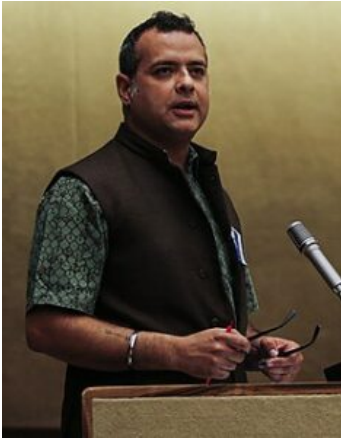


# The Choices That Australia Makes



*Vijay Prashad*

11-14-2024 ~ If you go to the bluff at Kings Park in Perth, Australia, you can overlook the Swan River and enjoy a remarkable view. Across the bay, there is a phalanx of steel and glass buildings that rise to the skies. Each of these buildings carries a sign that glistens in the sharp sun: BHP, Rio Tinto, Chevron, Deloitte, and others. Kings Park no longer survives merely with the patronage of the British King, who continues to claim sovereignty over Australia. Part of it is now named Rio Tinto Kings Park, needing the corporate profits from this enormous mining company to sustain its charms. Down one of the avenues of the park there are trees set apart by a few meters, and at the base of these trees are small markers for dead soldiers from past wars; these are not graves but remembrances that are crowned by Australian flags. The park brings together the three crucial pieces of Western Australia, this province of which Perth is the capital which is the size of Western Europe: the British monarchy, the mining companies and its affiliates, and the role of the military.

## *Of Kings*

A few days before I arrived in Canberra, an aboriginal senator, Lidia Thorpe, [interrupted](#) the celebration of King Charles III to say, “You are not my king. This is not your land.” It was a powerful demonstration against the treatment of Australia ever since the arrival of English ships to the country’s east in January 1788. In fact, the British crown does claim title to the entirety of the Australian landmass. King Charles III is head of the 56-country Commonwealth and the total land area of the Commonwealth [takes](#) up 21 percent of the world’s total land. It is

quite remarkable to realize that King Charles III [is nominally in charge of](#) merely 22 percent less than Queen Victoria (1819-1901).

The day after Senator Thorpe's statement, a group of aboriginal leaders met with King Charles III to discuss the theme of "sovereignty." In Sydney, Elder Allan Murray of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council welcomed the King to Gadigal land and [said](#), "We've got stories to tell, and I think you witnessed that story yesterday in Canberra. But the story is unwavering, and we've got a long way to achieve what we want to achieve and that's our own sovereignty." When Captain James Cook (1770) and Captain Arthur Phillip (1788) [arrived](#) on this Gadigal land, they were met by people who had lived in the area for tens of thousands of years. In 1789, a smallpox epidemic brought by the British killed 53 percent of the Gadigal, and eventually—through violence—they reduced the population to three in 1791. It is accurate, then, for Elder Murray to have said to the press after King Charles III left that "The Union Jack was put on our land without our consent. We've been ignored." What remained were *barrangal dyara* (skin and bones, as the Gadigal would have said). Given the value of the land in Sydney, the Gadigal clan would today be one of the richest groups in the world. But apart from a few descendants who do not have title to the land, the ghosts of the ancestors walk these streets.

### *Of Minerals*

Australia is one of the widest countries in the world, with a large desert in its middle section. Underneath its soil, which has been walked on by a range of Aboriginal communities for tens of thousands of years, is wealth that is estimated to be \$19.9 trillion. This estimate includes the country's holdings of coal, copper, iron ore, gold, uranium, and rare earth elements. In 2022, Australia's mining companies—which are also some of the largest in the world—[extracted](#) at least 27 minerals from the subsoil, including lithium (Australia is the world's largest producer of lithium, annually providing 52 percent of the global market's lithium).

On May 24, 2020, Rio Tinto's engineers and workers [blew](#) up a cave in the Pilbara area of Western Australia to expand their Brockman 4 iron ore mine. The cave in the Juukan Gorge had been used by the Puutu Kunti Kurrama people for 46,000 years and had been kept by them as a community treasure. In 2013, Rio Tinto approached the Western Australian government to seek an exemption to destroy the cave and to extend the mine. They received this exemption based on a law called the [Aboriginal Heritage Act of 1972](#), which had been drafted to favor

mining companies. Rio Tinto, with substantial operations in Western Australia and around the world, has a market capitalization of \$105.7 billion, making it—after BHP (market cap of \$135.5)—the second largest minerals company in the world (both Rio Tinto and BHP are headquartered in Melbourne). Hastily, BHP began to reconsider its permission to destroy 40 cultural sites for its South Flank iron mine extension in the Pilbara region (and after its investigation and conversation with the Banjima community) decided to save 10 sites.

Craig and Monique Oobagooma live in the northernmost homestead in Australia near the Robinson River. They are part of the Wanjina Wunggurr, whose lands are now [used](#) for the extraction of uranium and other metals and minerals. The uranium mines in the north are owned and operated by [Paladin Energy](#), another Perth-based mining company that also owns mines in Malawi and Namibia. There is also a large military base in nearby Yampi. Craig told me that when he walks his land, he can dig beneath the soil and find pink diamonds. But, he says, he puts them back. “They are sacred stones,” he says. Some parts of the land can be used for the betterment of his family, but not all of it. Not the sacred stones. And not the ancestral sites, of which there are only a few that remain.

### *Of Militaries*

In 2023, the governments of Australia and the United Kingdom [signed](#) an agreement to preserve “critical minerals” for their own development and security. Such an agreement is part of the New Cold War against China, to ensure that it does not directly own the “critical minerals.” Between 2022 and 2023, Chinese investment in mining [decreased](#) from AU\$1809 million to AU\$34 million. Meanwhile, Australian investment in building military infrastructure for the United States has increased dramatically, with the Australian government expanding the Tindal air base in Darwin (Northern Territory) to hold U.S. B-1 and B-52 nuclear bombers, expanding the submarine docking stations along the coastline of Western Australia, and expanding the Exmouth submarine and deep space communications facility. All of this is part of Australia’s historically high defense [budget](#) of \$37 billion.

In Sydney, near the Central Train station, I met Euranga, who lived in a tunnel which he had painted with the history of the Aboriginal peoples of Eora (Sydney). He had been part of the Stolen Generation, one in three Aboriginal children stolen from their families and raised in boarding schools. The school hurt his spirit, he told me. “This is our land, but it is also not our land,” he said. Beneath the land is

wealth, but it is being drained away by private mining companies and for the purposes of military force. The old train station nearby looks forlorn. There is no high-speed rail in vast Australia. Such a better way to spend its precious resources, as Euranga indicated in his paintings: embrace the worlds of the Aboriginal communities who have been so harshly displaced and build infrastructure for people rather than for wars.

*By Vijay Prashad*

*Author Bio:* This article was produced by [Globetrotter](#). Vijay Prashad is an Indian historian, editor, and journalist. He is a writing fellow and chief correspondent at Globetrotter. He is an editor of [LeftWord Books](#) and the director of [Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research](#). He has written more than 20 books, including [The Darker Nations](#) and [The Poorer Nations](#). His latest books are [On Cuba: Reflections on 70 Years of Revolution and Struggle](#), [Struggle Makes Us Human: Learning from Movements for Socialism](#), and (with Noam Chomsky) [The Withdrawal: Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and the Fragility of U.S. Power](#).

