

# United States: Resisting authoritarian populism - Trump's victory and the tasks of the Left, part 1

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**The Left, social movements, and unions cannot rely on the Democrats, who are responsible for Trump's victory, Ashley Smith argues. Instead, we must unite against all the looming attacks, defend migrants and trans people in particular, and build an independent resistance committed to fighting for our own demands.**

**Part 2 here : [United States: Trump's victory and the tasks of the Left - Part Two: Resisting authoritarian populism](#)**

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For the last four years, Joe Biden and his anointed but defeated successor, Kamala Harris, attempted to refurbish U.S. capitalism and reassert U.S. hegemony over the world system, particularly against China, but also Russia and a host of regional powers.

Their program of liberal reform at home failed to address the economic grievances of the country's exploited and oppressed majority. Their militarism abroad, especially their collaboration with Israel in carrying out genocide in Gaza, further undermined their popularity, provoking protest and opposition from Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims, as well as their supporters.

With social movements, unions, the Left, and reformist politicians like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez [rallying people to support Harris](#), Trump was able to pose as the sole opposition to the Democrats and the wretched status quo. His authoritarian populism tapped into discontent with inequality and militarism and offered reactionary, bigoted solutions to people's genuine problems.

Trump rode that to victory, but not by a landslide as panicked liberals and the media initially claimed. In reality, he won because Harris' support dropped by millions compared to Biden did in 2020, particularly among workers, people of color, women, and young people, some of whom flipped to Trump, while many just stayed home.

Trump's victory in the popular vote was one of the smallest in history and his victory in the electoral college was based on slim margins in the seven battleground states. On top of that, his majority in Congress is only a handful of seats in the Senate and House, and [most people do not support his reactionary program](#).

Trump does not have a mandate but will nonetheless claim one. And, unlike in 2016, he has a united Republican Party, as well as a cabinet in waiting of loyal oligarchs, bigots, crooks, crackpots, alleged sexual abusers, and neoconservative hawks and a far right program in Project 2025, which they are determined to implement in scorched earth fashion.

Faced with this imminent threat, the Left, social movements, and unions [cannot rely on the Democrats](#), who are responsible for Trump's victory. Instead, we must unite against all the looming attacks, defend migrants and trans people in particular, and build an independent resistance committed to fighting for our own demands.

### **An organic crisis of global capitalism**

How in the world did Trump, one of the [most unpopular presidents](#) in U.S. history, someone convicted of dozens of felonies and who led a far right riot to overturn the 2020 election, win another term in the country's highest office? After all, Harris was backed by the [bulk](#) of the [capitalist class](#), enjoyed the support of the bipartisan political establishment, and ran a far better funded and organized campaign than Trump.

The main reason is capitalism's profound organic crisis. The Great Recession kicked off a [long global slump](#) of stagnant growth and low profitability, which has deepened class and social inequality throughout the world. That has been compounded by several other systemic crises, from interimperial rivalry to regional wars, global heating, mass migration, and pandemics.

This organic crisis has destabilized the social order in the United States and nearly every other country. It has stoked opposition to the capitalist establishment, triggered unprecedented waves of struggle, most of which have been tragically defeated, and increased political polarization to the left but—because of our insufficient infrastructures of dissent, the revolutionary Left's weakness, and incapacity of reformism to deliver—mainly to the right.

In the United States, majorities of people have said the country is headed in the wrong direction for the last 15 years in a row. This year, [65 percent](#) of voters reiterated that view. The same is true in many other nation-states. Such deep discontent has led to unprecedented opposition to regimes in power, whether right-wing ones like Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro, Britain's Conservative Party, and Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party or establishment one's like Emmanuel Macron's Ensemble and the Democrats in the United States.

Indeed, *The Financial Times* [reports](#) that “the incumbents in every single one of the 10 major countries that have been tracked by the ParlGov global research project and held national elections in 2024 were given a kicking by voters. This is the first time this has ever happened in almost 120 years of records.”

### **The failure of Bidenomics**

While the root of anti-incumbency in popular discontent is similar, each country, as Leo Tolstoy said of families, is unhappy in its own way. In the United States, Harris' defeat is the direct result of the

failure of Joe Biden's [Imperialist Keynesianism](#), what Adam Tooze has [called](#) "MAGA for thinking people," to provide any real solution to the system's organic crisis and mass inequality.

