

Resistance to Trump Grows

written by Dan La Botz | January 30, 2026



Resistance to President Donald Trump is growing, taking the form of massive, peaceful protest marches, small local rebellions against ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), Democratic Party election victories, and a gradually changing public opinion. One could even talk about a growing class consciousness. The growth of the resistance comes in reaction to Trump's attacks on public services, on higher education, on freedom of speech, on public employees and their unions, and the cruelty of the violent attacks on immigrants. There is a growing revulsion against Trump, his Make America Great Again Movement (MAGA), and the Republican Party. The Resistance grows in response to the ferocity, depravity, and viciousness of Trump's policies that are affecting millions.

The Authoritarian Counter Revolution

We are in the midst of something like a counterrevolution as President Donald Trump is creating an authoritarian state that exists to further enrich the billionaire oligarchy by eliminating government regulation and taking away social programs from working people and the poor. He is using the power of the presidency to overturn the liberal programs put in place by Democratic president Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s and by Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1960s, back in the era of economic Keynesianism. And at the same time Trump is attempting to replace the global, neoliberal capitalist order, that began in the 1980s and went into crisis in the 2000s, with a nationalist, protectionist system, and state capitalism.

Donald Trump is at the peak of his powers. He controls the presidency, both houses of Congress, and he has a servile Supreme Court that so far has failed to challenge his claim to be boss of American society. He is a billionaire himself and has the support of at least a dozen billionaire backers who donate hundreds of thousands of dollars each to his political campaigns.¹ Others corporations and wealthy individuals donate tens of thousands of dollars to his personal projects, such as the White House ballroom he is building. Trump also held two crypto gatherings at the White House recently: a digital asset summit in March 2025 and a private dinner for cryptocurrency buyers in May 2025 that raised tens of millions of dollars from investors for his crypto business.² Trump, America's most corrupt president, is awash in money and it is this that powers both him and his MAGA movement. Many of these billionaires now also hold positions in the Trump administration.

Yet one cannot say he alone represents the capitalist class, or at least not Trump and the Republicans alone. Big tech corporations, Hollywood, and the entertainment industry contribute most to the Democrats. Silicon Valley corporations give about 80 percent of their political money to the Democrats.³ These sections of the bourgeoisie believe that the Democrats better represent their interests, their vision for the future, and what they see as their program for the country. Some tech companies, however, have moved from the Democrats to Trump to protect their businesses. The Resistance to Trump, if it is to be successful, truly successful, must also resist the powers of these

corporations and the parties they finance.

The Ideology of MAGA

Trump, MAGA, and the Republicans have been constructing an ideology as they go along, a system of thought based on ideas taken from older conservative beliefs both in their political and economic theories. First, Trump and his cabinet have increasingly become advocates of white, Christian, nationalism. White people, that is people who are white racially and culturally, were the founders of the country and they should remain the dominant group. So much for Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and native Americans who make up 40 percent of the population. These far-right ideologues claim the United States was founded as a Christian nation—despite the freedom of religion guaranteed in Article I of the Constitution—and they argue that the Christian faith is fundamental to the country. Christianity demands patriarchy, the idea that a man heads every family, and each family is made up of a man and a woman and their children. So women must be subordinate to men, and LGBTQ folk are anathema. And nationalism means the idealization of the United States that was founded by conquerors and colonists who exterminated and expropriated the indigenous people, a nation that subsequently expanded through wars with Mexico and Spain, and became the dominant global power after World War II. The Trumpists look back with admiration on McCarthyism and the anti-Communist crusade of the 1950s, but they want to be more thorough in the future.

Trump and his legal advisers opportunistically developed a series of legal doctrines on which they base their actions and which they are using to construct an authoritarian state.

First is the doctrine of “originalism,” which asserts that the Constitution should be interpreted as it was originally intended when it was written in 1787. In practice, this serves as a justification for the most conservative interpretations of the law, a cover for the Supreme Court’s subservience to Trump.

Second is the idea of “the unitary executive,” which argues that the president has absolute control over the entire executive branch, of every department, agency, and office. In the past government departments were expected to exercise some independence, but no more. Based on the unitary executive theory, rather than sending bills to Congress Trump has ruled through executive orders.

Third, is the “impoundment theory,” which claims—though Congress is supposed to decide on the budget—that the president can impound and withhold funds voted by the legislature. So Trump now takes that power from the Congress.

