



For social ownership of the banks and industry

TRUMP WIN BOOSTS FAR-RIGHT



See inside

» **Back civil resistance in US**
» **Unite the left for socialist policies**

Trump and resistance

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After Trump's win, unite the left!



The political world changed on 5 November with the victory of the Trumpist authoritarians in the USA. Trump's victory has set the alarm bells about far-right advance ringing louder and shriller, and it should shock us into serious discussion of left unity – out of our routine of each group cultivating its own walled garden and thinking about what gambit or gimmick might get them a few more recruits.

Across the world, different strands of the far right are boosted by Trump's win.

Benjamin Netanyahu hailed "history's

greatest comeback". Viktor Orban, in Hungary, said he would "open several bottles of champagne" to celebrate Trump's victory.

Alice Weidel in Germany declared that Trump is "of course a model" for her far-right AfD. Geert Wilders, in the Netherlands, has depended for funding largely on the same far-right lobbies in the USA as backed Trump. Much more funding for the Right from the USA is now likely. Nigel Farage is going to try to get Trump invited as an honoured guest to the British Parliament.

Since the crash of 2008-9, the main trend, now put into hyperdrive, has been for variants of the nationalist far right to dominate politics.

On many issues and many countries, broad opinion, especially among

young people, has moved left. People still care about equality and democracy. But mostly they don't think that we, the left, can be effective on those issues, or can make the labour movement effective. So the different far-right groups have been able to rally people behind them on "their" issues, like anti-immigrant feeling.

One basic reason why so many people see us, the left, as ineffective, is that we are divided. And divided into a scattering of groups which don't even talk to each other. Let's talk about unity.

Workers' Liberty proposes (and we believe we have been able to practise, on the limited scale possible as yet) three ideas to make future unity work.

- A way of organising where, yes, there are majority decisions, and we act promptly and coherently to execute them, but no minority is obliged publicly to pretend it agrees with the majority where it doesn't. Minorities are not obliged to put up or shut up. They have access to our public press, and to public in-person debates.

Socialist Worker has sometimes signalled dissent among their people, for example, on their "rejoice" headline after the Hamas atrocity of 7 October 2023, or on Brexit. But *Socialist Worker* does not give minorities space to debate.

- We explain our criticisms of other groups, and seek debate, opening our

paper to those groups as well as to minorities among us. But the left often sees explaining criticisms as "sectarian" and thinks the right road is for each group to pursue its own slogans and gambits and see "what works".

- We pursue "unity in action where we agree, honest debate where we disagree" in every field.

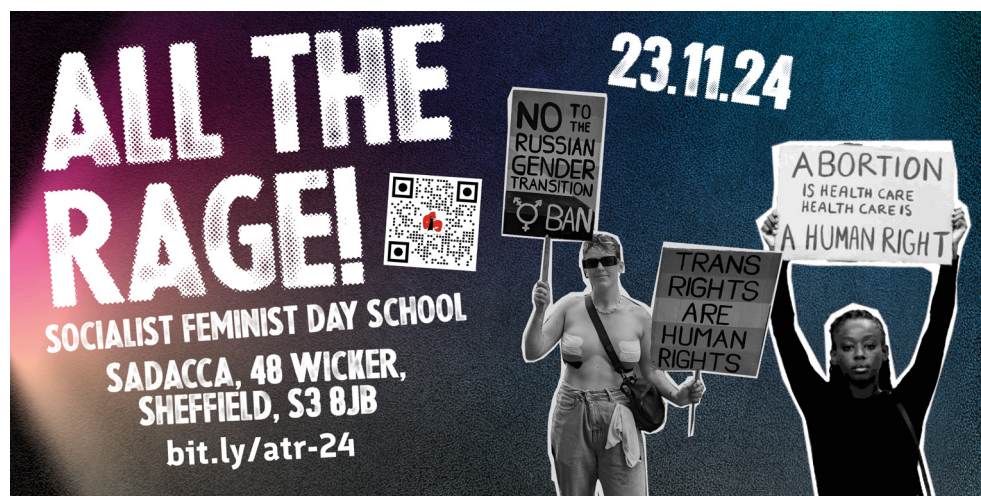
Those three ideas, we say, are axial to the left reorganising itself to become more united and effective.

Meet together at every level, in localities, in unions, in campaigns. Discuss. See what we can do together in the working class and to transform the labour movement. Organise open debate where we are too much at odds for united action. Make the left a force which workers can see as both honest and effective. □



Corrections

Trump has threatened "retribution" against his political opponents, and promised "one very violent day" to end crime, but his outburst against Liz Cheney quoted in *Solidarity* 724 was meant to brand her as an advocate of wars to be fought by other people. □



Building a "critical mass" of protest

From Standing Together

What a tough week. It began with Netanyahu firing the defence minister Yoav Gallant, and is ending with the terrifying news that Donald Trump was elected President of the United States.

While Gallant is of course a war criminal, and has been instrumental in the annihilation of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Netanyahu choosing to fire him was another step in the dangerous direction that him and his extremist government have been dragging us down. Gallant's replacement, Israel Katz, will no doubt be even more submissive to Netanyahu's demands, and it's going to make reaching a ceasefire and hostage deal even more challenging...

Once again, our reality proves what we have been fighting to make clear for so long: the political establishment does not act with our

interests in mind, and the majority of ordinary people are losing out while a small minority is benefitting. In Israel-Palestine, the United States, and around the world, we must remember that we cannot simply rely on the people in power to protect us and act in accordance with what is best for us. We need to build enough political power within our society to be able to demand what we know we deserve – we need a critical mass of people who are committed to fighting for equality and social justice. History proves that the power is in the people, and if we organise effectively we are able to fundamentally change our reality.

Last Saturday night [2 Nov] we held an emergency protest in Tel Aviv for a ceasefire and hostage deal, drawing hundreds of people together in a loud call to end the war, and we have joined into protests across the country throughout

the week. Standing Together's Be'er Sheva chapter came out on Wednesday night to demonstrate after the Deputy Mayor of Be'er Sheva Shimon Tubul incited against Arab schoolchildren, calling them "terrorists of the future" and attacked Arab-Palestinian citizens at a gas station just because they were listening to Arabic music. We came out with a clear call that this incitement and racism is unacceptable and he must be removed from office.

Between demonstrations almost every day, we've also been bringing groups to participate in olive harvests in villages in the West Bank, to assist with the harvest and provide a protective presence for local Palestinian farmers under threat from settler and army violence. □

- At bit.ly/uw-alg: a report of the Tel Aviv protest.



UK Friends of Standing Together

Standing Together, Israel's fastest-growing grassroots movement over recent years, unites Jews and Palestinians within Israel to fight for an equal and just society, for peace, and against the occupation. UKFoST promotes their work in the UK: for peace, justice, and equality for Israelis and Palestinians – Jews and Arabs – including an equal right to self-determination, and for the full equality of Palestinian citizens of Israel. UKFoST promotes the benefits of joint struggle by Jews and Palestinians to this end. • ukfost.co.uk • [@omdimbeyachaduk](https://twitter.com/omdimbeyachaduk)

Solidarity with Ukraine's schools

By Maisie Sanders

Between 30 October and 2 November, a delegation of education workers visited Lviv, in Western Ukraine. Our visit was organised by the National Education Union's Ukraine Solidarity Network.

We visited three schools: two kindergartens (for children between two and six) and one lyceum (for children aged between seven and seventeen). NEU districts and school groups affiliated with the Ukraine Solidarity Network have been raising money for them to buy generators. Generators are necessary for schools in Ukraine because the power supply has been unreliable since the full-scale Russian invasion.

One kindergarten teacher told us that when air raid alarms sound, "children aren't scared". They know what is happening and see the air raid shelter as a safe place; by now they are used to the same routine at home. Air raid alerts can last for several hours, so teachers facilitate games and fun activities. One kindergarten, however, has no basement for its own shelter. Instead, the youngest children use a corridor between two strong walls, while the older pupils go to a shelter a five-minute walk away.

We learned that four and five-year-olds know the names of types of bombs and aeroplanes. Our tour of the lyceum included a "military classroom", filled with drone simulators, deactivated landmines and other military equipment. Here, children and adults from the local community are taught how to keep themselves safe.

All schools in Lviv have seen an influx of children from more dangerous Eastern Ukraine and the currently occupied territories. While Lviv is much safer, there has been an increase in rocket attacks in the month before our visit. On 4 September, a Russian airstrike on Lviv killed at least seven people, including at least five children, in a building close

to where one of the kindergarten workers lives.

In much of Eastern Ukraine, education is online. Representatives from the Union of Education and Science Workers told us that life is very hard for education workers in Russian-occupied areas. They are forced to get Russian citizenship and passports as a matter of life and death. They have to teach the Russian curriculum, in Russian, as part of a cultural offensive to assert a Russian identity in the area. Russian teachers have also been sent to schools in the occupied territories.

Abducted

According to the UN, an estimated 19,500 children in the currently occupied territories have been abducted and taken to Russia. Many parents were told their children were going to a "summer camp". As of August this year, Save the Children reported that 2,200 children have been killed since 2022.

One mother, who has a four-year-old daughter at one of the kindergartens, came to Lviv from Mariupol, a city in the Russian-occupied Donetsk region. Her husband was involved in the 2022 siege at the Mariupol steelworks, and has been held captive by Russian forces since then. Until recently, she had no idea if he was alive or dead. The family have twice been internally displaced, having already fled their hometown Crimea after the 2014 Russian invasion.

Another mother, from Kherson, told us she left home with her child on the second day of the war. When the village she fled to was invaded by Russian soldiers, she left again for Kyiv before finally settling in Lviv. Leaving home, she said, was very hard. But back home in Kherson "felt like living in a prison: you couldn't leave your house for fear of being shot". One of her children was too scared to sleep at night. In Lviv, the children have begun to open up emotionally. "They enjoy life here and can play with their friends".



All three schools have become like community centres since the war, for families who are refugees and for those whose partners are fighting, missing or killed. Psychologists are available for support.

Valery, an activist in left group Sosialny Rukh, told us that housing is a huge issue for internally displaced people (IDPs). In the first year of the war, IDPs were housed in stadiums and sport centres. When shelters began to close, increasingly high rent meant that many had to move back to cities close to the front line. A third of the homeless population in Ukraine are now IDPs. Many injured or returned soldiers are also street homeless. Zelenskyy's government are pushing a help to buy scheme with low interest loans and low deposits. But low wages and poor job security mean this is still unaffordable for the vast majority. SR are calling for rent controls and funding for social housing and emergency accommodation. They are also involved in a newly formed tenants' union.

Teachers in Ukraine earn around €350 per month. Kindergarten teachers told us that from October, they will receive a 3-5% pay cut, to be diverted to military funding. When we asked what will be taken from the rich, they reported "they give the same percent. Taxation is the same for everyone, rich or poor."

Representatives from the Trade Union of Education and Science Workers told us they have been campaigning for a pay rise in 2025. However, the union did not seem to have a presence in the

schools we visited, and teachers were not aware of any union campaigns.

The union has a support fund for education workers who voluntarily joined the armed forces, and for the families of those who have been injured or killed, including paying for funerals. They have also opened a respite centre, with accommodation and treatment rooms. They would like support from trade unions in the UK to fund furniture and equipment for the centre.

The union is a part of the Soviet-era legacy FPU federation, and the much larger of the two education trade unions in Ukraine. SR activist Valery described the FPU unions as very bureaucratic, politically inert and pro-power. He said, "to the common people who are protesting, capitalists are the long-term enemy and the unions are the short-term enemy. When people start doing something, the unions are the first line of opposition trying to block."

Part of the reason for our trip was to lay the groundwork to call for an official, NEU-organised delegation to Ukraine in the future. The NEU Ukraine Solidarity Network is currently working to get motions in solidarity with Ukraine passed at as many districts as possible, in advance of NEU conference in April.

Shamefully, our union still has no policy in support of Ukraine against the Russian invasion. The network will also be continuing to fundraise, for further generators, resources for disabled children, and supplies for the Ukraine union's respite centre. □

Fight uni cuts, abolish fees

By Sam Myerson

The Labour government has announced that tuition fees will increase from September to £9,535, and from then in line with inflation. Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson has said that this is necessary, and it is a choice between fixing the NHS or repealing tuition fees.

