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Trump's threat to democracy and his crimes exposed during debate

By Mark Gruenberg and John Wojcik

PHILADELPHIA—In a debate long on fireworks but often short on substance, Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris slammed her Republican foe, Donald Trump, repeatedly for taking away the constitutional right to abortion.

From abortion rights to immigration, Trump showed the clear and present danger he would pose to the nation if he ever re-entered the White House.

Some of that danger would result from a man willing to make absurd and dangerous remarks about anything he feels will serve his interests. He talked, for example, about migrants allegedly eating pet cats in Springfield, Ohio and when the moderator told him the local police had debunked the story he doubled down on it anyway.

If you used debate scoring points rather than issues as your guide, with Harris repeatedly riling Trump by criticizing his presidential record, contrasting her "vision of the future" with his "taking us back to the past," the Vice President emerged the overwhelming winner.

"We're not going back," she declared, repeating a signature campaign theme.

Trump, over and over again, even if it was completely off topic, targeting migrants with lies, just as he had in his prior presidential runs four and eight years ago. And Trump never mentioned Harris by name, but at least 15 times cired retiring Democratic President Joe Biden. Harris had to remind him that he was running against her, not Biden. Biden was pushed out of the race after a disastrous prior debate against Trump.



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Sometimes the two candidates got into substance, notably when Harris discussed abortion rights. It's been a signature issue for her both in the Biden-Harris administration and while campaigning. She was gesturing and energetically making her case for that constitutional right all through the debate.

Abortion has been and remains a top issue for voters ever since Trump-named Supreme Court justices formed the core of the majority that ended the constitutional right nationwide two years ago. Harris repeatedly reminded viewers that Trump brags about picking the right wing justices who killed abortion rights, and she forecast worse to come if he wins.

By contrast, "I'll be a president to protect fundamental rights and freedoms, including a woman's right to run her own body," Harris declared. And if Congress passes a law restoring the right, "I'll sign it."

Former prosecutor Harris didn't spare Trump's criminal record, ranging from illegally barring Blacks from his housing developments more than 50 years ago to his declaration last year he would abolish the U.S. Constitution—and his aiding and abetting the Trumpite insurrection at the U.S. Capitol three and a half years ago.

Trump blamed the invasion on two female Democrats. Whining about persecution, he charged, as usual, that all the court cases, and convictions, against him are politically motivated.

And so it went, including some wild Trump swings that missed: "She has a plan to defund the police. She has a plan to take away your guns," charged Trump, who has the enthusiastic backing of police unions and the now-crooked gun lobby. Harris ignored both charges, but added that she and Tim Walz, her vice presidential running mate, are both gun owners "who have no intention of taking anyone's guns away."

Retaliation by lies

Trump retaliated by returning again and again to his lies about migrants. Though he didn't say so on stage in Philadelphia, Trump hates migrants from countries with majorities of color, but not white Northern Europeans. His family hails from Germany and Scotland.

Trump stated without proof that 21 million migrants "have overrun the U.S.," and charged they commit crimes at record numbers and take U.S. jobs. Reliable estimates put the number of undocumented people at 11 million. The other two statements are lies, too.

The number of migrants has dropped drastically, as has crime overall. And the migrants are less crime-prone than native-born people are, studies show. The two TV journalists called him on those lies, but he said the FBI statistics they cited are fake.

Trump wants to deport all those millions. Challenged how he would do that, he ducked.

"We're a failing nation and a nation in serious decline," Trump whined in his closing statement. "We're laughed at all over the world," he claimed, citing a reported private comment to him from Hungarian strongman Viktor Orban. Meanwhile, the migrants "are destroying our country."

The debate left many questions unanswered. Some, including workers' rights, went unasked, though Harris proudly claimed the endorsement from the Auto Workers and their reformist president, Shawn Fain. Trump vilifies Fain for agreeing to manufacturing electric vehicles and UAW for following him.

She also strongly endorsed continued U.S. leadership—many call it imperialism or hegemony—worldwide. That includes bolstering the NATO alliance, which is arguably the most dangerous military alliance active anywhere in the world today.