Finally, there is the “major questions doctrine,” which argues that government agencies may not engage in activities that are not explicitly spelled out in the laws that created them. So for example, the Supreme Court forbid the Environmental Protection Agency from implementing a plan aimed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by shifting electricity generation from coal to cleaner sources like natural gas, wind, and solar (known as “power generation shifting”).

Taken together, these legal theories give Trump enormous power, dictatorial power. And add to this the Supreme Court ruling on July 1, 2024, that presidents have absolute immunity for acts committed as president within their core Constitutional purview, at least presumptive immunity for official acts within the outer perimeter of their official responsibility, and no immunity for unofficial acts.

So we now live in a dictatorial regime, and that is what the Resistance is fighting.

Project 2025 Put into Action

Prior to Trump's re-election, a group of rightwing organizations and individuals created a detailed plan for his second term titled Project 2025, published by the Heritage Foundation, a rightwing thinktank. Several of its authors took up key positions in government—such as Russell Vought, now director of the Office of Management and Budget—and have been carrying out the plan. Six Project 25 authors are now cabinet secretaries and another dozen also hold high administrative positions. But Project 2025 made it possible for Trump and his crew to move rapidly and forcefully with their plan.

In his two presidential terms, Trump has cut taxes on corporations and the rich by \$4.5 trillion (projected from 2017 to 2030), which has led him to also cut social programs. For example, he cut the budget for agencies dealing with health, housing, and education, as well as those in the areas of science and the environment. Trump and the Republican Congress have proposed removing subsidies to the Affordable Care Act, the government health insurance policy that covers 44 million Americans. These changes could double or triple peoples' costs. Many education programs, from elementary school assistance to university and graduate program grants and scholarships, have been reduced. Trump has fired 300,000 federal employees, torn up their collective bargaining agreements, and effectively destroyed their labor unions.

In an attack on academic freedom, Trump has attempted to take control of higher education, including at private universities such as Columbia and Harvard, by withholding billions of dollars in research funds, and restricted and reduced the 1.1 million foreign students who study at U.S. universities. Falsely alleging that U.S. universities are pervaded with antisemitism, Trump has attempted to control hiring and curriculum, even demanding the elimination of some departments and programs. He offered guarantees of funding to universities that would accede to his demands, but several have refused. The goal of all of this is to transform universities, whose faculty in the humanities and social sciences are often liberal, progressive, or leftist, into more conservative institutions.

Trump has also attacked the media and the constitutional right to "freedom of speech and of the press." He has called the media an "enemy of the people" and says they produce "fake news." He insults reporters and expresses hostility toward them. He called one woman reporter "piggly." Trump has banned several news organizations from events and briefings, among them the Associated Press (AP), Reuters, and *The New York Times*. And at one time or another he has also banned CNN, Politico, *The Guardian*, BBC, BuzzFeed, and *The Washington Post*. He and his election campaign have filed lawsuits against major media such as ABC, CNN, and *The Wall Street Journal*. He has cut federal funding for the public radio and TV organizations National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting System. At the same time, he uses his own social media, Truth Social, to communicate, and he promotes rightwing Fox News, Newsmax TV, and One America News Network (OANN), outlets that promote him and his policies. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press in the United States still exist, but they are under a fierce attack.

All of Trump's policies are rife with racism and sexism. They are a reflection of the white, Christian, nationalist ideology that he has now completely adopted. Since taking office he has issued several executive orders ending all Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs—programs intended to protect racial minorities, women, and LGBT people to create fairness in hiring, promotion, and treatment of federal workers. DEI programs have now been eliminated from all federal government agencies, which will lead to a return of racial and gender discrimination in government. Trump and his cabinet members have fired Black officials from nearly all top leadership positions—heads of agencies, generals, and admirals. The federal government layoffs will have an especially adverse effect on Black employment, since federal employees are disproportionately Black.

Refugees of color are being refused. The United States under former president Joe Biden accepted

125,000 refugees per year from countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Syria, and Myanmar, where there had been wars or other major social problems. But now under Trump, the United States will accept only 7,500 refugees and prioritize white Afrikaners who it is claimed falsely suffer from systematic violent repression.

ICE raids have been among the most controversial and emotional issues of his administration. The ICE raids, conducted by armed, masked men and looking like kidnappings, are often violent and include arrests not only of undocumented immigrants, but sometimes of U.S. citizens. Many of those being arrested have lived and worked in the United States for years and even for decades. ICE agents snatch up people of all ages. A teenager was arrested at her graduation ceremony. There are often tearful scenes of parents and children being separated.

