

THE DEMOCRATS HELPED BRING TRUMP TO POWER

THEY ARE NOT A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS WE FACE



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Introduction

Since Trump's second term began, there has been a rapid acceleration of authoritarianism and an all out assault on working people and oppressed groups. Firing federal workers, gutting social services, closing federal agencies, carrying out mass arrests of immigrants, shredding the human rights of LGBTQ+ people, and much more, while they transfer trillions of dollars to billionaires in tax breaks, and increase the military budget to record levels.

The path that Trump and this administration are on is clear. This is a path towards an authoritarian, far-right society run by and for billionaires. This is what they think is necessary to maintain the profits of their system. They are willing to blatantly lie to the public, criminalize protests, use the courts to get their way, and defy them when they don't. And they continue to use the federal budget to make threats and coerce programs and institutions to go along with their authoritarian agenda. They want to go after anyone who dares to speak out or protest what is happening. They know these policies do not benefit the majority, and they need to be able repress the population into submission to drive this agenda forward.

In the face of these blatant attacks, the Democrats have done what they usually do when it comes to Trump – they talk. They offer their words of outrage and condemnation, blame people who voted for Trump, and promise that the only way to change things is to vote for them in the next elections.

But as much as the Democrats try to distance themselves from Trump, they are just as responsible for the policies of this administration. Trump has ripped the mask off of this so-called democracy, revealing what lies beneath: a gruesome face of a dictatorship of capital, a ruling class that is willing to remove whatever restrictions to profit and U.S. imperial dominance they think they can get away with.

In fact, the Democrats do the same thing, but with the mask on. They pay lip service to the plight of workers, as they support their exploitation; they talk about immigrant workers as essential as they militarize the border and carry out mass deportations; they pretend to defend the environment as they expand fossil fuel extraction across the country; they pretend to be against Israel's genocide as they provide the very weapons to carry it out.

The Democratic Party has aided and abetted this shift to the right represented by Trump all along the way. The problem is not that the Democratic Party has not done enough to resist the rise of Donald Trump; it is that they have done much to lay the groundwork for his rise to power.

In the 2024 election, the Democrats claimed to represent the interests of working-class people and all kinds of oppressed groups against the Republicans and Wall Street. But voters didn't buy it. In fact, one-third of the electorate voted for Trump, one-third for Harris, and about one-third for "none of the above." Trump won the Electoral College, but not the

popular vote. People saw that the Democrats did not offer them a way out of their financial distress or any of the other threats to our well-being.

For close to a century, the Democratic Party has claimed to represent the working class, minorities, and women. But that support at the ballot box, especially in the working class regardless of race or sex, has been hemorrhaging in recent election cycles.

The real base of the Democratic Party, similar to the Republican Party, are the class of the super rich, the billionaires, the people who run the Fortune 500 companies and the banks, the people who run the economy – these are the people who fund both parties. In fact, the wealthy elite have always been the Democratic Party's real bosses and financial base, just as they have been for the Republicans. Both parties represent the same system.

The Democratic Party has tried to maintain the pretense of representing the working class of any racial demographic for a long time. Today that pretense barely exists. The acknowledgment of this reality was articulated in 2016 by Democratic Party leader, Chuck Schumer, when he said, "For every blue-collar Democrat we lose in western Pennsylvania, we will pick up two moderate Republicans in the suburbs in Philadelphia, and you can repeat that in Ohio and Illinois and Wisconsin."

In the end, the Democrats have nothing to offer working people except more empty promises. Their defense of this system dictates the kind of hypocrisy they spew, promising big during election season, but doing the opposite once in power. From Clinton to Obama to Biden, we've seen consistent representatives of Wall Street and the biggest corporations in the U.S. Obama bailed out the banks with trillions of dollars, while slashing social services as banks forced millions of people out of their homes. Biden continued Trump's mass deportations of immigrants, undercut railroad workers fighting for safe working conditions, expanded oil leases to Big Oil, funded Israel's genocide, and accepted enormous campaign contributions from Wall Street.

It is no surprise that from 2020 to 2024, the Democrats lost about six million voters. The Democrats have done nothing for working people.

And now, as Trump has laid bare the violent and oppressive nature of this system, the Democrats are here again to tell us that the only solution is to vote for them in the next elections. They see the millions of people who have taken to the streets in protest since Trump's inauguration. They see the many Republican voters furious at Republican politicians for going along with Trump's slash and burn agenda. And the Democrats think their empty promises will be enough once again.

But we can't fall for it this time. For this administration, the path ahead is clear. This is a sharp turn toward far-right authoritarianism, aimed at defending a dictatorship of billionaires over our lives. Trump's administration promises us nothing but greater inequality, environmental destruction, and the threat of war as the U.S. empire is challenged internationally. But the Democrats promise the same future – perhaps with a different face.

We certainly cannot accept the array of attacks that are coming down on us as some new normal. But their elections are not the instrument to confront these problems. Not the courts, not the Democrats – no outside force is coming to save us. We need to mobilize our own forces on a scale not seen in generations to put a stop to these attacks. And we can't stop at just opposing Trump. We must fight to overturn their entire capitalist system, ruled by the billionaires, who both parties defend. A line in the sand is being drawn, and we have the majority of people on our side. The future is up to us

But we can't keep falling for the empty promises of the Democratic Party. And so it is important to be clear on the role the Democrats have played in the period since Trump's rise to power.

The Democrats Helped Pave the Way for Trump

As awful as Donald Trump and his regime is, Donald Trump is not the cause of the problems, he is the consequence. The main problems facing working people and the majority of the population are not fundamentally a result of Trump's unique personality. That problem is U.S. capitalism, which has been in a state of serious crisis for years while most people have had to pay for this crisis with their lives.

For decades, the promise of some American Dream, where hard work could lead to a stable and decent life, has become even further out of reach for most of the population. More and more people have been pushed to the edge.

Some 37% of people in the U.S. can't afford an unexpected emergency expense over \$400. Medical debt continues to be the leading cause of bankruptcy. Unlike previous generations, increasingly younger people do not have any confidence that they can have better lives than their parents. So called "deaths of despair" that include suicide and overdoses, now account for the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. All of these realities paint a very grim picture of how difficult life is for an increasing number of people.

Facing increasingly difficult living situations, many people feel desperate and are looking for answers wherever they can be found. This is the breeding ground for people to seek out anything that can seem like an alternative to the business as usual, whether from the far-left or far-right.