This is not just wrong, it's dishonest. This fee rise will not fix the issue; and there are more than enough resources to pay

for public services.

Direct government funding for university teaching has [fallen](#) by more than 60% since 2010-11, and for university research has not risen.

When running to be Labour leader Keir Starmer committed to abolishing tuition fees. This, along with the other pledges he made then, has been [junked](#).

Earlier this year the National Union of Students (NUS) launched its "Manifesto for the

Future", put together with sab-batrical officers from Student Unions, calling for free education and living grants.

But when it was public knowledge the fee rise was coming, NUS organised a lobby of parliament on housing guarantors, ignoring fees; and now they [celebrate](#) the rise in maintenance loans as an achievement of "years of campaigning". NUS claims to represent seven million students, but as we go to press only

2,300 students have signed up to the pledge to campaign against fees.

But the household thresholds for maintenance loans remain unchanged, while the thresholds for repaying student debt have decreased, and the [age](#) to which we will continue to repay increased.

Repaying

With the April 2025 rise in the minimum wage a worker on [just 2.6% above NMW](#) for 40

hours a week will start [repaying](#) a Plan 1 student loan at 9% of each extra pound of income.

Education is a public good. It should be funded by taxing the rich and big business. We need a campaign on fee abolition and against cuts.

[Recently](#) in Sheffield we saw some of that work beginning. If you want to join us in campaigning against cuts, and for free education, get in touch. □

Will AI go bust?



Debate

By Bruce Robinson

Artificial intelligence is now on its third thirty-year cycle of discovery, hype, disappointment and decline into an “AI winter” when it becomes unfashionable and unfinanceable. We are currently in the hype phase. Will AI now inevitably enter a third decline? Charlie Appelbaum in his article in *Solidarity* 720 says that AI is just “this year’s tech bubble” and predicts a crash comparable to the dot-com crash of 2000.

I think however that there are good reasons to believe that this AI cycle may turn out differently. Current AI is increasingly dominated by the existing tech giants such as Google and Microsoft which already have large resources to draw on. While there are many start-up or research projects on a smaller scale, if they show promise or profit they are likely to be gobbled up by the giants which have cash to spare.

So Open AI, which was originally a declared non-profit company based on open source software, but which

has had a long-term relationship with a major investor, Microsoft, has now undertaken a major deal to attract investors. This sees the company valued at \$157bn (£118bn) – similar to investment bank Goldman Sachs and more than most of America’s biggest companies – while chief executive Sam Altman is said to be restructuring the company to become a for-profit entity, stripping it of its non-profit board and transforming into a standard for profit company in order to attract more investment. For a detailed discussion of what he calls “AI capital”, see Marxist James Steinhoff’s *book Automation and Autonomy: labour, capital and machines in the AI industry*.

Further, the fuel of current AI systems is data which is produced on a large scale by the current tech giants. This leads to a symbiotic relationship between AI systems and their other functions which produce data. Both require the huge data centres and energy consumption Charlie talks about.

There will probably be a consolidation getting rid of lots of the unviable and unprofitable applications – such as Charlie’s AI mouse – but with AI becoming increasingly incorporated into both standard products and the normal

functioning of corporations. This, after all, is what happened after the dot-com bubble burst in 2000. It did not result in an end to the “web 2.0” innovation of

e-commerce and online transactions. Rather it began a move towards the tech oligopoly we see today. □



Activist Agenda

Meetings

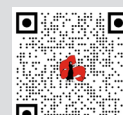
Thu 14 Nov: Intro to Karl Marx’s *Capital*. Ideas for Freedom discussion group. 3pm, Institute of Education Bar, Level 4, 20 Bedford Way, WC1H 0AL

Thu 14 Nov: Why socialism? Manchester AWL. 7pm, Friends’ Meeting House, 6 Mount St M2 5NS

Mon 25 Nov: Socialist chat. 6:30pm, Training Room 3, Northumbria University Student Union NE1 8SB

At work or on campus

We organise: among health and local government, school and education workers, on the railway and London Underground, in the civil service, on uni campuses, and more. See workersliberty.org/work-unions, Insta [@workerslibertystudents](https://www.instagram.com/workerslibertystudents), and email awl@workersliberty.org for more.



Scan the QR code to see our events & meetings page.

Template motions

Texts: to adapt for union branches and Labour Parties: bit.ly/mo-pe

Socialist-feminist book clubs
workersliberty.org/sf-book-clubs

20 Nov: The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework. 7pm, online.

Campaigns

For: UK Friends of Standing Together, Labour Left Internationalists, Workers Against the CCP, Free Our Unions, Solidarity With Iranian Workers, Neurodivergent Labour, Ukraine Solidarity Campaign, Labour Campaign for Free Movement – contact details, activities, template motions, etc. – see workersliberty.org/agenda. For environmental campaigning email awl@workersliberty.org. □

The working class in the Blitz



Film review

By Luke Hardy

The Second World War, how it’s remembered, and its modern resonances have occupied Steve McQueen’s mind of late.

In 2024 he has brought out two films on the subject. *Occupied City* was an acclaimed documentary, mixing beautiful shots of life in post-Covid Amsterdam with narration about the Nazis’ brutal five-year occupation of the city and the fate of the city’s Jews in the Holocaust.

Blitz, now on release, is a pretty conventional historical drama about the Luftwaffe’s bombing of London in 1940-1. Steve McQueen says he was inspired by a photo he



saw of an unidentified mixed race evacuee. The film follows George, a young boy evacuee (Eliot Heffernan), who jumps the train taking him from London and goes on a long journey through Britain in the Blitz back to his munitions-worker mother Rita (Saoirse Ronan).

McQueen’s direction is often striking and beautiful. Saoirse

Ronan is a charming screen presence throughout. The film tries to re-centre working-class women, black people and other marginalised people in a part of history often abused by right wing nationalists. We see working-class East Enders demanding access to the Tube stations to shelter, and Jewish socialists organising welfare provision in the shelters.

But the film suffers from being overstuffed with historically inspired scenes from the Blitz. We witness versions of the Balham Tube station disaster, the bombing of the Café de Paris, a looting gang, the destruction of much of the London waterfront in the “Second Great Fire of London”.

These scenes may have an educative purpose, but they feel artificial, as do moments where racism is addressed.

Tonally, as well, the film at times seems unsure of itself. Is

it a classic sentimental drama such as might have been made in the 1940s, or is it a more impressionistic and darker film? At times that gives it the feel of a Sunday night TV drama.

Perhaps a TV drama series would have given the subject

more time to breathe, or a documentary could have addressed more deftly some of the political points McQueen wanted to make. *Blitz* is a film worth seeing, but not one of the director’s better movies. □

More online

Southwark cleaners

Demand insourcing:
bit.ly/s-clea

Solidarity USA

Response to Trump:
bit.ly/so-usa

Identity politics

Weakening the left:
bit.ly/ide-pol

German government

Coalition collapses:
bit.ly/scholz-g

THE VESTAS JOBS BATTLE



The 2nd edition contains new material, plus photos from the campaign and occupation. £4 (inc. post) □
bit.ly/shop-wl

Referendums win despite Trump



Women's Fightback

By Katy Dollar

In *Solidarity* 724 Tom Harrison stated: "Whatever the outcome on 5 November, it seems certain women will vote against Trump more than men."

This was true – but less so than with previous Democrats facing Trump. CNN reports that Hillary Clinton won women by 13 points in 2016 and Joe Biden by 15 in 2020, Harris by only 10 points. Harrison goes on to say that, though white women were more likely to vote for Trump in 2016, that was before attacks on abortion rights and #MeToo which he predicts could be Trump's undoing. In fact in 2024 white women fell 45% Democrat and 53% Republican, compared an extremely narrow margin in 2016.

On 5 November Americans also voted in local referendums. In ten states, there were votes on the right to abortion. Most of these attempted to guarantee abortion rights on the state level, following the Supreme Court's 2022 decision to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*. In seven out of ten cases, voters

supported abortion rights. In Nebraska and South Dakota, a majority of votes rejected the amendments; in Florida, the 57% majority was not enough to amend the state Constitution (which needed 60% of the vote). In three blue states – New York, Colorado and Maryland – residents voted in favour of abortion access. There were joined by four traditionally Republican states: Nevada, Arizona, Montana and Missouri.

Alignment

Why did we not see greater alignment in votes for abortion access and candidates supporting abortion access? In Missouri, Josh Hawley, one of the most extreme opponents of abortion rights in Congress, was re-elected as a senator at the same time as the amendment to repeal the state's abortion ban passed with 51.9% of the vote. The state campaigns, combined with Trump stating the issue was one for state decision making, might have separated abortion and national level politics in minds of voters.

According to a survey of female voters conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, the top issue for women voters was inflation and household expenses. More than one-third (36 percent) of respondents cited it as the

most important issue. This was followed by threats to democracy (24%), and immigration and border security (13%). The same number (13%) cited abortion as the most important issue. This was consistent with national general polls.

Women cared about issues other than gender issues. The Democrats had little to say on the cost of living, which mattered to voters across the spectrum. The prestige politics with endless liberal celebrities did not help.

White women were more racist than Harrison had accounted for. The odd campaign strategy of assuring women that they can keep their votes secret from their husbands and boyfriends managed to be both offensive to family-first reactionaries and patronising to women who, though may keep their vote from their partner, understand how a secret ballot works.

Following the election there has been an array of articles admonishing the Democrats for not running a Sanders-like candidate, for not offering far reaching measures to reduce inequality – these could have won the election they cry, as if minor left media outlets have access to polling the Democratic Party didn't. If you're playing fantasy politicians you may as well wish Trump was not a dangerous authoritarian at-

tacking women and minority rights. There is no way the Democratic party are going to unleash a redistributive social programme outside of a massive upsurge in class struggle, one that would offer opportunities far greater than better Dems.

Over Biden's term, Trump has gained a relatively small number, but the Democrats have lost nearly ten million votes. Trump won thanks to the Democrats. □



WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

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Women's Fightback.

28 pages, £3.00 □

bit.ly/shop-wl

Trump, euphoria, and resistance

By Martin Thomas

There was "euphoria" on Wall Street at Trump's victory, according to the *Financial Times*. Once-Democrat billionaires have gushingly congratulated Trump, looking forward to tax cuts and lifting of environmental, financial, and equalities regulations.

On 7 Nov Donald Trump Jr said he wants "people who don't think that they know better" for the high posts in the new regime.

However, market movements signal that the billionaires think Trump won't impose the huge tariffs he promised, instead going for selective tariffs and the threat of more to get trade and other concessions from other states.

Trump has stridently reaffirmed his plan for mass deportations. That will mean expanding the special "ICE" police force, and sending it into, for example, migrant shelters run by "sanctuary cities".

Whether Trump can rescind birthright US citizenship is more doubtful.

Trump says that the president should have direct control over all federal agencies, including the FBI and the Department of Justice. Trumpists have [plans](#) for replacing tens of thousands of higher-level federal officials by loyalists.

Trump promises to pardon those he calls the "J6 warriors" (from the 6 January 2021 attack on the Capitol), except for "a couple of them". Outstanding prosecutions of them look sure to be dropped. That will boost the far-right militias and give edge to Trumpist threats of "retribution".

Trump promises to "end crime" with "one very violent day" of repression.

He wanted to invoke the Insurrection Act to suppress the George Floyd protests of 2020 militarily, but backed down. The Act has been used 32 times since 1807, and four times against strikes in 1877-1921. The USA already has 42 "states of emergency" in operation.

Despite the Republican majorities in the Senate and, almost certainly, in the House of Reps, Trump will seek to bypass Congress. That leaves the Supreme Court to control him, and it won't.

He claims that the president is not obliged to respect Congress mandates on spending, but only to see them as "ceilings". This claim will serve him against such as the Environment Protection Agency, and also over schools, universities, and healthcare.

He wants to pull state universities into line by withholding federal funds,

and private universities by taxing their endowments. He will set up a federally-funded online university as alternative.

He has promised to make it law that "sex is binary", as if intersex and transgender minorities do not exist, to ban schools from respecting transgender students' wishes and sports participation, and to ban "critical race theory" and "gender ideology" (other than his own).

