a terrorist. Biden, like others, claims that what occurred is not "who we are." He says, "For nearly two-and-a-half centuries, we, the people, in search of a more perfect union, have kept our eyes on that common good. America is so much better than what we've seen today." The reality is that what everyone witnessed is exactly what the U.S. of the rich gives rise to. Throughout those two-and-a-half centuries there have always been two Americas contending -- that of the people against that of the owners of private property who have concentrated power in their hands. The Constitution is designed to keep these private interests in power. The people have repeatedly fought against enslavement and inequality and the "union" as defined by and for the propertied interests which have seized control over the monopoly on the use of force.

It is clear that once the attempted coup failed, Biden, Pence, Cruz and others in Congress sought to unify the contending forces within and between the Presidency and federal policing and military bureaucracies. This is necessary to preserve their "more perfect union" and is a problem Trump failed to solve during his presidency. The numerous calls for unity are part of this. Biden again reiterated his refrain that anything can be done if "we do it together." He is seeking not

only to unify the contending forces among the rich but also to bring those demanding equality and rights behind him. Nonetheless, the same problems will haunt his presidency which will provide further proof that the material conditions do not fall in line with the authority the rulers wish for.

While the vote was certified and Trump now says there will be a "peaceful transition," there is no basis to think the source of conflicts and dysfunction of the system has disappeared. The conflicts among the private interests exist as all have self-serving interests and have made clear that the "common good," or "public good," is not to stand in their way. Further, it cannot be said that the U.S. has been a "peaceful" force. There is instead a history of wars, genocide and aggression. There is a war government and war economy that cause grave harm and violence to the peoples at home and abroad. What does occur is the transfer of power from one president to the next, each more powerful than the last. Certainly the people are not accepting conditions where their rights are even further trampled and where more violence and wars threaten. Their striving is for a peace economy and anti-war government where the people decide.

Necessity for People's Empowerment

There is broad recognition that for change that favours the people to take place, all those responsible for creating the problems -- including Biden -- will not be capable of providing solutions. Social responsibility rests with the people as they step up their organizing efforts, within the many collectives fighting for rights and more broadly within society as a whole, to be political themselves by focusing on bringing into being a decision-making process which is independent of the obsolete liberal democratic institutions.



While Biden claims the next four years are about the "the restoration of democracy" -- that same failed democracy that is in tatters, the people fighting for rights are making clear that what is needed is a people's democracy, designed by the people themselves that empowers them to govern and decide. Empowerment and control over decisions is being taken up for solution, as collectives defending rights organize to themselves make collective decisions, implement them and together assess results. This struggle is altogether missing from the accounts of the January 6 events.

Let us continue to unite in action to identify the problems which we think require solutions and how to provide them with solutions!

(Photos: T. Jane, E. Herrera, J. Kam, UNN, VOR)

An Event that Lays the Groundwork for Increased Police Powers

- Anna Di Carlo -

Within minutes of the January 6 breach of the Capitol Building by protesters incited by Trump's claim that victory in the 2020 Presidential Election was stolen from him, there was a widespread

description of the event as an "insurrection" by media personalities and elected officials. This represents a departure from the normal vocabulary of the ruling elite to categorize protests in which violence erupts.

Incoming President Biden stated: "What we're seeing are a small number of extremists dedicated to lawlessness. This is not dissent. It's disorder. It's chaos. It borders on sedition, and it must end now." After asking Trump "to demand an end to this siege," he continued: "To storm the Capitol, to smash windows, to occupy offices, the floor of the United States Senate, rummaging through desks, on the Capitol, on the House of Representatives, threatening the safety of duly-elected officials. It's not protest. It's insurrection."

It has not been explained how this protest action amounted to an "insurrection" as opposed to the traditional terminology used, such as "violent protest" or "illegitimate protest," "mob action" "extremist terrorism" and so on, although all of these terms are also being used. It would seem that the distinguishing feature of the term "insurrection" is the storming of the Capitol, the over three-hour lock-down of the Capitol, offices being occupied and ransacked by protesters, and members of the Senate and the House of Representatives being forced to shelter.