For decades, the Democratic Party has presented itself as the responsible managers of this system. They have actively carried out the policies that have worsened the livelihoods of wide sections of the society. The Clinton administration infamously passed free trade deals like NAFTA, and developed trade relations with China and many other countries, all of which helped accelerate the decline of manufacturing jobs in the U.S. in a global race to the bottom. At the same time, it gutted social safety net programs like welfare. The economic crisis of 2008 allowed the Obama administration to accelerate these same trends, funneling trillions of dollars to banks and corporations and the military, while millions lost their jobs

and their homes, and social services continued to be hollowed out. Eventually, Biden was no different.

Ultimately, the most that the Democrats have to offer are promises they can't keep.

The only way to challenge Trump and the far-right agenda he is ushering in is to challenge the very miserable and difficult conditions of people's lives. But this is something that the Democrats can never do. Carrying out meaningful policies that would improve people's lives would mean going up against big business and against the very system the Democrats defend. Hilary Clinton summed up the real attitude that the ruling elite have towards poor and working class people when she called many working-class Trump voters a "basket of deplorables."

While the Democrats, along with more traditional Republican administrations, were busy defending the priorities of this system, overseeing growing inequality, increasing military spending, and hollowing out social services, the political field became wide open for a figure like Donald Trump to step in and present himself as a sort of anti-establishment alternative.

The fact that Trump can appear to be a credible alternative may say more about how bankrupt the Democratic Party is than it does about the appeal of Trump and his policies.

The Democrats During Trump's First Term – A Lot of Noise

Given the road the Democrats paved, the election of Donald Trump in 2016 over Hillary Clinton probably shouldn't have been much of a surprise.

Following Trump's 2016 inauguration, there were waves of protests across the country, such as the Women's March, protests at the airports against Trump's so-called "Muslim Ban", mobilizations against ICE raids, and more. The Democrats quickly tried to present themselves as allies of these movements and direct them towards the midterm elections, which they were eventually successful at doing. In the 2018 midterms, the Democrats won control of the House of Representatives, gaining a total of 41 new seats.

But even with this control, they did very little to push for policies that would have helped alleviate the hardship facing many in the population. Any actual programs that might reduce the cost of housing, or help with medical debt or childcare or higher education debt would require the Democrats to cut the military or tax corporate wealth – both of which were off the table.

So, having nothing substantial to offer people, they instead decided to focus all of their energy on Trump himself, which for many working-class people just seemed like a convoluted political drama that wasn't very interesting.

The Democrats tried to blame Trump's electoral success on election interference from Russia. The Democrats and their allies in the media spent years and an enormous amount of

energy investigating ties his administration might have with the Russian government and their role in helping Trump get elected.

After much talk and fanfare, and days of televised hearings, the investigation found no real ties to Russia, and it did not result in Trump's indictment. It did expose some of Trump's many financial misdeeds and his links to criminals and unsavory characters. But for most people, what was known as the Mueller investigation was hard to understand. In the polarized political atmosphere created by Trump, it had little effect in changing anyone's mind. The Democrats falsely claimed they had proved Trump was guilty and that the Russians had interfered in the election, while the Republicans continued to back Trump.

Once that fell through, the Democrats pivoted to try to get Trump impeached based on the claim that Trump pressured Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky by threatening to withhold military aid unless he would dig up dirt on Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden. Trump alleged that Biden had earlier pressured Ukraine to back away from an investigation that could implicate his son, who worked for a Ukrainian energy company. But Trump's allegations were refuted, and no evidence ever came out that Biden took action to protect his son from investigation, nor any evidence of wrongdoing by Hunter Biden.

Trump was simply using his position as president to pressure Zelensky to discredit a political opponent, even if just to announce that there was an investigation, evidence or not. This time the Democrats succeeded to pass a vote for Trump's impeachment in the House but not the Senate. Ultimately, it led to nothing.

Again and again, these efforts accomplished very little in terms of sidelining Trump's political influence. If anything, they arguably painted him as a persecuted victim to his base, strengthening their support.

The 2020 Elections: The Democrats Promise to Fix Everything

The 2020 election took place during an extreme political crisis brought on by the four years of chaos under the Trump administration, the months of the Coronavirus pandemic raging and upending people's lives, and backdrop of the George Floyd rebellions all across the country. And the figure the Democrats decide to put forward to lead society out of the chaos of the Trump era? Joe Biden.

If it weren't for the Covid pandemic and the absolute death and devastation it brought to millions of people, Trump may have been re-elected in 2020.

In the lead up to the 2020 election, in the Democratic primaries, the party leadership moved quickly to solidify Biden, the long-time centrist, as the presidential candidate. Despite some initial strong showings in the primaries, the leadership pressured Senator Bernie Sanders to drop out and uncritically support Biden, which he did, and the other Democratic candidates did the same.

Lockdowns, mass layoffs, and other social pressures of the Covid pandemic added to the already volatile political situation. This highly combustible situation only needed a spark to explode and that is exactly what happened with the murder of George Floyd on Memorial Day of 2020.

The 2020 George Floyd uprisings were estimated to have been the largest protest movement in U.S. history, with 15 to 26 million people estimated to have participated in it. The often militant demonstrations took place in virtually every major city and countless small towns and were remarkably racially and generationally diverse.

Days after Floyd's murder, during the hot summer of 2020, when a Minneapolis police precinct building was burned down by protesters, a survey from Monmouth University found that some 54% of Americans felt that such actions were either partially justified or fully justified. Even for those who weren't in the streets, wide sections of society understood where the anger towards the system came from. An enormous energy for systemic change certainly existed.

But once again, the Democrats succeeded in funneling a lot of that energy into the dead end of the ballot box in the 2020 elections. Biden and the Democrats knew that they had to respond to the explosive anger in the streets. Their message was clear: *Don't look to yourselves. Don't build your mass struggles. Don't question the system. Just vote for us in November.*

Biden campaigned by promising everything for everyone: getting the Covid pandemic under control, increased Covid stimulus packages, advocating for racial justice, codifying Roe v. Wade into law, creating a public option for health insurance, decriminalizing recreational marijuana, forgiving student debt, providing tuition-free community college, passing a \$1.7 trillion climate plan, regulating fracking, and more.

When Biden was finally declared the victor of the election, some people were dancing in the streets out of relief that Trump was out, and in the hopes of seeing some of Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris's many promises come to fruition.

The Biden Presidency - Betrayals and Business as Usual

Biden's four years in office proved to be a presidency of broken promises, blatantly catering to corporate interests every step of the way, and delivering next to nothing. On many issues, if you ignored the rhetoric and just focused on the policies, the differences with the first Trump administration were not so significant.

Biden's Economy: Rising Poverty and Record Profits

During Joe Biden's presidency, most working-class people's lives did not improve, nor did society in general. The Biden administration tried to paint a rosy picture of the economy, bragging about low unemployment and bringing down the inflation rate. But the picture they painted didn't match the lives of most working people.