In this way, ICE has removed over 2 million undocumented immigrants or approximately 8,000 per day (including self-deportations). The average daily rate of formal removals has been around 729 to 759 per day. Those who succumb to pressure to self-deport may be given \$1,000 and a plane ticket. The people who are being detained and removed are made up overwhelmingly of immigrant workers and very few have any criminal record.

ICE agents are not the only uniformed men now active on our streets. Trump has claimed the cities run by Democratic Party mayors are crime infested and violent and he says that he'll clean them up. He has called Chicago a "war zone," "hellhole," and "death trap." He has repeatedly and falsely claimed that Portland, OR, is "burning down, just burning down." These accusations have been used to justify federalizing and mobilizing the National Guard to Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Chicago, and Portland. In other cases, Trump has claimed that peaceful protests against ICE require the mobilization of the Guard to protect them.

Finally, we should note that Trump has also transformed American foreign policies, and while he claims to be "the president of peace," many of his statements and actions portend war while others threaten to destabilize the world order in unforeseeable ways. Renaming the Department of Defense and now calling it the Department of War is more than symbolic. Trump, like Biden, continued to provide billions of dollars in military assistance to Israel as it carried out its genocidal war against Gaza.

Trump began his latest presidential term threatening to take Greenland, Canada, and the Panama Canal. He and his secretary of war, Pete Hegseth, have been ordering the destruction of small boats mostly in the Caribbean that they allege are transporting drugs, an unsubstantiated claim. So far, they have blown up 21 boats taking 83 lives. There is no justification for this in international or U.S. law; this is simply murder on the high seas. At the same time, Trump has moved the Ford aircraft carrier group of several warships, and thousands of troops near Venezuela and appears to be preparing for war there.

At the same time in Europe, Trump has failed to provide the weapons needed for Ukrainians to defend their sovereignty, hoping instead to reach an economic deal with Russian dictator Vladimir Putin.

Under Trump, neoliberal capitalism has begun to give way to state capitalism, ending laissez-faire, deregulation, and open markets and turning instead to state intervention in the economy. The most obvious signs of this have been Trump's tariffs on countries large and small to shape global markets and to raise revenue amounting to billions of dollars. The U.S. has placed a 32 percent tariff on China, at least 35 percent on Canada, while the effective general tariff rate has risen to 20 percent.

Trump seeks to make the United States the global leader in certain economic sectors and for

reasons of national security has also begun to change the economy in ways that resemble Russia and China, becoming at least a part owner of several important American corporations. The U.S. departments of Energy, Commerce, and Defense now own significant shares of American businesses. Among its biggest investment, the U.S. acquired “a golden share” in U.S. Steel Corporation in exchange for permitting its acquisition by Japan’s Nippon Steel. Trump also made a deal with Nvidia and Advanced Micro Devices, issuing export licenses in return for 15 percent of the companies’ revenues from sales to China of H2O chips. The Pentagon now owns a 15 percent stake in MP Materials, a rare-earth mining company, and the United States now has a 10 percent equity stake in Intel. We see here a trend toward state capitalism that increases the government’s direct involvement in the economy, in some areas giving it a leading role.

Finally, Trump has taken advantage of the recent budget crisis and government shutdown, which lasted forty-three days, to stop funding food programs that affect tens of million. Over 730,000 federal workers were furloughed while others worked without pay and weren’t paid until the shutdown ended. Trump used the shutdown to close “Democrat programs that we want to close up or we never wanted to happen.” By “Democrat programs” he means social welfare programs that provide food and education to low-income people. Trump has stopped funds for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as “food stamps,” that provides food to 42 million people with low or no income, that is, to 12.5 percent of all Americans. Most recipients are children, the elderly, or the disabled.

So, seeing Trump’s callousness, his ruthlessness, his racism and sexism, his xenophobia, and his indifference to climate change—but above all the cruelty of him and his cabinet, millions of Americans have risen up in protest. The protests have so far taken three principal forms: large peaceful marches, local militant actions that verge on rebellion, and voters turning to the left, voting for Democrats and in some cases for progressive Democrats.

The Protest Marches Against Trump

Trump campaigned on a platform of solving America’s economic problems for the country’s majority, that is, for the middle and working classes. Yet recent polls reveal that 75 percent of the population say prices are rising. People mostly complain of rising costs for housing and for food, and consequently many people, including Trump’s middle-class base, have been disappointed. According to the most recent polls about Trump, only 39 percent approve of him, 57 percent disapprove, and 4 percent say they are not sure. The broad disillusionment, the sense that life has simply become too hard, forms the background and is partially the basis for the growth of the resistance.