As the book [The Internationalists](#) documents, Biden and his brain trust did not develop their new program in response to Sanders and other reformists in the Democratic Party, as many on the Left wrongly claim. Instead, they created it in the aftermath of Hillary Clinton's defeat at the hands of Trump.

To neutralize the right-wing MAGA threat, they aimed to reassert Washington's imperial supremacy by grouping together its allies for great power rivalry with China and Russia, implementing an industrial policy of subsidies and tariffs to refurbish the U.S. manufacturing base, especially in high tech, and enacting mild liberal reforms to co-opt resistance from below by workers and the oppressed. Bidenomics failed on all fronts.

Biden's stimulus packages did restore growth, but most of the benefits went to the [capitalist class](#). Meanwhile the petty bourgeoisie, working class, and poor were hammered by inflation in everything from groceries to housing. As [The Wall Street Journal](#) reported, "The Labor Department's measure of consumer prices was nearly 20 percent higher this September than in January 2021—the largest increase for a single presidential term since Ronald Reagan's first four years in office."

The administration's liberal reforms designed to redress social inequality were blocked by Congressional opposition, and those that were enacted were either inadequate or, like the child tax credit, were not renewed. As a result, Biden oversaw austerity for his last two years in office.

On top of that, the Republican weaponized the rise of migrants at the border, a fact in large part caused by global capitalism's climate crises, imperialist wars, and impoverishment of the Global South. They bused tens of thousands of migrants to Democratic cities and states, forcing those governments to pay millions to house and take care of desperate people, while they did little for the rest of the multiracial working class.

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The Republicans exploited the predictable resentment to blame immigrants and the Democrats for supposedly being unwilling to impose repressive border policies, despite the fact that Biden imposed brutal crackdowns on the [southern border](#) and [throughout the region](#). As a result of these economic grievances, Biden's [approval ratings](#) plummeted into the low 40s and remained there for the last three years of his presidency.

Biden's reassertion of US imperial supremacy fared little better. He stumbled out of the gate with his shambolic withdrawal from Afghanistan, ending Washington's longest war in defeat with the return of the Taliban to power in Kabul. He revived his fortunes by rallying U.S. allies to support Ukraine against Russian imperialism's attempt to carry out regime change and impose semi-colonial rule over the country.

But Biden squandered those gains by collaborating with Israel in a joint genocidal war in Gaza that has spread to the West Bank, Yemen, Lebanon, and most ominously Iran. In the process, the United States lost all credible claims to be defending the so-called rules based international order as it vetoed United Nations resolutions, opposed the International Criminal Court, and violated its own Leahy Law, which prohibits providing aid to countries violating human rights with impunity.

In reality, Biden turned the United States into a “revisionist state” carrying out what Tooze [calls](#) the “controlled demolition of the 90’s post-cold war order.” In place of superintending neoliberal globalization, he attempted to establish geopolitical, economic, and military alliances committed to great power competition with China and Russia.

### **Harris—paid agent of capital and empire**

As the senile embodiment of a despised capitalist establishment, Biden was doomed to defeat at the hands of Trump even before his disastrous debate. After that, the party donors and leadership carried out [a palace coup](#) to install Harris as their selected, not elected, candidate.

Shackled with her administration’s high disapproval ratings, Harris faced a daunting and in the end losing battle against Trump. She and her handlers judged her best bet was to run as a “joyful” version of Biden, defend his record of Imperialist Keynesianism, offer modest reforms for workers and the oppressed, and, in full knowledge that this was an unconvincing appeal, turn to the right to win over moderate swing voters in the hopes of winning a tight election.

The bipartisan capitalist establishment rewarded Harris, plowing [\\$1 billion](#) into her campaign’s war chest, not counting all its affiliated PACs. That figure was more than double that of the [Trump campaign](#), which relied on a handful of oligarchs like Elon Musk and their PACs to make the race for cash close.

Toward the end of the contest, Harris stretched her fundraising lead, raising five times what Trump did in [last minute big donors](#). Indeed, Harris solidified the Democrat’s claim to be the [main party](#) of U.S. capitalism and imperialism and bulwark against Trump.

As such, she ran a center right campaign. She promised to maintain “the [strongest, most lethal fighting force in the world](#),” attacked Trump for blocking a Republican anti-migrant bill, touted her record as a law and order prosecutor, announced that she, as a gun owner, was willing shoot anyone who dared break into her house, and even removed opposition to the death penalty from the party platform. Harris touted the endorsement of a host of [neoconservatives](#), including war criminal Dick Cheney, and toured the pivotal battleground states with his daughter, the arch reactionary Liz Cheney.