In reality, the Biden years were one of record profits for the biggest U.S. corporations, coupled with increased debt for working people, and increased cuts to vital social services.

There were wage increases in some sectors, mainly among the lowest paid workers because many states in the U.S. passed laws to increase the minimum wage. But they went from poverty wages to slightly less poverty wages. Even with these wage increases, most workers did not see their purchasing power increase because of inflation.

Without a doubt, one of the biggest issues facing the working class during the Biden years was inflation.

Coming out of the Covid pandemic and later Russia's invasion of Ukraine, supply chains all over the world faced massive disruptions, and the lack of goods led to inflation, with every kind of commodity facing drastic price increases.

At the same time, many companies also engaged in what was sometimes called "greedflation" – companies took advantage of the general inflation to engage in even further price gouging. For example, one of the executives of the grocery store Kroger said in an internal email that "retail inflation has been significantly higher than cost inflation..." and that the extra costs would "pass through our inflation to customers."

While it is certainly true that mass inflation was a global event faced in countries around the world, and its cause can't simply be wholly pinned on the Biden administration, it is also true that the Biden administration failed to act in any meaningful way alleviate the hardship most families faced.

Early on, the Biden administration put forward what they called the "Build Back Better" bill, which promised to spend \$3.5 trillion over ten years to provide things like universal pre-K, four weeks of paid parental and medical leave, an extended child tax credit, free community college, expanded Medicaid, and more. While such reforms would have certainly been appreciated by many working-class people, these most minimal reforms couldn't even get through Congress. Biden and the Democratic Party were more interested in proposing the plan to give the impression that they were attempting to do something than actually implementing it.

Later, the Biden administration passed what was called the Inflation Reduction Act. It was able to bring down the prices of some goods, like some prescription drugs, but not much else. It provided some tax credits to support electric vehicle purchases and energy efficient appliances. But for the most part it was a massive handout to corporations. Of the \$400 billion dollars in federal spending in the bill, \$216 billion went to tax breaks, grants, and loans to corporations producing electric vehicles and batteries. For a bill named, the "Inflation Reduction Act," it didn't do much to reduce inflation.

At the end of the day, the Biden administration may have slowed down the rate of inflation, but it did not reduce prices to where they were before the pandemic.

For example, since 2019, housing costs have increased about 54%; energy costs around 61%; food about 25%; and health insurance about 22%. And no sector of the working class had wage increases that kept up with those numbers.

As a consequence, U.S. household debt continued to rise and remain at record levels. By 2024, about 20% of the population was behind on credit card payments, the highest since 2012.

During Biden's administration, the official unemployment rate stayed around 4%. But, the actual number was closer to 9% (when accounting for the long-term unemployed, and part-time workers looking for full time work). The decrease in unemployment was driven by new jobs that were part-time and usually low-wage. At the same time, there were large layoffs in several sectors: especially IT, auto, and delivery workers, public school teachers, and more.

In addition, while the impact of the Covid pandemic may have subsided to some degree, people's economic distress did not. Many of the protections that were created during Covid, such as increased unemployment insurance, eviction moratoriums, and a pause on student loan payments, were all allowed to expire. On top of this, there were major cuts to social services under Biden – to child care, food assistance, and education.

When the Biden administration canceled the eviction moratoriums and the cost of living continued to skyrocket, major cities saw continued growth in their unhoused populations, with tent cities popping up across the country. The Biden administration offered no relief. And in city after city, it has been mostly Democratic mayors, and Democratic governors at the state level, criminalizing homelessness, carrying out raids of homeless encampments, often without offering people any form of shelter.

In addition to the economic situation, Biden made many other betrayals to the working class. He campaigned promising to be a champion of workers and unions, calling himself the "most pro-labor" president ever. But his administration intervened in 2022 during national negotiations between railroad companies and rail workers, signing a bill to block the workers from going on strike and forcing them to accept a contract that did not meet their demands of increased staffing and more time off. Workers correctly saw it as a real betrayal.

Palestine and Genocide Joe

Following the Hamas attacks on October 7th, 2023, Israel unleashed an unrelenting assault on Palestinians in Gaza, carrying out a blatant campaign of genocide and mass expulsion, live streamed on screens across the country and around the world.

Immediately, the Biden administration provided unflinching support for Israel's massacre of Palestinians. As Israel began its assault, the U.S. quickly sent military vessels and personnel to the region to defend Israel, including two aircraft carriers, each supporting dozens of aircraft, along with other massive war ships. The administration continued to play an integral role in helping to maintain Israel's Iron Dome defense system, supplying it with most of its

munitions. And the U.S. military provided a consistent advisory role to Israel's military assault. The U.S. didn't just enable Israel's genocidal campaign of mass killing and destruction – it has been an active participant in it the whole time.

As protests in opposition to Israel's genocide grew in this country and around the world, the Biden administration helped increase the repression of protests, reducing any criticism of Israel to anti-semitism. When thousands of young people set up encampments at universities across the country, protesting their university's complicity in U.S. support for Israel, the Biden administration supported the crackdown on student protesters, many of whom faced expulsion, huge fines, jail time, or more.

The Biden administration did not retreat from its support for Israel even when it became clear they would lose many voters in the 2024 elections because of this. Horrified by the devastation inflicted on the Palestinians, the Democrats lost support from many young people, as well as Arab and Muslim voters – who were not inconsequential in the swing state of Michigan. In fact, one study found that close to a third of people who voted for Biden in 2020 and abstained in 2024 were motivated by a desire to, "end Israel's violence in Gaza."

The leadership of the Democratic Party tried to silence, sideline and even remove from power the very few Democrats that even mildly spoke out against Israel's policies, like Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, Cori Bush and Jamaal Bowman. At the Democratic National Convention that confirmed Kamala Harris as the presidential nominee, the leadership refused to allow a single person to speak in opposition to Israel's genocide.

The Biden administration tried to recover some of this support by occasionally criticizing the killing of Palestinians, and calling for a ceasefire. But as it was later made clear that the Biden administration never had any intention of pressuring Israel into accepting a ceasefire agreement – their words were just a maneuver to try to save face. Every step of the way, no matter the atrocities Israel committed, the Biden administration continued to send military support.

The Biden administration is in no way unique in its support for Israel. The U.S. has a special relationship with the state of Israel, which can be best understood as a wing of U.S. imperialism and military dominance in the Middle East. Every administration since the 1970s has provided Israel with military support. And since the Obama administration, Israel has received from the U.S. about \$3.8 billion in military aid per year, which is over 16% of Israel's budget. Israel has one of the largest militaries in the region and the U.S. makes sure that it stays that way. For the U.S., the whole Middle East has been the target of its imperial project since the decline of the British empire after WWII. The U.S. has seen the oil-rich region as its area to dominate, imposing its will on any regimes that are not in alignment with U.S. interests, and Israel's military is an integral part in maintaining that dominance. The U.S. also has interest in controlling this region as the intersection of trade among Africa, Asia, and Europe.