This adoption of the term "insurrection" into the ruling elite's lexicon of protest categorization came just six days after the Brookings Institution published a report entitled "The *Insurrection Act* and Putting Troops on American Streets." Published on December 30, 2020, the report summarizes a July 2020 study by its Congressional Study Group on Foreign Relations and National Security in response to Trump calling in the National Guard and threatening to deploy the military to quell the protests against the racist police killing of George Floyd. Oppositional in nature, the report nevertheless sets out precisely the steps to be taken through the provisions of the *Insurrection Act* to make deployment of the military against the people "legal." [1]

The Capitol Police are being criticized for not being prepared for the January 6 attack. The media is interviewing members of the extensive security and military apparatus as to how this could have happened. There are a lot of questions being asked about what is being called a "massive security failure." The Capitol Police answer to Congress. The head of the Capitol Police Steven Sund resigned effective January 16 and House and Senate sergeants-at-arms quit after the January 6 events. [2]

In an interview with MSNBC, former Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell called for Biden to step-up and put the full force of the state in place. He compared January 6 with the protests following the 1991 beating of Rodney King when, under his charge, the military was called in. He asked why the National Guard was not in place on January 6. "We should have seen what was happening," he said. "It took hours for them to respond ... it was a disgraceful performance by our leaders, a disgraceful performance by our military and our police officials." Stating that Biden "will address this problem," Powell concluded by saying "I have great experience with the President and I am sure that he has what it takes to be on top of the situation."



This is certainly a call to check the rallies backed by Trump but it is equally a call to quell protests in general, to maintain "law and order." This call comes amidst an intensified and united chorus of the U.S. ruling elite that its political institutions are thriving and healthy. The January 6

action has witnessed the doubling-down of the political elite's defence of the U.S. "institutions of democracy," with acceptance of the proclaimed "greatness of American democracy" identified as a criterion of U.S. patriotism.

The issue at hand is being eclipsed by the fact that all those who participated in the protest are being connected with all the hated, despicable features of Trump's shock troops. Many who were there are angry and have no confidence government will deal with their problems, like unemployment, evictions and the pandemic and feel that they have no means to hold government to account. The effort is to make it appear all about Trump and to divert from the very real concerns of the people and their demands for accountability.

The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) has analyzed that the democratic institutions of the so-called representative democracy are dysfunctional. While old forms of governance have passed away, new forms have yet to come into being. It is precisely within this space which exists that change is called for. Attempts to resolve this crisis by concentrating more powers in the hands of the presidency and police are fraught with danger.

Within this situation, the path that has been taken by those who have usurped the decision-making power -- the representatives of the most powerful economic forces -- is a path of controlling and quelling all opposition both within their own ranks and against the people. The use of violence is par for the course.

Today, the disconnect between the governing authority and the people is deepening in an unprecedented manner. The persistence of the resistance to U.S. rule shows that the demands for equality, justice and accountability cannot be silenced or stopped. Everywhere people are making clear that it is not elections -- including the one that brought Trump to power in 2016 and the one in 2020 that has removed him -- that will decide these issues; they will be settled by the people and their fight for rights to be recognized on a modern basis.



Behind the dark shadow of the rampage January 6 breaching the Capitol and the depraved ravings of a president refusing to accept the results of the election, the facts of life in this period and the main trend of the opposition of the peoples has to be brought to the fore. If today, the ruling elite speak of "insurrectionists" attacking the "bastion of democracy" and the need to enforce the rule of law against those who stand against this bastion, it is clear that the call will hold in all instances. There are now already 6,200 National Guard on duty in DC, 850 of them guarding the Capitol.

The situation in the U.S. and all over the world is on a perilous course with the ruling circles and the objective workings of the capitalist system incapable of addressing the serious problems that are demanding resolution, be it the growing impoverishment and devastation of the living

conditions of the people, the increasing concentration of wealth and power in the hands of fewer and fewer, the danger of war and aggression, the continued destruction of the natural environment, or the mishandling of the pandemic.