She warned that Russia's Putin had his eyes on countries in Europe and would be encouraged to invade if he won the war in Ukraine. Putin's Russia, of course, had close economic relationships with the EU, selling them energy before the war. The deals were far more profitable than any war and helped support peace in Europe. Now U.S. fossil fuel companies have moved in and are selling fracked U.S. gas, for example, to the EU countries.

It was U.S. policy to break up any cooperation between Europe and Russia by pushing for expansion of NATO right up to the borders of Russia, by pushing for NATO membership for Ukraine and by blowing up the pipelines that delivered Russian energy to Europe. None of that is mentioned by either candidate for the presidency, Democratic or Republican and what is common knowledge in Europe is being withheld from the American people.

Harris sketched out pieces of an economic program, including some very positive ones like a \$6,000 tax break for families with little kids and a \$25,000 federal subsidy for new homebuyers. Trump never spelled out a program, other than more tax cuts for the wealthy.

Harris also reiterated her promise to extend caps on prescription drug prices beyond the ten medicines, notably insulin, that her boss, current Democratic President Joe Biden, instituted.

Trump lies about replacing Affordable Care Act
For his part, Trump again denounced the Affordable Care Act, calling it "lousy health care." Voters now like it, after it's been law for about a decade and a half.

Like four and eight years ago, Trump promised to come up with something cheaper and better. Pushed, he wouldn't say what. That led Harris to point out Trump's Republicans tried dozens of times, and failed, to kill the ACA.

And she praised the late Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., for casting the deciding vote to keep the ACA by killing a GOP bill to repeal it. McCain literally got off what would be his deathbed to turn his thumb down to kill the repeal.

"McCain said 'No, you don't'" kill the ACA, Harris said. Turning to Trump, she added, "You have no plan."

Harris promised to improve the ACA, instead. But Harris in turn ducked a question about her past support for government-run Medicare For All, a position supported by more than a dozen unions and a majority of the U.S. people.

They're fed up with a health care system that is too expensive, too inefficient and takes money out of people's pockets and paychecks and puts it in the hands of rapacious insurers, who are some of the worst denizens of the corporate class.

"The only question I ever asked" constituents and clients in her political career as San Francisco DA, California Attorney General and as a U.S. senator from the Golden State was "Are you OK?" Harris said. She wanted them to be OK with what she planned and proposed.

U.S. gives green light to use long range missiles against Russia

By Morning Star



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) listens as UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy (right) speaks during the Fourth Crimea Platform Leaders Summit in Kyiv, Ukraine, September 11, 2024. | AP

A decision to allow the Ukrainians to use long-range missiles against Russia has already been taken, Moscow claimed today.

The claim comes as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and British Foreign Secretary David Lammy arrived in Kiev on a joint visit today.

The two diplomats travelled from London, from where Blinken accused Iran of providing Russia with Fath-360 short-range ballistic missiles, calling the move a "dramatic escalation" of the war.

For months, Ukraine has been requesting approval from the U.S. to use long-range weapons to strike targets deep in Russia.

"If we are allowed to destroy military targets or weapons prepared by the enemy for attacks on Ukraine, it would certainly bring more safety for our civilians, our people, and our children," Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said at a news conference in Kiev on Tuesday.

"We are working towards this and will continue to push for it every day."

But Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov claimed at his daily press briefing today that the U.S. and its allies have already decided to allow the Ukrainians to use the weapons they provide to strike deep into Russian territory.

He said arrangements were now merely being "formalized."

Peskov said: "The involvement of the U.S. and European countries in the conflict is direct, and each new step increases it."

Asked how Moscow would respond to such a development, Peskov said: "It will be appropriate," without providing specific details.

He said the authorization of Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory would serve as "further proof" of why Moscow launched its offensive, which he said was itself an "answer" to the West's support.

As Blinken and Lammy arrived in Kiev, Britain announced it was banning 10 commercial ships it accused of illicitly transporting Russian oil in violation of international sanctions.

The British government said the vessels would be barred from British ports and could be detained if they enter.