*Source:* Globetrotter

---

## What Are Republics, Exactly? It's A Good Time To Learn



11-13-2024 ~ *Republican ideals have evolved over millennia, shaping governance across the globe. Modern republics continue to adapt, but face challenges in upholding their foundational principles.*

The 2024 U.S. presidential election was framed as a crucial test for the nation's political system, with ongoing concerns over oligarchy, mob rule, a breakdown of equal protection under the law, and the ultimate power of citizens to determine the fate of the nation.

Republics have suffered total collapses throughout history, and there's no reason why the United States should be immune. The fear of that often prompts a superficial reference to the final fall of the Roman Republic or the end of Greek democracy.

But there's a deeper history: Republics came into being far earlier in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean civilizations. And we can draw from a much wider range of examples to learn from as we try to understand the challenges and the opportunities.

A true republic is a political system without monarchy or concentrated political power in any office, branch, or individual. Elected officials represent citizens to make decisions on their behalf, with separate branches of government providing checks and balances. While many associate republics with direct democracy in our times, there's a much wider array of power structures that developed in the formative era of republics.

The 20th century established republics as the global standard, with monarchies declining after World War I and most former European colonies declaring independence as republics following World War II. Fascist and communist countries, which centralized power in individuals or ruling parties, also reduced in number.

Despite their concentration of power, however, many fascist and communist states claimed the title of republics, and while [149 countries out of 193](#) identify as republics today, far less uphold republican principles and blend them effectively with democracy. Examining the historical evolution of republics highlights those best positioned to serve as the most resilient modern examples.

Republics require regular gatherings and assemblies, making them difficult to establish in sparsely populated agrarian societies, while empires generally concentrate power too heavily for self-rule to gain traction. It was in smaller city-states, particularly trade-focused ones, where citizens could form factions, exchange ideas, and influence government decisions and rules for commerce.

Some of the earliest experiments with republican governance appeared in ancient Sumerian city-states (4500–2000 BC), centered in modern-day Iraq. Kings acted more as neutral [arbitrators rather than rulers](#), sharing power with aristocratic families and groups, as well as common citizens. In Kish, [citizens could appoint](#) a new king during crises, while in Uruk, assemblies of townsmen and elders had to ratify major military decisions.

The Sumerian city-states fell to the Akkadian and Babylonian Empires by 1750 BC, but Phoenician city-states, emerging about 250 years later in what is now Lebanon, revived republican ideals. Here, monarchical power [was often shared](#) with a merchant class and citizen council. Egyptian records dating to the mid-14th century BC describe Phoenician cities [sending delegates to represent citizens](#) rather than monarchs, with mentions of [alliances and aid requests](#) by the “men of Arwad” and “elders of Irqata.”

By the 6th century BC, the Phoenician city of Tyre had [functioned for seven years](#) without a monarch, governed instead under *suffetes*, or judges, elected for short terms. In Chios, a “[people’s council](#)” allowed citizens to debate laws and hold officials accountable. However, beginning in the 9th century BC and continuing over the next few centuries, Phoenician city-states were successively conquered or subjugated by the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Macedonian Empires.

Like other civilizations, Phoenicians established colonies and trading posts. Carthage, founded by Tyre in 814 BC in modern Tunisia, grew into a powerful city-state with its [own republican features](#). By the early 7th century BC, two elected *suffetes* from aristocratic families [replaced the monarchy](#). They governed alongside an aristocratic Senate, while newer [merchants could gain influence](#) and a popular assembly allowed citizens input on major decisions. Military and religious leaders also held considerable power.

Republican ideals weren’t confined to Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean. Buddhist texts like the *Maha Parinibbana Sutta* mention Indian republics called [Gana-Sanghas](#) in the 6th century BC. Some adopted republican styles of government, while others formed republican confederations, like Sumerian and Phoenician city-states, to make decisions collectively and protect against larger threats. [The Indian republics were gradually absorbed](#) by the Maurya Empire (321–185 BC) and other entities.



Ancient Greek city-states also developed republican ideals. [Sparta was governed by a constitution and popular assembly](#) as early as 600 BC, though it remained largely monarchical. Athens established a direct democracy in 507 BC, known as *demokratia*, meaning “people” and “rule.” Greece’s slave-based economy allowed some citizens [time to participate](#) in politics, though this limited political fairness. [In 431 BC](#), Attica, the region surrounding Athens, had an estimated population of 315,000, of which only 172,000 were citizens, and just 40,000 male citizens could vote.

Still, [Athens’s democratic system](#) allowed these citizens to frequently debate, deliberate, and vote. They were overseen by the Council of Five Hundred, which was chosen annually by lot to draft laws and manage administration. However, following Athens’s Golden Age, 4th century BC Greek [critics like](#) Plato and Aristotle, and later historians like Polybius in the 2nd century BC, criticized the system for inefficiency and vulnerability to charismatic leaders to sway public opinion, leading to volatile policy shifts.

They emphasized balancing public, aristocracy, and monarchical roles to avoid the [typical political cycle](#) of chaos and order: first, a strong leader unites a restive society under a monarchy, which evolves into tyranny. It is overthrown and replaced by an aristocracy, which reduces into oligarchy. Democracy eventually replaces it but deteriorates into mob rule, restarting the cycle.

Invasions further weakened Greece’s republican and democratic systems, including in 338 BC, when Greece fell under the control of the Macedonian Empire, ending the independence of many city-states. Despite this, Greek states formed republican confederations to protect against threats, including the neighboring Roman Republic. The term *republic* derives from the Roman *res publica*, meaning “public affairs,” emphasizing shared governance, civic participation, and checks and balances. Since its founding in 509 BC, the Roman Republic’s political structure had evolved considerably. Polybius [expressed appreciation](#) for Rome’s system, where two tribunes were elected annually to represent the common citizens, while two consuls were elected and held executive power, checked by an aristocratic senate.

Romans were skeptical of Greek democracy, especially in Athens, due to its instability, infighting, and mob rule. Carthage’s republic seemed overly commercial and lacked the civic loyalty the Romans valued. This loyalty was

central to Rome's military, staffed by a citizen army [motivated by shared rewards](#). In contrast, Carthage's strong, citizen-led navy protected trade routes, but its reliance on mercenaries for land campaigns made them costly and unpredictable.

These factors reduced the ability to push back against Roman rule. By 146 BC, Rome defeated both Greece and Carthage, cementing its dominance and expanding political system. [Polybius suggests](#) that Rome's success over Carthage was partially due to its powerful, aristocratic Senate, while Carthage's policies were increasingly shaped by popular influence. He believed that Rome's decisions were made by elites versus the influence of the masses in Carthage.

Yet by this time, Rome was approaching its Late Republic phase. The scholar [Harriet Flower's research](#) argues that the Roman Republic wasn't a single entity but a series of six republics, each with unique political characteristics. Others have also challenged the notion of a single Roman Republic, placing Republican Rome into three main periods characterized by changing centers of power.

The Early Republic (509–367 BC) was marked by tensions between patricians (aristocratic elites) and plebeians (common citizens). The struggle for plebeian rights led to significant reforms, including the establishment of tribunes, elected by the [Concilium Plebis](#) to represent common interests, and often from the plebeian class.

During the Middle Republic (367–133 BC), the Licinian-Sextian laws of 367 BC were passed to again alleviate tensions between patricians and plebeians, limiting patrician land ownership, providing debt relief for plebeians, and ensuring that at least one of the two consuls was a plebeian. However, political power increasingly concentrated in the Senate, undermining these reforms.

