

United States : Racism Alive and Well in the November Elections

dimanche 7 novembre 2021, par [SHEPPARD Barry](#) (Date de rédaction antérieure : 5 novembre 2021).

November 2 gubernatorial race in Virginia : « It is clear that the current Democratic Party is not the answer to the racist and authoritarian Trump-controlled Republicans. »

One of the most closely watched elections on November 2 was the gubernatorial race in Virginia.

President Biden had defeated Trump in 2020 by a margin of 10 percentage points in the state. There was a large turnout for Biden among African Americans and youth.

In this year's election, Republican wealthy private equity executive Glenn Youngkin, who had never run for political office before, defeated outgoing Democratic Governor Terry McAuliffe by two percentage points, a shift of 12 points from 2020.

McAuliffe also comes from a business background, but is not as wealthy as Youngkin — electoral politics in the U.S. is bourgeois politics, as there is no mass workers party of any type.

Youngkin won by emphasizing the Republican Party's open racism in a campaign for "parents' rights", especially against teaching in schools the truth about America's long history of the systematic, institutional racist oppression of Blacks.

"There will be no teaching of critical race theory in Virginia !" Youngkin thundered.

"Critical race theory" is a study of the social roots of racial oppression largely in colleges and universities. But to white racists who make up the Republican base, it is a code for any opposition in theory, politics or action to the systematic oppression of Blacks that was brought forward by the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in 2020.

Reports are that the Republican base was motivated and enthusiastic for Youngkin, while support for McAuliffe among Blacks and progressive youth waned from Biden's support in 2020, with less votes among those groups.

The reasons why are obvious. McAuliffe never took on Youngkin's attack on critical race theory or advocacy of "parents' rights". The latter also includes right-wing opposition to COVID vaccine and mask mandates, and transgender rights in schools.

Nationally, the Democrats have failed to pass the voting rights bill in Congress named after civil rights leader John Lewis meant to counter the Republicans' laws in many states that sharply restrict the rights of Blacks to vote.

Biden and the establishment Democrats have barely mentioned the John Lewis bill, let alone launched a campaign to win the public to support it.

There is also the paralysis in the Democratic Party concerning passing a budget containing provisions to help Blacks, Latinos and all workers suffering from the COVID recession, even if inadequate and being progressively watered down.

After the election, Youngkin spoke in public, shouting not only that there will never be in Virginia teaching of “critical race theory”, but also that budgets for police would be increased.

He added that he will defend “qualified immunity” for police that prohibits legal actions against the cops by Blacks and others against police violence, killings, and racial harassment.

The Black Lives Matter actions in 2020 demanded defunding of the police, and removing all the laws and practices that block any serious holding police accountable for crimes no ordinary citizen could get away with, not only “qualified immunity”.

But the Democratic Party establishment, not only the Trump-controlled Republicans, has increasingly opposed the demands of the 2020 demonstrations, including defunding the police, instead joining the cry that “crime” is on the rise and we need more cops.

A case in point was a ballot measure in Minneapolis that would create a new Department of Public Safety, which would include the police but make some reforms such as not having the police deal with people with mental illnesses. The new Department would be run by the City Council, giving civilian oversight of the police.

Minneapolis, Minnesota, is the city where George Floyd was murdered by cops, which kicked off the nationwide actions in 2020.

It was no surprise that the city and state Democratic establishments, including Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, and U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith opposed the measure.

There were only two Democratic officials who supported it, both Black, U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar and state Attorney General Keith Ellison.

The measure was defeated.

There were also some elections for mayors of cities where Democrats won. These were generally establishment Democrats.

An exception was a progressive Democrat, Chinese-American Michelle Wu, who was the first woman and first person of color to become mayor of Boston.

In Buffalo, New York, the official Democrat was a Black woman, India Walton, a self-described Democratic Socialist. She won the Democratic primary election, defeating incumbent Mayor Byron Brown, who is the first African American mayor of Buffalo.

But then Brown launched a write-in campaign against her. The state Democratic Party and Democratic Governor Kathy Hochul refused to endorse Walton, whose campaign was left with little money.

Brown received a lot of money for his campaign, more than \$1.5 million, with which he flooded the TV airwaves attacking Walton.

The result was that Brown won.

It is beyond this article to explain why socialists supporting the Democratic Party or running on its ticket is a dead end. It's been tried many times in the past eight decades — “weighed in the balance and found wanting”, to quote the Bible.

But it is clear that the current Democratic Party is not the answer to the racist and authoritarian Trump-controlled Republicans.

Only actions, including in the streets, against the manifestations of exploitation and oppression of capitalism can be a start of building toward a mass party of the workers, African Americans, women and other oppressed people that can defeat both parties of U.S. capitalism and imperialism.

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