Harris offered workers and the oppressed little beyond tax credits for the poor and subsidies for first time home buyers. The sole exception was her promise to enshrine *Roe v. Wade* as the law of the land, a reform the Democrats refused to enact when they controlled the White House and Congress and something she would have been hard pressed to achieve without big majorities in both houses of Congress.

She downplayed almost any commitment to oppressed groups targeted by Trump, [especially trans people](#). And when she did make appeals to the oppressed, they were downright laughable, such as promises to Black men to legalize weed and provide them loans to start [cryptocurrency companies](#). \

Harris pledged to continue with Biden’s project of reasserting U.S. hegemony against China and

Russia. And on the signal issue of Palestine, she adopted her boss's tactic of crying crocodile tears over Israel's slaughter of people in Gaza and calling for a ceasefire, while promising to fund and arm Tel Aviv to carry out genocide.

Like the rest of the imperial establishment, she remained steadfast in their shared commitment to using Israel as Washington's proxy to destroy the so-called Axis of Resistance, from Hamas to Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iran, to ensure that the United States and its allies, not China and Russia, control the Middle East's spigot of oil. In pursuit of this aim, Harris' campaign was willing to forgo the support of Arabs, Palestinians, and Muslims, including in the pivotal swing state of Michigan.

While she platformed [eight Republicans](#) at her party's convention, Harris denied Palestinians a speaker and had the gall and cluelessness to boast a campaign of "joy" as her administration carried out genocide. She added insult to injury by dispatching Bill Clinton to Michigan, where he [justified Israel's mass slaughter as a just war](#).

### **Trump's authoritarian populist campaign**

By contrast, Trump positioned himself as an anti-establishment candidate opposed to the Democratic Party and the wretched order they defend. After easily trouncing a weak field of primary opponents, he united the Republican Party behind his project of authoritarian populism and drove what remained of traditional conservatives to its margins or out of it entirely.

In the process, he has transformed the GOP into a new far-right party, backed and bankrolled by renegade oligarchs like Elon Musk and Peter Thiel, with an electoral base in mostly white sections of the petty bourgeoisie and working class. He has assembled a network of think tanks and a deep bench of right-wing politicians, ideologues, campaign managers, social media influencers, and fringe celebrities.

The think tanks and ideologues have given programmatic coherence to Trump's authoritarian populism, most clearly expressed in [Project 2025](#) and summarized in capital letters in the [Republican Party Platform](#). These lay out Trump's economic, social, and imperial strategy in stark terms.

To spur growth, he promised to implement tariffs, cut taxes on corporations and the rich, and deregulate the economy, claiming that U.S. capital's boosted profits will trickle down and improve the lot for small business owners and workers. He paired all this with a reactionary social program to restore the social order of oppressive hierarchies of nation, race, and gender.

As part of that project, he threatened mass deportation of migrants, a war on "woke" and "diversity, equity, and inclusion," and imposition of so-called traditional family values against the "threat" of feminists and trans activists. And, of course, he vowed to launch a witch hunt against the Left, especially Palestine solidarity activists.

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To “Make America Great Again, Again,” Trump promised to bolster U.S. power by extricating it from endless wars, scrapping traditional alliances, replacing them with transactional relations with all states, both allies and designated enemies, and boosting military spending to prepare the United States for great power confrontation, including war with China.

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His rallies galvanized his base, especially in the wake of the assassination attempt that left him with a bloodied ear, leading his devotees in chants of “fight, fight, fight” and claiming [divine salvation](#) to complete his right-wing transformation of the U.S. state and society. And his ad campaign combined appeals to economic grievances and promises to end foreign wars with the worst bigotry imaginable.

This toxic mixture of resentment was best symbolized in one ad that proclaimed, “Harris is for they/them; Trump is for you.” That transphobic ad, which was one of many that Trump’s campaign ran at the cost of [\\$37 million](#), nearly 20 percent of its overall budget, spoke to popular grievances of small business owners, contractors, and sections of the working class against the establishment and fused it with scapegoating of an oppressed group.

But Trump also showed signs of his age and mental incapacity, especially in the debate, which made him the object of public ridicule for his racist, grotesque, and absurd lies that Haitian migrants were eating their neighbor’s pets in Springfield, Ohio. Moreover, his endless, meandering speeches at rallies exhausted even his most loyal followers, many of whom left venues, including at the Republican National Convention, before he finished.

