

Trump's Illegal, Brutal, Callous Attack on Working People; And an E-Coup by Musk?

written by Dan La Botz | February 2, 2025



In his first two week in office, President Donald Trump has violated the Constitution and broken the law to carry out measures that threaten millions working peoples' jobs and the health, education, and social welfare programs of the elderly, children and the poor. Blocked at various points by the courts, Trump has given his advisor billionaire Elon Musk, now head of the team called the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), power to take over government computer systems in a move that looks like an electronic coup. The president is acting with the unanimous support of the Republican Party, while Democrats dither and fail to oppose him.

Trump's actions are mind-boggling.

- He attempted to impose a spending freeze on all government grants and loans that would have affected 20 million children who depend on school lunch programs, 2 million elderly people who receive meals-on-wheels at their home, 79 million Medicare recipients and 93 million who receive Medicaid and Children's health insurance, and others. Two federal judges blocked Trump. But Musk and his team have taken control of the Treasury Department's computer systems and could block payments. Is this a kind of e-coup?
- Trump sent over two million federal government employees the "Fork in the Road" email—a virtual copy of Musk's November 2022 emails to Twitter/X employees—telling them they can resign now and continue to work from home to receive pay, and benefits until September 30, 2025. If they choose not to resign, they must return to working in their offices, but have no guarantee that they will keep their jobs. One need only reply to the email with the word "Resign." Depending on how many resign, this could result in depopulating various government agencies.
- Trump plans to launch a trade war against Mexico, Canada, and China, imposing 25 percent tariffs on products from Mexico and Canada, and an additional 10 percent tariff on China. They are America's three largest trading partners. Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum have already announced that their countries will respond in kind. Given the integration of North American industrial production, these tariffs could, for example, lead to the shutdown of auto plants in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The tariffs will also make more expensive the importation of lumber to the American construction industry.
- Trump has begun the roundup and deportation of undocumented immigrants using military planes, only several hundred so far, but promising to deport all of them, which he estimates at 20 million though experts say there are 11 million. Many immigrants are now afraid to go to work, school, the hospital, or to their church or temple.

All of this forms part of Trump's goal of reducing the size and cost of the federal government and

ending the welfare state.

Trump has fired 17 inspectors general whose job was to stop fraud, abuse, and corruption, so there is little effective opposition within the bureaucracy. So far, the political opposition is using the courts to try to block Trump, with some success, but ultimately court cases will go to the conservative Supreme Court which has tended to support Trump.

The Democrats have failed to speak out in a unified and clear voice and have not been able to slow Trump's onslaught. Progressive Democrats have called upon the party to reassert its historic claim to represent the working class which dates back to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s. But the party just elected as its president Ken Martin, who talks about reaching the working-class, but is fundamentally a moderate apparatchik.

Because Trump's attack has been so fast, so far reaching, and so intense, there is so far no mass response from below. Unions, Black and Latino organizations, women's, LGBT groups, and the left are discussing and planning, but do not yet have a strategy.

This article was written for L'Anticapitaliste, the newspaper of the New Anticapitalist Party of France and will also appear on the website of International Viewpoint.