Since Trump’s second term began in January 2025, the protests have been coming every couple of months, with protestors demonstrating in hundreds of cities, towns, and hamlets across the country, each protest larger than the last, involving hundreds of thousands at first and then millions by the summer. In American metropolises like New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles hundreds of thousands have filled the streets, a river of humanity. The first of these was The People’s March held on January 18, 2025, two days before Trump’s second inauguration. It was organized by mainstream NGOs that advocate for women, civil rights, and the environment: the Women’s March, Abortion Rights Now, the Sierra Club, Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the National Women’s Law Center. The People’s March was not focused on Trump. Instead, it raised all of the issues of women’s and LGBT rights, racial justice, immigration, militarism, and climate changes. There were People’s marches in Washington, D.C., and other cities, and tens of thousands marched and demonstrated.

The next big protest took place on February 5, 2025, and both the organization that built it and the demonstration itself took the name 50501, a number standing for fifty protests in fifty states on one

day. Unlike other protests it was not a coalition of NGOs but rather organized and led by volunteers and local networks of activists. Most of the protests were held in front of state capitol buildings but some were in other cities. The protests focused on billionaire Elon Musk, who Trump had brought into the government to head the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), an agency that ran amuck through the government, closing departments, canceling programs, and firing tens of thousands of workers. Somehow it was this protest from below that initiated the gigantic demonstrations that followed. The 50501 movement was also the principal organizer of the "Not My President Day" protest held on the national holiday, Presidents Day, February 17, 2025.

By spring, the Resistance, as expressed in these massive protests, was growing rapidly. The Democratic Party's leaders and elected officials appeared to be pathetic, presenting no resistance to Trump. And now that he had been in office for four months, people were beginning to take the measure of his administration and the disconnect between his campaign promises and the reality of his actual policies.

The "Hands Off" protest against Trump and Musk on April 15, 2025, was held in 1,300 locations in all fifty states and represented a turning point. Millions participated. Demonstrators called upon the government to keep its hands off our democracy, off our rights, off our environment, off our jobs and income, off our social welfare programs, off our bodies, off our immigrants, off our unions. Children carried signs saying, "Hands Off My Future." A Democratic Party organization, Indivisible, was the key organizer of the Hands Off protest, drawing in the AFL-CIO, the country's largest labor confederation, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and 150 other organizations.

There is little doubt the Democrats, the AFL, and the AFT, most of the other organizing groups and the millions involved in these political parades were looking toward the November 3, 2026, elections with the hope that the Democrats would win, take back the House of Representatives, and prepare the ground to oust Trump in 2028. Most people in these demonstrations are Democrats and they would vote for Democrats in the next election. Yet the demonstrations have taken on the character of a social movement, and it is not clear that groups like Indivisible will be able to determine the movement's course, a movement of people who while they're Democrats, are sick of the Democratic Party leadership.

The next big step was the first "No Kings Day." A common sign said, "No Kings since 1776," the year that the Declaration of Independence was signed. At least five million people participated in the June 14, 2025, "No Kings Day" protests, in big cities and small towns in all fifty states, the largest yet in a series of national demonstrations. In a festive but defiant spirit, with bands and drummers, the marchers chanted, sang songs, and waved their signs with slogans opposing President Donald Trump's attacks on health care, food programs for children and the elderly, or his attacks on education and science. Some banners read "Fight Oligarchy." Some signs said, "No Kings, No Billionaires." More signs than in earlier protests said, "Fight Fascism!" In all of the protests there were more American flags and chants that expressed a desire for national redemption. Where I protested in New York City people chanted, "Whose country? Our country!"

Most recently, millions of people in 2,600 cities in all fifty of the United States participated in the second round of "No Kings" that took place on October 18, 2025. Like the earlier No Kings, this No Kings was organized by a coalition of 200 groups, the most important being Democratic Party groups like Indivisible and MoveOn and NGOS like Public Citizen and the American Civil Liberties Union, and the activist network 50501. At least seven million of us marched and rallied across America, which would make it the largest protest in U.S. history. I marched in a labor union contingent in New York City, one of 100,000.

What were we protesting against? According to the protestors' signs, chants, and comments, people

are angry about the cruel and violent ICE raids, about Trump's dispatching the National Guard and active military units to several cities, about the firing of hundreds of thousands of federal workers from their jobs, about the attacks on health, education, and housing programs, about the suppression of free speech and academic freedom, and about racist policies, such as Trump's changes in the refugee program to favor white people.