By the time Biden left office, his administration had given over \$20 billion in military aid to Israel. In that time, with those funds, Israel was able to carry out the killing of over 45,000 Palestinians, bombing hospitals, schools, refugee camps, repeatedly targeting journalists and aid workers. Israel's military carried out a systematic destruction of buildings in Gaza, destroying 70% of all buildings, and about 90% of residential buildings, all with the clear goal of making Gaza unlivable. Biden left office with Gaza completely destroyed, and two million Palestinians facing imminent starvation and mass death.

Biden's Climate Policy: Record Fossil Fuel Production and Profits

Eager to appear like he was prioritizing climate action, Joe Biden signed an executive order to rejoin the 2015 Paris Agreement just hours after he took office in 2021. In reality, this was a purely symbolic act as the Paris Agreement is essentially a non-binding treaty. Ten years after its adoption, not a single country has implemented policies consistent with the goals set out in the treaty. Nevertheless, the media and politicians continue to treat the Paris Agreement as some high-profile international agreement, and it gave Biden the perfect opportunity to do nothing and make headlines as a climate hero.

In the year following this action, the Biden administration approved 34% more permits for oil and gas drilling on public lands as compared with Trump's first year in office. This disparity would only increase, eventually reaching a full 50% increase compared to Trump's full first term.

The Biden administration framed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) as, "the largest investment in climate action and clean energy in world history," claiming it would reduce the country's carbon emissions by 40% by 2030.

The IRA promised a reduction in carbon emissions partly by promising what is called "carbon capture", an unproven technology that would trap greenhouse gases at the site of burning fossil fuels, preventing them from entering the atmosphere. In reality, carbon capture has never been implemented at any large scale, and it is simply a cover to allow increased fossil fuel extraction and CO₂ emissions, with an empty promise that the technology will work in the future.

At the same time, the IRA gave major handouts to the fossil fuel industry, including the construction of a 300-mile gas pipeline in West Virginia, which was insisted upon by Democratic then-Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, with major backing from the fossil fuel industry. The bill expanded the use of federal land for oil and gas projects. The bill required that before any new federal land could be leased for wind or solar energy, each year at least two million acres of federal land must be offered for lease to oil and gas companies, and 60 million acres must be offered in federal waters offshore.

Ultimately, neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have any solution to the climate crisis. The fundamental needs of capitalism require continuous growth of production, increased extraction of raw materials, increased energy use, and the continued replacement of human

labor with machine labor. In turn, the capitalist system is entrenched in an increasing reliance on fossil fuels, which requires a continuous dumping of CO₂ into the atmosphere.

Under Biden and the Democrats, we saw lip service paid to the environmental crisis, saying things like this is “the number one issue facing humanity.” But in fact we saw record-level expansion of fossil fuel extraction, as 2023 broke records for U.S. natural gas and oil production. Biden ended his term with 2024 being the highest year of Global CO₂ emissions ever recorded.

Immigration: Mass Deportations and Border Militarization

During Trump’s first term, Democratic politicians engaged in an outcry about Trump’s immigration policies that led to the separation of children from their families, the militarization of the border, and other aggressive anti-immigrant policies. But in fact, it was the Obama administration that began the practice of separating families at the border, which Trump simply continued and accelerated.

Once Biden was elected, the Democrats continued many of the very same policies as the Trump administration. While Biden did end Trump’s so-called “Travel Ban” and promised to defend immigrant rights, ultimately his administration increased the militarization at the border, extended the border wall, made record arrests and deportations of migrants, and set a record for denials of refugees seeking asylum.

In fact, during President Biden’s four years in office, his administration spent about \$32.3 billion on border militarization and expansion, far more than any previous president, including Donald Trump in his first term, who spent \$20.9 billion from 2017 to 2020. The Biden administration extended the border wall; increased the number of border agents, detention centers, and beds; and instituted its own version of Trump’s asylum ban, which allowed immigration enforcement officials to turn away migrants for almost any reason.

During Biden’s term, the number of migrants arrested at the southern border peaked in December 2023 at over 302,000 – an all-time high. In 2024, the Biden administration carried out 272,000 removals of migrants, greater than any year of Trump’s first term. The only president who deported more migrants per year was Obama, with about 400,000 deportations per year.

Up until May of 2023, Biden kept Trump’s “Title 42” policy in place, which used health concerns around Covid as a pretext to carry out rapid deportation of migrants and the blocking of asylum cases.

At the same time, many Republican officials such as Texas Governor Greg Abbott and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis engaged in cynical and cruel political theater by busing desperate migrants into Democratic run states and cities. Democratic officials who ran cities like New York and Chicago responded with calls for curfews, surveillance and even the deployment of the National Guard. As the Republicans hysterically repeated the hate-filled lies of an immigrant criminal invasion, Democrats openly embraced this narrative.

The policies of the Democrats and the Republicans at the southern border have become increasingly similar. The capitalist system, with its increased militarism, climate destruction, and political and economic instability, can only promise continued increases in the record numbers of people displaced and seeking survival around the world. And the response to this mass displacement of people by the U.S., and other governments around the world, has been to increase their border walls and border militarization to deny people entry, and to point the finger at immigrants in an effort to drive wedges in the working class between native born and foreign born workers.

Ultimately, the Biden administration helped pave the way for the aggressive border and anti-immigrant policies we see today from the Trump administration.

Ukraine: An Opportunity to Weaken Russia

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Biden administration saw this as an opportunity to provide Ukraine with military support as a means to weaken Russia.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine was an act of unmistakable imperialist aggression against the Ukrainian people's right to self-determination. For Ukrainians, this war has always been one of national self-defense against the Putin regime, which openly denies Ukraine's national independence, and is trying to annex parts of Ukraine, destroying vital infrastructure and entire cities. The Ukrainian people, of course, have the right to defend themselves and decide their own fate against Russia's enormous military aggression.

But despite repeated claims from the U.S. government about defending the Ukrainian people, this is not at all the motivation for U.S. involvement in this war. The U.S. and its NATO allies have demonstrated their interests in the region over the past decades. Ukraine's strategic location bordering Russia, with major ports on the Black Sea, as well as its fertile agricultural lands, mineral deposits and significant industries, positions it between the U.S. and Western Europe on one side and Russia on the other.