During the Late Republic (133–31 BC), Rome's military success over rivals coincided with the growing influence of ordinary citizens in the judicial system, especially as jurors. Yet the republic was plagued by social conflict, corruption, and civil unrest. Sulla's march on Rome in 88 BC and his curtailing of the tribunes' power exemplified rising instability. After, figures like [Pompey in the '70s BC](#) and Julius Caesar in 59 BC began consolidating power, further undermining republican values. In 27 BC, Augustus formally transitioned Rome into an empire, while maintaining [the illusion of republican traditions](#).

Roman orator Cicero, a prominent defender of the Republic, inadvertently



[accelerated its demise](#) through his support for Augustus, endorsement of dictatorial powers, and willingness to suspend legal norms during crises, showing the dangers of sacrificing republican ideals to manage turmoil. For the next few centuries, republican ideals were largely sidelined.

The collapse of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD saw [feudalism](#) and monarchies spread across its former territories and peripheral regions. This instability nonetheless allowed new republics to emerge, such as Venice, founded in 697 AD. It maintained a 1,100-year run as a [republic](#) through a political system that encouraged merchant participation and representation, shrewd diplomacy, social mobility, community cohesion, and an extensive trade network. It was eventually conquered by France in 1797.

During the Italian Renaissance (14th to 17th centuries), urbanization, advancements in communication, and Enlightenment ideals enabled the rise of new city-states. Merchant classes and other groups established republican systems as alternatives to European monarchies elsewhere as well. However, they were ultimately absorbed by empires, partly due to their inability to exploit the expanding Atlantic trade routes that reduced the importance of the Mediterranean.

Republics were not confined to Europe. [The Kongsu Republics](#) in modern-day Malaysia, particularly the Lanfang Republic declared in 1777, arose when Chinese settlers recruited by local sultans for mining formed companies to safeguard their interests. Over time, they evolved into self-governing territories with elected leaders and various levels of democratic governance. The Lanfang Republic was eventually defeated by Dutch colonial forces in 1884, with the rest absorbed through treaty or militarily defeated by the century's end.

The establishment of the United States marked the reemergence of the large-scale republican state. In 1787, after the Revolutionary War, the U.S. formally became a constitutional republic, aiming to eliminate monarchy while avoiding a chaotic direct democracy. The Founding Fathers created a [mixed system](#), balancing public participation with safeguards against aristocracy and emphasizing consent of the governed (though limited to white male landowners). The debates over constitutional amendments and expanding democracy [continued for decades](#), paralleling similar discussions in post-Revolutionary France after 1789.

Today, many republics exist, but their authenticity and stability can be compromised. Being conquered imposes outside authority, while others pursue foreign expansion themselves, centralizing control and subjugating other territories. Republics such as those in 16th century Netherlands, 17th century England, and 18th century U.S. and France grew into empires or reverted to monarchies, adapting in ways whose lessons are still relevant today. These expansionist policies, often justified as essential for wealth and security, led to the abandonment of certain republican and democratic principles.

Republics can also shift toward authoritarianism, with modern policymakers perceiving more open democratic systems as unstable and vulnerable to manipulation. In recent years, China and Russia have seen reductions in public accountability, civil liberties, meaningful political participation, and concentrations of power behind Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. In North Korea, power has been concentrated in the leader's office since its founding, with leadership passed within the Kim family. Similarly, a dynasty has developed under the Aliyev family in [Azerbaijan](#) since the 1990s, with concerns that [Turkmenistan](#) may follow.

Countries with strong presidential systems, common in the Americas, risk [concentrating power in the executive branch](#). Fixed terms limit the removal of unpopular leaders, since, unlike in parliamentary democracies, no "confidence vote" mechanism exists for crisis situations. [Partisan loyalty](#) can also weaken checks and balances, and coups can be common.

Alliances and federations of Greek city-states like the [Achaean](#) and [Lycian Leagues](#), as well as the [Native American Iroquois Confederacy](#), formed assemblies and councils for representation and collective decision-making, influencing models like the [U.S. Constitution](#) and European Union (EU). The statement that the U.S. is "a republic, not a democracy" reflects the original aim to keep political power within the states rather than the federal government. However, authority has increasingly centralized in Washington, D.C., reducing state sovereignty, tensions mirrored in the EU between [individual states and Brussels](#).

Political apathy and extremism can also stem from the influence of billionaires and corporations over the political process, government corruption, and the erosion of social mobility. Social media platforms offer the chance for heightened political participation, but are increasingly vulnerable to disinformation spread by

big tech and political actors, revealing new ways in which democracies can [veer toward mob rule](#).

The diversity of republics today reflects their historical variety, with countries still navigating the governance structures in their own contexts. Kazakhstan, initially authoritarian, has [seen some shift toward a more balanced system](#) with a more powerful parliament following popular protests in 2022, though it remains less democratic. Similarly, Singapore, often described as authoritarian, is still considered a republic [due to some checks and balances](#), maintaining a blend of controlled leadership and political structure.

An informed and engaged citizenry, supported by a strong economic base, is essential for a successful republic. Citizens must feel the benefits of their system, and these must endure through fair elections, the rule of law, and due process. Effective foreign policy also relies on wide-ranging trade networks and adaptable alliances, while maintaining a strong military and avoiding military overreach or falling into the trap of foreign conquest.

Historically, empire and monarchy have been more common than republics, shaping world order through hierarchical and anarchic systems. Within the global UN framework, which is designed to support the sovereignty and equality of nations (a principle rooted in republican ideals), republics can govern more democratically by collaborating in a way similar to ancient confederations. The Achaean League and Lycian League consisted of states with varying political systems cooperating within a loose, republican-style confederation. Modern blocs like the EU, ASEAN, and African Union allow countries to work together under common principles and boost their voice in the international system.

Changes in domestic politics have meanwhile seen the growth of direct democracy [in the 2010s](#), as more referendums and popular votes of legislative and constitutional issues emerged globally, but especially in Europe. While larger republics like the U.S., Germany, and India still avoid national-level votes on major issues, direct democracy is increasingly apparent at regional and local levels. Challenges remain in terms of deliberation and integration, as states like California and Arizona have seen ballot initiatives often rushed, leaving limited time for meaningful debate.

Modern [citizens' assemblies](#), based on those originating thousands of years ago,

have also elevated these referendums in recent years and provided an alternative to traditional political processes. They have influenced major policy changes, such as climate policies in France to abortion laws in Ireland, with assemblies, typically convened by legislative bodies in partnership with nonprofits, designed to reflect demographics. While they have led to concrete policy shifts, some recommendations have not been adopted, with lawmakers citing the importance of expert-led decision-making.

With the U.S. election behind us, reassessing republican ideals, both domestically and globally, is crucial. As the GOP potentially gains control over all three branches of government in a divided nation, how it implements policies will either ease concerns or amplify them. The future of republicanism depends on the U.S. shaping its domestic agenda for the common good and using its influence on the global stage in line with democratic principles.

*By John P. Ruehl*

*Author Bio:* John P. Ruehl is an Australian-American journalist living in Washington, D.C., and a world affairs correspondent for the [Independent Media Institute](#). He is a contributor to several foreign affairs publications, and his book, [Budget Superpower: How Russia Challenges the West With an Economy Smaller Than Texas'](#), was published in December 2022.

*Source:* Independent Media Institute

*Credit Line:* This article was produced by [Human Bridges](#).