Trump’s appearances reached their bizarre apotheosis at a town hall meeting when he forced his audience to listen to his favorite playlist while he swayed and smiled. However weird Trump appeared, he expanded his base, as his Madison Square Garden rally demonstrated. While it was a carnival of reaction replete with racism and sexism, it also drew a [layer of people of color](#), lured by Trump’s attacks on the Democrats for their warmongering and failure to deliver improved economic conditions.

## The missing Left

The Left failed to put forward an alternative to Harris and Trump that could have expressed the deep opposition to them both. We did not succeed in building either independent social and class organization or a new party out of the vast wave of struggle from Occupy through the Red State Teachers Revolt, the Women’s March, and Black Lives Matter.

Instead, the Left adopted Bernie Sanders’ electoral strategy inside the Democratic Party. Various people argued socialists could influence its policies, transform it into a worker’s party, or build a surrogate party inside it to eventually stage a dirty break and form a new party.

All that ended in disaster. Sanders and the Squad, with the important exception of Rashida Tlaib, were incorporated as at best the loyal opposition to the Democratic Party. The worst example of this degeneration was AOC, who morphed from a purported socialist firebrand protesting with Sunrise against Nancy Pelosi to becoming her supporter, referring to her as “Mama Bear,” supporting



Harris, and claiming without a shred of evidence that Harris was working “[tirelessly](#)” for a ceasefire in Israel’s genocidal war.

The toll of this strategy on class and social movements has been extreme. Most movements collapsed into electoral campaigns for the Democratic Party, failing to get their demands adopted and meanwhile demobilizing their struggles.

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The exception was the ripple of union strikes and the Palestine solidarity movement. The Biden administration co-opted the first and repressed the second. It claimed to be pro-worker but lobbied behind the scenes to pressure officials for settlements, most recently at Boeing, and broke the railway workers’ strike.

The Democrats did not even try to co-opt the Palestine solidarity movement. Biden, Democratic Party mayors, and liberal university bosses tried to crush the movement with gag orders, bans on the right to assembly, and police repression.

Despite this fact, the Left, along with NGOs and most of the trade union bureaucracy, pulled out all the stops to campaign for Harris. While some tried to argue she was a progressive (a claim only tenable by denying her complicity with genocide), most recycled the same old [lesser evil argument](#) that she was the last backstop against fascism.

The Left, the NGO bureaucracy, and the union officialdom spent most of their time, money, and energy over the last year backing the Democrats in a vain attempt to defeat Trump, not on building our struggle for our demands. Unions alone [spent an estimated \\$43 million](#) just on the Harris campaign—and that does not even count all the paid organizers and volunteer workers making phone calls, knocking on doors, and organizing events to make the case for people to vote Democrat.

Of course, various third party candidates did get on the ballot in states across the country, but none of them has roots in real social forces and their campaigns failed to galvanize the Left and popular struggles. The only partial exception was in the case of the Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim vote for Green Party candidate Jill Stein in Michigan.

## **The funhouse mirror**

As a result, this election was a funhouse mirror of popular consciousness, forcing people to choose between Harris on the center right and Trump on the far right. There was no credible Left alternative on the ballot that combined progressive positions on social and economic issues.

Trump did not win a landslide, as the media initially reported. He [didn’t even win 50 percent of the popular vote](#). Instead, he scored a very narrow victory over Harris in the popular vote and electoral college, while the GOP similarly eked out slim majorities in the Senate and House.

That alone shows that the United States is not a right-wing country. As does the fact that voters approved abortion rights referendums in seven out of ten states and passed [many other progressive measures](#) across the country.

But without a Left representing such positions, the electorate was forced to choose between two bad options, a lesser evil and a greater one. That “choice” was so unappealing that, despite a record \$18 billion spent on an election that both parties claimed was the most important in history, [36 percent](#) of eligible voters did not vote. Most of those were workers, the poor, and disproportionately people of color.

The two candidates split the 64 percent that did vote down the middle. At best, then, Trump has the support of a little more than 33 percent of the electorate, and many of those who voted for him did not support his policies but voted for him because he was the sole opponent of the Democrats who oversaw their misery.

