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Women's March promotes Democratic Party, sabotages opposition to Trump

One year after millions marched across the United States and internationally to oppose the new Trump administration and its fascistic policies, the Democratic Party organized, in the name of the second Women's March, demonstrations designed to divert mass opposition to Trump behind the election of its own right-wing candidates in the 2018 midterm elections.

Compared to last year's march, which to some extent reflected broader anti-Trump sentiment and opposition to his right-wing agenda of war and xenophobia, this year's marches were focused almost exclusively on electoral politics and the #MeToo campaign, which is using allegations of sexual misconduct to attack democratic rights. "Me Too" and the related "Time's Up" slogan dominated signs and speeches.



The demonstration in Chicago

All the major issues confronting the working class—attacks on immigrant rights, the threat of nuclear war, layoffs and stagnating wages, police violence—were either downplayed or ignored entirely. The democratic issues highlighted, including the right to an abortion and the rights of LGBT Americans, were separated as much as possible from the broader attacks on democratic rights, aided and abetted by the Democrats as much as the Republicans. Every effort was made to portray the Democratic Party as an ally in the fight for these rights.

One of the most sweeping attacks by the Trump administration over the past year was the rescinding of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which offers limited rights for undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children. Mere hours before the marches, the Democrats had refused to support a continuing budget resolution, resulting in a government shutdown, ostensibly because it did not contain protections for DACA enrollees as part of a bipartisan immigration deal.

Nevertheless, the DACA program played a subordinate role in the Women’s March. To the extent that immigration featured in the marches, it was mostly limited to criticizing President Donald Trump’s racist “shithole countries” remark.

Listening to the speeches and reading the signs carried across the country, one would hardly know that the US is preparing to introduce tactical and “usable” nuclear weapons and threatening war with North Korea.

Instead, signs focused on the November 2018 midterm elections, threatening the Republicans with a “blue wave,” a “pink wave” or even a “blue tsunami coming in 2018.” Many signs read, “Grab ‘em by the midterms.”

The organizers of the Women's March made their electoral, pro-Democratic orientation explicit in the launching of the "Power to the Polls" initiative, announced yesterday in Las Vegas. The stated goal is "to convert the groundswell of momentum and activism into direct electoral power."

The marches were essentially campaign rallies for the right-wing Democratic Party. CBS News reported that the Washington march "took on the feel of a political rally when US Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and US Rep. Nancy Pelosi, both Democrats, urged women to run for office and vote to oppose Mr. Trump and the Republicans' agenda." CBS quoted Pelosi as telling the crowd, "We march, we run, we vote, we win."

Pelosi was joined by "more than a dozen Democratic lawmakers on the stage" in DC, according to the *Washington Post*. Representative Don Beyer used the occasion to make the ludicrous comment that "if Mitch McConnell, Paul Ryan and the president were women, we would not be in the middle of a government shutdown right now."

The speakers at the Women's March in different cities indicate the general emphasis on putting Democrats in office and on elevating gender issues above all others. Actresses Eva Longoria, Natalie Portman, Scarlett Johansson, Viola Davis and Olivia Munn spoke in Los Angeles, centering their remarks on the #MeToo campaign.

Two multibillionaire Democratic figures spoke in Chicago: hedge fund manager and fundraiser Tom Steyer and Illinois gubernatorial candidate Jay Pritzker. The speakers at the Chicago event also included Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, who has supported hundreds of millions of dollars of cuts to jobs and pensions, as well as Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx and Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan.

New York City's Women's March began with a rally featuring New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and actress and comedian Whoopi Goldberg. Before the march, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo spoke at a Women's March Breakfast.

In general, the January 20 protests were smaller than last year's protests, which immediately followed Trump's inauguration. In 2017, about 400,000 people marched in New York City, some 500,000 in Washington, DC, 300,000 in Chicago and about 750,000 in Los Angeles. This year, 120,000-200,000 marched in New York City, 150,000 in Chicago and 600,000 in Los Angeles, according to news reports and official estimates.

World Socialist Web Site reporters observed, compared to last year's marches, a much lower attendance of youth, workers, ethnic minorities and immigrants as a proportion of the marchers.

Marchers who spoke to the WSWS expressed various reasons why they opposed President Donald Trump. Many expressed strong support for the Democratic Party, though others voiced concerns that transcended the right-wing political framework promoted by the organizers.



Liz at the New York march

In New York, Liz told the WSWS, “Trump is a symptom of a much larger disease. The way that the whole country is structured is to benefit a very small amount of people at the very top.” When asked if she thought the Democratic Party represented a way forward, Liz said, “Based on the compromises made in the last few days in our government I’m not so sure that’s true,” but she expressed hope that the Democratic Party could be salvaged.

The WSWS also spoke to Ellie and Lauren, recent college graduates, in Chicago. Lauren said, “So, this is a ‘march to the polls’ but I’m here for so much more than that. DACA and the immigration issue is huge. We’re calling other human beings illegal. No one should ever consider some human beings to be less than any others. No one is illegal.”

“Every country in central America has been subjected to American intervention in the 1980s and since, and it’s created a huge, violent mess. People are fleeing for their lives.”

Ellie added, “This is something we’ve realized. This is the women’s march. I never felt threatened or anything as a woman. But there are people who don’t have that privilege—like immigrants—who have to worry all the time, and they have no voice.”

While the Democrats hope to be swept to power in the 2018 midterm elections and the 2020 presidential contest on growing anti-Trump sentiment, they are opposed to any appeal to the working class.



Ellie and Lauren

Any serious examination of the major issues fueling working-class opposition to Trump reveals the Democrats' foul role. On immigration, the Democrats have pledged to support the militarization of the border. Senator Bernie Sanders said in an interview with ABC News Chief Anchor George Stephanopoulos: "I don't think there's anybody who disagrees that we need strong border security. If the president wants to work with us to make sure we have strong border security, let's do that."

Leading Democrats joined with the Republican majority in the House last week to reject an amendment that would have placed minor limits on the power of the National Security Agency's warrantless surveillance program. Democrats then joined with Republicans in both houses of Congress to pass the bill extending Section 702 of the FISA Amendments Act by a wide margin.

On the issue of war, the Democrats' main criticism of Trump has been his supposed "softness" toward Moscow. This has been the basis for the hysterical neo-McCarthyite campaign against "Russian interference" in the 2016 election, providing a pretext for further attacks on democratic rights, including a massive campaign to censor the Internet.

A serious struggle against the Trump administration and its policies is only possible through a complete break with the Democratic Party. The aim of the Women's March was precisely the opposite.

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