For decades, the U.S., along with Western Europe, has helped saddle Ukraine with over \$129 billion dollars in debt, helping to make Ukraine the poorest country in Europe. And that debt has continued to increase during the war, as the U.S. has opposed any sort of debt cancellation. Ukraine has always been seen as both a strategic economic opportunity by the U.S. and Western Europe, and as a means of containing Russia's imperial expansion.

In 2025, many were shocked when President Trump insisted that any further support for Ukraine would be contingent upon Ukraine providing the U.S. with rights to mineral extraction in Ukraine. But, in fact, Trump was just saying the quiet part out loud. Of course, the Biden administration had every intention of negotiating new terms for U.S. control of Ukraine's economy once the war ever came to an end.

Ultimately, the Biden administration saw Russia's invasion as an opportunity to supply Ukraine with weaponry simply as a means to limit Russia's imperial expansion and drag

Putin's regime into a prolonged war. They never had any concern for the hundreds of thousands of Russian and Ukrainian deaths, nor for the Ukrainian people in general.

In February 2023, one year into Russia's invasion, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken criticized the horrific nature of Russia's bombardment of Ukraine, saying:

Day after day of Russia's atrocities, it's easy to become numb to the horror, to lose our ability to feel shock and outrage. But we can never let the crimes Russia is committing become our new normal ... Bombing schools and hospitals and apartment buildings to rubble is not normal. Stealing Ukrainian children from their families and giving them to people in Russia is not normal.

In less than a year, this would become the new normal of Israel's assault on Palestinians – bombing schools and hospitals and apartment buildings to rubble, and stealing children from their families. The double standard of Blinken's words were impossible to ignore.

This hypocrisy of the Biden administration was on full display. The Biden administration said that the death of Ukrainians was wrong because the perpetrator was Russian imperialism, a rival to the U.S. But the genocide of Palestinians was justified because the perpetrator is Israel, a strategic ally of U.S. imperialism. In both cases, their only concern is the prolonged dominance of U.S. imperialism.

Imperialist Rivalry with China: A Bi-Partisan Consensus

Since Trump's re-election, he has portrayed himself as taking a much more aggressive stance towards China, especially as it concerns trade and tariffs. Certainly, tensions with China have intensified, but none of this is really new.

Ever since the Obama administration and the 2008 financial crisis, the economic rivalry between the U.S. and China has continued to intensify. At its core, this is an imperialist rivalry over dominance of regions, for markets and resources, which leaves little room for the continued growth of both empires. A breaking point seems difficult to avoid, as neither country's ruling class is willing to yield to the other, and both regimes are intent on trying to out maneuver the other.

This rivalry was just as much a cornerstone of the Biden administration as it is of the Trump administration. Under Biden, with the stated aim "to counter ... China and ensure a strong deterrence in the region," the U.S. continued to supply Taiwan with billions of dollars in advanced weaponry, sending submarines, missiles and an enormous military fleet to the region. Under Biden, the U.S. carried out regular war game strategies in the South China Sea in clear preparation for a potential military conflict with China.

And, under Biden, the U.S. maintained strong tariffs against Chinese imports in many industries that pose some economic or strategic challenge to the U.S., including quadrupling tariffs to 100% on electric vehicles (EVs), and maintaining tariffs on lithium-ion batteries, semiconductors, aluminum and steel, solar panels, and other products. Similar to

the Trump administration, the Biden administration imposed tariffs aimed at both protecting U.S. companies, and also trying to slow China's development and dominance of certain technologies vital to key industries, including the military.

Whether Biden or Trump, Democrat or Republican, the imperial rivalry with China is a top priority for the U.S. ruling class. This is a rivalry for imperial dominance, with both countries equally prepared not to back down, fully willing to pull the world along a path towards greater military escalation.

Reproductive Rights: Words are not Enough

In the 2020 election, one of Joe Biden's campaign promises was to codify *Roe v. Wade* into law. But abortion bans and restrictions were being passed in state after state for years, while the Democrats did nothing. Biden's campaign promise was made in anticipation of *Roe v. Wade* possibly being overturned during Biden's term.

What did the Democrats do on this issue once Biden was elected? Nothing. Just as they had for decades. In fact, the Democratic Party had nearly 50 years to make abortion access guaranteed to all without any restrictions, and they never did anything. Even when they had a super-majority in Congress during the Obama administration, the Democrats just sat back and watched as access to abortion was slashed in states all across the country. Just like Biden in 2020, then-Senator Barack Obama promised in 2007 that as President he would sign the Freedom of Choice Act, which would have codified abortion rights into federal law. Once elected, even with a majority in Congress, in April 2009, he explained that he "...had other priorities," and helped pave the way for another decade of increased attacks on reproductive rights across the country.

So once the *Dobbs v. Jackson* Supreme Court decision came down in June 2022, *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, and all federal protections for abortion were eliminated – states could do whatever they wanted.

With about two-thirds of Americans believing that abortion should be legal in all cases, abortion has been one of the Democratic Party's main issues to pressure people into voting for them in every election cycle.

Protests erupted across the country following the Supreme Court decision and the Democrats did what they do best, channel all of that anger back into the same dead end of elections, promising that the best way to protect reproductive rights would be to vote for Democrats in the mid-terms. Their electoral strategy proved partially successful, and they were able to regain some seats in Congress. But ultimately their efforts deflated the protest movement, and did nothing to slow down the evisceration of reproductive rights across the country, paving the way for an accelerated attack under the current Trump administration.

The absolute spineless and futile efforts of Biden and the Democrats to guarantee unrestricted access to abortion can serve as a reminder of what still needs to be done. The initial *Roe v. Wade* decision was won not because of politicians and their promises, but

because of grassroots organizing and a mass movement in the streets. And at the same time, Roe was never enough because winning the abstract right to an abortion is not the same as having guaranteed access to abortion services, without any restrictions, which is what's needed today. And it won't be Democratic politicians that ultimately win people the right to unrestricted abortion services in the future. Again, it will take a mass movement from below, one that is able to resist all of the concerted efforts of the Democratic Party to co-opt that movement into another one of its dead-end electoral strategies.

Reform the Police? Not at All

Following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in 2020, there was an explosion of protests across the country, with millions of participants in big cities to small towns. A combination of circumstances – from the pandemic and the new economic crisis to systemic racism and years of rising inequality and more – all converged to help shape a ticking time bomb of outrage, especially among the Black population and young people. And George Floyd's murder just pushed everything to the edge, exploding into weeks of protests in cities and small towns in every state in the country, and in major cities around the world. This movement had enormous potential.

The Democratic Party quickly intervened at both local and national levels.