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The key to the result was not a massive increase in Trump’s haul of votes, but a big drop in Harris’ compared to Biden’s in 2020. She got 7 million fewer votes and tallied a lower total than Biden had in at least [36 states](#). Whole swathes of the Democrat’s traditional base stayed home, while some voted Trump. Harris garnered [fewer votes](#) from workers, women, Black people, Latinos, and young people than did Biden in 2020 and Clinton in 2016.

Trump did increase his total from 2020 by some 3 million votes, for the most part turning out a bigger portion of his base among unlikely voters. And, contrary to claims that his voters were unreconstructed sexists and racists, Trump [lost support](#) among white men and white women compared to 2016 and 2020.

By contrast, he [expanded](#) his vote mainly among Latinos, Black men, and the [42 percent](#) of young people that voted. He [swept](#) the mostly Latino districts along the US/Mexico border in Texas.

The key issue that tipped the election for Trump was the economy. “On Election Day,” *The Washington Post* reported, “[68 percent of voters](#) said the economy was either ‘not so good’ or ‘poor,’ according to exit polls.... 75 percent said inflation had caused a moderate or severe hardship on them or their families.”

In [exit polls](#), 32 percent of voters ranked the economy as the most important issue, and Trump took 80 percent of those. He won a slim majority of voters from families with incomes below \$100,000 a year, a plurality of the voters, while Harris won the majority of those with incomes above \$100,000.

Harris did rake in 80 percent of votes from the 34 percent who identified democracy as their main issue. On the two most decisive other issues in the election, Trump won 90 percent of the 11 percent of voters who identified immigration as their top concern, while Harris frankly underperformed on the 11 percent who said abortion, raking in only 74 percent of their votes.



That explains why Harris lost in states like Arizona and Nevada that passed abortion referendums. Clearly, people split their ballot, casting votes in support of abortion rights but also for Trump. In part, this is the result of his decision to downplay the issue and promise to oppose any national ban, but is also an indication that large numbers of people voted for reproductive rights while rejecting Harris.

Thus, Trump won a very narrow election on his signal issues of the economy and immigration. While he expanded his base, he did so only narrowly, but he certainly did not forge some new multiracial working-class coalition.

### **Denial, wishful thinking, and blame and shame**

Trump's defeat of Harris has sent liberals and the Left in search of answers. Some should be dismissed out of hand as clueless denial, like claims that Harris's losing campaign was "[flawlessly run](#)."

The various "coulda, woulda, shoulda" arguments are just as unconvincing. Assertions that a [primary](#) could have produced a better candidate are simply not credible. Remember, Clinton and Biden were the victors in the last two primaries, and they were pathetic to say the least, the first losing to Trump in 2016 and the second winning but only to oversee austerity and carry out a genocide.

Furthermore, arguments that the Democrats should have run Sanders or someone like him, and if they did, they would have [won](#), are also implausible. In reality, the Democratic Party establishment and its capitalist donors would not have allowed such a candidate to lead the ticket.

They united to block Sanders in 2016 and trounced him in 2020. There is no guarantee that he would have done better than Harris. She actually tallied a higher vote total than Sanders in his home state of Vermont this year.

The truth is the Democrats fared badly for obvious reasons. They were the incumbent party that oversaw a wretched economy at home and splurged on war abroad. That unappealing record explains the [shift across the country](#) toward Trump and the GOP.

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We also must refute the various liberal commentators that concluded from Trump's victory that the country is irredeemably right-wing. Such dismissals of half of the electorate as unreconstructed reactionaries echo Hillary Clinton's castigation of Trump voters as "a basket of deplorables" and Biden calling them "garbage."

The worst example of this argument was penned by Elie Mystal in [The Nation](#). Leading the blame and shame chorus, he sadistically argued that people that voted for Trump "deserve" the attacks

that Trump has planned.

Such snobbery and sadism from liberal elites betrays their insulation from the wretched conditions working-class people endure in our society. They cannot explain why 36 percent of mostly working-class people and disproportionately people of color did not vote, why people earning under \$100,000 tilted toward Trump, and most importantly why Harris' support from oppressed groups actually declined.

There is no doubt that Trump's bigotry appealed to a bloc of his voters, but, as [Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor definitively explains](#), the main reason why his votes went up and Harris' down was the Biden administration's failure to improve people's economic lot and Trump's claim that he could. Capitalism's crises and the Democrat's inability to address them, not the electorate, are to blame for Trump's victory.