Night of terror in Jenin: One child's harrowing experience of an Israeli raid

By Abo Sam



Palestinian children walk among the ruins following an Israeli military operation in the West Bank city of Jenin on Friday, Sept. 6, 2024. | Majdi Mohammed / AP

JENIN, Palestine—In the dead of night, gunfire ripped the stillness of Jenin, echoing through narrow streets. Inside one home, a young boy lay asleep with his family, unaware that his world was about to be torn apart. He can still hear the shots, feel the fear in his chest, and see the look on his father's face when the phone rang.

"I woke up to the sound of gunfire. It was terrifying," the boy recalls. "Then, all of a sudden, my dad's phone started ringing. It was late, and the number wasn't familiar. My father answered, and his face went pale. It was an Israeli officer on the line. He told my father that we had to leave our home immediately. My dad tried to argue, saying it was too dangerous to step outside, and that the soldiers could shoot us. But the officer didn't care. He said, 'You have no choice. Get out now.'"

The boy's heart raced as his father hung up the phone. He rushed to wake his mother and siblings, fear gripping him tighter with every passing second. But what he saw next sent a chill down his spine—a drone, hovering right outside their window, at eye level, like a ghost silently watching them. Its small red lights blinked in the darkness, casting eerie shadows across the room.

"It was like a nightmare," the boy says. "That drone was right there, staring into our home as if it was waiting for something to happen. It felt like it was alive, like a ghost watching us, waiting to see what we'd do. I knew then that we were trapped."

After what felt like an eternity, the soldiers came, storming into their house, shouting orders and pointing their guns. The family had no choice but to leave. The boy remembers the fear in his mother's eyes as they were forced out of the only place they had ever known as home.

"They told us they were going to blow up our house," the boy says, his voice trembling with the memory. "The soldiers spread through the house like a flood. There were so many of them, and their faces were cold, empty. They didn't care that we were just a family."

The soldiers didn't stop at the one home. They swept through the neighborhood, barging into house after house, rounding up families. The boy remembers being herded into a neighbor's home, packed in with other families. The soldiers tied some of them up, their hands bound tightly. Then came the dogs—large, snarling beasts that sniffed through their belongings and growled at the children, adding to the terror.

"They brought these huge dogs with them," he says. "They were scary, barking and snapping at us. We were all so scared, and the soldiers didn't care. They took our phones, ripped them right out of our hands. We had no way to reach anyone, no way to call for help."

As the hours dragged on, the soldiers ransacked their homes, smashing furniture, overturning cabinets, leaving chaos in their wake. They arrested one of the neighbors, a man who wouldn't survive the night. "We stayed like that, locked in that house, for more than seven hours," the boy recalls. "No one knew what would happen next. We just waited and prayed."

The boy's personal encounter with the soldiers was brutal. One of them grabbed him by the arm, hard enough to leave bruises, and threw him violently to the ground. His small body hit the floor, but he made a silent promise to himself in that moment.

"I didn't cry," he says with quiet determination. "I wouldn't let them see me cry. I wasn't going to give them that."

When asked how he feels now, days after the raid, the boy's face hardens with a mixture of sadness and resilience. "I feel okay," he says after a long pause. "But I'm sad. Sad that our neighbor died, sad that our home is gone."

Despite everything he has endured, the boy refuses to be consumed by fear. "I'm not afraid of the soldiers," he says firmly. "I worry about my mother, about my siblings. I'm scared they'll hurt them. But I can't let fear control me. This is our life now. The enemy is always around, and fear won't help us. It won't make us strong. Only our determination can do that."

In the face of overwhelming terror, this boy has found a strength beyond his years. His story is a testament to the resilience that grows in the hearts of those forced to live under constant threat. He knows that the enemy may always be near, but so too is his courage—an unbreakable force that no raid, no soldier, and no drone can take away.

Appearance vs. Essence: A Marxist look at the Harris-Trump debate

By C. J. Atkins



Watching the Harris-Trump debate, an old idiom came to my mind: “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” Karl Marx had another way of saying much the same thing: “All science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided.”