At the national level, Democrats in Congress quickly moved to pass the "George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020." When it was passed by the Senate, a few dozen prominent Democratic leaders from Kamala Harris to Nancy Pelosi gathered in the Capitol building for a disgusting photo op, getting on one knee and draped in a Kente cloth (a traditional item of clothing from West Africa). The farce of their theatrics was only matched by the hollowness of the legislation.

The legislation was voted down in the House of Representatives. Biden and Harris carried the idea of the legislation with them on the campaign trail, promising major police reform. And once in office, Biden issued an executive order around police reform that was modeled on the same bill.

The legislation proposed the creation of a national registry of officers fired for misconduct, encouraged state and local police to tighten restrictions on chokeholds and so-called no-knock warrants, restricted the transfer of military equipment to law enforcement agencies, and mandate all federal agents to wear activated body cameras.

In addition, Democratic mayors and governors in several cities and states made huge promises around police reform, imploring protestors to get out of the streets and to meet with elected officials to help enact new legislation.

Overall the Democratic Party was successful at channeling a lot of the momentum of the protests into the dead-end of elections and their Democratic bureaucracies at the state and local levels.

And what came of Biden's executive order and the various promises of police reform around the country? Nothing. The brutal nature of the police is not something that can be legislated away, nor can the entrenched racism of capitalist society.

In fact, the number of police killings have gone up every year. In 2024, there were 445 white people killed by police, and 277 Black people killed by police. Black people are still about 3 times more likely than white people to be killed by police. Almost every six hours, someone in the U.S. was killed by law enforcement in 2024. The vast majority are poor. And the majority of these killings happen in cities where the police departments are overseen by Democratic mayors.

In addition, despite some superficial and symbolic changes, with racist monuments being taken down and buildings being renamed, conditions of Black life have not improved. Whether issues of police violence, mass incarceration, underfunded schools, lack of good paying jobs, Black people still disproportionately face some of the worst aspects of capitalist society.

The Democrats have tried to position themselves as opposed to police violence and racial oppression, but in their defense of this system, they depend on the violence of the police and the brutal subjugation of people of color of just as much as the Republicans.

Repression and the Criminalization of Dissent

Throughout Biden's presidency, there was an increasing level of repression against dissent and protest. The Biden administration played a major role in linking criticism of Israel's genocide and expressions of solidarity with Palestinians to anti-semitism. Media networks and news companies fired or pushed out many staff, accusing them of anti-semitism for their criticism of Israel's atrocities. This retaliation was directed at city officials, actors, university professors, and even top university administrators. Dozens of workers in various industries were fired for expressing solidarity with Palestinians while at work.

Student campus protests faced violent attacks both by police and right-wing mobs. Many of the students that occupied buildings on university campuses faced, in addition to expulsions, felony charges for burglary, and charges for resisting arrest. These charges came with large bail amounts, and even if they didn't end in jail time, they turned peoples' lives upside down. The Biden administration along with many Democratic governors and mayors fully supported these crackdowns on protestors.

But the repression has been in no way restricted to protests against Israel's genocide. During Biden's presidency, hundreds of anti-protest bills were introduced in over 21 states, bringing new laws with increased penalties and fines for common protest-related crimes, such as trespassing or blocking highways, and in many cases these have been upgraded from misdemeanors to felonies, and in some states they are being charged as domestic terrorism. In Atlanta, 61 protestors of Cop City were indicted under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO Act) – which was passed in 1970 to go after the mafia.

Most of these were introduced by Republican politicians, while the Democrats did very little to oppose them. And Democrats in New York, in response to protests against Israel's genocide, proposed their own bill that would expand the definition of domestic terrorism to include blocking public roads or bridges.

At a moment today when Trump and Republicans are rapidly moving in an authoritarian direction, it is important not to ignore the significant role played by Democrats in helping to build up this massive apparatus of repression. From September 11th, 2001, until today, both Democrats and Republican politicians, wholeheartedly supported the Patriot Act and other measures to help create the current mass surveillance apparatus.

Trump may have accelerated this repression, and has certainly made it more public, but repression is a clear bi-partisan consensus. As the brutal nature of this system is increasingly exposed for all to see, it is no surprise that the state is relying on intensified repression as the primary means to suppress dissent.

The Squad: Reformism from the Sidelines

Back in 2018, following the defeat of Bernie Sanders's bid for the presidency in 2016, there were four Democratic challengers who won House of Representative seats, who portrayed themselves as continuing Sanders's brand of politics. These included Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) (New York), Rashida Tlaib (Michigan), Ayanna Pressley (Massachusetts), and Ilhan Omar (Minnesota). They were dubbed "The Squad."

Many saw their victory as a challenge to the Democratic Party establishment from the left, and had enormous expectations that they would represent a continuation of Sanders's aspirations to tax the rich and help working-class people confront the climate crisis, win universal health care, free education, and more. The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), a socialist group in the U.S. that endorsed and campaigned for members of the squad (AOC, Tlaib, and others later), saw in The Squad the beginning of a left-faction in the Democratic Party, which could move the Democratic Party's agenda to the left, and make the Democratic Party popular again.

They could not have been more wrong. The opposite happened: all of the original and subsequent members of The Squad were pulled towards the center of the Democratic party, sometimes remaining a supportive left flank at best. All of their attempts at major policy changes failed, or died in committees. Their votes in Congress tended to match the votes of the Democratic majority. All of The Squad but Tlaib endorsed Biden both in 2020 and again in 2024, even amidst the Biden-backed Israeli genocide of Palestinians.

Ultimately, all of the promises and big ideas that got them elected in the first place are not the sorts of things that will ever be won through legislative maneuvers inside the halls of Congress. Funding universal health care, universal housing, higher education, rapidly reducing CO₂ emissions to zero – none of these are winnable through legislative means. Demands like these require enormous concessions by the ruling class, amounting to trillions

of dollars in lost profits and tax breaks. Massive cuts in military spending doesn't just mean losses for weapons manufacturers; it would mean a decline in the posture of U.S. imperialism around the world, a decline in the ability of the U.S. ruling class to impose its will internationally. And, certainly, the end of the fossil fuel industry – a starting point requirement to even begin to address the climate emergency – won't just mean a gradual phasing out of fossil fuel companies as they shift to renewable energy sources. Instead, it would mean the end of the capitalist system because the entire global economy from manufacturing to agriculture to pharmaceuticals and more all depend on the fossil fuel industry. None of these demands can be won from some sidelined opposition inside the Democratic Party. To win any of these demands will take massive social movements, involving millions of people, occupations, strikes, general strikes, and more. Ultimately, they will take movements with the potential to go beyond mere reforms to the system, movements with the power to carry out a revolutionary reconstruction of the whole society. At that point, it would be criminal for any movement to stop at mere legislative changes alone.