For decades the left shunned the American flag, seeing it as a symbol of racism at home and the U.S. wars against Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. But now many protestors fly the flag, reclaiming America for democracy and social justice. One protestor carried a sign saying, "Make America America Again," with a list of what he saw as American values: Free Speech, Science, Free Press, Rule of Law, Democracy, Choice (meaning the right of women to choose abortion), Due Process, and Diversity.

While the marches have been wonderful, they have not reflected the country's racial and ethnic diversity. Black people have been under represented. Because of white racism, unity between Black and white people has always been difficult. But in the recent period Black influencers in their podcasts and videos have discouraged Black participation. They have suggested that Black people already did their part in the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 60s and more recently in Black Lives Matter protests in which 15 or 20 million participated. Others suggest that if they participate, Black people will be victims of repression. And others say protest accomplishes nothing. One has to wonder if someone in government or on the far-right is paying some of these pundits. In some areas Latino participation has also been low, maybe because many Latinos now fear going to work, school, or the grocery store, much less joining in a political demonstration, because ICE is everywhere. In any case progressives have to encourage Blacks and Latinos to join the parade and raise their issues.

In ten months, the people in these demonstrations had become clearer about what they want, what we want. They want to take their country back from Trump, they want no dictators, no billionaires. And they know that they are fighting fascism, which if it isn't here now could be just around the corner. The enormous size of the demonstrations shows the tremendous opposition to Trump, and marching in them, being surrounded by others who feel as we do, is an expression of solidarity that gives us courage and optimism.

Local Protests Verging on Rebellion

In Portland, Oregon, where small numbers—dozens—of protestors had been marching back and forth in front of an ICE facility, Trump claimed falsely that the city "was burning," "war ravaged," and under attack by "domestic terrorists." In a comic interlude, locals responded by putting on inflatable animal costumes and dancing in the streets and in front of the ICE facility. The State of Oregon and the City of Portland went to court and sought and won an injunction to stop the deployment of the National Guard to the city. People in other cities adopted the inflatable costumes and wore them in the mass marches.

As the mass peaceful protests continued, in some areas people turned to more militant action that at times verged on rebellion. In June in Los Angeles and in September in Chicago, both cities with large Latino immigrant communities, protestors began to confront ICE officers engaged in raids and to take action to try to stop the raids. Often these were peaceful actions such as blowing whistles when immigration officers entered a community and undocumented people might be in danger. At other times protestors blocked streets with their bodies or their cars. Protestors had to be careful not to be charged with physically interfering with ICE officers, a charge that could lead to a year in prison, and not to hit them, which could lead to twenty years in prison. In the cities and states where ICE was deployed, local governments sought and often won temporary injunctions that slowed ICE

operations.

In Los Angeles, a city of nine million, a third of the population are immigrants and 800,000 or 7.1 percent are undocumented, so there is an understandably strong opposition to the ICE raids. People in Los Angeles are seeing their family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors being kidnapped from the streets by ICE. And this is a city with a largely progressive population many of whom stand with the immigrants. So it is not surprising that as ICE has become more violent in L.A. and everywhere else, with ICE officers using flash-bang grenades, tear gas, and pepper spray, beating people in their custody, and firing guns, that confrontations between ICE and the community have become more tense. As ICE officers conducted raids in the Los Angeles area on June 6, dozens gathered to try to impede ICE and protect immigrants. Later in the afternoon, hundreds at the Los Angeles federal building demanded an end to immigration raids in the city. When protestors heckled the police, other officers dressed in riot gear appeared and fired rifles, launching tear gas into the crowd.

The next day in the nearby town of Paramount where there were rumors, false rumors it turned out, of a raid on a Home Depot hardware store, crowds gathered and the police again used tear gas. In Compton, where there was a raid, protestors vandalized property and set a car on fire. Protestors threw rocks, glass bottles, and fireworks at the police who responded with flash-bang grenades, gas, and rubber bullets.

Over the objections of California governor Gavin Newsome and Los Angeles mayor Karen Bass, both Democrats, Trump then sent in the National Guard, which arrived on June 8. It was the first time in decades that any state's National Guard had been activated without a request from its governor. Democratic governors of twenty-two states called Trump's dispatch of the Guard "an alarming abuse of power." In response, protestors marched down Los Angeles streets and when faced with police and the National Guard they blocked the 101 Freeway. People dropped heavy objects from overpasses, breaking the windshields of police cars. Altogether, Trump deployed a total of 4,000 Guardsmen and 700 U.S. Marines. The president claimed he had to do so because there was a rebellion taking place in L.A.; Governor Newsome and Mayor Bass denied this. It was in fact a very localized minor rebellion in a few square blocks—but a righteous one.