---

# **Anti-Haitianism: A Hemispheric Rejection Of Revolutionary Blackness**



*Bertin M. Louis, Jr. -  
Photo: University of  
Kentucky*

*11-13-2024 ~ From the United States to the Dominican Republic to the Bahamas, the collective scapegoating and mass deportation of Haitians for political gain lays bare a particular kind of anti-Blackness.*

*[This piece is part of a series analyzing anti-Haitianism with a hemispheric approach. [Read the first article in the series.](#)]*

On September 25, 2024, Democratic representative Steven Horsford introduced [House Resolution 1500](#) on the floor of Congress. The intent of the resolution was to censure Republican Congressman Glen Clay Higgins of Louisiana over a social media post that amplified [false claims](#) made by former president Donald Trump and his running mate JD Vance that Haitian immigrants were eating pets in Springfield, Ohio. In a post on X responding to an Associated Press article about Haitians in Springfield [filing charges against Trump and Vance](#), Higgins wrote: “Lol. These Haitians are wild. Eating pets, vudu, nastiest country in the western hemisphere, cults, slapstick gangsters... but damned if they don’t feel all sophisticated now, filing charges against our President and VP.”

He continued: “All these thugs better get their mind right and their ass out of our country before January 20th.” Higgins later deleted the tweet but the damage was done. Condemnations flooded in, followed by the resolution to censure the congressman.

Such comments and lies reflect the worst white supremacist stereotypes about Haiti and Haitians. Broadly, [anti-Haitianism](#) consists of actions, beliefs, outcomes,

policies, political strategies, and practices that reify the negative connotations associated with Blackness and Haitian identity. Trump and [Vance](#) both used the [admittedly](#) false [anti-Haitian rumor](#) as a form of anti-Black, anti-immigrant fear mongering to garner political support.

Examples of such strategies abound. In September 2021, for instance, U.S. Border Patrol agents [appeared to whip Haitians in Del Rio, Texas](#) amid a crackdown at the border that resulted in the [largest mass expulsion](#) of asylum seekers in recent U.S. history. Between January 2021 and February 2022, the United States expelled or deported over [20,000 Haitians](#). During the same period, more than 5,000 Haitians were deported from other countries, about half of them from the Bahamas.

Anti-Haitianism, of course, is not limited to the United States. It is a [regional and hemispheric phenomenon](#). Within scholarly and informed circles, the best known example of this form of political domination, marginalization, [racism](#), and anti-Blackness is in the Dominican Republic. In his study of race and politics, Ernesto Sagás analyzes how Dominican political elites use race and [antihaitianismo](#) to “construct national myths and then use these myths to stymie challenges to their hegemony.”

As Sagás explores, the national myth undergirding Dominican statehood was that the Dominican Republic was the most Spanish colony in the so-called New World. After Haiti’s occupation of Santo Domingo from 1822 to 1844—which liberated enslaved people, guaranteed Haitian freedom and independence, and [culminated](#) in Dominican independence—the Dominican Republic solidified its distance from Blackness and Haitian identity. Antihaitianismo then developed as an ideology based on anti-Black prejudices, stereotypes, and myths about Haitians and people of Haitian descent. Antihaitianismo, Sagás writes, scapegoats Haitians for problems within Dominican society and considers Haitians to be culturally and racially inferior Black sub-humans.

Antihaitianismo was violently on display in Dominican society in the 1937 [genocidal massacre of tens of thousands of Haitians](#) at the orders of Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. More recently, in 2013, the country’s highest court issued a ruling, locally known simply as [la sentencia](#), that not only upheld a constitutional amendment that abolished birthright citizenship but also retroactively stripped the citizenship of more than 200,000 Black Dominicans of



Haitian descent, rendering them stateless. Beginning in 2015, tens of thousands were forced out of the country. Now, Dominican President Luis Abinader has [announced plans](#) for a new round of mass deportations.

### *“A Certain Kind of Black”*

In my book project, *Anti-Haitianism in Paradise: Marginalization, Stigma, and Anti-Blackness in the Bahamas*, part of the “Black Lives and Liberation” series from [Vanderbilt University Press](#), I build on Sagás’s work and use anti-Haitianism to articulate the unique form of oppression Haiti and people of Haitian descent experience. In other words, I am wresting the idea and reality of anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic, applying it to varying social contexts, and broadening the theory to explain what anthropologist Gina Athena Ulysse—in reference to the racist treatment and degradation of Haitians in other parts of the world—refers to as [“the rejection of a certain kind of Black.”](#)

The Bahamas, a small, predominantly Black Caribbean archipelago nation, has a history of anti-Haitian actions. Haitians have migrated to the Bahamas since the era of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1803). Yet on November 9, 2019, members of a Bahamian nationalist group called [Operation Sovereign Bahamas](#) protested outside a gymnasium housing hundreds of victims of Hurricane Dorian. The [devastating Category 5 hurricane](#) hovered over Grand Bahama for 24 hours starting on September 1, 2019, flooded much of the island, and mostly submerged the Abaco Islands, rendering these areas uninhabitable. Haitians who had been living in informal settlements in Abaco were displaced.

Two months later, the Operation Sovereign Bahamas demonstrators called on the Bahamian government to evict the displaced people taking shelter at the gymnasium. “The Bahamas is for Bahamians,” the group’s founder, Adrian Francis said, according to Bahamian news service [Eyewitness News Bahamas](#). Other members of the group held Bahamian flags and shouted at evacuees, presumably of Haitian descent, “Go home!” “Repatriation!,” and “We want you out of our country!” This scene came after the same civic group had held a well-attended [town hall meeting](#) on October 4, 2019 in New Providence, Bahamas titled [“Eradicating Illegal Immigrants in the Bahamas, Shanty Towns Down.”](#)

### *Cyclical White Supremacy*

Anti-Haitianism operates as an ideology rooted in anti-Blackness, nationalism, political domination, and marginalization. We can also see anti-Haitianism

expressed as a set of practices. But what is the relationship between antihaitianismo in the Dominican Republic and anti-Haitianism in the Bahamas? As in the United States, political elites in both nations use anti-Haitianism as a strategy, suggesting that both African-descended nations are structurally anti-Haitian. When Black Dominicans of Haitian descent were forced to leave the Dominican Republic in 2015 due to [la sentencia](#), it was partly done by the party in power as a move to garner political capital.

Another dimension of anti-Haitianism is that these nations express and exert their sovereignty through anti-Blackness. In the wake of Hurricane Dorian, the Bahamas repatriated 228 Haitian migrants, 153 of whom had lived in hurricane-ravaged Abaco. Many Haitian residents of Abaco lived in informal settlements, locally called shanty towns, and had unexpired work permits that granted them legal status in the country.

When majority Black nations assert their sovereignty through anti-Haitianism, they extend the spirit of white supremacy and anti-Blackness, traditions previously exerted on the ancestors of Bahamians and Dominicans through slavery. These cycles also expose the *cyclical* nature of white supremacy and the *durability* of anti-Blackness.

### *Anti-Haitianism in Hemispheric Perspective*

Reflecting its hemispheric dimensions, anti-Haitianism has also developed into an important type of anti-Blackness informing other types of Blackness within nations in North America, the Caribbean, and South America. Regine O. Jackson's 2011 [Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora](#) discusses how Haitian migrants and their progeny have served in the past and present as repugnant cultural "others" in relation to the citizens of Jamaica, Guadeloupe, and Cuba.

