

An election dominated by the threat of war and dictatorship

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Some eight weeks remain in the most reactionary presidential election campaign in modern American history. The two main capitalist parties are offering American working people the choice of the candidate of fascist dictatorship, Republican Donald Trump, and the candidate of imperialist world war, Democrat Kamala Harris.

The replacement of President Joe Biden by Vice President Harris stemmed the collapse of the Democratic presidential campaign and brought in an influx of campaign cash, but the race remains essentially tied. A New York Times/Siena College poll made public Sunday showed Trump with a one percentage point lead nationally, but Harris with narrow leads in three of the seven “battleground states” that will determine the outcome in the Electoral College, and tied in the other four.

Significantly, the poll found, according to the *Times*, that “more than 60 percent of likely voters said the next president should represent a major change from Mr. Biden, but only 25 percent said the vice president represented that change, while 53 percent said Mr. Trump, the former president, did.”

In a statement issued on X, Socialist Equality Party candidate for president Joseph Kishore, citing the *Times* poll and other indications that the election contest was extremely close, wrote:

What could be a more devastating indictment of the Democrats than the fact that the former president, who attempted to overthrow the last election in a fascistic coup, is able to gain traction and could even win the 2024 elections?

Kishore added, “Harris and the Democrats have

absolutely nothing to put forward to deal with the social crisis and the devastating conditions confronting the broad mass of the population. Their central priority is the escalation of war, particularly the US-NATO war against Russia, which is not popular. And they, along with the Republicans, are fully responsible for the genocide in Gaza.”

It is increasingly unlikely that the winner of the election will be known on the night of November 5, given that a few thousand votes could well be decisive in the closest states. The Trump campaign is already making feverish preparations to challenge the vote-counting, both legally and with physical violence, and expects to use Republican-controlled state legislatures and the right-wing Supreme Court to hijack the vote.

In remarks at campaign rallies over the weekend, Trump again threatened his political opponents with arrest, trial and imprisonment. “We gotta stop the cheating. If we stop that cheating, if we don’t let them cheat, I don’t even have to campaign anymore,” he told a Wisconsin crowd. On his Truth Social media site, Trump wrote, “WHEN I WIN, those people that CHEATED will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the Law, which will include long term prison sentences so that this Depravity of Justice does not happen again.”

Trump has already vowed to assume the role of “dictator” on day one of his second presidential term, while pledging to mobilize the military within the United States to round up as many as 20 million immigrants and their families and expel them from the country.

Over the weekend, Kamala Harris received the endorsement of two Republican arch-warmongers, former Vice President Dick Cheney and his daughter Liz Cheney, a former congresswoman from Wyoming and co-chair of the now-disbanded House Select Committee to investigate the January 6, 2021 coup attempt by Trump against Congress.

Dick Cheney is a war criminal, the principal architect of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, responsible for the slaughter of millions in the Middle East and Afghanistan in wars instigated by American imperialism. That he has chosen to publicly endorse Harris over Trump testifies to his confidence that the Democratic candidate will continue this policy of military aggression in the new arenas chosen by the Biden-Harris administration: the war against Russia in Ukraine, a joint US-Israeli war against Iran and its allied groups in the Middle East, and the war buildup against China in the Asia-Pacific.

Cheney couched his endorsement in language denouncing Trump's instigation of the attack on Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021. The hollowness of this supposed defense of democracy is demonstrated by Cheney's own history. The Republican ticket of George W. Bush and Cheney used lies, violent intimidation and the suppression of legal votes—backed by a reactionary Supreme Court—in its successful drive to steal the 2000 election. It was also Cheney who was the most outspoken defender of CIA torture, kidnapping (“rendition”) and murder as part of the so-called “war on terror.”

Nonetheless, the Harris campaign issued a statement welcoming Cheney's statement: “The Vice President is proud to have the support of Vice President Cheney, and deeply respects his courage to put country over party.”

Appearing on the ABC Sunday interview program “This Week,” Liz Cheney said she had spoken with Kamala Harris and expected to campaign for her. She praised Harris's acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention, saying that it could have been given by Ronald Reagan or George W. Bush.

Demonstrating this bipartisan alliance for war, another Republican operative and former official in the Trump administration, Alyssa Farah Griffin, speaking on CNN Sunday, offered this explanation for Dick Cheney's support for Harris: “Ukraine is on the ballot, continuing support for Ukraine in its war against Russia. That is something that Donald Trump and J.D. Vance have not committed to continuing ...”

Trump and Vance are not opposed to imperialist war, including in Ukraine, but hope to profit electorally by posturing as critics of a war that is deeply unpopular. They speak for a faction of the ruling elite that wants to turn more directly to a military confrontation with China, particularly as the Ukraine war has become a stalemate that may well end in military disaster.

As Trump made clear in his appearance last week on

Wall Street, where he basked in the support of billionaires like Elon Musk and Steve Schwarzman, he offers the super-rich a further vast increase in their fortunes through another round of tax cuts. Meanwhile, the Harris campaign is seeking to compete for the same support, as shown by proposing a lower capital gains tax than sought by Biden, and publicizing her endorsement by nearly 100 corporate CEOs and billionaires, current and former chief executives of Merck, Aetna, Blackstone, Ford, Xerox and Starbucks.

Whatever the outcome of the vote, the drive by the American ruling class towards war, social counter-revolution and dictatorship will continue. Whether or not he wins the election, Trump will emerge with tens of millions of votes, complete control of the Republican Party, and the backing of important sections of the financial aristocracy.

SEP candidate Kishore wrote:

It is impossible to fight the danger posed by Trump through support for the Democrats. Not only will the Democrats intensify a war abroad that threatens nuclear annihilation, the entire experience of the Biden administration demonstrates that they serve not to undermine but rather strengthen the fascistic right.

The only way forward is through the building of a political movement in the working class that articulates its interests, in opposition to the Democrats and Republicans and the entire capitalist system.



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