Since then, protests against ICE haven't stopped; they have continued throughout the spring and into the summer and fall. On November 4, some 200 Venice High School students walked out of class and organized a protest march against Trump immigration policies.

Chicago Protests

The events in Chicago began following Trump's announcement that he was sending ICE and the National Guard to Chicago, against the wishes of Governor J.B. Pritzker and Mayor Brandon Johnson and of the people of Chicago. The peaceful march was interrupted when a red car sped through the protestors hitting a woman who had to be taken to the hospital. Other protests were held at U.S. Navy and Coast Guard bases in North Chicago that were being used as staging areas for ICE and the Guard.

In Chicago, in September, ICE agents carried out Operation Midway Blitz—"Midway" for the name of a local airport and "Blitz" for the Nazi's term for a lightning strike. Protests in the Chicago area centered on the Broadview processing and detention center where ICE took the immigrants it arrested. ICE declared that the operation was to honor Kate Abrams, a woman killed by an undocumented immigrant who was driving drunk. ICE claimed it was going after murderers, rapists, "the worst of the worst." But most of those arrested were working-class people, almost none of whom had serious criminal records.

ICE deployed throughout Chicago, but particularly in Latino communities and made over one thousand arrests between September 8 and October 3. At the same time, hundreds of protestors gathered regularly at the Broadview ICE facility. When they protested, police showed up and in classic police practice, pushed the protestors back, using their night sticks and knocking people down. As the incidents became more violent, two people were hit by vehicles and a reporter was pepper-sprayed by the police. When “fourteen suburban moms” as they called themselves sat down and blocked the street in front of the facility, they were arrested.

Confrontations in Chicago continued for weeks as ICE agents behaved like thugs and gangsters, provoking violence and then firing on protestors with tear gas and rubber bullets. Not only protestors, but also emergency workers were overcome by the gas. Katrina Thompson, the mayor of Broadview said that ICE was “making war on my community.” In other parts of Chicago, ICE agents without warrants arrested and handcuffed U.S. citizens. The activists used their cars to try to block the streets and the gates of the facility to prevent arrests. Some of them were arrested.

While the Los Angeles and Chicago protests were the most militant and could be characterized as mini-rebellions against the federal authorities, there were protests in many other cities, including New York City, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Seattle, Austin, Boston, Washington, D.C., and San Antonio. Some protests broke out spontaneously as people rushed out of their houses to confront ICE operating in their neighborhoods. Others were organized by local Latino immigrant organizations, by state or city civil rights groups, or by churches. In some places protestors created encampments near ICE facilities or operated out of a local church or community center. State and city governments often stood up for the protestors against Trump and ICE. These kinds of confrontations are the reason that some historians, political scientists, and journalists talk about the United States heading toward a civil war.

At the Prairieland ICE facility in Alvarado, Texas, things took a violent turn as ten protestors, dressed in black and allegedly wearing body armor, were charged with luring ICE agents into an ambush and then attacking them from nearby woods with rifles, firing several shots and hitting one police officer in the neck. They were accused of being members of antifa, labeled domestic terrorists, and charged with attempted murder, facing possible ten-year to life sentences. That event was an outlier, an exception to the general rule that protests have been peaceful, if sometimes militant and disruptive. There is no sign at this point that armed attacks will become a trend. Were *agents provocateurs* behind this action?

In addition to this kind of active physical resistance in the mass movements and local uprisings there is also the resistance of university presidents who have refused to accede to Trump’s demands and of progressive law firms and lawyers who have not only brought law suits against Trump’s administration but have also refused to be silenced by him.

On the Electoral Front

Most Americans who oppose Trump, those who demonstrate and those who don’t, put their hope in ending his regime through elections. In the United States, third parties may win some state and local offices, but they are irrelevant in the national elections, though some are elected as independents with no party affiliation. In the November 4 national elections, the first since Trump began his second term, the Republican Party suffered a stinging defeat as Democrats won not only several important races, but also some minor ones. The results suggest a turning away from Trump that will be tested in the November 2026 mid-term elections; these have the potential to flip the Congress to a Democratic majority.

In New York on election day, November 4, Zohran Mamdani, a 34-year-old New York Assemblyman

of Indian descent, a Muslim immigrant and Democratic Socialist, succeeded in defeating 67-year-old former New York State governor Andrew Cuomo to win the New York City mayoral election. He won half of the two million votes cast. He is the first Muslim to be elected mayor of New York.