In Haiti, in the wake of the 2010 earthquake, a United Nations-introduced cholera outbreak [claimed nearly 10,000 lives](#) and adversely affected more than 820,000 people. The United Nations remains unaccountable and unpunished for this human rights [catastrophe](#). In addition, much earthquake aid did *not go to Haitians* but to donors' own civilian and military entities, UN agencies, international NGOs, and private contractors, suggesting that humanitarian aid can be wielded as an anti-Haitian weapon.

And in Brazil, scholars [Denise Cogo and Terezinha Silva](#) have observed the racist

treatment of Haitians who were encouraged to migrate the country in the post-earthquake period to work as laborers ahead of the 2016 Olympics. The adverse experiences of Haitians in Brazil—home to the [largest Black population](#) in the Americas—expose the linkages between labor extraction, anti-Blackness, and anti-Haitianism.

Anti-Haitianism also serves other purposes within these examples, such as identity construction. The peoples of the Bahamas, Brazil, the Dominican Republic and other countries construct their identities as superior in relation to Haitian identities, producing anti-Haitian outcomes. The fact that Haitians have still not been compensated by the United Nations for cholera-related illness and death, and that the people who caused the epidemic have not been punished through Haitian or international law, reflects how Haitian lives are not only considered expendable but also unworthy of justice.

While we must consider differences in the local histories, socioeconomic conditions, and political situations of the Bahamas, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and elsewhere, a clear anti-Haitian pattern emerges in the wake of the 2010 earthquake. This pattern, on display in the news and scholarly publications, includes [alienation, death, expulsion](#), elimination, humiliation, marginalization, and stigmatization. Also, while these majority Black nations are subject to anti-Blackness, all these countries promote a unique form of anti-Blackness that specifically adversely affects Haitians. This should remind us that all that is Black is not the same type of Black, reflecting hierarchical and differentiated Blackness.

Anti-Haitianism is, in other words, an expression of a rejection of the Blackest of the Black—a revolutionary Blackness that demands freedom, equality, and dignity, but remains collectively punished and stigmatized.

*By Bertin M. Louis, Jr.*

*Author Bio:* Bertin M. Louis, Jr., PhD is [Associate Professor](#) of Anthropology and African American & Africana Studies (AAAS) at the University of Kentucky. He is the winner of the [2023 Sam Dubal Memorial Award](#) for Anti-Colonialism and Racial Justice in Anthropology from the American Anthropological Association and the winner of the 2023-2024 [Wenner-Gren Fellowship](#) in Anthropology and Black Experiences (administered by the [School for Advanced Research](#)). Louis is also the co-editor of [Conditionally Accepted: Navigating Higher Education from the](#)

*Margins (University of Texas Press, 2024).*

*Credit Line: The following article is syndicated in partnership with the [North American Congress on Latin America \(NACLA\)](#).*

*Source: Independent Media Institute*

---

# The One-Word Explanation For Trump's Stunning Victory?



*C.J. Polychroniou*

*11-13-2024 ~ Corporate media pundits will not tell you, because it remains at the core of their belief system. But neoliberalism is not just an economic doctrine, but a political project that has now ushered us into the abyss of fascism.*

Donald Trump's commanding victory over [Kamala Harris](#) seems to have surprised a lot of people both in the U.S. and around the world. Yet, it's not surprising that Trump pulled off this victory, especially since polls predicted a tight race. What is surprising though is the scale of his victory. In a deeply divided society with a two-party system, one would have expected that either candidate would have won by a narrow margin.

Trump's victory, which will have a wide-ranging impact on all aspects of U.S. society and will reverberate through the global political economy, represents a

genuine political earthquake. He won the electoral college and the popular vote by expanding his coalition with historic demographic shifts. Even democratic heartlands saw large swings toward Trump, while Kamala Harris underperformed with both women (thus indicating that abortion was much less of a key issue than people thought it would be in the 2024 presidential election) and young voters. [Young male voters](#), in particular, swung toward Trump in a big way as Kamala Harris not only put [women on top of her agenda](#) but, in turn, had very little to say about men. As for the [loss of the working-class vote](#), which so much has already been said and written about it, suffice to say that Harris also had nothing to say to the mass of citizens facing economic hardship. Strangely enough, Harris and the Democrats in general did not even try to convey to the public some of the success that Biden's economic policies had in contributing to growth and employment.

Kamala Harris could not convince the voters. A considerable majority of the electorate did not share her priorities. That much is obvious. Following her loss to [Donald Trump](#), Democratic National Committee finance committee member Lindy Li made a telling comment when she said that Harris' bid for the White House was a ["\\$1 billion disaster."](#)

Indeed, Democrats' humiliating losses in the 2024 elections has sparked [infighting and finger pointing](#) about what went wrong and where the party goes from here. Whether Kamala Harris was the right choice for the Democrats is now of course an academic question. But it may be of interest to see what the [New York Times](#) said about Harris in November 2019: "Ms. Harris is the only 2020 Democrat who has fallen hard out of the top tier of candidates. She has proved to be an uneven campaigner who changes her message and tactics to little effect and has a staff torn into factions."

The emerging consensus on Trump's reelection is that it was fueled by the economy. But what exactly does this mean? Between the final quarter of 2022 and the third quarter of 2024, the [U.S. economy](#) under the Biden-Harris administration was in rather good shape. Unemployment was at its lowest level in decades, wages were rising (though it's not clear at all if Americans' pay has fully recovered from inflation), and the GDP was expanding above the trend. In fact, the U.S. economy has been growing [faster](#) than any other advanced economy by a wide margin. And the inflation has steadily cooled over the past couple of years.

Now, we do know of course that there was a mismatch in U.S. economy

perception and reality, and that a [Harris-Guardian](#) poll conducted in the spring of 2024 had in fact revealed that almost everything that most Americans believed about the economy was wrong. However, all this can be explained by the fact that economies are too complex to be summed up by just a couple of indicators. A person's perception of a country's economic health can be influenced by one's own economic status, pessimism about the overall direction of the economy based on comparisons about economic conditions even with the rather distant past, and sentiments about the role of government and even the public's voice in government and politics. People who feel disconnected from the political system and have dismal views about the nation's politics are not likely to express positive views about the state of the economy. In other words, perceptions about the state of the economy can be influenced by [political biases](#).

The notion that Trump's re-election was fueled not so much by the actual state of the economy but rather by voter anxiety over the general direction of the economy and who is really in charge of government in the United States would have made more sense. [Most voters](#) don't feel economically stable or secure. They are aware of the growing economic inequalities and worry about job security. Surveys have consistently found that most workers in the U.S. can't afford an [emergency expense](#) even of a few hundred dollars. For most U.S. adults, the [American dream](#) no longer holds true, including a staggering 80 percent among people under the age of 30.

Let's call things by their proper names. It is the cumulative effects of neoliberalism on economic wellbeing, social cohesion, and democratic politics that explains the pessimism that exists in people's minds about the direction of the economy and the condition of the country overall. It is the disastrous effects of neoliberalism that can explain the latest realignment of the U.S. electorate and Trump's decisive victory over Kamala Harris. It is the dysfunctional U.S. economic system in its totality that has given rise to authoritarian demagogues like Donald Trump who promise unhappy and angry voters a return to a golden age.

