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Trumpocalypse

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January 31, 2017

Despite losing the election, Donald Trump will be installed as U.S. president on January 20. Just over 25 percent of eligible voters cast ballots for Trump or Hillary Clinton, about 47 percent didn't vote, and the other 3 percent voted third party. (Millions more aren't permitted to vote.) Clinton – a right-wing politician with a long history of war-mongering, mass incarceration, environmental devastation and neoliberal economics – received some 2.7 million more votes than did Trump. And exit polls and referendum results suggest that most voters are far to the left of either party. Voters in several states raised the minimum wage, legalized marijuana (not that this will stop the feds from throwing potsmokers in jail), and rejected anti-labor measures.

Why, then, did Trump win the presidency (despite getting fewer votes)? In large part, for the same reasons both houses of Congress are dominated by Republicans despite Democratic candidates (as a whole) receiving more votes. This is in large part an artifact of gerrymandering, in individual districts and entrenched in an Electoral College designed to ensure that popular revulsion could not force an end to slavery. Also contributing was a barrage of voter suppression laws that prevent millions from voting. In Wisconsin,

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for example, 10 times as many voters were disenfranchised in the last few years as provided Trump's margin of victory.

But the main factor seems to have been widespread disgust. Voter turn-out was down by 10 million since 2008, even though the number of people eligible to vote is much higher. Trump received fewer votes than did Mitt Romney four years ago (and also fewer than John McCain or John Kerry), even though he ran slightly stronger (though still quite poorly) among Black and Latino voters. But Trump did much better than Romney in rural areas and in depressed mining and industrial regions.

While many pundits blamed white working class voters for Trump's victory, exit polls indicate that Clinton carried the votes of those earning less than \$50,000 a year, and Trump those earning more. But huge numbers in both categories stayed home, unwilling to pull the level for either of the millionaires on offer.

Since the election, we have seen waves of mass protests, calls for a general strike on Inauguration Day (though no major union has endorsed these), and nominations of right wing hacks and millionaires to serve in the new Trump administration, including a climate change denier to head the environmental protection agency, an anti-civil rights zealot to head justice, an anti-minimum wage fast food mogul to head labor, the man responsible for killing coal miners at the Sago Mine to head commerce, a charter school fanatic with no education experience to run education, etc. Trump is sending a clear message that he intends an all-out assault on the environment, on workers' rights, on women and minorities, on our very ability to survive as a species.

It is not enough to say – true though it is – that the majority have no illusions that either political party serves their interests. The question is what they are going to do about it – whether we can build a movement inspired by a vision of the world that could be, and willing to act to bring it into being. We asked several of our readers and contributors to reflect on this challenge...