And since Trump called Harris a “Marxist” (though she’s anything but), why not take an actual Marxist look at the debate? Shining a light on the divorce between the way things may look on the surface (their appearance, or form) and their underlying reality (essence, or content) is a central part of dialectical materialism.

Marxists, the real ones, always try to avoid being taken in by appearance, which the ruling class uses to hide or distort the real essence of things. Just a few examples make the point: free labor market / capitalist exploitation, political democracy / institutionalized power and privilege.

Applying this methodology to the presidential debate, there are a few observations that can be made. When it comes to appearance, most corporate media commentators and political operatives from both of the mainstream parties – yes, even many Republicans – have trumpeted Harris as the runaway winner.

She was calm, in command, and coherent (a relief after [the Biden-Trump matchup](#) a few months ago). On abortion, she ripped her opponent, delivering blows that no male candidate could probably match in intensity and authenticity. On the need to protect constitutional democracy from another Jan. 6th, Harris effectively painted Trump as a threat and coup-plotter.

Trump, by contrast, was Trump. He flailed around from one lie to another, blared racist dog whistles through a megaphone, and was obsessed with matters relating to his own ego. He was easily triggered by Harris’ comments about rally sizes, felony convictions, and her claims that people are laughing at him. Again and again, he fell into the vice president’s trap.

If the nation was sitting at a meeting of the high school debate club and tallying up the score, then yes, Harris owned the night. It was the steady-handed forward-looking leader against the unhinged and dangerous fascist. Mission accomplished.

But if we go past those surface-level assessments, beyond the appearance of things and dig into the content of the debate, the picture gets a little more complicated.

On immigration, Trump endlessly pivoted to his well-worn tropes of violent and job-stealing migrants invading the country, beefed up this time with the absurd claim that Black Haitian immigrants are stealing and eating people's pets in suburban Ohio. He's a racist and a demagogue, which readers of this publication know all too well. Compared to that, it's easy to shine, even by saying very little.

Harris made no mention of comprehensive immigration reform; rather, she talked of adding more border patrol agents. She mostly limited her remarks to talking up the bipartisan bill that Republicans refused to pass in February. It didn't differ all that much from previous Republican and Trump approaches (minus the wall), but GOP lawmakers rejected the bill for not being anti-immigrant enough. Encouraged by Trump, they also wanted to deny the Democrats any chance of a "win" on immigration.

When it comes to the economy, there wasn't a whole lot for working-class and poor people in this country to get all that excited about in the debate. Trump repeated his go-to economic mantra of tax cuts for billionaires (which Harris rightly hit him on) and the false promise of creating jobs via a trade war against China.

The Democratic nominee herself, though, was quite thin on economics, perhaps choosing to go light on an issue for which most polls still give the edge to Trump.

She mentioned the Democrats' \$6,000 child tax credit for families with newborns and the promise of up to \$25,000 in down payment assistance for buying a home. Both are positive proposals, as far as they go, but they hardly constitute a real economic "plan" at a time when millions are struggling with stagnant wages, inflated prices, and slow job growth.

Neglecting to talk about the role of corporate price-gouging in driving inflation and inequality was a missed opportunity, and bragging about how a big bank like Goldman Sachs positively evaluates her economic plan didn't really help matters, either.

Added to Harris' reduction in the capital gains tax rate from Biden's proposed 44.6% to 28% and a pledge to keep corporate taxes lower than they were pre-Trump, there's not a lot to work with here if you want to assemble a working-class economic program.

Questions like the ones pushed by the Poor People's Campaign ahead of the debate — "What's your plan to address the needs of 140 million poor and low-wage people of this nation?" — were ignored by the television network moderators. If they'd been asked, perhaps Harris would have had the chance to put more meat on the bones.

On health care, Trump does have a plan, even though he didn't expound upon it Tuesday night. It includes the further starvation of Medicare and Medicaid, free reign for price-gouging pharmaceutical and insurance companies, and privatization.

On the other side, Harris deserves credit for defending Obamacare, protecting people with pre-existing conditions from losing their insurance, and the Biden administration's drug price negotiations that have made some medicines cheaper. Her defense of private insurance companies and the retreat from her past support of Medicare for All, however, suggest there's no reason to expect any new big progress on the issue should she win the election.

