

US Midterm Elections Demonstrate Failure of Democrats to Address Concerns of African Americans, Oppressed

Party of the working class and oppressed must organize to take leadership

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A low voter turnout among key Democratic constituencies can be largely attributed to the loss of the United States Senate to the Republican right and their gains within the Congress during the midterm 2014 elections.

African Americans, who have traditionally voted democratic since the FDR era of the 1930s and 1940s, failed to be motivated by the last-minute appeals for them to vote in large numbers.

In a New York Times (NYT) Sunday edition first page headline article published on Oct. 19, entitled "In Black Vote, Democrats See Lifeline for Midterms", the report reveals an internal memorandum addressing what the party would not say publically that their fate was largely dependent upon the turnout of African American voters. This memo predicting crushing Democratic Party losses if there was not a rekindling of enthusiasm for voting-in candidates representing the organization which was holding on narrowly to a slight majority in the Senate.

The NYT article said that "African-American surge voters came out in force in 2008 and 2012, but they are not well positioned to do so again in 2014," Cornell Belcher, the pollster, wrote in the memo, dated Oct. 1. 'In fact, over half aren't even sure when the midterm elections are taking place.'" (Oct. 18, NYT)

This same report continues quoting a notable politician saying "Anybody who looks at the data realizes that if the black vote, and the brown vote, doesn't turn out, we can't win. It's just that simple," predicted Representative Marcia L. Fudge of Ohio, who is the current chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), in reference to African-American and Latina/os voters. "If we don't turn out, we cannot hold the Senate."

African Americans Feel Brunt of the Contemporary Crisis

The Obama administration has failed to address the concerns of African Americans and Latina/os in relationship to jobs, income, political brutality, imperialist war drives, the decline of the cities, the attacks on democratic rights, immigration relief and other issues. Nonetheless, the onus of the failure to point out the declining living standards and democratic rights of African Americans cannot be solely placed on the administration but the lack of a program that encompasses these issues by the Democratic Party.

Since the 2010 midterms, which also saw a low turnout among African Americans, there have been several developments that represented clearly the current character of national oppression in the United States. What can only be described as a hostile or tepid at best response from the Obama administration and the Democratic leaders in Congress easily translates into a lack of participation in a process that does not speak directly to the concerns of the most exploited and repressed.

In Feb. 2012, people witnessed the murder and subsequent acquittal the following year of the killer of African American youth Trayvon Martin, sparking outrage throughout the country. It was the mass demonstrations that attracted thousands which prompted the authorities in Sanford, Florida to both arrest George Zimmerman and to put him on trial.

When Zimmerman was acquitted demonstrations broke out across the U.S. from New York to California. Some of these protests turned into rebellions reflecting the degree of anger among African American youth.

On Aug. 9 in Ferguson when 18-year-old Michael Brown was gunned down by a local white police officer and the youth rose up in rebellion for days, people within the African American communities and others were in solidarity with the people of St. Louis County. Many traveled to Ferguson to demonstrate alongside the people who expressed the best in the traditions of African resistance within U.S. history.

The fundamental question is: what do African Americans really have to vote for? There are depression-era conditions prevailing in cities such as Detroit, Memphis, Chicago, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Jackson and Ferguson where the people have given political voice on the degree of the oppressive conditions. African Americans are being systematically denied economic opportunities, basic civil and human rights as well as being channeled into the prison-industrial-complex utilizing racist police forces, unjust courts and dysfunctional educational systems.

African American, Oppressed Nations Need Alternative Party

These developments demonstrate that another party is needed to rally oppressed nations to an alternative socialist program to fight capitalism and imperialism. The decline of African American electoral participation in midterm elections since 2010 is a clear reflection of the failure of both the Democratic and Republican parties to appeal to these voters. (See The Black Turnout and the 2014 Midterms by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies-http://jointcenter.org/sites/default/files/Joint%20Center%202014%20Black%20Turnout%2010-29-14_0.pdf)

Such a set of political dynamics provides opportunities for initiatives that rely on massive outreach to African American, Latina/os, Middle Eastern, Asian, Native American, Women, LGBTQ Communities, People Living With Disabilities, Seniors, Youth and other oppressed and exploited populations within the overall working class. This party would declare openly that it was in favor of meeting the aspirations of the most oppressed within the working class which is becoming the majority of the people residing within the U.S.

An electoral strategy which begins from the premise that the capitalist and imperialist systems no longer have anything to offer the working class and oppressed, would be in a position to openly advocate for full-employment, universal healthcare, the raising of the minimum wage to living-wage levels, a guaranteed annual income, the abolition of the

Pentagon budget and the total dismantling of the prison-industrial-complex, racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ bigotry and inequality- guaranteeing the right to self-determination and full equality for all.

Through successive democratic and republican administrations the wars of regime-change have continued. The rebellion in Ferguson in 2014, and the mass response to the lack of justice for Trayvon Martin in 2013, can only re-emphasize the need to fight institutional racism as a systematic pillar of national oppression.

The party would rely on the mass mobilization and organization of the people. This organization would of course reach out to form alliances with other progressive and revolutionary parties rooted in the working class and oppressed throughout the world.

In every capitalist state internationally, the ideologues of the ruling class have no alternative to the austerity, super-exploitation and imperialist militarism now in operation. The party of the working class and the oppressed would provide a platform to reverse the economic decline in its efforts aimed at building a socialist future.

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