In the USA, 45% of government spending is state and local; but nearly 40% of states' revenue is from federal level, and most states, unlike the federal government, legally have to balance their budgets. That federal funding looks like being Trump's lever also in healthcare: having recently disavowed repeal of (state-administered) "Obamacare", he will use funding cuts to degrade it and Medicaid.

J D Vance has sponsored a plan to replace unions by joint worker-boss outfits. Other Trumpists want to declare public-sector unions unconstitutional. A case, backed by Elon Musk, is making its way to the Supreme Court, to declare the 1935 Wagner Act, the USA's main union-rights law, unconstitutional. In the meantime Trump will nullify it by appointing anti-union officials to op-

erate it. Asked if he will back Taiwan militarily if China invades, Trump said: "I wouldn't have to, because he [Xi Jinping] respects me and he knows I'm fucking crazy".

Such is his "anti-warmonger" pitch; but a war, or a domestic crisis, even a manufactured one, will strengthen Trump's ability to repress.

Especially with this Supreme Court, the Constitution is little safeguard. In 1919-20 Democrat Attorney-General Mitchell Palmer arrested thousands and deported hundreds for being leftists. Many objected, and the raids ended, but Palmer suffered no penalty, and the Communist Party of the USA went underground.

California's governor Gavin Newsom has vowed to resist Trump, but evidently by lawsuits rather than on-the-ground non-cooperation. Lawsuits may slow Trump down – despite his efforts in 2016, there are still many non-Trumpist judges in the USA – but will not be decisive.

Trump's pull-backs on Obamacare and on abortion rights ("leave it to the states") show that he can be resisted. The moves reported by Traven Leyshon (p.8) for labour movement and community organisation on the ground are vital. □

From Third Period to Popular Front?



Antidoto

By Jim Denham

Donald Trump may or may not be a fascist, but no serious observer doubts that his regime will be far-right, authoritarian and a mortal threat to democracy and workers' rights. The argument about fascism seems fairly academic.

In the late 1920's and early 30s (the "Third Period") the Stalinist Comintern said that fascism was nothing different from the status quo and, indeed, would pave the way for socialism. After Hitler took power, they did a smart about-turn in 1934-5 and endorsed an anti-fascist "popular front" that would include "liberal democratic" capitalists as well as the leadership of social-democratic parties and unions.

At the moment – responding to Trump – the Communist Party of Britain and its mouthpiece the *Morning Star* seem to be zig-zagging between the Third Period and the popular front.

Leading CPBer Andrew Murray (on 30 October) advised his readers not to worry about Trump, who might even provide "perverse assistance" to the "global left". Indeed, "liberal British and US imperialisms with not a day of fascist rule between them" are "the main enemy, not the orange demagogue."

This Third Period stuff was backed

up by one Dennis Broe, an American "cultural commentator" and fairly open Putin supporter, who (in the *Morning Star* of 5 November) accused the Democrats of "employing the paranoid style to accuse Trump of being Hitler" and claimed that "Biden-Harris are ... responsible for sabotaging peace talks that may have quickly ended the war in Ukraine where 1,200 Ukrainians are dying each day as the US unsuccessfully uses them to weaken Russia."

After Trump's victory, another piece (on 7 November) by Mr Broe denounced Harris's nomination as "the least democratic in history" contrasting this with Trump, who underwent "a gruelling primary against two formidable candidates, Nikki Haley and Ron DeSantis, coming out ahead." Lest he be misunderstood, Mr Broe assured readers that "Trump of course is no better" than the Democrats.

But hold on a moment: according to Francisco Dominguez, secretary of the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, writing in the MS of 9-10 November: "The people of the United States and most of the rest of the world woke up this week to the very last news they wanted to hear.

"Not only had Donald J. Trump presiding over a proto-fascist Maga mass movement been elected president of the United States, he will enjoy a comfortable majority in the Senate". In sharp contrast to Murray and Broe, Dominguez reckoned "Trump's election as president has a historic signifi-



cance in the worst possible sense of the term."

Strangely, readers of the MS were not given the opinion of the American Communist Party prior to 5 November. Finally, on 8 November, the paper carried a piece by C J Atkins of the Communist Party USA, which described Trump's movement thus: "outright racists and misogynists along with millions of disaffected and confused members of the working class. It's the classic formula for fascism."

Atkins then quoted Georgi Dimitrov, Secretary of the Comintern in 1934 and the foremost proponent of the Popular Front: "Fascism aims at the most unbridled exploitation of the masses but it approaches them with the most artful anti-capitalist demagoguery, taking advantage of the deep hatred of the working people against the plundering bour-

geoisie, the banks, the trusts, the financial magnates."

More sensible than the Third Periodism of Andrew Murray and Dennis Broe, perhaps, but Atkins fails to mention that the popular front in practice meant collaboration with capitalists: the French CP even wanted to bring in "patriotic" fascists. In the US the CP went from promoting self-organisation, militant action, and political independence among workers, African Americans, and other oppressed groups to serving the union bureaucracy in its drive to tame worker militancy and cement its partnership with the Roosevelt administration.

Veering between Third Periodism and Popular Frontism, the *Morning Star* and the CPB simply have no practical proposals. □

"After Trump, it will be our turn next"?



Eye on the Left

By Matt Cooper

Socialists should be appalled by Trump's re-election. Alan Woods, writing in the RCP's *The Communist* (#18), welcomes it. He believes Trump's victory was driven by working-class anger at capitalism. Soon, Woods continues, the working class will see through Trump and will turn to revolution.

Woods buys into the Trump narrative, claiming: "The ruling class of America ... were determined to keep him out of office, by fair means or foul". The leaders of US big business did mainly stay quiet. Only two big corporate CEOs donated ostentatiously to Trump, most notably Elon Musk. The "mar-

kets", however, show big business happy with Trump. Many don't welcome the possible tariffs and limitations on migrant labour, but they do welcome the pretty-definite tax cuts and deregulation.

Woods knows better. US capitalists are "hysterical" and "furious" at Trump's victory. He "is feeding a mood of radicalisation that sets a dangerous precedent for the future". Although Woods states Trump is doing this for his own, reactionary, reasons, he sees the votes for Trump as a displaced "expression of a growing tension between the classes – split between left and right." This vote is based on the working class's "burning hatred of the rich and powerful: the bankers, Wall Street, and the establishment in general".

But those who voted for Trump are not rebelling

against capital. A YouGov poll published before the election asked voters who they thought was responsible for post-pandemic inflation. Most (59%) blamed "big business seeking to maximise profits", thanks to 80% of Democrat voters placing blame there. Only a third of Trump's supporters blamed corporations. Instead, they blamed the Democrats generally (90%) and high spending by Biden's government (87%).

Further, only a quarter of those who voted for Trump thought that their own economic position was poor. Rather, they saw the national economy negatively, 62% believing it was doing badly, a similar figure believing (wrongly) it was in recession.

Woods fails to mention the second most important policy area for Trump voters, immigration, where Trump's rheto-

ric has been at its most toxic. Those who voted for Trump, which for sure contains a large section of the working class, are not incipiently class-conscious but rather in thrall to Trump's paleo-nationalist ideas.

This can also be seen if we examine where Trump's voters live. A *Washington Post* exit poll shows voters who live in large cities favouring Harris by 59% to 38% for Trump. In suburbia, Trump won, but narrowly, by 51% to 47%. In rural and small-town America Trump romped home by 64% to 34%. Although only one-in-five Americans live there, conservative small towns favoured Trump strongly enough to hand him victory.

The conclusion that Woods draws from this is that "once the masses have fully explored the potential of Trumpism and

realised its limitations, they will turn in a different direction. The way will be prepared for a massive swing of the pendulum to the left."

We have seen this idea before. It is the policy of Third Period Stalinism. In 1932 Ernst Thälmann, Stalin's placeman at the head of the German Communists, declared "Hitler must come to power first, then the requirements for a revolutionary crisis [will] arrive more quickly"

Trump is, of course, not Hitler (although his comment last December that immigrants are "poisoning the blood of our country" suggests that he has one foot planted in that territory). But Woods's belief that Trump's win is a positive step towards a working-class upsurge repeats the tragic history of the 1930s, although this time as farce. □

Resisting Trump: a symposium

Working Families Party

It may not seem like it, but today is the beginning of the end for the Trump era and the MAGA movement. Donald Trump has no solutions to address the needs of working-class people in this country. And we know that when he tries to implement his agenda of more tax cuts for billionaires, gutting health care, deporting millions, and supporting war crimes with public dollars, people will rise up. Make no mistake, we have a lot of urgent work to do. Not just to protect each other in the face of a right-wing authoritarian government, though we must do that. It's clear from last night's results that we'll only get to victory by building a coalition of working-class people of all races.

The exit of working-class voters from

the Democratic Party didn't start this election cycle. It's been going on for years. Now, that realignment has put the authoritarian right in power.

This is an all-hands-on-deck moment. We need to join together to build the largest pro-democracy coalition in history and block Trump at every turn. The solution to Trump's politics of division is a politics of solidarity. We also need to build independent political power, because both major parties have failed to prioritise working people. It's time to get to work. □

• *Maurice Mitchell, National Director of the Working Families Party. The WFP is an electoral party, mostly operating through Democratic primaries.*

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

This is real. And I'm not here to sugar-coat what we are all about to collectively experience. But I think that what we can do to prepare is build community... Our choice is to continue to fight, our choice is to win, our choice is to have each other. We are about to enter

a political period that will have consequences for the rest of our lives. We cannot give up. Our main project is to unite the working class in this country against a fascist agenda. We have had an enormous setback in this election because the fascists won a lot of work-

Bernie Sanders

It should come as no great surprise that a Democratic Party which has abandoned working-class people would find that the working class has abandoned them. First, it was the white working class, and now it is Latino and Black workers as well. While the Democratic leadership defends the status quo, the American people are angry and want change. And they're right.

Today, while the very rich are doing phenomenally well, 60% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck and we have more income and wealth inequality than ever before. Unbelievably, real,

inflation-accounted-for, weekly wages for the average American worker are actually lower now than they were 50 years ago. Today, despite an explosion in technology and worker productivity, many young people will have a worse standard of living than their parents. And many of them worry that Artificial Intelligence and robotics will make a bad situation even worse.

Health

Today, despite spending far more per capita than other countries, we remain the only wealthy nation not to guaran-

tee health care to all as a human right and we pay, by far, the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. We, alone among major countries, cannot even guarantee paid family and medical leave.

Today, despite strong opposition from a majority of Americans, we continue to spend billions funding the extremist Netanyahu government's all out war against the Palestinian people which has led to the horrific humanitarian disaster of mass malnutrition and the starvation of thousands of children. Will the big money interests and

At the end of the day the ultimate problem is our ability to clearly and forthrightly advocate for an agenda that clearly champions the working class. □

well-paid consultants who control the Democratic Party learn any real lessons from this disastrous campaign? Will they understand the pain and political alienation that tens of millions of Americans are experiencing? Do they have any ideas as to how we can take on the increasingly powerful oligarchy which has so much economic and political power? Probably not.

In the coming weeks and months those of us concerned about grassroots democracy and economic justice need to have some very serious political discussions. Stay tuned. □

Democratic Socialists of America

Make no mistake: Donald Trump was elected president because of the Democratic Party establishment's failure to present a credible alternative to the right wing. For decades they have bowed to billionaires, waged war, ripped millions of immigrants from their families, and shown a complete lack of conviction to deliver a better quality of life for working people. In her campaign, Kamala Harris defended her administration's role in the genocide in Gaza and cozied up with Republicans, abandoning the Arab and Muslim community and the progressive base who helped put Democrats in power. This is the result, and the international working class is paying the price.

Trump is no solution to working-class problems. A second Trump presidency

will present enormous challenges to our already-weak democratic rights and will fan the flames of bigotry, division, authoritarianism, and fealty to corporations, allowing fascist tendencies to flourish.

But the fight for a better world will not be won or lost in a single election. It is understandable to have fear in the face of Trump's hateful agenda, but the best way to defeat it is with courage and solidarity. We take inspiration from socialists and communists around the world and across generations who remained steadfast even as they faced world wars, dictators, violent repression, and economic depression. Many of the left's greatest victories were achieved under these conditions.

