



Speak Out Now

November 11, 2024

@sonsocialists

speakoutsocialists.org

mail@speakoutsocialists.org

(510) 343-9105

Their Elections Can't Decide Our Future — We Can

Donald Trump has been reelected, winning both the popular vote and every swing state, with the Republicans likely gaining control of both houses of Congress. But despite what the media says, this is not some mandate from the population. Instead, the election results show this was a rejection of the Democrats and the status quo, and an expression of deep dissatisfaction with both parties.

In 2020, Biden got over 81 million votes. But Harris got millions of less votes (some votes are still being counted). Instead of gaining supporters, Trump got about the same number of votes as last time. And this time about 35% of eligible voters didn't vote, so about 85 million people didn't vote for president — more than either candidate got — suggesting that neither candidate represents their interests.

This is not surprising. Biden promised to be the most pro-worker president in history, but the lives of most working-class people have not improved. Under Biden, the working class saw its purchasing power eroded with rampant inflation. Compared to 2019, housing costs are up 54%, energy costs 61%, food about 25%, health insurance about 22%. These prices have forced working-class people to go deeper into debt just to survive. And the small support that people did get during the pandemic, for things like food, child care and eviction protection — all of that was cut during Biden's term, just as the cost of living was skyrocketing. Even the jobs Biden bragged about bringing back, most of them were part-time and low-wage. And then Harris ran a campaign telling people that everything was great, while their lives and communities were in crisis.

So, it should be no surprise that in every demographic of working-class voters, the Democrats lost votes — among white workers, Black workers, Latino workers. The only group the Democrats gained votes in are among households with incomes above \$200,000 per year.

Meanwhile, in major cities across the U.S., homelessness is increasing; there are frequent crimes of poverty; deaths from drug overdose are at record levels; rent is unaffordable; schools and hospitals are underfunded and understaffed; police continue to brutalize people in poor neighborhoods. And it is often Democratic mayors and governors that oversee these cities and states, and who have done nothing to address the crisis many workers face.

Add to that the enormous promises that Biden made when he ran in 2020: to protect the environment, defend immigrants, cancel student debt, lower health care costs —

he delivered on none of these. Under Biden, the U.S. is producing more barrels of crude oil per day than any country in the world. Instead of protecting immigrants, the Biden administration boasts about its record number of arrests at the border. Students are still finishing college averaging over \$37,000 in debt. But the Democrats didn't hesitate to give over \$20 billion to support Israel's genocide of Palestinians, and a wider war in the Middle East.

Of course, Trump and the Republicans don't offer any solutions to these problems, either. But Trump was able to acknowledge some of the hardships that workers face. He would then, of course, try to redirect all of that dissatisfaction into blaming undocumented workers, or LGBTQ people, or any other scapegoat he could think of.

Trump voters didn't have to agree with everything he said, or believe he would carry out all of his threats. In some states that Trump won, voters passed laws to protect reproductive rights, or to increase the minimum wage and provide paid sick leave. Some workers felt heard by Trump, and were able to vote for him, hoping he will do something to fix their situation.

But he won't. Trump will continue to serve the very wealthy and their corporations. He will intensify the attacks on undocumented workers, further restrict the rights of LGBTQ people, accelerate the destruction of the environment, and keep going after reproductive health care. He will continue down a path of increased militarization and war, and will cut social services even further. The Democrats and the Republicans both defend the same system, but Trump does so with the mask ripped off, wearing his attacks on the population like a badge of honor.

But the solution is not to lose hope, nor is it to wait for the next election to pick someone with more false promises. There is no political party that is coming to save us. But we can't fight back alone. In order to stand up to the crisis we already face and the many more attacks that are coming, we must rely on ourselves. We don't have to let these dishonest politicians speak for us — we can speak for ourselves.

We know more attacks are coming. Now is the time we can begin to come together in our workplaces, neighborhoods, and schools, and discuss how only if we are united together can we confront the problems we face. After all, we do all the work to make their society run, and collectively we have an enormous power both to defend our interests, and to transform the whole society.

Speak Out Now at BART (11/11/2024)

Another Tragedy & First Responders

The brutal stabbing of a BART passenger earlier this month gained a lot of publicity. Of course it was the Station Agent at 24th street who assisted the victim, before medics arrived. And a station agent spotted the man who had been identified as the assailant at the Fruitvale station and he was arrested. Will the news media and Board members who disrespect BART workers remember this?

When the Criminals Decide

The publicity around this recent attack on a BART passenger is another strike against BART. Another scare; another reason to not ride Bart; another victim – actually two victims.

The first victim was the woman who suffered a horrific attack. The second, is now a violent felon. He has also suffered attacks, not that it excuses his violent behavior. But it might explain such an irrational act.

How many people exist on the margins of society and fall into criminal behavior and before or during that period become addicted to street drugs? Sleepless nights on the streets, surrounded by people like themselves, who have been tossed aside by society. Under that stress many people can feel disoriented.

Mental illness is an epidemic in this society and is fed by poverty, drug use, lack of housing – everything that pushes some people to the margins of society. Some manage to find their way out. But many don't.

Locking people up is the usual approach. In California state prisons it costs more than \$132,000 a year per inmate! This is after the cost of a trial.

The money is there and could be used to benefit the majority. But our tax dollars are taken from us and rarely used to benefit us. Sometimes they are used for criminal activity. The UN, and the World Court have found Israel guilty of genocide in their attacks on Gaza. The U.S. government has aided and abetted this criminal genocide. Since these attacks began 14 months ago, the U.S. has spent close to \$18 billion of our tax dollars on this criminal operation.

Save the Date

Speak Out Winter Holiday Party

Sat, Dec.7, 6:30pm

Talk to your Speak Out person for information

If you like this newsletter? Pass it along to a co-worker or leave it in the break room.

When Politics Choose Us

The recent elections resulted in a wide range of reactions – shock, anger, despair and devastation for some. And those who supported Trump and think things are going to change may be celebrating. Some are just watching and waiting to see what will happen.

There are probably some big changes ahead. If we are to believe the proclamations of the last months, there are members of our communities, including people we work with who could be targeted. Racist and anti-immigrant attitudes were fueled throughout Trump's campaign.

Programs that many people depend on could be defunded – essential social programs, like healthcare, public education, social security and others. Unions are on the list, while the rich and big corporations will get huge tax breaks. These programs and our basic rights were not handed to us. They were won through the efforts and mobilization of working people. There is no reason to tolerate any attacks on individuals or the rights we have today.

We don't have to watch and wait to see what happens. We can talk with our families, friends and co-workers and people we know about the situation, to build awareness and a sense that we are together.

Throughout history, people have had to break their routines to stand together for what is right. One lesson of the Civil Rights Movement that became a saying, is **"We are the ones we've been waiting for."**



Their Elections Are Over

Our Future is Up to Us

A discussion about getting together and organizing to deal with what we are facing



Sunday Nov. 17, 4pm

Doors open at 3:30pm

Henry Ramsey Jr. Center

2939 Ellis St., Berkeley

(Near Ashby BART) \$5 donation requested