Missing in all reporting on the events of January 6 is the people's striving for empowerment, for an end to racial injustice, for humane relations and an end to the exploitation and humiliation of the working class and peoples. The democracy being praised is not a people's democracy. Everything being said about "insurrectionists," about how U.S. democracy must not be defiled and the need to uphold rule of law and "law and order" is setting out the underpinnings for Biden's presidency.

The ruling elite, in their declarations about defending the completely exhausted and corrupted institutions of democracy, are hitting at anything and everything that does not fit the mould of what they declare to be legitimate and in step with the "values" of their defunct system. This is a universal cry, as seen in the desperate international chorus of calls for the restoration of order in the U.S., which is supposed to stand as a symbol to the world of the highest stage of democratic rule. The danger of January 6 is that it will mark another restructuring of the state to further eliminate obstacles that stand in the way of using the full force of the police powers against the people.

From the Biden forces the efforts are now to portray the events of January 6 as an "epiphany," a revelation. January 6 is the Christian celebration of the Epiphany that ends the 12 days of Christmas with the coming of the three wise men, the Magi. "On this day of revelation, let us pray that this instigation to violence will provide an epiphany for our country to heal," said Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. President-Elect Joe Biden also spoke of an epiphany after the November election.

These statements and many others like them are an attempt to suggest that this is just about Trump, and to suppress the demands and fight of the people for new arrangements. It is to convince people that the current electoral system and democratic institutions are not broken, and that renewal is not the order of the day and the urgent task facing the people. It is all to stop people from keeping the initiative in their own hands, an effort that will no doubt fail.

Notes

1. The Brookings Institution is a Washington think-tank comprised of over 300 government officials and academics from around the world. It traces its origins to the 1916 formation of the Institute for Government Research, "the first private organization devoted to analyzing public policy issues at the national level." The Congressional Study Group on Foreign Relations and National Security is described as "a program for congressional staff focused on critically engaging the legal and policy factors that define the role that Congress plays in various aspects of U.S. foreign relations and national security policy."

2. Sund joined U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) in 2017 as its Assistant Chief of Police and Chief of Operations. He became its Chief of Police in June 2019.

Prior to those roles, Sund served more than 25 years with the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C., retiring as the commander of its special operations division, according to a biography of him on the USCP website.

"During his career, Sund coordinated a number of National Special Security Events by the Department of Homeland Security, to include the 2001, 2005, 2009, and 2013 Presidential Inaugurations," it said.

"Chief Sund is a recognized expert in critical incident management and active shooter preparedness and response," the biography continues. "His experience involves being the on-scene incident commander on the 2009 shooting at the National Holocaust Museum, the 2012 shooting at the Family Research Council, and the 2013 active shooter incident at the

Washington Navy Yard. In addition, he has handled dozens of criminal barricade and hostage situations with an impressive record of zero fatalities."

USCP say Sund also has instructed the U.S Secret Service "in the area of major events planning and has taught Incident Command System at the George Washington University as an adjunct professor."

He received his Bachelors and Masters of Science degrees from Johns Hopkins University and a Master of Arts in Homeland Security from the Naval Postgraduate School, it adds.

What Is an Insurrection?

President-Elect Joe Biden, along with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and New York Senator Chuck Schumer -- who will soon replace Mitch McConnell as head of the Senate, have all termed the protest at the Capitol building January 6 an insurrection. It is reported that articles of impeachment being drawn up by Pelosi charge President Trump with "incitement to insurrection." So far no such charges are being levelled against the Senators, such as Josh Hawley of Minnesota and Ted Cruz of Texas, who also could be said to have "incited" protesters. These two Senators and the six others who joined in challenging the certification of the vote for Arizona and Pennsylvania, are now being referred to by some U.S. Representatives as the "Sedition Caucus." But there is no call for charges to be laid, only for resignations.

The term insurrection has also been widely used by media, pundits and government officials. However, what constitutes insurrection has yet to be defined or explained by any of them. Why does this protest and all that happened at the Capitol on January 6 constitute an insurrection?