We understand the work ahead of us:

Build a new party for the working class. Bring new communities into the class struggle. Unite with popular movements across a common set of demands for everything workers deserve. Find points of leverage against the ruling class, like organising our coworkers to strike, and shutting down business as usual through civil disobedience. Campaign for socialists to take office in all levels of government. Prepare a viable left opposition presidential candidate for 2028.

Socialists are already winning where Democrats have lost. Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, a DSA member and champion for Palestinian liberation, won handily in her district while Harris lost significantly with those same voters. In red states, Gabriel Sanchez

won a seat as the first socialist in the Georgia State legislature and J P Lynamer as the first socialist in Louisville, Kentucky's city council. Even as Republicans gained ground, DSA candidates prevailed around the country. We are standing up and demanding no abortion ban, no genocide, no deportations!

You are needed in this fight. DSA is an organisation where we can come together and organise campaigns to improve our lives, support each other through hard times, study strategy and history, and make decisions democratically. Don't go through the next four years alone. Join DSA. □



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Resisting Trump

SEIU

We are not defeated, we are determined. And we won't back down. We remain united to each other and to our vision for a healthy, joyful, and prosperous future. And we're not going to let anyone divide us based on racism, sexism, or fear.

SEIU's two million members did monumental work in this election, reaching

more than seven million voters in 12 languages. Those conversations weren't just about one vote, they're about the world we're determined to build together. Our shared future is one rooted in joy and optimism, where we have Unions for All so that workers can share in the nation's prosperity.

We are putting corporations, billion-

aires, and extremist politicians on notice – we see you, we know just what you're trying to do, and we won't back down. We know what it's like to face down bullies. We know how to keep going, to care for each other, to face down systems built to keep us out of power and divided. We will fight back by organising, mobilising, and win-

ning worker power. We will not allow anyone to take away our fundamental rights and freedoms. Hear us: when you attack just one of us, you're attacking every worker who makes our communities, our economy, and our nation strong. □

• From *Service Employees International Union (SEIU)* president April Verrett

Traven Leyshon

There was an online meeting a couple of days ago, with some unions involved. Out of that there will be maybe 10,000 community-based meetings over the next few weeks, wherever they can find someone who's willing to organise a meeting.

They're urging in-person meetings, though a lot of left political work has been limited to online in recent years.

SEIU and a few other unions were at that meeting. SEIU has a significant base among poor and non-white sections of the working class which are very threatened, and it has significant organisational capacity.

It was possible in 2016 for a very small organisation to reach out and suddenly bring in hundreds of people that they didn't expect. From that came some organised resistance, like occupation of airports in response to attacks on immigrants.

The initiative now is coordinated by groups which have an online capacity, but not many actual cadres – the Working Families Party, Move On, groups on the left of the Democratic Party.

We will see what the DSA will do. The DSA probably has a cadre of five thou-

sand, people that be can be counted on to do something every week, then maybe 60,000 paper members.

The need is to build some kind of mass, non-violent resistance, eventually including workplace-based political strikes.

A lot of people are scared, and for good reason. The right here is well-armed, well-mobilised, and it looks like both houses of Congress, the Supreme Court, and the presidency will all be in far-right Republican hands. Not that they intend to be limited by anything in the constitution or law; they will go ahead and use the state apparatus to suppress resistance. And I think there is mass support in the country right now, sad to say, for mass deportations.

I expect that the Trump administration and the Republican Congress will do a great deal to defund the online liberal left and the non-profits, which have done most of the work in resistance to attacks on immigrants.

The left is weaker than it was in 2020. The left grew, and people's aspirations grew, with the Bernie Sanders campaigns. But with the effective shutting-down of that in 2020, a lot of

the hope for change in the foreseeable future collapsed.

Unions, environmental groups, etc. felt that they had access to the Biden administration, and to some degree, they had. The administration would listen to them. It wasn't able or willing to do much.

It's true that Biden probably is the most pro-union president since FDR, but that's a low bar. So despite the fact of people are wanting to join unions, and a higher level of strike activity, union membership has stagnated or shrunk during the Biden administration, despite some tremendous opportunities.

Today you've got the AFL-CIO patting themselves on the back after the election, saying the majority of union members who voted, voted for Harris and not for Trump. It's true that the organised working class still was willing to support the Democrat over the Republicans, but every other demographic moved to Trump.

The Republicans, to some degree, are perceived by working people as a party that's responsive to the needs of working-class people, and the Democrats as useless at best.

As the Trump administration sheds its populist image, people are going to become angrier.

In 2028, assuming there are elections, and I think there will be elections, people will likely want to throw the Republicans out. By then Trump will be gone, and it will probably be someone like J D Vance, who is more competent, and has more of a proto-fascist dynamic than Trump.

This is a very dangerous situation, with the left shrinking, social movements demobilised, and the Harris-Trump choice with no credible or meaningful left choice on the ballot.

Some groups favoured Stein [the Green Party candidate], but hardly anyone actually campaigned for Stein. The Green Party will never be an advance towards, an embryo of, or a constituent

part of the future working-class-based party that we need in this country.

The labour movement here is not ready for the scenario in which the National Labour Relations Act [the USA's basic union-rights law, from 1935] is declared unconstitutional, which I think is almost certain.

The National Labour Relations Board, which has been friendly to unions and union organising under Biden, will be filled with right wingers, then within a year or two there won't even be the National Labour Relations Act.

It will be what people refer to as the law of the jungle. If you had a mobilised labour movement that could be a good thing. We'd engage in political strikes, in secondary boycotts, and so on. But the current leadership of the AFL-CIO managed to get rid of the class-struggle leadership of the Vermont AFL-CIO, for example. It took them five years to do that, but they managed to turn it into a do-nothing lobbying organisation of Democrats.

I think elements of such things as Vance's proposal to replace unions by joint worker-boss organisations, and right-wing think-tank hopes to get public-sector unions declared unconstitutional, are probably going to come to pass.

In many states teachers' unions have a legal right to strike. I think we can expect that in at least half of the states, public employees, including teachers, will lose the right to strike. But you can have effective strikes that violate the law. We saw that in the teachers' upsurge back under the previous Trump administration.

All this is going to challenge the existing labour movement. I think we're going to take a beating over the next few years, that's for sure, but out of that will come a class-struggle wing. □

• Traven Leyshon is a long-time trade unionist and socialist who has been active in Vermont and New York

Shawn Fain, UAW

UAW members around the country clocked in today under the same threat they faced yesterday: unchecked corporate greed destroying our lives, our families, and our communities. It's the threat of companies like Stellantis, Mack Truck, and John Deere shipping jobs overseas to boost shareholder profits. It's the threat of corporate America telling the working class to sit down and shut up.

We've said all along that no matter who is in the White House, our fight remains the same. The fight to fix our broken trade laws like the USMCA continues. The fight for good union jobs and US leadership in the

emerging battery industry continues. The fight for a secure retirement for everyone in this country continues. The fight for a living wage, affordable health care, and time for our families continues.

It's time for Washington, DC to put up or shut up, no matter the party, no matter the candidate. Will our government stand with the working class, or keep doing the bidding of the billionaires? That's the question we face today. And that's the question we'll face tomorrow. The answer lies with us. No matter who's in office. □

• Shawn Fain is president of the United Auto Workers

p: a symposium

Randi Weingarten, AFT

The voters have spoken. While we hoped and fought for a different outcome, we respect both their will and the peaceful transfer of power. At this moment, the country is more divided than ever, and our democracy is in jeopardy. Last night, we saw fear and anger win... At the same time, our opportunity engines – labour unions and public schools – remain popular and enduring. It means we must fight for the means and agency to secure a better life, and that public education and a growing labour movement are more important than ever. For example, while Trump won Kentucky, the ballot initiative there to destroy public schools lost.

Many people today are devastated; many are excited. Many wonder whether the arc of the universe does

bend to justice; many wonder whether our democratic institutions will hold.

These are questions that are not knowable today, but I pray we are curious and introspective enough to understand what happened and ask how we unify the country. What binds us as Americans is far more important than what divides us. I do know one thing: Educators, healthcare professionals and public employees will be doing everything they can to make a difference in the lives of the people they serve. And our guiding principle will be to continue to do the work to improve people's lives: to fight for our children's future and the promise of America. □

• Randi Weingarten is president of the American Federation of Teachers



Protect our futures march, Anti-Trump demo, 9 November, New York City

Eric Blanc

After spending 48 hours in shell-shock mode, here are some initial reflections on what went wrong and how we can defeat Trumpism:

Blame the Democratic Party establishment... The only chance the Dems had at winning in 2024 was by running someone outside of the Biden administration, probably someone like Gretchen Whitmer. (And though Bernie was too old this time around, it's worth remembering that he won over exactly the people Harris struggled with: workers across the country, Latinos, and Joe Rogan bros.)

Incapable of seriously looking at the Democratic Party's flaws, many elitist liberals are already blaming ordinary people, claiming most Americans are irreparably brainwashed or prejudiced. But if this were true, it's hard to explain why Americans elected Barack Hussein Obama in 2008.

Given that most unions only represent 10 percent of the workforce and

made so few attempts to recruit new members over these past four years, it's not surprising that Biden's pro-union policies did little to reverse the Democrats' fortunes among working people.

The sad truth is that top union officials – with a few notable exceptions – failed to seize an exceptionally favorable opening for mass unionization created by a tight labour market, a very good NLRB, and a grassroots revitalization driven by young radicalized workers. Had most unions massively invested in new organising after 2020, this could have significantly changed the political map.... There's no path to defeating the far right that doesn't pass through expanding and transforming the labour movement.

Workplace organising will be harder under Trump, but it's far from impossible. We should remember that labour's current uptick began with the red state teachers' strikes of 2018, which won big gains against Republican state gov-

ernments.

Trump's election is a big blow for democracy and working people in the US and worldwide, especially the most marginalized. But we shouldn't despair. There are good reasons to believe that this could resemble George W. Bush's election in 2004 – which quickly spurred backlash leading to Obama – rather than Reagan's 1980 election, which ushered in a long era of conservative policies.

By far the biggest mistake made by the Left this cycle was to not run a viable candidate in the presidential primary....

It's worrisome that many resistant liberals seem resigned to Trump this time around – but it's good that democratic socialists are still ready to fight and that we're better organised now than we were in 2016. Most urgently, we have a key role to play in helping initiate big united-front mass protests capable of bringing together everybody who

stands against Trump's horrors.

The Democratic Party's failure is a major opening for recruiting hundreds of thousands to the democratic socialist movement. But doing so requires that we quickly pivot away from internal-facing debates and a tendency to worry too much about whether we're sufficiently radical...

We'll get through all this collectively, not as isolated individuals. I felt sick to my stomach and full of despair until I went to an [Emergency Workplace Organising](#) meeting last night, which re-energized me and gave me a much-needed shot of hope. If you haven't already, you should join DSA and organise your workplace with EWOC's help. A luta continua. □

• Abridged from bit.ly/eb-20. Eric Blanc is in the DSA and writes for Jacobin magazine.

Howie Hawkins

The first thing we should do is understand why a majority of the 63% of eligible voters who actually cast ballots elected a far-right authoritarian by a narrow 51% to 48% margin.

The American working and middle classes are angry at the economic precarity that the powers that be have given them after five decades of corporate neoliberalism. Trump presented himself as the outsider anti-establishment change candidate, while Harris ran as the moderate establishment candidate. The swing vote was the 10 mil-

lion or so 2020 Biden voters who Harris lost, not to Trump but to disaffection from the Democratic establishment.

The election returns show that Trump did not receive many, if any, more votes than he received in 2020 when he lost to Joe Biden by 7.1 million votes. Trump's total in 2020 was 74.2 million. At this writing three days after the election while some mail ballots are still being counted, Trump had 73.4 million votes.

Harris had received only 69.1 million, compared to Joe Biden's 81.3 million in

2020. The difference in this election is over 10 million Biden voters who stayed home instead of voting for Harris. Harris ran to the right, trying to get moderate Republican votes, and lost enough of her progressive base to lose. Those 10 million or so 2020 Biden voters who did not vote in 2024 would have come out for Democrat who campaigned as a change candidate on a progressive populist economic agenda. Harris' refusal to condition arms to Israel on adherence to human rights, which is US law and supported by a majority of

Americans, also depressed the Democratic vote for Harris.

