

# After the collapse of the Biden campaign

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The withdrawal of President Joe Biden from the US presidential election is a further demonstration of the vast dimensions of the political crisis in the United States. In the space of only nine days, the Republican presidential nominee narrowly escaped an assassination attempt, while the Democratic president has now been forced to end his reelection campaign.

Following his disastrous performance in a June 27 debate with Trump, Biden declared for weeks that he would not withdraw from the race. However, he finally bowed to the combined pressure of top party congressional leaders and billionaire donors. While Biden has endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to replace him at the head of the Democratic ticket, the final decision is in the hands of the financial oligarchy and representatives of the military-intelligence apparatus.

In only its seventh month, 2024 already recalls the crisis year of 1968, when American politics was upended by the Vietnam War, the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, and the decision of President Lyndon Johnson to forego a reelection campaign. The crisis of American capitalism today is far deeper, however, and more shocks lie ahead.

Biden's withdrawal followed the Republican National Convention, an orgy of fascistic reaction, anti-immigrant hysteria and Christian fundamentalism. Pitched to the lowest cultural and moral level, the convention was the completion of the MAGA takeover of the Republican Party, i.e., making it a party of American fascism.

Less than four years ago, Trump left office in disgrace after his failed attempt to overthrow the Constitution and block the transfer of power to Biden and Harris. But today, Trump has the backing of a substantial section of the American capitalist class, including billionaires like Elon Musk. The possibility of a fascistic regime is not a matter of far-fetched speculation. It is a political reality.

Trump currently leads in national polls, as well as in the "battleground" states whose electoral votes are likely to be decisive. This arises not from mass support for the fascistic policies advocated by the Republicans. Rather, the reactionary character of the Democratic Party and its

policies of war abroad and attacks on the working class at home have left large numbers of workers vulnerable to the right-wing pseudo-populism personified by Trump's vice presidential running mate, Senator J.D. Vance.

The Democratic Party long ago abandoned any significant connection with social reform measures that would advance the living standards and democratic rights of working people. It is a party of Wall Street and the military-intelligence agencies, focused above all on the assertion of the global interests of American imperialism. This is combined with the promotion of identity politics aimed at dividing the working class and advancing the interests of privileged sections of the upper middle class.

In the media and political commentary on Biden's withdrawal, there are ubiquitous references to his "great record" as president.

In fact, the Biden administration is held in contempt by broad sections of the working class, which faces declining wages, inflation and the consequences of endless war abroad.

The Biden presidency had four years to deal with the threat posed by the growth of MAGA fascism, and it failed miserably. Upon taking office just two weeks after the January 6 insurrection instigated by Trump, Biden proclaimed the need for a strong Republican Party. "Bipartisan" cooperation, especially against Russia, was proclaimed the greatest priority.

Biden sought "unity" with Trump to pass anti-immigrant legislation, and congressional Democrats backed the ultra-right House Speaker Mike Johnson in order to obtain tens of billions in funding for the war against Russia in Ukraine.

Biden blurted out the nature of his political priorities in his recent interview with ABC News. George Stephanopoulos asked him, "You've had three months to challenge Trump. Why haven't you?" Biden replied, "I've been doing a hell of a lot of other things, like wars around the world."

Even after the collapse of Biden's campaign, escalating the war in Ukraine remains the main focus of the Democratic Party and its backers in the corporate media. The *New York Times*, hailing Biden's decision, put in first place among its concerns: "This election will determine

whether the United States, as it has under Mr. Biden, stands up to Russia's aggression against Ukraine."

The *Times* editorial went on to insist that the Democratic Party move still further to the right, arguing, "The next Democratic nominee should acknowledge and offer solutions for the pain and disruptions caused by uncontrolled immigration." In other words, the Democrats should embrace the racist bigotry and xenophobia that flowed like an open sewer through the Republican convention.

And the editorial hailed Biden's policy of conciliating with the fascist Republicans: "In an era of intense polarization, Mr. Biden eschewed the satisfactions of principled stands in favor of the compromises necessary to make tangible progress. He engaged respectfully and honorably with Republicans."

Coupled with the war in Ukraine is the ongoing US support for Israeli genocide in Gaza and for wider war in the Middle East—signified by the Israeli air strikes on Yemen the day before Biden folded his campaign. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu travels to Washington this week to report to a bipartisan joint session of Congress on his accomplishments in exterminating the Palestinians of Gaza.

Through its arming and embracing the genocide in Gaza, the Biden administration has angered and outraged millions of working people and youth in the United States, while encouraging the fascist forces that see in Netanyahu an ally and co-thinker.

The struggle against the danger of fascism and the Democratic Party, which enables it, requires as well the ruthless exposure of those forces which prop up the Democratic Party and seek to give it credibility in the eyes of the working class.

Biden has long claimed to be the most "pro-union" president in history. By that he meant the president who most heavily relied on the bureaucratic apparatus of the unions to shut down strikes and strangle the working class politically. The union officials are rallying to Harris, with American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, a leading backer of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, announcing Sunday night that the union executive board had already voted to endorse Harris for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The pseudo-left supporters of the Democratic Party, many of them part of the trade union apparatus, play a particularly foul role in attempting to block any independent political movement of the working class, thereby giving free rein to the continued strengthening of the danger of the fascist right.

Speaking for this entire social layer, Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez adamantly opposed any effort to pressure Biden to step down, only to

embrace the candidacy of Kamala Harris hours after he did so. Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, who won 10 million votes in the last Democratic Party primaries, has not suggested that he would back a different candidate, let alone vie for the nomination himself.

Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joseph Kishore issued a statement posted on X in response to Biden's withdrawal from the election. He wrote:

A fight against fascism is urgently necessary. But fascism cannot be opposed through the Democratic Party. Indeed, if despite everything the Democrats are able to win the election, they will pursue policies that will further strengthen the far right. Opposition to fascism must be based on the fight to free the working class, the vast majority of the population, from the stranglehold of the entire two-party system.

It is necessary to fight within the working class for a program and perspective that articulates its real interests. This is the fight for socialism. It is impossible to oppose imperialist war except in opposition to the capitalist nation-state system, the root cause of war. And it is impossible to defend democratic rights except in opposition to the corporate and financial oligarchy, which controls both political parties.

The greatest fear of the ruling class is that the eruption of the unprecedented political crisis in the United States will not only encourage the growth of social opposition to corporate America but give the working class an opening to break free from the entire corporate-controlled two-party system.



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