The economic, political, social, and cultural dominance of neoliberalism has facilitated the rise of authoritarian populism and the far right not only in the United States but throughout the world. Here, I define neoliberalism not only as an economic doctrine primarily characterized by free markets, globalization, liberalization, massive deregulation, shifts away from social welfare programs, and the redistribution of income and wealth from labor to capital, but also as a



political project that aims to undo the demos and is carried out by the dominant economic classes through a brutal form of class warfare and with the explicit aim of capturing the political system and hijacking the state as the implementation of neoliberal policies requires large-scale intervention in the capitalist economy; and, equally important, as a sociopolitical ideology that puts individual self-interest before the common good, displays indifference to economic and social inequality and subsequently justifies plutocracy, offers acceptance to unequal power distribution, and transfers responsibility to individual agents.

Neoliberalism has attained a hegemonic position as an economic doctrine and sociopolitical ideology in much of the developed world and permeates the entire mainstream political space. Across Europe, social democratic and socialist parties have become virtually indistinguishable from conservative and right-wing political parties. In the U.S. the Carter, Clinton and Obama administrations pushed neoliberalism as the only viable alternative. Subsequently, what we have seen over the past twenty or so years across the developed capitalist world is the resurgence of ethno-nationalism, the rise of far-right political movements and political parties, and neofascist leaders like Orban in Hungary and Meloni in Italy and proto-fascists like Trump in the United States rising to power through the ballot box.

The new breed of authoritarian populists like Trump has emerged precisely because neoliberal capitalism has created so much discontent and anger that it needs a new model of governance to keep the system intact. And it comes in the form of proto-fascism or neo-fascism. Trumpism is an extreme far-right ideology that attacks democracy and seeks to disband progressive social agendas while promoting a new and more ruthless form of market liberalization. Trumpism is best defined as neoliberal fascism.

Unfortunately, as the traditional parties of the left have themselves embraced the neoliberal orthodoxy and the postmodern left has become obsessed with cultural issues and anti-racism at the expense of economic issues, a very sizeable chunk of the working class has been duped by the new breed of authoritarian populists and put its trust in turn in their hands in hopes of a better future. This is the tragedy of the Left. For without radical political leadership for guidance and inspiration, the working class of today fails to recognize neoliberal capitalism as the problem and has been made in turn to look for scapegoats. This is what Trump has managed to do with his vicious attacks on immigrants, undoubtedly more

successfully than any other authoritarian demagogue in the western world.

Like their predecessors, the new breed of authoritarian demagogues with proclivities to fascist rhetoric like Trump are homogenizing nationalists. But with the U.S. being one of the most ethnically diverse and multicultural nations in the world, Trump knew he had to expand his voter base if he were to be successful in his bid for reelection. The fact that his message got through with black, Latino and Asian voters is nothing short of amazing. It seems that the more racist Donald Trump sounds, the more voters he attracts from minority groups. Indeed, the Republican Party is now less white than ever before, and that has to be a very distressing development for the future of the Democratic Party.

What the next four years will bring from the Trump administration may be unlike anything the United States has experienced in modern times. Trump feels he has a powerful mandate, which is hard to argue against, to fulfill his campaign promises. Deportations and closing the border, drilling, pardons, tariffs, targeting journalists, and signing executive orders for schools pushing “critical race theory” and “gender identity” could be among the first promises he may try to fulfill. The restructuring of the U.S. government will take time, and it is unlikely that the second Trump administration will be as disorganized and chaotic as the first.

Progressives and radicals should prepare for what lies ahead. We do live in interesting times.

*Our work is licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0). Feel free to republish and share widely.*

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/trump-s-victory-explained>

*C.J. Polychroniou* is a political economist/political scientist who has taught and worked in numerous universities and research centers in Europe and the United States. His latest books are *The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic and the Urgent Need for Social Change* (A collection of interviews with Noam Chomsky; Haymarket Books, 2021), and *Economics and the Left: Interviews with Progressive Economists* (Verso, 2021).

---

# The Sustainability Scam: How Self-Interest Ruins Good Ideas



11-09-2024 ~ *We must ensure ecocentric standards to reverse environmental and social injustices.*

We have laws to ensure children are born into a safe, sustainable, and unpolluted environment. These laws are also meant to [empower](#) future generations and guarantee birth equity. But far from ensuring that these rights are upheld, we disfranchise children at birth because they do not have a legal say in the actions of adults that impact their future.

Our ill-advised desire to [prioritize economic growth over children's futures has led to the climate crisis](#). It has also led to children being born into unequal conditions where they do not have equal access to welfare resources. This has resulted in the impacts of environmental degradation being felt unequally among different socioeconomic groups. Poor people, Indigenous groups, and people of color are, by and large, impacted more by the degraded environment than the wealthy and white segment of the population. This is the tragic legacy of environmental racism, which has been referred to as "[the new Jim Crow](#)."

Those most affected by these injustices often have little or no say in shaping policies and laws, and their children eventually inherit this unequal system. In a capitalist, profit-driven economy, it is unsurprising that the corporate sector, driven by financial concerns above all else, is the biggest culprit in perpetuating these wrongs—particularly the [extractive industries](#) and [industrial agriculture](#).

## *The Misinformed Power Grab*

Most leaders—and the biggest beneficiaries of an unequal society—never came close to protecting children from the harm caused by the development model

avored by the rich world. Instead, poor children grow up in a world to face the repercussions of a [power grab](#) by wealthy, primarily white, families.

The first misstep of dissociating the connection between human rights and environmental sustainability was taken in 1948 when the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR) was signed, establishing fundamental rights for all people.

Twenty years later, in 1968, the [United Nations held a conference in Tehran](#) where some groups raised concerns about the impact of population growth (and, by extension, economic growth) on human rights. Despite these efforts, the concerns were never resolved, and the relevant changes were never incorporated into the UDHR.

### *Fixing the Problem: Laws, Norms, and Reparations*

The UN's ill-informed, misguided policy decision has led to a socioeconomic system built on the disenfranchisement of children at the time of their birth. There is an urgent requirement to rectify this situation and secure their welfare.

Firstly, reparations are needed. The wealth made through this process of disenfranchisement must be used to secure the future of newborn children who are entering the world. Those wealthy individuals and corporations that have benefited most from this disenfranchisement (and may have promoted ignorance by glossing over the [actual impacts of economic growth](#)) should be held especially responsible.

Secondly, we must establish laws and norms that ensure that the rights and welfare of unborn children are accounted for in the democratic process and that human beings are not merely seen as a means to sustain and grow economies. We must shape a future where children are not born simply to become consumers or workers but as fully participatory citizens with agency over their lives, with the ability to choose and thrive instead of merely surviving.

While [Effective Altruism](#) and other movements based on financial investments are often viewed by many nonprofits as effective ways to resolve these issues, [reparations are the most effective and immediate](#) way to fix problems facing us today if we want to restore the natural balance. If we skip this crucial step, it would be the equivalent of building a house with no foundation.

### *The Sustainability Scam*

Sustainability has become a buzzword among environmentalists, CEOs, and politicians. Leaders often present themselves as guardians of a better future, bragging about eco-friendly projects and sustainable methods. However, a closer look exposes a darker aspect to these assertions. The rhetoric and reality frequently diverge significantly, with racial disparities, self-interest, and uneven growth undermining various projects' ostensible benefits.

Nonprofits working toward social, economic, and environmental changes must also include family planning in their goals. They must first help ensure the shared, inclusive equity of children born into the world. That means giving all newly born human beings an equal capacity to self-determine the social and ecological influences that others have over them.