The normalization of The Squad towards the mainstream of the Democratic party is just another reminder that there are no shortcuts and no substitutes for the collective power of the working class.

2024 Elections: An Unsurprising Victory for Trump

Going into to the 2024 election, Biden's presidency represented a series of broken promises, increased misery for working-class people, and an unbridled support for genocide.

In four years, the cost of living had skyrocketed – in key areas like housing, food, energy, and health insurance, the increase was about 20%.

As low-income working class households were struggling to make ends meet, the Biden administration had cut funding for housing assistance, food assistance, and child care assistance. But meanwhile they had pumped tens of billions of dollars into supporting Israel's genocide and other military efforts around the world – again breaking records for military spending.

Under Biden, major cities continued to see increases in homelessness, record bankruptcies of small businesses, and a continued high-rate of deaths of despair (death from suicide and drug or alcohol overdoses).

It didn't matter whether his administration was the sole cause of all of these problems or not. The point was he promised to make people's lives better, while most people were worse off.

For many a vote for Trump was just a way to say they were dissatisfied with the economic situation, which in poll after poll, was seen as the number one issue concerning voters.

At the same time, despite environmental promises, Biden opened up more protected land to fossil fuel extraction, giving the energy industry more record-breaking years in both output and profits. While Biden promised to be a break from Trump's anti-immigrant policies, he ended up spending more money on border militarization than any president and deported more immigrants than Trump.

And add to this, for a steady 13 months, the Biden administration continued its non-stop support of Israel's genocide of Palestinians, which was shown on daily news programs, further alienating some voters, mostly Arab and Muslim and younger voters, who saw a vote for Biden as a vote for genocide.

The disappointment of the Democrats was further compounded by the fact that Joe Biden was facing serious cognitive decline. There were many moments when Biden struggled to put together coherent sentences. This reached an embarrassing breaking point at the presidential debate against Trump when Biden seemed repeatedly lost, confused, and incoherent.

After enough pressure from the Democratic Party establishment and major donors, Biden agreed to drop out and endorse Kamala Harris as the nominee. The Party thought this could revitalize their chances. It did give a temporary jolt of enthusiasm for a few weeks, but it proved not to be enough.

The Democrats were forced to run an unconvincing campaign. If they made big promises, critics would rightly point out: "you had four years, why haven't you done anything already?" And Harris as the former Vice President could not represent herself as anything new. Famously, when Harris was asked on the popular morning television show *The View*, "Would you have done something differently than President Biden?" She answered: "There is not a thing that comes to mind." That said it all. While people's lives were worse, Harris kept trying to tell people how much better she and Biden made it for them.

Despite getting endorsements from someone like UAW president, Shawn Fain, Kamala Harris spent much more time campaigning with extremely unpopular right-wing politicians like Liz Cheney, hoping that it would win imagined moderate Republican voters. Liz Cheney notably voted with Trump 93% of time.

The Democrats were able to raise more than three times as much money as Trump and the Republicans, in what was the most expensive election in history, with both parties spending a combined total of over \$5 billion dollars on the presidential race alone. Harris and the Democrats spent millions of dollars campaigning with various celebrities from Beyoncé to LeBron James. Many people thought that the Democrats ran an "out of touch campaign." But how could they not? The Democrats had been in the White House 12 out of the last 16 years, overseeing a period of unprecedented inequality and worsening living conditions for millions of working class people. They couldn't be more out of touch with the plight of working-class people.

The main message of their campaign was that Harris was not Trump. They thought they could win simply on a vote against Trump. In fact, the opposite happened: Trump won on a vote against the Democrats.

When it was all said and done, Trump won with around 77 million votes compared to Harris's 75 million votes. The 2024 election was more a story of the Democrats losing than it was of Trump winning. The Democrats lost over 6 million votes from 2020 to 2024, while Trump gained only 3 million. More eligible voters chose rather not to vote at all than to vote for either candidate – nearly 90 million eligible voters sat it out. The Democrats didn't just lose to Trump – they lost to the couch.

The Second Trump Administration: The Democrats Plan to Wait It Out

Once Trump was elected, his administration was rearing to go, ready to fast track their authoritarian billionaire agenda like a whirlwind. In the first few days, it was executive order after executive order, closing government agencies, firing federal workers, announcing tariffs, and stripping basic rights from immigrants and LGBTQ+ people. Their agenda was clear: transfer wealth to the billionaires and U.S. companies, slash social services for the poor, and gut any agency that did not serve this agenda. They needed something to show for this blatant class war strategy, and they doubled down on nationalism and division, carrying out high profile arrests and deportations of immigrants, with as much publicity as they could. So far, it seems they might care more about the visibility of their aggressive immigrant deportations than they do the total numbers – that could change of course. Their goal is to instill fear in the population.

And to carry all of this out, they know they need to expand their powers of repression, criminalizing protest, and using threats of arrest and deportation as a club to silence people into submission.

In the face of this the Democrats have done little more than hold up signs of protest.

After nearly ten years of the Democrats raising the alarm about the authoritarian threat that Trump represents, occasionally calling him a fascist, not only did they roll out the red carpet for his return to office with their anti-working class policies, but now they have returned to bipartisanship and decorum.

At a press briefing weeks into the Trump's presidency, Democratic House Minority Leader, Hakeem Jeffries summed up the Democrats attitude like this: "What leverage do we have? Republicans ... control the House, the Senate and the presidency. It's their government."

He's right, however. There is nothing the Democrats can do. They will not stand up to the attacks of the Trump administration. That can only happen from the population, organized in mass resistance. So, the Democrats have begun to focus on the only thing they can do: redirect people's anger and opposition to the attacks of the Trump administration into the 2026 midterms, and from there the 2028 presidency. They are relying on the courts to slow things down here or there, seeing how they might delay this or that policy in Congress. They

are taking advantage of every opportunity to speak out and pose like an opposition. But besides words, they have abandoned any attempt to mount a real opposition to Trump's policies, if they ever had one in the first place.

They have been forced to offer words of support to the protests against Trump in order to not alienate themselves further. So, many Democrats try to offer a message like, "protest in the streets for now, but the real power is voting Republicans out and voting Democrats in."

With this message, Bernie Sanders and AOC have once again tried to operate as a supportive left flank of the Democrats, and embarked on what they've called a "Stop Oligarchy Tour," holding large rallies in parts of the country, including those that have traditionally leaned Republican. They correctly saw that many Trump voters were not happy with the Republicans blatant alliance with billionaires like Elon Musk, or the cuts to social programs, or the firing of federal workers.

