

Democrats grovel before Trump

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8 November 2024

In statements issued by Vice President Kamala Harris Wednesday and President Joe Biden Thursday, the leaders of the Democratic Party have adopted a posture of outright complicity with the incoming fascist president-elect Donald Trump.

Harris said that she had called Trump and congratulated him on his victory in the November 5 election. “I also told him that we will help him and his team with their transition,” she continued, “and that we will engage in a peaceful transfer of power.” She made no reference to previous statements that Trump was a fascist and a threat to the democratic rights of the American people.

Biden’s statement Thursday was even more cowardly. He went on national television, not to warn the American people about the dangers of dictatorship, but to extend a welcome to his fascist successor:

Yesterday I spoke with president-elect Trump and congratulated him on his victory. I assured him that I would direct my entire administration to work with his team to ensure a peaceful and orderly transition. That is what the American people deserve... I will do my duty as president. I will fulfill my oath. I will honor the Constitution. On January 20, we will have a peaceful transfer of power in America.

But the re-entry of Donald Trump into the White House, regaining the most powerful political office in the world, is anything but a normal political occasion. Four years ago, Trump staged a violent political coup, attempting to overturn the outcome of the 2020 election and maintain his grip on power. He summoned a mob of supporters to Washington and they stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021, aiming to block congressional certification of Biden’s victory. After the failure of the coup, Trump refused to attend Biden’s inauguration, and he conducted his election campaign in 2024 on the basis of the “big lie” of a stolen election.

Biden made no mention of this history. He was entirely silent on the repeated declarations by Trump that from January 20 he will act as a dictator, ordering mass roundups of immigrants and imprisoning millions in detention camps for immediate

deportation. He made no reference to Trump’s declaration to supporters that this was the last election in which they would be voting. He said nothing about Trump’s threats to arrest and prosecute “the enemy within,” a category that includes journalists, civil liberties groups, students protesting the Gaza genocide, socialists, and leaders of the Democratic Party, including Biden himself.

In 2016, after Trump’s surprise victory over Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama welcomed him to the White House with the revealing comment that the election had represented only an “intramural scrimmage.” He was acknowledging that the rival factions of the American ruling class, whatever their election mudslinging, were united in the defense of the interests of American capitalism.

Biden is going even further. He is not a naïf. He has been in bourgeois politics for more than a half-century. He knows what Trump is and what he is preparing to do. He didn’t express a word of concern about the plans for mass deportations, which would have devastating social consequences and have a truly police state character. His promise to facilitate the transition to Trump thus goes beyond mere fecklessness or prostration. Through Biden, the Democratic Party is declaring in advance its complicity with the frontal assault on the working class that the Trump administration will carry out.

In his televised remarks, Biden reiterated the bogus claims of social progress under his administration, in the face of a mass repudiation by working people who have seen their living standards and social conditions devastated over the past four years. “We are leaving behind the strongest economy in the world,” Biden claimed. “Together we have changed America for the better.” Why then did his chosen successor fail so abjectly at the polls?

The Biden administration has only one priority: escalating the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine. The White House is taking urgent action to ensure that the final billions in US military aid are pumped out from the Pentagon to the Kiev regime to fund the war through the winter. This is in the sharpest contrast with the failure of the White House to lift a finger to protect the American people from the measures planned by Trump.

It would have been entirely in order for Biden to declare that as long as he remains president, for the next 70 days, Trump is on political probation, and that the “peaceful transfer of power”

requires guarantees of the peaceful and democratic exercise of power after January 20. This would include Trump making public whom he will nominate as his principal cabinet officers, particularly those in charge of the military-intelligence apparatus.

In the meantime, Biden would be entitled as president to consult with Democratic governors and members of Congress on ways to protect the rights of the majority of Americans who did not vote for Trump, including the 70 million who voted for Harris, the tens of millions who refused to vote for either candidate, and the many millions whose anger and frustration were exploited by Trump's right-wing populist demagoguery, but have no desire to install a dictator-president. Instead, Biden gives Trump *carte blanche*.

In his posture and actions, Biden resembles an outgoing Democratic president of more than 150 years ago, James Buchanan, usually ranked by historians—until Trump—as the worst president in American history. After the victory of Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 election, the pro-slavery Democrat effectively gave a green light to the gathering Confederate insurrection. He took no action to protect federal military installations and stockpiles in the South, allowing the secessionists to seize them and gain an initial military advantage.

Biden's and Harris's pledges of a "peaceful transfer of power" are absurd, since the only threat to such a transfer was Trump himself, in the event that he lost the election. It was Biden who warned at the Democratic National Convention that his greatest fear was that Trump would seek to overturn an election defeat as he did in 2020.

As late as Sunday, the *New York Times* wrote extensively on the plans of the Trump camp to create chaos in the event of a Harris victory. The front page report included the following: "When Stephen K. Bannon, an influential right-wing media figure and close Trump adviser, was released from prison on Tuesday, he quickly told reporters that Mr. Trump should act preemptively on election night and simply claim victory."

Trump's election victory made such a repeat of the 2020 coup unnecessary, but Bannon continues to voice the frothing bloodlust in Trump's inner circle. In a subsequent podcast, referring to MSNBC, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, as well as the Democratic Party leaders and sections of the federal bureaucracy, Bannon declared they "don't deserve any respect, you don't deserve any empathy, and you don't deserve any pity... You deserve what we call rough Roman justice, and we're prepared to give it to you."

Bannon was likely referring to the notorious proscriptions of Sulla, a campaign by the Roman proconsul to eliminate his political enemies after victory in a civil war within the aristocracy. As one historian describes it:

"Sulla set out on the systematic elimination of his remaining opponents ... A list of between 2,000 and 9,000 equestrians and senators was drawn up, any of whom could be freely killed for

reward." (Charles Freeman, *Egypt, Greece and Rome*, Oxford University Press).

Trump will enter the White House in January with immensely greater power than when he left it four years ago. The Republican Party, in control of both houses of Congress, has been completely reshaped as the instrument of Trump's fascist policies. The Supreme Court, in its infamous decision of last July, has given Trump immunity for any action he takes as president, no matter how illegal, unconstitutional or violent.

For all the rhetoric about Trump as a threat to democracy, powerful sections of the bourgeoisie are reconciled to the establishment of a dictatorial regime. Leading Democrats and their backers in the financial aristocracy have already begun genuflecting before the new American ruler and pledging their support. This preemptive surrender was signaled even before the election when the billionaire owners of the *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times* blocked planned endorsements of Harris.

Post owner Jeff Bezos, the second richest man in America, followed this up with an effusive statement praising Trump: "Big congratulations to our 45th and now 47th President on an extraordinary political comeback and decisive victory." He wrote this on X/Twitter, owned by Elon Musk, the richest American and a fervent Trump enthusiast.

There will be no meaningful opposition to a Trump dictatorship from the Democratic Party or any section of the capitalist oligarchy. Substantial sections of the trade union bureaucracy will quickly follow suit, as demonstrated even before the election when Teamsters President Sean O'Brien spoke at the Republican National Convention.

The opposition to Trump will come from below, from the working class. Whatever the political confusion among workers who voted for Trump, the class struggle has an inexorable logic. Trump's program of mass repression against immigrants, huge tax cuts for the wealthy, and deregulation of corporations will be paid for in the lives and living standards of working people.

The Socialist Equality Party will advance a socialist perspective and program for the development of the struggle against dictatorship and for the defense of democratic rights. The SEP and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees will develop opposition in the working class at plants and workplaces, and will be holding meetings to build and rally opposition.



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