The corporate funders and professional cadre who control the Democratic Party are intractably committed to a neoliberal and imperialist agenda. The Harris campaign reflected their politics.

So what the left must do now is build its own political party. It needs to be a movement party that is as active in the unions and social movements as in the

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Resisting Trump

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elections. Indeed, without organised intervention in the unions by a leftwing party, we won't have a labour movement that is more than the business unions we have now that are narrowly focused on servicing a shrinking membership base that is now down to only 10% of all workers and 6% of private sector workers. It will take leftwing party activists to organise union rank-and-file members to transform their unions into social movement unions that engage and educate their own members, organise the unorganised into unions, join forces with other progressive social movements, and take independent working-class political action.

Since the Communist Party led the US left and labour movement into the Democratic Party under the Popular Front policy in 1936, the socialist left has disappeared as a distinct political force in the US with its own identity, social analysis, and policy program. Most of the shrinking numbers of self-iden-

tified socialists have been supporting Democratic Party candidates in elections for nearly a century now. With no left competing for their votes, the Democrats have taken progressive voters for granted as they moved to the right over the years, from the mildly social-democratic New Deal Democrats of the 1930s to 1970s to the harshly neoliberal corporate New Democrats since the 1980s.

So it is past time for the US left to undertake the long overdue and fundamental task of breaking with the Democrats and building its own party. The Democrats, who have normalized the far-right Republicans by seeking bipartisanship compromises that accommodate to their extreme right-wing policies, have proven that they don't know how to fight the right and defeat it politically. For that we need a left party that campaigns against both Democratic neoliberalism and Republican neofascism and for a democratic socialist and ecological society that takes care of all the people and the planet. □

• *Howie Hawkins is a long-time socialist. He was the Green Party presidential candidate in 2020.*



Barry Finger

The Harris candidacy properly identified the authoritarian threat that the Trump movement propelled. But it tried to counter it with a popular campaign in defence of democracy devoid of a robust activist agenda, aside from the defence of reproductive rights. Without a vigorous social agenda, "democracy" is in abstraction. Its appeal is pitched primarily to the educated classes. And these classes, by themselves, cannot carry an election.

She was urged, even by Sanders, to distance itself from the Biden presi-

dency, a presidency that inherited a pandemic, a migrant crisis and high inflation. Biden himself is deeply unpopular for the inflation-led deterioration in real wages that characterised his first two years.

But Harris should have doubled down on its very real pro-worker successes, taken responsibility for its limitations, and centered its intentions on building and expanding on what worked: unions are the strongest they've been in decades; wages among the lowest earners grew the fastest; the child care tax credit was expanded; a minimum corporate tax was enacted; a tax on stock buy backs was added; inflation was brought down and, unlike in the 1970s, without recession and mass unemployment; millions of jobs, including manufacturing jobs, were created; unemployment remained low; prescription prices were lowered; more Americans had health care than ever before; billions were given to student debt relief; the American Rescue Plan [of 2021] got Americans back to work, covered COBRA (health insurance) payments and deposited money directly into Americans' bank accounts.

Instead, she assembled a coalition

of middle class moderates, Wall Street and Silicon Valley donors with special outreach to disaffected business-oriented Republicans and their traditional war hawks. Rather than touting the bottom-up programs of the Biden administration, she emphasised lowering the capital gains tax for millionaires. She thereby neutralised what could have been a point of attack against Trump, promising instead to have a more business-friendly orientation than her opponent.

Authoritarian from the top, the Trump campaign deepened its inroads into the multiracial, multiethnic working class. 40% of union families voted for him. And it was a clean sweep. Even in solid blue districts, Trump increased his support.

It was not his authoritarianism that attracted workers to Trump. Many of these people had been life-long Democrats, who had given Obama and Biden a chance. It was rather that Trump had a social agenda that cynically combined social resentments with real class grievances: the Covid lockdowns hit poorest workers the hardest; unregulated immigration placed excessive strain on social services, which negatively im-

pacted workers in particular; and the heartland had grown weary of "forever wars" for which there are few upsides and for which they were tired of being taxed. The Harris camp failed to defuse these with a progressive alternative.

And the Left? The other day, I received a call from the local DSA chapter inviting me to participate in an anti-fascist demonstration in a near by city. Where was this concern in the past two years? They, the Left in general, had more important priorities. And they exercised those priorities in support of Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis. Which is why it is so glaringly obvious that they have discredited themselves as anti-fascists and why no one, except the most deluded, will look to them as leaders or allies in an anti-authoritarian struggle.

Having spent the past year spreading jihadist ideologies that directly harmed minorities and outraged working class communities the Left managed to marginalise themselves – at the very moment when their presence is most needed. □

• *Barry Finger is a long-time socialist in New York state.*

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workersliberty.org/publications/

Tom Harrison

Whether he's had the ability or patience ever to have played Monopoly, Donald Trump has picked up a mammoth get-out-of-jail card, capping a lifetime's achievement avoiding accountability for his criminal activities. This time the outcome comes courtesy of those American voters willing to ignore his criminal past and almost certain criminal future for promises he'll

keep prices down at the gas stations.

Trump frequently complains that he's been indicted more times than Al Capone, an interesting comparison to make with America's most notorious gangster. Trump himself has had numerous mobster connections throughout the years and is going to act like a mafia boss in his second term as he demands unwavering and unquestioning

loyalty from his subordinates.

The renowned playwright Bertold Brecht famously drew a comparison between American organised crime and Hitler's Nazi Party in The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui. The play's essential message is that fascism is preventable if it's nipped in the bud.

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Resisting Trump

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America hasn't made a particularly good job of that over the last four years! After Trump's 6 January 2021 coup attempt, it was nearly two years before the temporising Attorney-General Merrick Garland appointed Jack Smith as special prosecutor, far too late to get a verdict against an individual with a lifetime's experience in legal trickery. Even the trial where Trump was found guilty of defrauding the citizens of New York came too late for any punishment to be handed out.

Trump used the media every time he went to court. He denounced the proceedings and threatened the judges, prosecutors, court officials and even some of their family members, and wrote the charges off as the system "out

to get him". The public were denied the information of clear court findings.

Presenting himself as "victim" was one reason Trump increased his support among black and Latino men, although the American justice system cuts you a lot of slack if you are a rich white guy.

Unless you are one of his deluded followers or belong to that increasing band of sycophants and Trump toadies, it's pretty obvious he was guilty as hell of trying to overturn the US constitution. In the case of the stolen documents, the evidence was found all over his tacky Florida golf resort.

Ever since the revelations of collusion with Russian agents in 2016, opponents of Trump had believed that the legal system or impeachment proceedings would bring him down. But was left for the electorate, and they didn't manage it either.

That political failure can be largely put down to the thinness of the Demo-

crats' response to the cost of living crisis experienced by most sections of the working class. Proposals like doubling the minimum wage would have been a good idea if they'd actually been done months before the election. The fear that any kind of wealth redistribution measures would have the Dems branded "communist" by the right wing media accounts for their unbearable lightness of policy in this respect.

Turnout was 63% in this election compared to 66% in 2020. Trump's vote was up only a bit despite attracting new voters. The Democrats though, were 10 million votes short on 2020. People didn't turn out – a sign of general disenchantment and the notion that voting doesn't change anything. Such a mood is what feeds right wing "populism".

Of course Trump will not improve the lot of the America working class. Some believe this is all part of a political merry-go-round, with the Dems back again in four years' time.

Yet Trump's victory is the triumph of the oligarchs, with the likes of Musk, Thiel and co. – his bankrollers – effectively the powers behind the throne and wishing to gut welfare spending and attack workers' rights.

These people want to turn the USA into an "illiberal democracy". On 5 November Trump was successful beyond their wildest dreams, the first Republican to win the popular vote in twenty years. He will allow his autocratic tendencies full rein as he seeks to persecute his enemies.

Already several of the lickspittle personages on Fox News have said prosecutors in Trump's criminal cases should face the death penalty. A resistance to the chaos and horrors of the next four years must be built, and it's really up to the American left to provide some decent leadership. □

• Tom Harrison is a writer for *Solidarity*

Arguments pour la lutte sociale

This is a defeat for the proletariat and democracy, which calls for analysis, resistance and counter-attack. That's why we welcome [\[the\] statement by the United Automobile Workers](#), which has the merit of reminding us that the working class is in the majority and that it has the same aspirations and demands whatever its vote, with Donald Trump and Elon Musk as its enemies.

Harris could not have won on her own, being the candidate of one of the two major parties of the American capitalist class. In 2020, Biden won against Trump not on his own strength, but because of the powerful wave of demonstrations by Blacks and all the youth with them, whose detonator had been the assassination of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Why didn't we get that this time?

It's not good enough [just] to say that you can't beat the far right with a liberal programme that is, to say the least, soft on "social" issues. Such recriminations are based on illusions. Harris could not have had any other programme than the one she had. The defence of democracy had to (and will have to) be

done without the Democratic Party and outside it, and it is on the terrain of the defence of democracy that the Democrats have instilled weakness.

Because, let's never forget, all of Biden's four years have been under the sign of the "U.S. Capitol Attack" on 6 January 2021 and the absence of a judicial crackdown on Trump in its aftermath. While all "serious people" know of his dependence on Putin, the ruling circles of the US have chosen to keep quiet about this fact that is so disorientating and problematic for them and their credibility: a president who is a "Russian agent"!

What's more, this time, unlike in 2016, it is key circles of capital that have moved towards Trump, certainly to control him, but also to direct his blows against the unions and the labour movement... And the dollar is rising and so are the stock markets: the capitalist class is betting on Trump, who is no longer an "accident" as he was in 2016.

The element of physical intimidation, typical of fascism, has been present in the United States at least since 6 Jan-

uary 2021 and was a factor in Trump's election. It combines with the strong masculinist and virilist dimension of a campaign in which the struggle for or against male domination over women was a central issue – and although this masculinist vote also includes female voices (just as there are, in Iran, female guardians of the Islamic veil), the majority of those resisting Trump were women.

Let's repeat: violence was already an element of this victory. It took place under threat, because everyone knew that Trump would not concede defeat. The methods of "bourgeois democracy" alone have been defeated in advance. It is the methods of the picket lines of the strikers in the automobile industry, victorious in a conflict over wages at the end of 2023, and of self-defence against the police and militias on the part of young Blacks, aided by other sectors of youth, as in 2020, it is these methods alone, involving the independent organisation of the broadest masses, that will be effective against Trumpist violence and attempts at intimidation.

[However] the mobilisation of universities on the theme of Palestine has, for the most part, done nothing for the Palestinian people and has played into Trump's hands.

This is neither the fault nor the responsibility of the students and the millions of young people revolted by the suffering of Gaza, but of the political direction given to this movement by its leaders, namely the vast majority of the extreme left and the sectors claiming leadership of the movement, who [diverted] legitimate indignation into a movement uncritical of Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran, and acting on the basis of fantasised representations.

A combined mobilisation demanding a halt to arms supplies to the IDF, aid to Ukraine and real democratic repression of Trump and the coup plotters of 6 January 2021 would have been needed. But this was made impossible, the movement undermined by campism, "anti-Zionism" and the Genocide Joe slogan... □

• Abridged from bit.ly/aps-t. APLS is a socialist group in France

Will Roberts

Since the outcome of the US election has been made clear, the programmatic differences between the majority and minority in *Workers' Liberty* on the US are less sharp: there is no longer a vote to call for (or not call for), and the immediate priority of organising to stop the impending threat of a Trump presidency is clear on all sides.

That said, there are some arguments worth responding to from the last few months, and some points worth emphasising in light of the election.

Both [Martin Thomas](#) and [Ollie Moore](#) had rather baffling attacks aimed at mine and Katy Dollar's use of Trotsky in our [last article](#).

The authors say we were wrong-

headed to bring up Trotsky's article: that Germany in the 1930s was a fundamentally different situation to America in 2024, and that the class forces at play were entirely different (and for our side, much worse). I couldn't agree more. Our article, in fact, only brought up that Trotsky quote because Martin cited it as a useful precedent. We said that it was wrong to make that comparison because the situation was different, and because the quote had been ripped out of context and made to say the opposite of what Trotsky actually intended. Both authors could have benefited from rereading what they were attacking before putting pen to paper.

