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USA

Trump's Second Term – Now is the time for a global fightback

- IV Online magazine - 2024 - IV598 - November 2024 -

Publication date: Thursday 7 November 2024

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Donald Trump won a second US presidency on 6 November 2024. The Republican Party is now in almost total control of US establishment politics as they also made gains in the Senate, giving them control of the entire legislature, the presidency and the Supreme Court. It is a victory for the US Plutocrats and Oligarchs, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, the crypto-fanatics and west-coast Tech Bros.

Trumpism is part of the global counter-revolutionary wave we see with far-right populists, authoritarians, semi-fascists and libertarians taking power in countries around the world. What we are seeing is a process of a general shift to the far-right caused by neoliberalism and the collapse in the post-war liberal consensus that it has brought about. Trumpism is the same trend that produced Modi in India, Duterte in the Philippines, Meloni in Italy and so on.

But this victory, in particular, is a disaster for billions around the planet. The power of US imperialism to act or not act is still a decisive factor in global politics.

A second Trump presidency will be as chaotic and vile as the first. Only now his key intellectual backers will be much clearer on what they want to get out of it. Project 2025 is a blueprint for an authoritarian USA; it includes the proposals to sack thousands of government employees and place the rest of the US government bureaucracy under central presidential control. Elimination of the Department of Education to allow state-level control of curricula. It involves Rolling back transgender healthcare and social rights, making trans existence almost untenable in some states. It means the elimination of federal protections for gender equality, sexual orientation and reproductive rights. It will almost certainly prevent abortion pills from being sent through the post, which is the number one way people get abortions in the USA. We will see the mainstreaming of “conversations” about disenfranchising women. It also involves slashing funding for renewable energy research and development, increasing energy production and scrapping targets for carbon reduction.

Whether Trump's promise to be a dictator on day one and use the military against political opponents was hot air for electioneering or not is unknown. But that he ran such a reactionary campaign and got such a decisive vote reveals something about the growth of far-right populist ideas. We know that both he and his Vice President JD Vance recently endorsed a book called *Unhumans*, a manifesto for the mass murder of left-wing activists along the lines of Pinochet in Chile. This reveals the fascist kernel of neoliberal politics, which has come full circle.

This defeat largely rests on the wretched politics and failed strategy of the Democrats. It is clear that the Democrats are not even a dented shield against the growth of the far right; they actively feed the problem. They were business as usual in a period of anxiety and division.

They ran a campaign against a populist who was appealing to ‘the common people’ by instead focusing on the virtue of the establishment – constantly repeating that Trump was a felon as if there are not millions of felons in the USA in a corrupt and unfair judicial system who might see in him a persecuted martyr. The Democrats' fixation on the law courts to undermine him before the election failed utterly and added to his populist credentials. They preferred a campaign from the centre, focusing on celebrity endorsement, winning over middle ground Republicans, and parading with Liz Cheney. They appealed to the belief that the US is a country of equal opportunity and post-racism when it palpably isn't.

Trump and his supporters see through this. They know it is a lie. They prefer bullish, macho posturing, might makes right, freedom from consequence. The Democrats focussed in the last few weeks on labelling Trump a fascist – the

response from his supporters was either a shrug or to embrace the fact that he wound up the liberals so much. Trump is a cypher for all the most selfish and reactionary views in US society, but the Democrats were no alternative. His movement crystallised a view of the USA that rejects equality and embraces domination. His movement is not foreign to the US body politics; it is rooted in it.

The global counter-revolutionary wave is largely a reaction to the gains of the post-war era – the advances made by women, Black people, the LGBTQIA+ community and others. Trump appealed especially to white people and young men, to Christian nationalist far right and tech bro supporters of Elon Musk. He also picked up votes from the Arab American community that turned on the Democrats for their funding of Israel's genocide in Gaza (although Trump will pursue the same policy). But he also drew support from a significant number of Black people (meaning people of colour) and women, those who reject the liberal establishment and want to resolve the contradictions of American society by embracing its supremacist values. Some of the US Black population also backs mass deportations of recently arrived immigrants if it drives down prices and improves wages (as Trump claims). That is the point of populism; it combines contradictions and appeals to different people in different ways while claiming to provide simple answers to complex questions and denying meaningful change.

There will be considerable contradictions in his populist programme. Trump promised a carbon fossil fuel bonanza to drive down energy bill costs and tackle inflation, but he also wants tariffs on imports to strengthen US industry, which will drive up prices. He seems unlikely to deliver better living standards and more jobs for US citizens, especially with massive public sector cuts. But we also have to be wary of assuming that people primarily vote on economic grounds – the modern political landscape is far more complicated and riven by ideological divisions rather than simple financial calculations.

His indication that he will withdraw support from Ukraine and 'end the war there' almost certainly means that Russia's imperial annexation will be allowed to proceed. What this means for the broader region as Putin continues his expansionist project remains to be seen. Certainly, the emergence of a more multipolar world will propel us closer to a third world war at some stage. For the Palestinians, it also means more slaughter and defeat, Trump has been clear with Netanyahu that the far right leadership of Israel can "do whatever they need to do" to win.

The need for continued resistance goes without question. There will be many people feeling hopeless or full of despair right now, and that is exactly what the far right and fascists want. They take sadistic pleasure in the defeats they inflict on the 'woke' and on the left. But politics is determined by struggles for power and counter-power, building mass coalitions of resistance, identifying the weak points in the enemy's side and mobilising forces to shatter their strength.

ACR is in total solidarity with those in the USA who reject this authoritarian turn and want to fight for a better world. We know the next few years will be difficult, but our movement has faced difficult times before. We know things will get worse before they get better. But we also know that we can argue for a world beyond capitalism, imperialism, and militarism, based on a society that provides for everyone and is sustainable with the environment. Runaway global warming is already with us, as is the worldwide strengthening of the far right; the two are linked. And politics does not end at the ballot box – that is another lie the Democrats relied on. Power comes from our organisation and resilience. We fight for a revolutionary change. Our role is to be part of the international fightback to change the world, to reclaim the future and build a better society for everyone!

6 November 2024

Source [Anti*Capitalist Resistance](#).

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