

Trump Rallies for Reopening as Biden Strengthens His Position

This article was written for L'Anticapitaliste, the biweekly newspaper of the New Anticapitalist Party (NPA) of France.



President Donald Trump held his first campaign rally in months on June 20 in an indoor arena in Tulsa, Oklahoma where speaking to a smaller than expected crowd of only 6,000 he minimized the seriousness of the coronavirus pandemic still spreading across the country and failed to address the police racism and violence that have led to protests by hundreds of thousands nationwide. He talked about reopening the economy and a return to American greatness, as long as the Democrats and anarchists don't take over.

Speaking to the nearly all-white crowd, almost none of whom were wearing the recommended masks or keeping social distance, he did not talk about Juneteenth, the holiday commemorating the end of slavery in America, nor did he mention the Tulsa Massacre of 1921 when whites attacked a black neighborhood, burning it and and killing 300 black people. And he did not did say the name of George Floyd whose murder at the hands of police spurred the recent protests. Instead he talked about the "left-wing mobs" who have been pulling down statues of Confederate generals who fought to preserve slavery. Trump suggested that if elected Joseph Biden and the Democrats would

allow anarchists and rioters to run wild. Trump remarkably ignored the 122,000 who have died in the pandemic and new predictions that 200,000 may be dead by October, and he did not allude to the 40 million unemployed.

Recent polls show Biden ahead of Trump by 11 points and the likely winner of the 2020 election in November. Trump has been on the defensive not only because of the coronavirus pandemic, the economic crisis, and the national protest movement over police racism and violence, but he has also recently lost two Supreme Court decisions. In the first, the court voted 6 to 3 that the 1964 Civil Rights Act that bars discrimination based on sex also applies to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, a major victory for the LGBTQ movement. In the second temporary decision based on procedure, the court voted 5 to 4 against a Trump administration attempt to overturn DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, Barack Obama's 2012 executive order that protects from deportation 700,000 young immigrants brought by their parents to the United States when they were infants or small children. Trump promises to make another attempt to overturn DACA and may be successful.

Joseph Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, has not been holding any rallies and only attended one small public event near his home in Delaware a month ago when he placed a wreath on a monument at a ceremony on Memorial Day. Biden has promised to choose a woman as his vice-presidential running mate, and because of the recent protests he is under pressure to choose a woman of color. In May Biden for the first time raised more money, \$80 million, than Trump's \$74 million.

Biden has said that he would make DACA permanent on "day one" of his presidency. But while the new Black Lives Matter movement has demanded the "defunding" of police, Biden has said he does not support defunding. He calls instead for more money for police to carry out reforms, such as "community policing," that is, police working closely with local

neighborhoods. Biden is for reopening the U.S. economy, but wants to do so more gradually and carefully than Trump, who is for reopening now. Biden has assembled a team of economic advisors, many of whom are neoliberals from the Barack Obama administration, while others are said to be more progressive.

Meanwhile, a month since Minneapolis police murdered George Floyd, the movement in the street continues, signaling a new era of demands for reform. The protest demonstrations have become celebratory, rejoicing in a newfound solidarity. Yet so far the proposals of both Republicans and Democrats are shallow and do not represent the demand for profound structural changes that the movement wants.