Speaking January 6, President-Elect Joe Biden first called the actions an "unprecedented assault" on "our democracy." "This is not dissent. It's disorder. It's chaos. It borders on sedition, and it must end now," Biden said. "To storm the Capitol, to smash windows, to occupy offices, the floor of the United States Senate, rummaging through desks, on the Capitol, on the House of Representatives, threatening the safety of duly-elected officials. It's not protest. It's insurrection," he added.

From saying that what took place was an "unprecedented assault" to saying it "borders on sedition" to concluding that it is an "insurrection" what are we to think? These are three separate things: an assault, an insurrection, and something which "borders on sedition" but is not sedition. What then does it mean to call it an assault and an insurrection, but not sedition?

From a legal standpoint, it is useful to refer to Title 18 U.S. Code Chapter 115 -- TREASON, SEDITION, AND SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES.[1] Sedition, and seditious conspiracy are defined as follows:

If two or more persons in any State or Territory, or in any place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, conspire to overthrow, put down, or to destroy by force the Government of the United States, or to levy war against them, or to oppose by force the authority thereof, or by force to prevent, hinder, or delay the execution of any law of the United States, or by force to seize, take, or possess any property of the United States contrary to the authority thereof, they shall each be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than twenty years, or both.

When five Puerto Rican patriots and independence fighters entered the Capitol building in 1954 while armed and managed to reach the gallery, they were charged with "assault with intent to kill" and "assault with a dangerous weapon" and given decades-long sentences. Later, in 1981,

many fighters for Puerto Rican independence, a right sanctioned by international law as part of ending colonialism, were charged with sedition and seditious conspiracy and also given decades-long and even life-sentences. Not so in the present case. Despite the presence of weapons, police can be seen on video footage actually escorting some people into the building and taking selfies with them. Charges are minimal.

Sedition also brings to the fore civil war, something the rulers are trying desperately to avoid. So while reference is made to a "Sedition Caucus," and claims of treason are also being thrown about, no serious action is being taken. It should be remembered that after the Civil War, the main Confederate Generals involved were not charged with treason or sedition.

Still, why then does the event "border on sedition," but is an "insurrection"? By law, insurrection requires arrests and prosecutions. The same portion of the Chapter 115 law, under "rebellion and insurrection," says:

Whoever incites, sets on foot, assists, or engages in any rebellion or insurrection against the authority of the United States or the laws thereof, or gives aid or comfort thereto, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both; and shall be incapable of holding any office under the United States.

Does this mean charges will be laid against those who incited insurrection? Is this the aim of calling it an insurrection? Or is it mere rhetoric on Biden's part in an effort to unify the very divided ruling factions?

The way Biden speaks, it appears that an insurrection involves "a mob" threatening the safety of elected officials, which was indeed the case, but it is important to stress that beyond the rampage, there is a serious problem of a President assaulting Congress. There are no limits to the presidential powers. The assault on Congress was not by an "external enemy" or a problem of "racist militia" *per se*.

Despite revenge-seeking which targets Trump, the issue is not Trump but presidential authority to use force and to punish. It also serves to make it far easier to make use of such a claim in the future against demonstrations in front of federal buildings and authority.

No matter how Biden uses the word insurrection, images from the past of what constituted an insurrection will not suffice to describe what is taking place in the United States today, nor provide insights on how to analyze unfolding developments or provide the problems with solutions. It is bound to add fuel to the fire of the anarchy and violence taking place in the United States today.

Note

1. The Code of Laws of the United States of America (variously abbreviated to Code of Laws of the United States, United States Code, U.S. Code, U.S.C., or USC) is the official compilation and codification of the general and permanent federal statutes of the United States. (Wikipedia)

The Fight Between "Violence" and "Defence of the Democratic Institutions"

- Pierre Chénier -

Things are moving fast in the aftermath of the January 6 events in Washington, DC. The

Democrats are circulating articles of impeachment of President Donald Trump, which give as an argument for impeachment "incitement of insurrection." They claim to have the support of close to 190 Democrats in the House of Representatives for these articles. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has said that unless Trump resigns immediately there is going to be a move to force him out either through impeachment or through the 25th Amendment of the Constitution, which would require that Vice President Mike Pence and half the Cabinet declare that Trump is "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." So far, Pelosi has not given her blessing to the motion of impeachment, but the media expect that the articles of impeachment will be presented to the House of Representatives.