One policy area where the Democratic candidate's remarks were anything but bare, though, was foreign affairs. Again, the danger to peace posed by another Trump administration is well-appreciated by progressives and those on the left. He talks an isolationist talk while aligning with right-wing dictators and implies he will be an even stronger supporter for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's genocidal war than Biden has been.

But what about Harris? On the most pressing issue of Gaza, there was nothing new. In essence, she promised to continue arming Israel no matter what atrocities its armies may commit. There were acknowledgments of the scale of Palestinian suffering, to be sure, and a pledge to “continue to work around the clock for a ceasefire,” but it was the Biden status quo in every way that matters.

Harris also glowed when talking about NATO as “the greatest military alliance ever known,” indicating that the expansion of U.S. control over Europe and confrontation with Russia remain top goals and that the war in Ukraine will probably drag on.

Carrying on the new Cold War against China – a key priority of U.S. imperialism no matter which party is in power – showed up as an area of overlap, with differences between the two candidates being largely ones of style.

Trump praised himself for imposing trade tariffs on China, which Harris characterized as a “trade war” and a “Trump sales tax” while dodging the sticky issue of why the Biden administration left them all in place if the Democrats really thought they were bad policy. In the end, it was a debate over who would be better at putting the U.S. on the path toward conflict in East Asia.

Did Harris say what she has to say to get elected in an America where money, big business, and the military-industrial complex constrain the possibilities of what are possible under this capitalist system? On many issues, the answer is of course yes, and progressives and the left have to keep that reality in mind. That’s no reason to be satisfied and let right-wing policies pass without comment or struggle, though.

Harris completed the task of demolishing Trump rhetorically, but it’s very possible that the Washington pundit class is overly excited in declaring her the obvious winner. The 2016 Clinton-Trump debate stands as a warning: Trump was clobbered in the debate but still won the election, at least in part because the Democratic campaign did not go very far in laying out a program to address the needs of working people.

Trump once more made it obvious why he has to be defeated and the path toward fascism blocked, and Harris set a clear contrast on issues like abortion and constitutional democracy. But many of the other policies she outlined (or didn’t) also prove, once again, that the organized labor and people’s movements’ work must continue after Nov. 5, no matter the outcome of the vote.

We have to stay on offense and be prepared for defense.

¿Se evitó la huelga de Boeing? Los maquinistas votarán sobre un pacto tentativo

By Mark Gruenberg



Miles de miembros del sindicato Boeing Machinists se reúnen para una "reunión para detener el trabajo" y una sanción de huelga en T-Mobile Park en Seattle, el 17 de julio de 2024. | Kevin Clark / The Seattle Times vía AP

SEATTLE—Más de 32.000 trabajadores de Boeing, miembros de Machinists en Seattle y la región de Puget Sound y en Portland, Oregon, tienen la oportunidad de votar el 12 de septiembre sobre un acuerdo tentativo de cuatro años con el gran fabricante de aviones, pero con problemas financieros.

Al mismo tiempo, emitirán una segunda votación sobre si realizar una huelga inmediata, a partir del día siguiente, si rechazan el pacto. Se necesita una mayoría de dos tercios para hacer huelga.

El pacto con Boeing es importante porque la empresa es uno de los mayores fabricantes de aviones civiles del mundo, junto con la europea Airbus.

Pero ya hay rumores en las redes sociales de que los negociadores de IAM, del Distrito 751 en el área metropolitana de Seattle y del Distrito W24 en Portland, que representa a 1.200 trabajadores de la planta de repuestos, no consiguieron todos los trabajadores buscados.

En particular, las quejas se centran en el aumento general del 25% propuesto en el contrato, aunque los aumentos para algunas subcategorías de trabajadores llegarían al 43,7%. El sindicato buscó aumentos generales del 30% al 40% durante cuatro años.

El aumento es una característica importante del acuerdo tentativo. Pero otra característica importante quita un arma importante de las manos de la gerencia de Boeing: la amenaza de producir nuevos aviones en la antisindical Carolina del Sur específicamente para evitar contratar y emplear a trabajadores sindicalizados en el área de Puget Sound.