In his 2018 book [\*Winners Take All, The Elite Charade of Changing the World\*](#), Anand Giridharadas examines how the global elite's efforts to "change the world" are only an attempt to retain the status quo. He argues that their actions to try and resolve problems are a bid to hide their role in creating the problems in the first place. Publishers Weekly [called](#) the book a "damning portrait of contemporary American philanthropy."

But Giridharadas—and publications like the [New York Times](#)—have missed the biggest charade—the one mainly driving the suffering and death unfolding as temperatures increase. This "sustainability scam" has at least two standards for activist campaigns that claim to be sustainable, green, humane, democratic, eco-friendly, etc. There is one standard for wealthy investors (and their children), who often fund organizations that promote these terms, hoping that their work might have an impact in furthering them, and a different standard based on birth equity.

These standards are artificial, arbitrary, and designed to allow a particular form of economic growth that benefits some—mainly the white population—at a deadly cost to others. This first standard—anthropocentric and [adopted in 1968](#) by the UN agencies bowing to wealthy families—does not require birth equity. It functions on unsustainable welfare as the primary currency or value.

This first standard allows significant deviation from the ecosocial baselines and ecocentric standards that would have [prevented the climate crisis](#). These real standards can be measured along [at least eight metrics](#) like restorative levels of greenhouse gas emissions and inclusive representative ratios that ensure a

healthy, functional democracy. Deviation from these standards—based on self-determination or freedom and equitable share in democracy—has led to the [climate crisis that is killing millions](#).

Funders in the polluter nations facing significant climate liability fund various institutions—media, nonprofits, universities, agencies, think tanks, and celebrities—to spread disinformation to support the first standard. This allows wealthy families to treat inherited wealth and other privileges as something outside the realm of the democratic process, which they use to strengthen their positionality and growth to systematically disenfranchise the average voter. We are now at a place where they can use the wealth they made through the scam to attack the democratic process and try to step outside of it.

An [effort is underway at the United Nations](#) that requires assessments of climate damages. This includes the need to 1) ensure that ecocentric standards are adopted to account for the actual harm being done by the crisis and 2) to treat these standards and the recovery of climate reparations as the first and overriding human rights, a right that preempts the government's authority to assign wealth contrary to it, and allows citizens to engage in preemptive acts of self-defense to protect themselves and their children.

### *Inequitable Growth Policies*

As a fundamental right, people who are made vulnerable by the actions of others—like [fenceline communities put in harm's way](#) by petrochemical plants being built in their backyards—are owed compensation. As [millions die in a climate crisis](#) resulting from inequitable growth policies undoing most mitigation efforts, questions arise about how that happened and who should be held accountable.

We can see the imbalance in how the climate crisis disproportionately impacts those who are least responsible for causing it. In 2022, Seth Borenstein and Drew Costley of the Associated Press [reported](#) that “the data shows that the top carbon emitter over time, the United States, has caused more than \$1.9 trillion in climate damage to other countries from 1990 to 2014, including \$310 billion in damage to Brazil, \$257 billion in damage to India, \$124 billion to Indonesia, \$104 billion to Venezuela and \$74 billion to Nigeria. But at the same time, the United States' carbon pollution has benefited the U.S. by more than \$183 billion, while Canada, Germany, and Russia have profited even more from American emissions.”



This problem can no longer be ignored if we want to secure our children's future. We must work toward [resolving](#) the social and economic disparities, increasing access to welfare measures, and ensuring better resources for pregnant women and families.

### *Ensuring Child Rights*

There is a [minimum threshold of well-being for birthing a child](#), which is necessary for self-determination. We must take drastic measures to ensure all children have the resources to become self-determining individuals. This could involve seizing resources from well-defended enclaves of wealth. By doing so, potential mothers might be incentivized to plan for their children's future, knowing these resources would be available.

Some will argue that reduced economic growth, for example, is too high a cost to pay for ensuring birth equity and access to the same welfare opportunities for all children, especially those from BIPOC communities. However, these minimum thresholds are essential in forming a just and equitable society. People who argue against these basic standards threaten who we aspire to be as a society. They are more interested in exploiting humans and the environment for their gains, rather than investing in a better future. They [threaten our freedom](#).

It's physically impossible to have a legally obligating "we" that precedes all legitimate national constitutions without measurable birth equity. As the work done by the United Nations shows, no one gets to use authority and state violence to benefit at a cost to others [without incurring significant risk](#). It is important to see beyond the lies perpetuated [between 1948 and 1968](#) to make us think that national sovereignty is magically inherent. It has to be derived from the measurable sovereignty or self-determination of its subjects.

The only way to ensure share equity is to entitle would-be parents to bring children into the world only after a certain threshold of planned conditions, measurable on the eight metrics, have been achieved. The wealth accumulated by exploiting nature, which led to the climate crisis, must be used to ensure these conditions.

The United States prides itself on being a free nation but uses the concept of freedom that starts by exploiting the most vulnerable. There is no [minimum threshold of well-being](#) for future children and animals, as they are [seen as a](#)

[means](#) to growing economies rather than individuals with rights who form integral parts of society.

Converting democracies into unsustainable growth economies that enrich a few by diluting everyone else's equal and influential equity shares in our political system is a subtle form of oppression. It leads to [millions dying as the growth triggers catastrophic heat waves](#). This eventually results in justified resistance movements to protest against the scam, where those at the top of the economic pyramid benefitted from a society that promised an inclusive democracy, which is instead based on shared inequity.

"While there is no 'optimal' human population, the evidence suggests that a sustainable global population of 3 billion is an optimistic number given that we long ago entered a continuously intensifying state of ecological overshoot, accumulating ever more massive amounts of ecological debt that must be paid down if we are to avoid the ongoing (and ever-worsening) climate catastrophe, ecological destruction, and the resulting human misery," Dr. Christopher K. Tucker, chairman of the American Geographical Society, said in an October 2024 email.

"Adding 80 million additional people to the planet each year—the equivalent of 10 New York Cities or an additional Germany each year—is not a recipe for addressing this polycrisis," he said. "Fortunately, simply investing (heavily) in empowering strategies focused on women and girls worldwide can hasten the already inevitable demographic transition that would relieve the unrelenting pressure we have foisted on our planet—and help us meet our commitments to the next generation under the UN's 1959 [Declaration of the Rights of the Child](#)."

The wealthy need to pay the cost of creating an unequal system that benefits them instead of ensuring equal and inclusive participation by all citizens in that system. They profit from treating children as part of a labor force [to build and grow economies](#), instead of securing their rights as part of human rights and the democratic process.

Many involved in prioritizing birth equity have seen a pattern in how they react to it: they do not offer counterarguments to the idea that [restoring nature through ecosocial birth equity](#) must be the first and overriding human right but resort to tactics to evade the issue.

These people share a common trait: They attempt to evade being held responsible for the deadly costs and lush benefits of their birth, developmental, and emancipatory positionality. Their phrasing varies from “I’m just trying to save these specific animals” to “I’m just trying to focus on this specific area of research.” That kind of siloed myopia ultimately [destroys](#) biodiversity and causes irreversible environmental damage.

### *True Sustainability Means Having Children in a Very Different Way*

These deceptive tactics undermine the promise of sustainability, allowing leaders to project a false image of environmental stewardship while continuing harmful practices. To achieve genuine sustainability, we must demand transparency, hold organizations accountable, and ensure that the benefits of sustainable development are [distributed equitably](#). Addressing these systemic issues is the only way toward a sustainable and just future.