Mamdani, was born in Kampala, Uganda, to parents of Indian descent and raised a Muslim. He grew up in New York City where his father Mahmood Mamdani was a professor of African Studies at Columbia University and his mother, Mira Nair, a famous filmmaker. Zohran graduated from the public Bronx High School of Science and attended the private Bowdoin College where he was a campus activist and earned a degree in African studies. He moved to New York City and in 2017 he joined the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the largest left group in the country, then with about 100,000 members. He was elected to the New York Assembly in 2020 and as an assemblyman helped to launch a free bus pilot program. While an assemblyman, he learned about how the inflating price of taxi medallions (permits) was bankrupting some NYC yellow taxi drivers and that nine taxi drivers had committed suicide. Mamdani joined them in a 15-day hunger strike. The protest led the New York City Council to provide debt relief to the drivers.

The general election was a three-way race. In New York City the Republican Party is insignificant, so the contest in the first stage took place in the Democratic Party primary election where Mamdani had to defeat former governor Andrew Cuomo. The sitting mayor, Eric Adams, had been indicted on federal charges of bribery and campaign finance irregularities. But Trump ordered the Department of Justice to dismiss the charges with the understanding that Adams would cooperate with ICE raids in NYC. He accepted the deal, but New Yorkers were disgusted with him and he could not run for a second term with any hope of winning.

Cuomo had been forced to resign as governor of New York State after thirteen women accused him of sexual harassment, including engaging in non-consensual touching and making suggestive sexual comments—though the legal case was later dismissed. He was also blamed for covering up the deaths of elderly people in assisted living facilities during COVID. Still, he believed that he could win the election because he had the backing of the New York City financial and real estate elite. Mamdani defeated him in the Democratic primary—469,642 votes or 43.82 percent to 387,137 votes or 36.12 percent—but Cuomo then decided to run as an independent in the general election, so Mamdani would have to defeat him again.

Mamdani ran on a platform of affordability, calling for freezing rents, making public transportation free, and providing free childcare. He also ran as a mayor who would defend New Yorkers from Donald Trump. And while it was not a central issue in his campaign, he made clear that he supported Palestine, could not support Israel as a religious state, and promised to arrest Benjamin Netanyahu for war crimes if he came to New York. His opponents labeled him an antisemite, and even suggested he was linked to Hamas; still, he won one-third of the Jewish vote. He won wide support from younger voters, renters, labor union members, and Black and Latino voters.

With DSA members as the core of the movement, Mamdani organized a massive campaign of 100,000 supporters, knocking on doors and making phone calls. Mamdani won the general election with a crushing vote of 1,036,051 or 50.4 percent to Cuomo's 146,137 or 41.6 percent. And it was a great achievement for DSA, the country's largest socialist organization. His victory also represented a victory for the Resistance and has energized it. Mamdani's victory was a defeat for President Donald Trump and his Republican Party, especially coming as it did among several other Democratic victories.

Across the country Republicans suffered defeats on November 4. In Virginia, former Democratic Rep. Abigail Spanberger defeated Republican Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears 57.4 percent to 42.4 percent to become governor. In New Jersey Democratic Rep. Mikie Sherrill defeated Donald Trump's

candidate Jack Ciattarelli, a former state legislator, to win the governorship. The Democratic victors are known as “national security democrats,” that is, not “hawks” but supporters of a strong military and the use of soft power, such as foreign aid. Spanberger is a former CIA intelligence officer and Sherrill is a former Navy officer. Both are moderate Democrats, opposed to Donald Trump and his Republican Party. Their election was a victory for the opposition.

In California, Governor Gavin Newsom and the Democrats succeeded in passing a referendum on Proposition 50 that allows them to redraw the congressional districts to get more seats in Congress. They won by 64 to 36 percent, a stunning victory for the Democrats. Prop 50 was a response to a measure in Texas that will redistrict to benefit Republicans. Newsom now becomes a leading contender as candidate for president against Trump in 2028.

The far left, those who define themselves as “revolutionary socialists,” such as the groups Solidarity and Tempest, declined to endorse Mamdani because he’s a Democrat, a member of a capitalist party. They called instead for building mass movements to challenge Trump and both major parties. Most American progressives, however, look to a combination of protests like “No Kings” days and to the election of Democrats to stop Trump.