The Democratic Party's right makes an even more pernicious version of this argument, [denouncing Harris](#) for running what it calls a "[woke campaign](#)" that supposedly alienated bigoted voters. In reality, she ran an anti-woke campaign that studiously avoided opposing Trump's bigotry, especially toward trans people, pandered to the right and so-called "moderates," and trumpeted anti-migrant legislation, law and order policing, and militarism.

In doing so, she blurred the contrast between her positions and Trump's instead of differentiating them. If the Democrats move further in that direction, as some party leaders are urging, then they will further entrench Trump's bigotry, not challenge it.

### **Dear Democratic National Committee, please....**

Also reeling from the election, the reformist Left has written what are in essence desperate advice columns to the Democrats in the hopes that they will adopt their council.

They rightly criticize Harris for abandoning her so-called base and pandering to the Right to attract moderate votes in the suburbs. Bernie Sanders offered the [sharpest criticism](#), denouncing Harris for offering nothing to the working class and arguing that the Democrats should not be surprised that the white working class abandoned them for Trump in the past and that many Black and Latino workers have done the same in 2024.

Such a bitter judgement, however, is odd coming from Sanders, who said Biden could become "[the most progressive president since FDR](#)," [trumpeted](#) his administration during the election for delivering huge reforms for the working class, and aggressively campaigned for Kamala Harris, calling her a "[progressive](#)." Regardless, Sanders' diagnosis of the election is inaccurate, his characterization of the Democratic Party's past is untenable, and his expectation that its donors and party bureaucracy would adopt his strategy is unrealistic.

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Remember, Trump barely won a majority of voters earning under \$100,000 and 36 percent of people, mostly the working class, did not vote. He, at best, only won a significant minority of the working-class vote. Moreover, Harris won 54 percent of the union vote, slightly more than Biden did in 2020. So, it is wrong to say the multiracial working class went over to Trump.

The claim that the Democrats “abandoned” the working class is also untrue. As a capitalist party, it never represented workers, but only appealed to us for votes. It only ever implemented reforms that benefited workers and the oppressed when confronted with mass uprisings from below in the 1930s and 1960s, and only did so to co-opt such resistance and preserve the existing capitalist order.

Finally, it is naïve at best to expect the Democratic Party to adopt Sanders’ advice and offer radical reforms in the interests of the working class without mass opposition from below. As Senator Chris Murphy [tweeted](#), “when progressives like Bernie Sanders aggressively go after the elites that hold people down, they are shunned as dangerous populists. Why? Maybe because true economic populism is bad for our high-income base.”

Left reformists, including Sanders, have also joined the liberal establishment in counterposing identity politics to class politics. Sanders [warned](#) that Democrats can’t “hang their hats on identity politics” and Dustin Guastella has [repeatedly argued](#) that Democrats and the Left more broadly must focus on class issues and [downplay questions of oppression](#).

This is a disastrous response to the threat posed by Trump. He aims to divide and conquer the working class, precisely by targeting oppressed groups in our class. So, it is a mistake to deprioritize resistance to oppression. It must be fought precisely to unite workers against our common enemy.

Moreover, it is wrong to counterpose economic demands and demands about oppression. Abortions cost money. Gender-affirming care costs money. Sexism in the workplace lowers women’s wages. Racism does the same to people of color.

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And most obviously the criminalization of migrant labor subjects such workers to second class non-citizenship, but also low wages, no benefits, and no legal recourse in civil or labor law. And that low wage floor is used to drive down all workers’ wages. The old labor slogan “an injury to one is an injury to all” recognized the interpenetration of exploitation and oppression, and it should be the Left’s north star now more than ever before.

Finally, the Democrats did not hang their hat on identity politics in anything but symbolism. In reality, because of their capitalist nature, they cannot genuinely fight either social oppression or class exploitation. In fact, they are agents of maintaining the system that relies on both, as their record of border repression and mass deportation of migrants for decades proves.

Pleas to the Democrats to adopt and advance a class program are wishful thinking that sows the illusion that the Democratic Party can and should be the vehicle for the Left to advance its demands. It is not and will never be.

**Ashley Smith**

Part 2 here : [United States: Trump's victory and the tasks of the Left - Part Two: Resisting authoritarian populism](#)

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**P.S.**

• Tempest. Posted December 5, 2024:  
<https://tempestmag.org/2024/12/resisting-authoritarian-populism-pt1/>

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*Tempest will publish Part 2 of this essay shortly.*

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