The Sanders and AOC rallies confirm there is widespread opposition in the population to the blatant class-war agenda of the Trump administration, as well as a lot of support for Sanders's typical populist messages of taxing the rich to pay to improve the lives of working-class people. But once again, behind the popular slogans is a dead-end method: protest, but the only way to win is to vote Trump out by supporting the Democrats.

The implicit message of the "Stop Oligarchy Tour" is for the working class to get behind the Democratic Party. In other words, their message is to stop one wing of the oligarchy only to restore power to a different wing of the oligarchy. Clearly, they are not stopping anything.

It is no surprise that even as Trump's approval rating has declined a bit since he's come to office, the approval ratings of the Democrats have remained at a long-time low (the lowest since 2018). Sanders and AOC's Stop Oligarchy Tour" is less a strategy to take on the class-war agenda of Trump, and more a meager attempt to try to revitalize the Democratic Party's horrible image.

Conclusion - What Is The Way Forward?

Trump's return to power marks a sharpening of tensions within the capitalist order. The truth behind Trump's slogan Make America Great Again is its admission that the U.S. is no longer as great as it was.

The kind of unrivaled dominance that the U.S. held after World War II – lasting for decades, increasing after the fall of the Soviet Union, when the U.S. empire could do what it wanted anywhere without consequence – that dominance is over.

Today U.S. imperialism is being challenged economically by China, more or less aligned with Russia, and others. The U.S. has an enormous Treasury debt of \$36 trillion dollars, used to keep its economy and military afloat over the past decades. Before the 2008 financial crisis, this debt was \$9 trillion; it has quadrupled since, surpassing the U.S. GDP of \$26 trillion. The U.S. was able to sustain this level of debt so long as its currency and economy

were trusted and stable enough to invest in. But that stability has waned as the U.S. debt continued to grow, as its economy has stagnated, and as China has encroached on various U.S.-dominated markets.

The Trump administration represents a desperate and reckless attempt to reclaim U.S. dominance. To do this, they are removing all obstacles to profit, gutting any government programs that don't directly support the accumulation of wealth. As the profits and economic growth of U.S. companies have stagnated, the government has turned to looting the budget as a means of handing wealth back to the ruling class in the form of tax breaks paid for by enormous cuts to social services. They see everything from vaccine and cancer research, environmental safeguards, climate science, workplace safety under OSHA, consumer protections, the Department of Education and more as totally ancillary and expendable, like pigs at the trough sucking up any funds that could be going to billionaires.

Trump's trade tariffs, though chaotic, reckless, and volatile, ultimately have a clear aim: to charge a fee for doing business with the U.S., and to punish those that choose to ally with the China over the U.S.

For them, the increase in repression is a necessary accompaniment to the extremes to which this administration is willing to go to preserve the profits and dominance of the U.S. empire. It is because their class-war assault has become so blatant that they rely on strengthening their grip on executive power, on the courts, and on the systematic repression against individuals and institutions that resist, even including academic hallmarks of U.S. capitalism like Harvard. This administration desires silence and submission, and is prepared to use its executive and financial power to get it. It appears as if a new McCarthy period is taking shape.

But their strategy isn't just reckless; it is utopian. There is no heyday of American capitalism waiting to be ushered in. The contradictions of this system are rampant – the need for endless growth amidst intensifying global competition, of meeting increased energy demands while further destroying the planet's ability to sustain life, of increasing labor productivity while throwing millions into the ranks of the unemployed. There is no making America great again. There is no making capitalism great. This administration is more an open declaration that this system has nothing further to offer humanity, a reminder that the ruling class can't even manage its own affairs.

And so in all of this, there is overreach. The Trump administration thinks it will be able to dangle mass deportations, attacks on the rights of trans people, and perhaps no tax on overtime and tips in front of the working-class population and that will be enough to get them to go along. All they have to offer people is nationalism and hatred for populations they will try to scapegoat. That won't work forever. Ultimately, Trump's ability to present himself as an anti-establishment populist in the eyes of wide sections of the population is his biggest political strength. But he and his policies are a fraud and he is destined to betray people's expectations to make their lives better – and that is his biggest weakness.

But even though this administration has gone to new extremes, moving further than any recent administration, there still is a broad consensus and overlap between the strategies of both parties. Ultimately, the Democratic Party does not represent an alternative. When it comes to defending the interests of U.S. capitalism – intensifying military aggression around the world, deporting immigrants and militarizing the border, destroying the environment for fossil fuel extraction, transferring wealth away from the working class and the poor to billionaires and corporations, and more – the differences between the two parties is one of tactics, but not goals. Both parties seek to divide working people by nationality, race, immigration status, and other categories. They both seek to suppress dissent. Trump represents a faction of the ruling class that has a much more belligerent view of how to manage this crisis and restore the power of the American ruling class, whether domestically or internationally. And we are seeing a similar phenomenon around the world – as capitalism falls deeper into this crisis, the need to rely on their so-called democracy becomes smaller, which is why demagogues like Trump have become more attractive to those who want to manage this system, both in this country and around the world.

While there are disagreements among the ruling class on how to manage this crisis, none of them have any solutions, especially for the working class. Trump and the MAGA movement may be the immediate threat at the moment, but the Democrats are getting ready to step in and redirect any movement towards elections if it springs up – in order to crush it.

To take up the fight against all of the attacks that we face, the working class will need to develop its own leadership, and organize independently of either of the major parties of the ruling class, Democrats or Republicans.

The recent upsurge of popular opposition to Trump's policies gives us a glimpse of the potential that could be unleashed if we can organize our forces together. If a popular resistance movement does take shape, it will have to resist both the Democrats trying to channel it into elections, and potential attacks from a far-right cheered on by the Trump administration.

We have to be clear about what is taking shape: this is a new period of intensifying competition and conflict, with increasingly destabilizing debt, a race for what's left, an acceleration of environmental catastrophe, of increasing wars, of blatant attacks on the working class, a ramping up of repression, major attacks on the poor and the most vulnerable. It is the billionaires on one side, and the vast majority of humanity on the other.

This is a future we cannot accept. Building up our forces requires individuals to take a stand with those around us, in our communities, our schools, our workplaces. It requires making new connections and taking actions, however small at first, with those around us. People need to see others standing up, so they can be ready to take the first step as well.

But the task in front of us requires more than just standing up to Trump's attacks. The goal cannot simply be to pressure the system to give us what humanity needs. Capitalism can never do that.

Ultimately, the kind of fightback that is necessary to collectively stand up to the attacks of this system can open up the real possibility of transforming the system entirely. Hence this is a fight not just for mere reforms, but for a revolutionary reconstruction of society, one that puts humanity's needs first. The period ahead could open up the possibilities to build the kind of revolutionary working class organization that is needed to carry out such a fight.