When he becomes mayor on January 1, 2026, Mamdani will face enormous challenges. One cannot ignore that since his opponents have characterized him as a dangerous antisemite supporter of Hamas and a terrorist, he could become a target of violence, of political assassination. Last year there were three political assassinations in the United States and two attempted assassinations of President Trump. New York City is the center of American capitalism and Mamdani will face stiff opposition from the city’s financial and real estate elite. To pay for his multibillion-dollar program of a rent freeze, free buses, and universal free childcare, Mamdani will have to persuade the state governor to support his goals and convince the legislature to provide the budget, a serious challenge. The Democratic Party machine has already begun to try to control his new administration, pushing its people into top posts.

Trump at first suggested he would block Mamdani and punish New Yorkers for electing a socialist, though after a meeting between the two, they agreed they could work on issues of affordability. Still we know that Trump is not to be trusted and he could withhold funds from the city or send in ICE and the National Guard.

All of this will be a challenge for Mamdani and for DSA, which has supported him. DSA has about 11,000 members in New York City and usually about 10 percent are active members, though more became active in the Mamdani campaign. The organization has focused on electoral politics, though it also has groups that organize tenants, some members working on the immigration issue, women involved in the fight for abortion rights, and many are active in their labor unions. DSA members have, no doubt, participated in the mass marches, but without a significant organizational presence. Mamdani will have to inspire and organize DSA’s members and many others to build a movement to fight for his program. We must try to help Mamdani be as good as he can be for as long as he can. But he can only be as good as the movement that both supports him and pushes him.

The Future of the Democratic Party

The Democrats will find it hard to win coming elections as the Republicans continue to eliminate likely Democratic voters from the election rolls and redesigning congressional districts to give themselves more Representatives in the House. The Republican strategy is to multiply the congressional districts they control. The Democrats have responded in kind, but they don’t control as many states; so far only California is creating new districts.

Can we expect that Mamdani's victory will change the direction of the Democratic Party? There is no doubt that Mamdani's astonishing victory has created enormous excitement and that there will be attempts to change the Democratic Party's direction. But the Democratic Party appears to be hopelessly out of touch with the American people and it is not clear that it can change, since its main function is to represent the interests of certain sections of the capitalist class. Sanders' 2016 campaign for president, which had a program that spoke to the issues of the working class, was crushed by the Democratic Party leadership, while in 2020, faced with the opposition of the party leadership, he felt he had to give up and support Joe Biden.

How could one change the Democrats? Occasionally, one hears leftists say, "The Democratic Party is dead," but this is nonsense. Democrats have 23 state governors, compared to Republicans 27. The Democrats have 213 Representatives in the House, compared to the Republicans 219. The Democrats remain a rich and powerful political organization. What is changing in the people's sense of identification with these parties. Today 28 percent of registered voters are Republicans and 28 percent are Democrats—but 43 percent are independents. Still, neither the Green Party's valiant efforts nor DSA Democratic Party ventures has succeeded in organizing a political party on the left that might provide an alternative.

The Democratic Party (just like the Republican Party) is not a party such as one finds in some European countries with an active membership in a democratic organization. The Democrats have no members and virtually no organization at the popular level; rather they are led and controlled by the elected professional politicians, by donors who finance them, and are administered by political apparatchiks. They raise billions of dollars that go to lawyers, political strategists, and principally to TV, radio, and social media advertising. Ordinary people play no role in setting the party agenda, establishing its goals or anything else. Groups like Justice Democrats and DSA that operate in the Democratic Party largely find they have to adopt the approach of the very party they are trying to change. Election to national political office now costs several million dollars if one is to compete, and the reform groups, progressives, and leftists must either drop out or adopt the approaches of the Democrats.

The Resistance must continue to do what it has been doing: build mass demonstrations, engage in small local rebellions, and fight to win elections to reduce the political power of the Republicans even if we have little faith in the Democrats. In these mass marches, in small local rebellions, and in elections, the American people are standing up against Trump. He continues to impose his political agenda and to militarize our society, to ignore our Constitution and laws, and we continue to fight him. We will need more militant disruptive actions, civil disobedience, and strikes on a large scale to defeat him, and there is a chance we can do it. Still, we face the threat of Trump's authoritarianism developing into actual fascism. If that happens, the Resistance will have to change as well.

notes

1. "Top Contributors, federal election data for Donald Trump, 2024 cycle."
2. David A. Fahrenthold, Eric Lipton, David Yaffe-Bellany, Dylan Freedman, and Devon Lum, "Who Won a Seat at Trump's Crypto Dinner?" *New York Times*, May 23, 2025.
3. Chris Maisano, "Republicans' and Democrats' Biggest Corporate Sponsors." Oct. 8, 2024.