Ollie Moore's article hinged on a re-

peated point: that Dollar and I were refusing to "grubby ourselves with the trifling business of actually answering the questions workers ask us about politics." Unfortunately for Ollie, nobody was asking us this question – indeed, he acknowledges as much himself, when he calls the debate "an exercise in simulation, a kind of 'war game'." In this situation, we are what Ollie called us – "mere propagandists" – and the propaganda we have put forward has been muddled by tying itself to the Democratic party's electoral campaign. By placing the question of voting Democrat front-and-centre, we have harmed our ability to correctly identify and criticise the betrayal of voters that

the Democrats have carried out.

Post-election, a serious shift is needed in our coverage. Mark Osborn and Cathy Nugent's article in *Solidarity* [724](#) argued that if the election result hung in the balance, as it did in 2000, the Democrats should be "made to fight" rather than admitting defeat as Al Gore did. On the morning after the article's publication, when a Trump victory was clear, the article was edited online to simply say: "The left must press the Democratic leadership to stand up to Trump's demagoguery. The left must demand the Democrats fight."

This is a much more open statement

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Resisting Trump

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than the original article. The Democrats are not the Labour Party, they do not have formal channels for working class influence on party policy or government action. While Osborn and Nugent are correct that we must look to the socialist left and the unions to “present an alternative”, their article is vague on what that alternative should be, and leaves open the idea that it should be primarily a struggle around the Democratic party platform for the

next four years. To restate: both authors are correct that the immediate task is to organise resistance to Trump’s threats in the labour movement and local communities. But a broader horizon is needed, and fast.

Martin Thomas hides, in an online [footnote](#) in his response to myself and Dollar, a summary of the history of Trotskyists and the demand for an American labour party, in which he writes off the tactic as “wishful thinking”. I do not agree with some statements made by others in the minority, that a labour party could arise out of the AWL “talking to” people in the American left and provoking them to launch a party in

the coming months. That is, indeed, wishful thinking. A longer article on perspectives for the coming years is in order, but the work ahead of our allies in the US left is an attempt to regroup as large a grouping of the American left as possible, and a process of diligent work in the grassroots of unions and campaigns, to rebuild a working-class force capable of influencing politics at a national level.

Thomas is right that the demand for a labour party has failed previously – in fact, he could have listed several other failed attempts on top of those in his article. But he is wrong to give up on the demand. The low-level, careful work

now must be informed by a longer-term perspective of working-class influence in American politics – and then an even-longer-term perspective of the working class raising themselves to the level of the ruling class. If the left spends four years trying only to put out Trump’s fires, we will be having a re-run of this exact debate in four years’ time. And I think I speak for all of Workers’ Liberty when I say that none of us want that. □

• Will Roberts is one of those in Workers’ Liberty who favoured backing no candidate in the 5 Nov presidential election.

Eric Lee

On the eve of the Second World War, the American journalist John Roy Carlson infiltrated a large number of pro-fascist organisations across the country. The book he wrote, *Under Cover*, was a best-seller.

The inside covers of his book are illustrated with his membership cards, using the false name he gave to all the groups. The range of the groups is extraordinary, from the German American Bund (a powerful and influential group) to long-forgotten fascist bands like the Silver Shirts. Some of the groups were explicitly Christian nationalist. The fascist radio star Father Coughlin had an audience estimated at thirty million listeners. The Ku Klux Klan was probably the largest, and most violent, with a membership estimated to be in the millions. Others were anti-war – supporters of American isolationism, opposed to giving any support to embattled Brit-

ain. All the groups were antisemitic to one degree or another, though some – such as the America First Committee – took pains to pretend that they were not.

Some of this forgotten history has come back into public view in recent years thanks to Donald Trump. In 2016, Trump embraced the slogan “America First” – which was probably the largest and most effective of the pro-Nazi groups in the 1930s. And more recently, on the eve of this year’s election, he chose to hold his final mass rally in Madison Square Garden, where in February 1939, the German American Bund rallied 20,000 supporters. Back then, the stage was decorated with an enormous portrait of George Washington, American flags – and swastikas. This time, the swastikas were gone.

The similarities between the “MAGA movement” (as Trump calls it) and the

range of groups Carlson infiltrated and exposed are clear. The hyper-patriotism, the racism, the fawning over foreign dictators, the threat of violence, the conspiracy theories, the isolationism – they were all present in 1940 and they are all present today. Arguably, Father Coughlin with his tens of millions of listeners used a new technology (radio) in the same way that Elon Musk does today with social media.

The only thing missing, it seems, is the pervasive antisemitism of the earlier movement. Back in 1939, Fritz Kuhn, the German American Bund leader, could openly refer to “President Rosenfeld”, implying that Roosevelt was either Jewish, or in the control of Jews. This kind of overt anti-Jewish hatred is a not a feature of Trump’s speeches.

But with his promises to put an end to “wokeness” it may only be a matter of time before openly antisemitic

language returns. And let’s not forget what Trump called those who in 2017 chanted “the Jews will not replace us”. He said they were “good people”. He also has only kind words for those jailed for the 6 January 2021 storming of the capitol – one of whom was wearing a “Camp Auschwitz” hoodie.

The “Nazi underworld of America” in Carlson’s time was enormous, led by some highly influential and powerful figures, including politicians, clergyman and celebrities like Charles Lindbergh and Henry Ford. Yet within days of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the American entry into the war, the movement collapsed. It did not collapse because the left and the unions effectively destroyed it with their counter-protests. It collapsed because of state repression. American fascists, like their counterparts in Britain led by Oswald Mosley, were arrested, jailed and driven underground.

Could history repeat itself? Probably not. And not least because the successors to the groups described in Carlson’s book will soon be running the country. The institutions, including the Justice Department and FBI, that came down hard on the German American Bund and America First eight decades ago will now be entirely in the hands of Trump’s most loyal supporters.

With the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government under his control, bringing down this generation’s “Nazi underworld” will be an even greater challenge. □

• Eric Lee writes a personal column for Solidarity. He is founder-editor of LabourStart, and started his political activity on the US socialist left.

Kent Worcester

For what it’s worth, I thought the Democrats would do better. I spent the weekend before election day driving back and forth between NYC, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland. The drive encompasses dairy farms, small towns, suburbs, and hipster districts. It’s vital territory from the standpoint of the swing state calculus.

My sense of things was warped by what I saw and what I didn’t. I spotted a surprising number of pro-Harris bumper stickers, along with only a smattering of pro-Trump lawn signs. There was less visible support for the GOP than when I drove across Pennsylvania in late 2020. Nor was Trump dominating the local airwaves, from what I could tell. It certainly did not seem as if the Trump campaign was in the driver’s seat.

Furthermore, my gut told me that the Harris campaign was getting a lot of things “right” from a cynical electoral perspective. I was blown away by the campaign’s fundraising prowess. I allowed myself to be lulled into thinking that the [Bulwark](#) slice of the electorate mattered. I never imagined that Harris would do so poorly with voters earn-

ing under \$50,000 year. I had assumed that Gaza would hurt Democrats in Michigan but not that it would depress turnout across the board. And I figured that the negative energy on display at Madison Square Garden would backfire on the Republicans. So much for my powers of prognostication.

While I was in Cleveland, I attended a memorial for Glenn Perusek (1958-2024). Glenn and I first met at an International Socialist Organization summer camp at the end of the 1970s. We shared a deep ambivalence toward our Cliffite heritage but moved in different directions. I took up cultural history while Glenn prioritised labour issues – while also reading ancient Greek and modern German philosophers, in their original languages, on the side. Tellingly, his final book, produced in collaboration with Peter Olney and John Womack, is [Labor Power and Strategy](#).

For a couple of decades Glenn taught at a small college in Michigan. But he left academia in the early 2000s to devote himself to the labour movement on a full-time basis. He then worked as a strategist for the Team-

sters Union, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and the AFL-CIO. He also taught classes for union members through the Cornell/AFL-CIO program and the Building Trades Academy at Michigan State University.

Glenn always insisted that rebuilding the labour movement had to be our top priority. In 2016 he wrote that, “If we do not take steps today to build organisations that can link together disparate struggles, then the broadly social democratic left will be weakened. We will never be able to take on global capital unless we build a solid organisational edifice – both political and economic.” The key, he thought, to cracking the puzzle of US politics was social democracy from below.

When we last spoke, he sounded pessimistic about the Harris campaign. The gap was too wide, he said, between windy rhetoric – the politics of joy! – and lived experiences on the ground. I should have listened. □

• Kent Worcester is a long-time US socialist and a writer for New Politics

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Cathy Nugent



Book review

Interviewed in the *Guardian* (7 November) journalist Gabriel Gatehouse, who has spent years investigating conspiracy theories in US politics, identifies two main factors behind Trump's Presidential victory. The first is the continuing impact of a squeeze on the cost of living. The second is that a large block of voters think the "system sucks, it's fucked" and the Democrats are seen to defend the system. Gatehouse believes that because conspiracy theories are nearly always anti-system, they help to build these views.

Gatehouse is right to say that we have to take conspiracy theories seriously. But the extent to which these views are shaping the political landscape is up for debate. Gatehouse's podcast and new book, *The Coming Storm*, and Richard Seymour's recent *Disaster Nationalism: The Downfall of Liberal Civilisation*, cover this ground.

Ian Dunt and Dorian Lynskey's *Conspiracy Theory, the Story of an Idea*, may be a more useful place to start for anyone wanting to understand how conspiracist thinking serves a political purpose for the far right. It covers a lot of ground for a short book. It is strictly factual and avoids polemic.

Conspiracy theories, the authors say, can best be thought of as "the unnecessary assumption of conspiracy when other explanations are more probable". It is more than confirmation bias – such as when Republican supporters believe the court cases against Trump were "rigged" because they were initiated by the Democrats.

The authors draw on a 1964 essay by the US historian Richard Hofstadter who outlined a "paranoid style" in US politics. Hofstadter defined this as: "heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy." After the Second World War the paranoid style involved virulent anti-Communism, starting with Senator Joseph McCarthy's Red Scare, continued by the John Birch Society and epitomised by the Presidential campaign of Barry Goldwater.

Conspiracist thinking is also a psychological disposition which acts as a buttress against the "chaos, uncertainty and fallibility of life" and eliminates ambiguity. A vulnerability to conspiracist thinking could be said to be hot-wired into the human brain – a need to seek patterns and narratives in order to make sense of complexity.

Conspiracy theories in politics provide useful templates to explain the effects of power and often these are emotional rather than factual and co-exist very well with populism. They are about bad actors doing shady things. They often have a scapegoat at the centre of them: the Muslim immigrant who

is part of a bigger plot of mass immigration orchestrated by the elite or Jews, a force which will eventually marginalise the "white race". This, the narrative of the "Great Replacement", has, in different iterations, become mainstream.

Dunt and Lynskey track how conspiracy theories became mainstream in US politics from the 1990s onwards, when narratives such as the one about the Clintons being a ruthless criminal gang took shape, an idea recirculated and reformulated by Trump against Hillary Clinton in 2016. Many other theories were generated after 9/11 and the subsequent "war on terror". They found a means to spread widely and quickly through the development of the internet and online platforms.

What is the connection between Trump's 2024 victory to this back story? By the early 2020s "conspiracism had become a widespread psychological addiction [boosted by the pandemic], political strategy and a booming market." Trumpite Republicanism bases a political strategy on exploiting the vulnerabilities of people with these addictions. The money-making enterprises of the influencers who have piggy-backed onto the Republican cause help to consolidate this eco-system.

Trump's special skill was to leverage conspiracist ideas to provide self-protection. By targeting "the deep state" in his first term he could eliminate the possibility of his own failure: if something went wrong in his first term it was the fault of the civil service. Then the election was stolen by the deep state. Now Trump may have to try to "eliminate" the deep state through a mass sacking of the civil service. Time will tell.

How do we fight conspiracy theories if they are, as Dunt and Lynskey maintain, not so much a pathology but an all-too human reaction to the volatile, frightening social circumstances of the last thirty or more years? The authors' liberal answers emphasise the need to distinguish between the victims of conspiracy theories and the villains, to relate to the nuggets of truth contained within many conspiracy theories and build up alternative narratives.