Many willing to benefit at a deadly cost to others want to treat the birth of children as unrelated to their lives. It is not. It is the basis of all things: a commitment to our most fundamental aspirations. Do we care about each other or exploit each other? While economics has dominated the social sciences because humans predictably try to maximize their welfare, it is also clear that many people choose criteria for truth and value that reaffirm their birth and developmental positionality.

That’s a dangerous form of self-deception, but understanding its existence allows us to move beyond economics, beyond capitalism versus socialism, and toward unifying constitutionality. We can’t change lives for the better if disproportionately influential people have the power to define what good is. Recognizing this fact is essential to hold those who evade our [obligations to birth equity](#) accountable—so that we all can work together to know what’s right and work toward taking remedial steps to prevent further environmental damage.

How could you know how much welfare you deserve if you are not involved in making the rules determining welfare? We can’t create economic demand by violating neonatal rights. We can’t ensure economic growth by preventing all citizens from being born and raised in town halls and participating in the democratic process. Using [specific ecosocial thresholds](#) to reform birth and development rights ensures an equal and influential role in rulemaking, thus limiting the influence others have over you to live in relative self-determination.

Given the [exponential difference](#) between the wealth of Black and white children, massive reforms are necessary to achieve equity.

Countries cannot legitimately undercut the sovereignty of their subjects by ignoring children's birth and development entitlements, using those children instead as economic inputs to create ecologically deadly growth. Nations and many powerful interests within them have, while responding to the "baby bust" of falling fertility rates, openly admitted to doing this. Part of creating deadly growth is to offer [tax cuts to women for having children](#).

In the book [Walden](#) by Henry David Thoreau, we learn that a basket weaver could not expect to [succeed in the "free" markets](#) created by those colonizing his lands. But even Thoreau missed the fundamental value of nature in constituting the creation of power relations toward equity and freedom. Laws that protect the beneficiaries of any political system only derive their legitimacy by [including and empowering future generations—in a measurable way](#)—rather than exploiting them.

*By Esther Afolaranmi, Carter Dillard, Beatrix Homler, and Mwesigye Robert*

#### *Author Bios:*

*Esther Afolaranmi* is an attorney, humanitarian, researcher, and writer. She is co-executive director of the [Fair Start Movement](#) and founder and executive of [Golden Love and Hands of Hope Foundation](#), a registered NGO in Nigeria that targets the needs of the vulnerable and underprivileged. She is a contributor to the [Observatory](#).

*Carter Dillard* is the policy adviser for the [Fair Start Movement](#). He previously served as an Honors Program attorney at the U.S. Department of Justice and with a national security law agency before developing a comprehensive account of reforming family planning for the [Yale Human Rights and Development Law Journal](#). He is a contributor to the [Observatory](#).

*Beatrix Homler* is an animal and human rights activist based in New York. She is the head of communications at the [Fair Start Movement](#), a consultant at [Rejoice Africa Foundation](#), and a board member at the [Education for African Animal Welfare Foundation](#). She is a contributor to the [Observatory](#).

*Mwesigye Robert* is the founder of [Rejoice Africa Foundation](#). He is focused on human and nonhuman climate mitigation and adaptation strategies and is passionate about investing in women and children to save future generations from the climate crisis. He is a contributor to the [Observatory](#).

*Source:* Independent Media Institute

*Credit Line:* This article was produced by [Earth | Food | Life](#), a project of the Independent Media Institute.

---

# Neoliberal Fascism Is Now The Dominant Ideology In The United States Of America

11-09-2024 ~ *The formation of a united front against this far-right realignment is more important and urgent than ever before.*

It's official. Neoliberal fascism has become mainstream in the United States.



*C.J. Polychroniou*

This is the only rational conclusion that one can draw from [Trump's decisive victory](#) in the 2024 election. Indeed, Trump's historic victory (which includes leading the GOP to a much larger-than-expected Senate majority and potentially in control of the House) has changed the nature of the Republican Party and shifted the center of gravity in U.S. politics in such earth-shattering fashion that it has led to the actual collapse of the Democratic Party.

Neoliberal fascism is now the dominant politico-ideological orientation in the United States and its dire consequences will undoubtedly be felt for years to come both inside the country and across the world. In this context, the formation of a united front against fascism is more important and urgent than ever before.

Under the leadership of [Donald Trump](#), a political movement has been born that encompasses different major coalitions (working-class voters, women [whose share of support for Trump, ironically enough, went up by 2 percentage points from the last election], Christian fundamentalists, minorities [Black, Hispanic, Asian voters] and youth [though largely white and conservative], and the ultra-wealthy) all of whom have been drawn to the "America First" slogan.

As such, the followers of Trump's movement are apparently enthused by the idea of witnessing the radical restructuring of the federal government (the shrinking of government agencies accompanied by the expansion of the powers of the presidency) and retribution for the great leader's political enemies; they are apparently in favor of rolling back civil and human rights and in approval of "law and order" politics which includes, among other things, militarizing the police and carrying out a militarist plan to deport millions of undocumented immigrants and banning sanctuary cities; they are apparently in support of a political agenda that targets climate change and curtails measures that protect the environment; and they are apparently in approval of massive tariffs on all imports as a tool of economic competition and tax cuts to benefit the rich.

The GOP is now Trump's party, and it is fascistic. It was a fallacy all along on the part of many Democrats to think that MAGA Republicans were a minority within the GOP. [Kamala Harris](#) exhibited anything but political savviness by going after [wavering Republicans](#), flip flopping on key issues, and ignoring the needs of working-class people. Thus, as [Bernie Sanders](#) aptly put it, "It should come as no great surprise that a Democratic Party which has abandoned working class people would find that the working class has abandoned them."



The Democrats should have learned from the mistakes of Social Democratic parties in Europe, which abandoned working class people and subsequently opened the door to authoritarian populist leaders who promised voters fed up with neoliberal policies a return to a “golden age” of economic independence, national identity and traditional social values. But they didn’t because Democrats have become the party of Wall Street and jet-setting celebrities.

The question now facing progressive and radical forces in the US is what to do next. Questions over political identity, vision and strategy ought to dominate public discussions in the weeks and months ahead. A united front against Trump must be formed in order to curtail the scope of his neoliberal fascist plans. As things stand, there are virtually no checks on Trump in his second term. And he comes into office armed with a Supreme Court ruling that grants the president immunity from prosecution for criminal acts committed while in office.

Dark times lie ahead. Many of those who voted for Trump will come to regret their choice, but that’s of little consolation now to the rest of society. Now it’s up to the rest of us to become more involved ever more passionately in pedagogical projects and political struggles that would build walls of resistance against a fascist takeover in the US. The fascist threat is real, and the Democratic Party bears much responsibility for democracy’s imminent demise.

The country needs a new vision and new politics. A powerful popular mass political response is urgently needed. It can happen. It must happen. The time to get organized in a much more serious and effective way is now.

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/neoliberal-fascism-trump-win>

*Our work is licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0). Feel free to republish and share widely.*

*C.J. Polychroniou* is a political economist/political scientist who has taught and worked in numerous universities and research centers in Europe and the United States. His latest books are *The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic and the Urgent Need for Social Change* (A collection of interviews with Noam Chomsky; Haymarket Books, 2021), and *Economics and the Left: Interviews with Progressive Economists* (Verso, 2021).