"Somos el alma de esta empresa. Nunca olviden que no hay Boeing sin el IAM", dijeron los dos principales negociadores, el Distrito 751 Jon Holden y el Representante Comercial Directo del Distrito W24, Brandon Bryant, al presentar el contrato detallado en sus sitios web.

"Este contrato no son sólo palabras en papel. Es un testimonio de su voz colectiva", dijeron Holden y Bryant. "Cada demanda, cada prioridad que pusimos sobre la mesa, llevaba el peso de su fuerza. La empresa sabía que éramos sólo el conducto para sus prioridades.

"Las negociaciones son un toma y daca, y aunque no había manera de lograr el éxito en cada punto, podemos decir honestamente que esta propuesta es el mejor contrato que hemos negociado en nuestra historia".

Prohibir futuras mudanzas a Carolina del Sur pone fin a lo que Boeing logró bajo un ex presidente que anunció específicamente planes para construir los 787 Dreamliners en North Charleston, Carolina del Sur. "para alejarse de los maquinistas". Lo logró.

El entonces gobernador. Nikki Haley, R-S.C., y su comisionado laboral, un ex antisindical, se comprometieron a hacer todo lo que estuviera a su alcance para mantener a los sindicatos en general y a IAM en particular fuera del estado de Palmetto.

Haley calificó los sindicatos como "no necesarios, no deseados y no bienvenidos" en Carolina del Sur, el estado menos sindicalizado. Eso resultó ser literalmente cierto: cuando los organizadores de IAM llegaron más tarde a North Charleston, enfrentaron amenazas de daños corporales y el sindicato tuvo que retirarlas.

La prohibición de trasladar la producción de nuevos aviones fuera de Puget Sound y Portland es otra señal de la nueva militancia de los trabajadores y de su capacidad para ganar para los trabajadores. Sigue, en menos de un año, los contratos que los trabajadores del automóvil alcanzaron con los fabricantes de automóviles de Detroit a través de las huelgas continuas "Stand Up" del UAW.

Además de hacer retroceder más de 15 años de pérdidas y devoluciones, la UAW firmó compromisos en sus pactos de que los nuevos vehículos eléctricos y sus piezas se fabricarían en plantas de la UAW de pared a pared.

Pero uno de los fabricantes de automóviles. Stellantis/FiatChrysler, ya planea incumplir ese compromiso en su planta de Belvidere, Illinois. El contrato del UAW dice específicamente que el sindicato puede hacer huelga por ese plan.

Además de los "aumentos salariales generales sustanciales", el acuerdo tentativo entre Maquinistas y Boeing mejora la seguridad laboral, reduce la participación de los trabajadores en los costos de atención médica al 15% y agrega licencia familiar pagada por el empleador, dijeron los dos principales negociadores.

"Aseguramos el próximo programa de aviones comerciales, si se lanza durante la vigencia del acuerdo, para nuestros miembros en Puget Sound y Portland", dijeron. Agregaron que el nuevo pacto asegura que la producción continua del Boeing 737MAX, 767 Tanker y el 777X permanezca en el área de Puget Sound.

El acuerdo también es notable porque, mientras que el UAW obtuvo sus contratos de los fabricantes de automóviles de Detroit cuando estaban llenos de efectivo, Boeing está tambaleándose financiera y políticamente. Se enfrenta a múltiples investigaciones estatales y federales sobre accidentes aéreos recientes y dos accidentes fatales en el extranjero.

Dadas esas revelaciones, otra disposición importante del contrato es que "ahora tenemos un asiento en la mesa sobre la seguridad y la calidad del sistema de producción", dice el resumen de IAM.

El Distrito 751 de IAM representa a más de 30.000 trabajadores de producción de Boeing en la región de Puget Sound, mientras que el Distrito W24 representa a unos 1.200 que trabajan en la planta de piezas de Boeing en Portland, Oregón. Si se aprueba, el nuevo contrato estaría vigente hasta el 7 de septiembre de 2028.