How to fight is a harder question for socialists because we need to build the forces that can confront the far right before it wins new recruits on the basis of conspiracy theories. Do we have time to wean people away from their conspiracist fantasies?

There is a longer-term strategy we need to develop. That is to turn labour movements out towards organising more political discussion in our communities and workplaces. We should advocate setting up debates, meetings, and schools where ideas about how the world works can be tested and discussed. □

• Cathy Nugent is a writer for *Solidarity*

Claureen Ryan



Resisting Trump

The election of Donald Trump as US president came as a horrible shock to leftists. And this will not be the same presidency as Trump's first term in 2016-20; nor quite the same Trump, either.

Only 63% voted in the USA, yet is an event that will have great consequences across the world. It will most likely give Putin victory in Ukraine, and an extension of life as Russia's dictator. It will boost other right-wing authoritarians across the globe.

Trump's triumph will further erode the value of truth and objectivity – the very idea that there is objective or scientific truth.

This will grow the right wing and authoritarianism everywhere. No socialist should feel triumphant or vindicated at the failure of Harris-Walz. If the prospects for authoritarianism look better, and they do, then we all lose.

And the consequences for American workers, including those who voted for Trump, will be dire. Dire for them as workers, as citizens, and as people who live in a threatened environment which Trump and Musk will now throw to the mercies of its rich ravagers and scavengers.

Trump ran a racist-chauvinist-localist campaign. He ran an ultra-nationalist campaign.

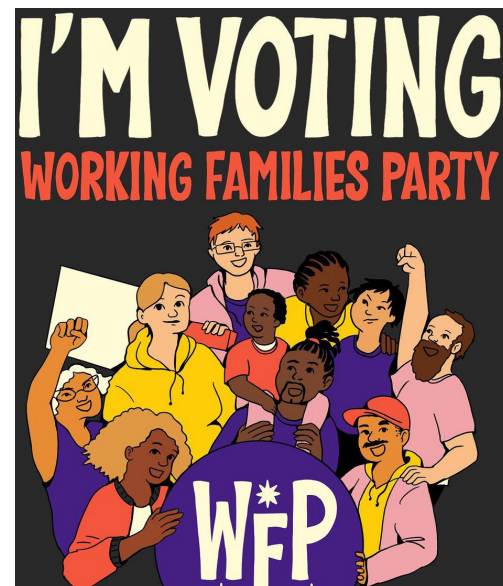
The Trumpist Supreme Court has already redesigned the presidency to be above and outside the law. It massively expanded presidential immunity from prosecution, and Trump regards it as complete immunity. They gave a monarchical power and centrality to the presidency.

No other president in nearly 250 years, back to the first president, George Washington, has had such power, and none of them was less fit to wield it than Trump is. When Trump said that he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and not lose support, it sounded mad, an expression of out-of-control self-love, but it is becoming true.

President Biden has had the increased presidential powers from the Supreme Court for a few months. But Trump is not Biden. He will use those powers. The Republican Supreme Court has radically shifted the powers of the presidency Trump will assume on 20 January.

The man elected president on 5 November has promised to be a dictator ("for one day" – but there is not such thing as a one-day dictatorship). The Supreme Court will not restrain Trump.

Trump has promised to radically change the presidency, by fusing into it the powers of the Department of Justice (including powers similar to the Crown Prosecution Service in Britain)



and of the FBI. He has said he wants "the kind of generals" that he ignorantly thinks "Hitler had". "People who were totally loyal to him, that follow orders".

All this is possible because, in addition to the "rights" given to him by access to big money, Trump got special consideration. Prosecution for the insurrection on 6 January 2021 was delayed for years. Trump, who could have been barred from standing, was allowed to stand again as president because of such delays.

He ran a deeply racist campaign. He promised to arrest and deport eleven million people or more. He even claimed in a televised debate with Kamala Harris that some immigrants were killing and eating household-pet cats and dogs. He knowingly reprised Hitler by declaring that immigrants were "poisoning the blood" of the USA.

He has been convicted in civil court of raping E Jean Carroll. He has been convicted of financial irregularities and is awaiting sentencing. None of that mattered to those who voted for him. A majority voted for a declared authoritarian.

Power

He says he will give some of his presidential power to Elon Musk, who is to cut everything spent and reduce costs all round gain. There will be major tax cuts for the rich.

In the USA, the billionaires are now in power with an openness and blatancy absent for many decades.

Lunatics are now, again, centre-stage. Robert F Kennedy Jr will, says Trump, be given power to rampage according to his lunatic lights. Against Covid, Trump recommended the injection of bleach; now he has Kennedy and his disbelief in vaccines, for measles for instance.

Trump ran an astonishingly demagogic campaign, designed to appeal to the most ignorant and disaffected electors. He has promised to Make America Great Again by putting big tariffs on US imports. He presents that as getting money from exporters to the USA, whereas the tariffs will be an effective

continued on page 14 →



“ What we stand for

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production.

Capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth causes poverty, unemployment, blighting of lives by overwork; imperialism, environmental destruction and much else.

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The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control, and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

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In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political alliances we stand for:

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- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement
- A workers' charter of trade union rights – to organise, strike, picket effectively, and take solidarity action
- Taxing the rich to fund good public services, homes, education and jobs for all
- Workers' control of major industries and finance for a rapid transition to a green society
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression
- Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. Reproductive freedoms and free abortion on demand.
- Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people
- Black and white workers' unity against racism
- Open borders
- Global solidarity against global capital – workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation
- Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small
- Maximum left unity in action, and full openness in debate

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Resisting Trump

→ from page 13

tive tax on US consumers and US firms needing inputs from abroad.

It is demagogic manipulation at its least subtle, yet Trump got away with it.

The man elected president got a majority of working-class votes, many Latino votes, some Black votes, and a lot of young votes. Laughable as Trump's pose as a rebel against the system is, it seems that, in the wretched state of US politics and US enlightenment, he was accepted as that.

Harris-Walz ran a conservative, complacent, "isn't the USA wonderful?", insiders' campaign that became more conservative and more for the status quo as Liz Cheney and other such arch-Republicans rallied to Harris-Walz. Some of the Trump voters will have reacted to that: it was Trump against the status quo.

Harris-Walz accused Trump of denigrating the existing wonderful America, of threatening extant democracy, of advocating authoritarianism and even fascism. What they said about the authoritarian danger was true, but it did not move many trade unionists, Latinos, women, or even Blacks.

It was assumed that women would flock to vote against Trump because of his part in rescinding Roe v Wade and ending the right to abortion which

women in the USA had enjoyed for the last fifty years. They don't seem to have. Backwardness may have played against Kamala Harris, as both a woman and a person of colour.

When asked how he had won a second term as president, Bill Clinton replied: "The economy, stupid". Biden-Harris lauded the rises on the Stock Exchange on their watch, but what many electors, and the working class most of all, experienced was inflation. Harris-Walz barely recognised that, but the economics of working America recognised them.

Trump's acceptance by some of the electors proves something fundamental that Marxists say: under stress, it will be reactionary ideas or ours. Trump railed incoherently against the status quo and the establishment. He has no solution beyond an authoritarian regime and his tariffs nonsense. His very incoherence and demagoguery probably helped him win.

Anger

Marxist, socialist, anti-capitalist ideas go logically with anger against the status quo and the establishment. They were scarcely put.

The supreme power of money in US politics was not made central in discussions on the election. Elon Musk played a major part in getting Trump elected. He spent \$130 million, some of it in barely disguised bribery.

Trump is the capitalist USA writ very small. He is a TV celebrity. He was man-

ufactured as a political figure, a fake as he would say.

Assuming that Trump and his enablers do some sizeable part of what he said they would do, everything now will depend on the degree of resistance they meet with. Some of the Democrats vow to resist the Trumpites where they can. But the old US system is now badly broken.

In Britain we must prepare to fight the authoritarians who are greatly strengthened by Trumpism. □

• *Claureen Ryan is a writer for Solidarity*

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Not our job to help the Democrats



Letter

Rhodri Evans's reply to Zack Muddle in *Solidarity* 724 says that Workers' Liberty support for a Labour vote across all constituencies can be compared to backing Harris in every state. He says the cases are not the same, but I think the comparison is made to bend the stick towards a similarity. The superiority of a clear statement is one thing, but this only muddies the waters.

Every Labour MP elected is accountable, in some way, to their local Labour party and at least formally to the affiliated unions. Labour-affiliated unions elect delegates to CLPs who can question and scrutinise their MPs and councillors, move motions and try, even if in a semi-remote way, to argue a pro-working class line.

None of that exists for Democratic representatives, least of all in a Presidential election. But it is why casting a

Labour vote, even for Blair or Starmer, had a purpose.

As Rhodri says, "for a small Marxist group, the purpose of any electoral intervention is to 'speak the truth, no matter how bitter it may be', not to pose as clever distributors of a big voting bloc which we do not in fact have". But Rhodri is going beyond just advocating a Harris vote was to keep Trump out of the White House to saying an overall larger Democratic vote was preferable.

If we will now be calling on "Democratic states and cities, to organise and deploy their strength against his promised assaults" alongside the labour movement and left, then what strength are we asking to be mobilised? Inroads made by the Republicans in New York or California, small though they are, suggest the Democrats are losing some ground even where they could previously rely on votes. It isn't our job to help them out of the mire. □

Simon Nelson, London

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Employment Bill: a big opportunity



Debate

By a CWU activist

The introduction of an [Employment Bill](#) into this Labour government's legislative programme in the first hundred days is the greatest opportunity to improve UK workers' rights for a generation.

The previous Labour government, 1997-2010, brought in the National Minimum Wage (NMW), the right to union representation for all employees, and restored union rights at GCHQ, amongst other things. However, it kept the vast majority of the anti-union laws from the Thatcher era which had limited the power of the labour movement in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Starmer government has approached labour market matters differently, so far. Before the Employment Bill was introduced to Parliament it had (in effect) repealed the Tory Minimum Service legislation, which removed the right to strike from as many as a fifth of

the workforce, announced the repeal of the vast majority of Cameron's 2016 Employment Act which brought in ballot thresholds and put obstacles in the way of democratically decided industrial action during the strike wave of 2022-3, and settled several outstanding disputes.

It has also immediately changed the criteria for the Low Pay Commission (which decides the level of the NMW), to include the recent massive rises in the cost of living. These are all significant in themselves but it is the details and effective implementation of the Employment Bill proposals that has the real potential for change.

The draft Employment Bill promises both improvements in individual rights and in union rights to organise and take collective action. Key individual rights promised are: introducing basic day one rights to unfair dismissal, sick pay and parental leave; removing the lower earnings limit for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP); improving access to flexible working from day one; banning the majority of zero hour contracts and introducing a right to a permanent contract; banning fire and rehire in most

circumstances; modernising blacklist laws; strengthening and lengthening employment tribunal claim periods; improving rights for pregnant workers; new duties on employers to protect workers from third party harassment; a right to bereavement leave.

The key improvement to collective rights for trade unions are: simplifying the process of trade union recognition, including scrapping the 10% requirement and the need to show majority support before starting the process, and introducing a simple majority (which does not have to be 40% of those voting); introducing a right of access to workplaces for union recruitment and organising; going back to automatic "opt in" to union political funds; introducing statutory rights for union equality reps; ending restrictions on check-off; and introducing a simple majority threshold for industrial action ballots. There will also be a new enforcement body for employers who fail to keep to these legal rights.

What is missing? Comprehensive collective sectoral bargaining arrangements (at present the only collective bargaining arrangements that are

promised are for Social Care). Also, any significant changes to current severe restrictions on solidarity action and political action which are fundamental for a fighting labour movement.

This Labour government's plans, then, are further-reaching than those of the previous Labour governments, but in several areas the status quo in industrial power is left untouched. Also, there are several potential loopholes in the proposed legislation which will either be plugged or left open, depending on consultation and the details of the legislation.