Media are also saying that Pence is not in favour of pursuing efforts to get rid of Trump as President before President-Elect Joe Biden is sworn in on January 20. Biden says the country must heal and unify under his presidency. If the motion of impeachment is adopted by the House of Representatives, the Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of the Senate to convict. The penalty for an impeached official upon conviction is removal from office.

There is even discussion that because the Senate is not planning to meet before January 19, the vote on impeachment in the Senate could be held after Trump finishes his term as president. A president convicted of impeachment no longer qualifies to run for office. There is clearly lots of behind the scenes manoeuvring to achieve some sort of resolution to the crisis.

Meanwhile, Twitter has forever banned Trump's personal account, Facebook until January 20 and Amazon Web Services has banned social media app Parler (similar to Twitter) because, Amazon says, it advocates violence. This feeds the debate about freedom of speech versus prohibition of incitement to violence. Meanwhile, police forces are said to be combing media footage in preparation for laying more charges against those who breached the Capitol building on January 6 and were seen to commit crimes.

What we can see from these facts is that the conflicts between the factions of the imperialist elite are continuing relentlessly, while further deployment of police powers is provided with a justification through the discourse on insurrection, violence and the need to protect the institutions of democracy.

Despite talk about defending the democratic symbols and institutions, a problem discussed without the seriousness it deserves is the humiliation the revenge-seeking will cause to what is called "the Trump base" which is far from being limited to the racist militias said to have broken into the Capitol on January 6. There are 73 million people who are reported to have voted for Trump, many of whom simply do not trust the government to help them deal with the serious problems they face. The cartels and coalitions trying to use these events as a way to line up workers and the people behind themselves are sowing the wind and are sure to reap the whirlwind sooner rather than later. Attempts to divert the peoples' consciousness into believing it is a fight between "violence" and "defence of the democratic institutions" seek to cover up that this violence within the ruling class is what is left when the democratic institutions, including elections, do not function and serve as a block to people's empowerment.

U.S. Election Spending

Telling Indictment of U.S. Democracy

Spending on the November 2020 U.S. elections broke all previous records according to the U.S. Federal Election Commission. The two main cartel parties, the Republican and Democratic parties, spent the bulk of the total \$14 billion.

Election spending during the presidential election cycle included spending to win the White House, 35 Senate seats and 435 seats in the House of Representatives.

The presidential candidates of the two cartel parties spent \$6.6 billion, which far exceeds the \$2.4 billion in the 2016 presidential race.

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden was the first candidate in history to raise \$1 billion from "donors." Incumbent President Donald Trump raised \$596 million. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, national groups organized as Political Action Committees (PACs) were behind much of the spending. Spending by PACs on advertising during the month of October alone was \$1.2 billion, with more of the money going to Biden than Trump.

Sarah Bryner, research director at the Center for Responsive Politics, said that with the creation of Super-PACs 10 years ago, those connected with the Republican Party "were the quickest to jump on the newly permissible outside groups as a way to facilitate huge donations."^[1] In the recent election, groups associated with the Democratic Party "have more than made up the difference," Bryner said. The Democrats overtook the Republicans in the "money race" in the 2018 election cycle and increased their domination in 2020. PACs alone spent \$5.5 billion for the Democratic Party and \$3.8 billion for the Republicans in the recent election.

Money went increasingly online to Facebook and Google with over \$1 billion spent on the 2020 election to advertise on those social media platforms, according to OpenSecrets' online ads database, which is connected with the Center.

The Center reports that out-of-state donors were important in certain congressional races. In the so-called swing states of Arizona, North Carolina and Iowa, the vast majority of election money came from outside those states. The Center writes, "In the South Carolina Senate race, where the candidates have spent a record-smashing \$164 million (since calculated upwards to \$275 million), Democrat Jaime Harrison brought in 93 per cent of his money from out of state, while Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) raised 87 per cent from other states. The North Carolina Senate race was the most expensive congressional race of all time, with \$265 million (now calculated at \$300 million) spent between candidates and outside groups. The Iowa Senate race claimed the No. 2 spot with \$218 million in total spending (now exceeded by South Carolina). When all is said and done, at least the top four most expensive Senate races of all time will have taken place in the 2020 election cycle."