Some of these loopholes are due to successful business lobbying of Labour politicians, as well as popular pressure stirred up by the right wing press (the two phenomena are related). But they are also due to the different priorities between unions themselves and a collective failure of aspiration of the UK labour movement on the necessary expansion of union organisation and strength. More on that in another article. □

• See previous comment on the Bill at bit.ly/not-en and bit.ly/too-w

Tube pay: not so "groundbreaking"



Tubeworker

Drivers' union Aslef claimed that a "groundbreaking" offer led it to suspend strikes on the London Underground planned for 7 and 12 November. The all-grades union RMT had already called off its strikes from 1 to 8 November.

But there is something of a discrepancy between what Aslef says is on offer, and what is in the letter to the union from London Underground Ltd (LUL). The company has said only that it will "bring forward a proposal" for a restructured working week "by January 2025", contingent on the current pay offer being accepted.

If Aslef accepts the deal, a proposal will be presented in January to outline a plan for an average four-day working week, with paid meal relief incorporated into working hours.

LUL is absolutely categorical that it will not be reducing the 35-hour contractual week, but making meal breaks paid suggests a reduction of two and a half hours in the working week. If so, that should be demanded for all grades, not just drivers.

Aslef claims this makes a four-day week feasible, but RMT's demand for a 32-hour, four-day week is not even being considered by LUL.

There has been a trial of a four-day week for drivers on the Jubilee Line – the same total working hours, but longer shifts.

The current proposals could also involve a slight extension of the overall length of the working day, reduce annual leave by about seven days, but offer approximately 40 additional rest days each year.

A restructure of the working week could be accompanied by enabling drivers to work overtime. Currently, drivers are the only grade that cannot take on any contractual overtime.

Many drivers – particularly those new to the role or younger – find the option of overtime appealing. But it is important to resist a shift to an overtime culture. We want higher pay and a better work-life balance – working less, not more.

Overtime would likely result in a reduction of headcount, a trend already observed in other grades experiencing chronic staffing shortages, especially at stations and in service control.

Our aspirations for a reduced working week are about maximising time away from work so we get to spend more quality time with our friends and families. More rest days would be welcome, but not at the cost of lengthening shifts and increasing driving time, and licensing an overtime culture that allows the company to reduce headcount. □



Ealing parking enforcement workers will finish 12 weeks of strike action on 16 November. With a re-ballot just completed, the workers will be back on strike in two weeks. Ealing Council and its wholly owned subsidiary, Greener Ealing, still refuse to recognise their chosen union, Unite. With outstanding questions over sick pay and new contracts for some managers, the workers will use their brief return to work to get organised for the next round of action. More: bit.ly/ea-p-s

Young Mr Lincoln



Kino Eye

By John Cunningham

There was no need for John Ford's 1939 film about the early days of Abraham Lincoln to establish a myth. That already existed, and still does. It did however add to the myth: the youthful Lincoln (Henry Fonda) is portrayed as an ordinary Joe, a country bumpkin even, despite his chosen vocation as a lawyer. Although he displays great skill in the courtroom, he declares "I may not know much about the law but I know what is right". The idea of destiny permeates the film,

reinforced by the audience knowing what lies ahead for him (in France it was retitled *Towards his Destiny*).

Central to Ford's filmmaking career was his construction of myths about the USA, in films such as *Stagecoach* and *My Darling Clementine*. In *Lincoln* the myth is partly the worn-out cliché that anyone can become President.

The reality of Lincoln's life was very different, for example, he wasn't the dyed in the wool opponent of slavery that is often portrayed in history books. Perhaps the myth would not have been so overblown had he not been assassinated. For an anti-myth viewpoint, have a look at the section on Lincoln in Hal Draper's *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, Vol. 5. □

• To watch *Young Mr Lincoln*: bit.ly/ymlin



Trump's victory hangs over Ukraine

By Dan Katz

Ukraine is losing ground to Russian forces across the eastern Donbas front, and the rate of loss is increasing.

In October 2024 Russia gained 410 sq km of Ukrainian territory, more than any month since July 2022. Half of Russia's total gains in 2024 have come in the last three months. Strategic towns such as Vuhledar, which anchored the Ukrainian defence, have been destroyed and overrun by Russia. US analysts now consider the front lines, which were stable since the summer of 2023, to be shifting against Ukraine.

Russian gains are coming at a terrible cost to their own troops. The British Ministry of Defence believes Putin's army suffered 42,000 killed and wounded in October 2024. That is an average of 1,360 each day and a total of 700,000 since the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Russia now aims to surround, obliterate and seize Pokrovsk, a key logistics hub. Putin's forces are now occupying more favourable open ground.

Ukraine's top general, Oleksandr Syrskyi, warned on Saturday 9 November that the Russian offensive "shows signs of escalating" as Russia prepares to deploy 10,000 North Korean troops.

Ukraine has had little answer to the increased use of enormous guided bombs and Russian control of the airspace over the frontlines.

Ukraine is being outgunned and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy complained in October that no more than ten percent of the promised arms donations from Western allies had actually reached the frontlines in 2024. A senior Ukrainian official has also demanded more backing from Starmer, saying the UK provided Ukraine with more equipment under Rishi Sunak's government.

Zelenskyy is also angry that the EU and US have made little response to the North Korean presence, which is presumably only possible with at least the tacit agreement of China. The North Korean dictatorship appears to have been provided with food and space technology in return for artillery shells and troops. Ukraine believes half the shells now used by Russia in Ukraine are North Korean.

Now Ukraine also has to contend with the threat

posed by a new Trump administration in the US. Ukraine's leaders fear that Trump will force them into a shabby peace with Putin by threatening to cut off aid.

Ukraine faced a similar situation in 2014-5 when France and Germany pushed Ukraine into lousy deals with Russia, the Minsk 1 and 2 agreements. France and Germany wanted to maintain economic links with Russia and were willing to partially sacrifice Ukraine's national rights in order to do so.

Trump will probably do likewise. He may even expect an economic gain from reintegrating Russia into world markets, taking advantage of Russian oil and other natural resources.

If Trump forces Ukraine to make a peace it doesn't want it will certainly contain sizeable territorial concessions to Russia alongside promises not to integrate Ukraine into NATO or the EU and with restrictions of Ukraine's ability to defend itself from future Russian attacks.

Outrageous

That would be an outrageous denial of Ukraine's right to self-determination and a concession to brutal Russian imperialism.

Trump's supporters in Congress blocked President Joe's Biden's Ukraine Aid bill for months over the winter of 2023-4. Some, such as far-right Georgia representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, nicknamed "Moscow Marjorie" by critical Republicans, are openly sympathetic to the Putin dictatorship.

Trump also appears to admire Putin.

When the Republicans blocked aid it not only meant Ukraine had fewer missiles and shells to fend off Russia, but it also demoralised Ukrainian fighters and civilians.

On 9 Nov Trump said he would not ask Nikki Haley, his former ambassador to the UN, nor Mike Pompeo, his former secretary of state, to join his administration. By doing so he signalled he would not have two right-wing but broadly pro-Ukraine Republicans working for him.

Trump is a probable disaster for Ukraine.

The internationalist left, including the AWL, will continue to back Ukraine against Russian occupation and to support the struggles of Ukraine's labour movement. □

Call PCS leaders to account

By a PCS member

For members of the civil service union PCS, there are two interconnected issues currently facing the union. The first is the union's abandonment of any campaign to improve the worst pay settlement in the public sector. The second is the consistent undermining of union democracy by the minority on the National Executive (NEC).

In May, members elected a new NEC which for the first time contained a majority opposed to the longstanding leadership faction, Left Unity.

This left coalition, including supporters of the PCS Independent Left, was elected on a platform which included advocating a militant and escalatory campaign for the union's demands, including pay, and the democratisation of the union among other things.

Since the first NEC of the year however, proposals advancing these positions and commanding majority support, have been bureaucratically ruled out-of-order by the Left Unity National President.

The pay remit for Civil Servants announced in July of 5% was the lowest in the public sector and came with strings attached: Employers were required to provide efficiency savings (read "job cuts") in exchange for the money.

Instinctively, trade unionists should be opposed to such impositions. The left coalition put forward numerous proposals to reject the remit and begin a campaign, including balloting, to put pressure on the new government to improve the offer, remove the strings and begin to negotiate on the union's other priorities such as national pay bargaining, flexible (hybrid) working, a reduction in the working week and insourcing of government facilities contracts.

The Left Unity minority position, represented by the General Secretary, was to be purposefully agnostic on the remit, oppose any further industrial action or re-balloting, and allow existing strike ballots to expire.

They were unable to gain a majority on the NEC for this. Instead of arguing their position and putting it to a vote, the National President has refused to allow the NEC to hear any of the alternative positions which command a majority support.

In addition, the General Secretary, purposefully

and without NEC oversight, has imposed a new staffing structure in the union.

This involved creating two new "super-grade" positions with salaries far more than the average member's, which were filled with her close advisors, backfilling the previous positions and creating new ones. This significantly increased the union's pay bill and gave incredibly well-renumerated jobs to her allies without any democratic oversight.

The two most senior posts have been filled by the candidates defeated in the 2019 and 2023 Assistant General Secretary elections by PCS Independent Left supporter, John Moloney, who now has less responsibility and dramatically fewer staff than they do.

The result of these antics is to insulate the cabal that runs LU against the union's democracy and to prevent PCS functioning as a campaigning union.

As a result, the NEC majority called for branches to hold members' meetings to pass calls for an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) to put the control of the union back in the hands of reps and members.

Surprised by the momentum of this call, in an unprecedented move the General Secretary and President used the union's communication machine to send a personal email to all members in branches which had called for an EGM, urging them to distrust their reps.

The last NEC on 7 November brought the union no closer to a decision, with motions from the majority once again ruled out-of-order.

Regrettably, the only way forward remains for branches to call for an EGM to break the minority stranglehold over PCS. □

Contact us



020 7394 8923



solidarity@workersliberty.org



Write to: 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London, SE1 3DG



Production team: Martin Thomas (editor), Kayden Jones, Dan Katz, Simon Nelson, Will Roberts, Zack Muddle □





Solidarity

For a workers' government

TRUMP WINS: REDOUBLE SOLIDARITY!

By Ira Berkovic

The election of Donald Trump to the US presidency is a setback for struggles against Israel's oppression of the Palestinians, including the murderous war it is currently waging against the people of Gaza.

US voters sympathetic to the Palestinians, including many people of Muslim and Arab backgrounds, turned against the Democrats, revulsed by the Biden administration's initially publicly supportive attitude to Israel's war. Although US policy has shifted to a more openly critical stance since, the shift has happened slowly, and the flow of military aid and arms supplies has continued almost entirely unchecked. The US wants a ceasefire, but continues to provide Israel with weapons. Notionally it will block supplies unless Israel increases aid supplies to Gaza by 12 Nov, but we'll see.

The revulsion is understandable. But the beneficiary, in electoral terms, is a figure who said to Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a phone call less than a month ago, "Do

what you have to do".

Trump's victory has been met with elation by many on the Israeli right, including Netanyahu himself, who once called Trump "the best friend Israel has ever had in the White House". Yisrael Ganz, head of the Yesha Council, an umbrella organisation for settler groups, said: "The threat of a Palestinian state is off the table [...] This is a historical moment and opportunity for the settlement movement ... Now, with the election of President Trump, it is time to change reality in Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] as well, to ensure it will forever be a part of Israel and to ensure the security of the Jewish state."

Standing Together

The left-wing Standing Together movement says: "With Trump in power it seems like the Israeli government will continue to be given blank cheques, and the hope we had for Netanyahu to be held accountable by the US government is fading."

Some speculate that the warmer relationship between Trump and Netanyahu, compared to Netanyahu's increas-



Standing Together activists in the Galilee. Pic from [ST on X](#)

ingly strained relationship with Biden, may mean Trump is better able to impose restraint on him, and extract concessions. But Trump's previous presidency made clear what his vision for "peace" in Israel-Palestine consists of: a green light for Israel to formally annex Palestinian territory, and permanent stateless subjugation for the Palestinians.

There is pressure from the most hardcore-isolationist, and antisemitic, elements in Trump's coalition, to end US aid to Israel. Some think this pressure may lead to a decrease in the flow of aid. Others have argued that Trump's vaguely "anti-war" self-presentation might lead to him pressuring Netanyahu to agree a ceasefire.

His "do what you have to do" remarks tells a different story, and any pressure a Trump administration places on Israel to end the current wars will be bound up with incentives around US support for annexation. □