The Center says much of the funding for PACs comes from "dark money," which it describes as "spending meant to influence political outcomes where the source of the money is not disclosed." For example, it says, "Future Forward, a relatively new hybrid PAC that has spent \$106 million to back Biden, got \$33 million from dark money groups."

According to the Center, the Senate Leadership Fund raising money for Mitch McConnell, the leader of the Senate Republicans, "received nearly \$63 million from its allied dark money group One Nation. This phenomenon means spending by groups that only partially disclose their sources of funding is at record highs. Meanwhile, only 30 per cent of outside spending comes from groups that fully disclose their donors, an all-time low. These big money groups are typically funded by ultra-wealthy individuals. The top 10 donors combined to give \$642 million in 2020."

The Center writes, "Las Vegas casino owner Sheldon Adelson and his wife Miriam, a physician, have given \$183 million to GOP (Republican) candidates and groups, the largest sum any couple has given in a single election cycle. The billionaire couple made most of their donations in the final months of the election, including \$75 million to pro-Trump super PAC Preserve America.

"In a repeat of the 2018 cycle, former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg is the second most generous donor. He's given \$107 million to Democratic committees in addition to his billion-dollar self-funding effort in the presidential race. Bloomberg sent \$30 million to his flagship super PAC, Independence USA. In the final week of the election, Bloomberg announced he'd spend another \$15 million to boost Biden in Texas and Ohio."

The Center continues, "Other deep-pocketed donors have worked their way into the top 10 for the first time. Wyoming investor Timothy Mellon gave \$65 million to GOP committees in 2020 after giving \$10 million in the 2018 cycle. Republican donor Jeffrey Yass gave \$25 million, up from less than \$8 million last cycle."

The Center also breaks down the donations by economic sectors writing, "Several industries have flipped over to the Democrats' side under Trump's presidency, including the well-funded miscellaneous finance and securities and investment industries. Real estate is one of the few major industries to stay in the Republicans' corner during the Trump era, giving slightly more to GOP committees than Democrats.

"Given their overall fundraising advantage, it's not surprising that Democrats have gotten more from powerful industries. While Biden's campaign is partly powered by small donors, it's also boosted by Wall Street donors. The securities and investment industry has given \$74 million to Biden's campaign and allied super PACs, compared to \$18 million for Trump's re-election effort.

"Business interests have given nearly \$4.6 billion, up from \$3.4 billion throughout the entire 2016 election cycle. Labour, meanwhile, has seen its giving power decline. Through mid-October, labour groups donated \$175 million, accounting for a tiny fraction of campaign money."

Georgia Run-Off Senate Elections

In the window of time since the November election to the January 5 run-off for the two Georgia Senate seats, spending on advertising alone by the Republican incumbents and Democratic challengers totalled \$486 million with the bulk (\$458 million) going to TV ads. The Democrats outspent the Republicans marginally \$249 million to \$237 million.

According to Ad Impact, most of the half billion dollars came from the two national parties and "outside groups such as super PACs to run ads."

Note

1. From the Center for Responsive Politics Website: "Super PACs are a relatively new type of committee that arose following the July 2010 federal court decision in a case known as *SpeechNow.org v. Federal Election Commission*.

Technically known as independent expenditure-only committees, super PACs may raise unlimited sums of money from corporations, unions, associations and individuals, then spend unlimited sums to overtly advocate for or against political candidates. Unlike traditional PACs, super PACs are prohibited from donating money directly to political candidates, and their spending must not be coordinated with that of the candidates they benefit. Super PACs are required to report their donors to the Federal Election Commission on a monthly or semiannual basis -- the super PAC's choice -- in off-years, and monthly in the year of an election."

(With files from Center for Responsive Politics, U.S. Federal Election Commission, Ad Impact, Reuters)