

Why was the election so close?

written by Stephen Millies
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Striking workers picket Trump International Hotel in 2016. The transformation of Las Vegas into a union town is why Nevada voted against Trump.

While Trump is still trying to steal the election, he lost the popular vote by over four million ballots. Black, Indigenous and Latinx voters were key to Trump's defeat. But why was it so damn close?

For five years, Donald Trump has been on the national stage spreading hate. His administration killed tens of thousands by its deliberate mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

So why did more than 70 million people vote for this dangerous racist fool?

Trump's election campaign was the reaction to the Black Lives Matter movement that swept the United States. At least 20 million people took to the streets following the police murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

In small towns never reached by the Great Migration of African Americans — like Waupaca, Wis. — people came out to demonstrate against racism. Many of them were white. If the election had been held two months earlier, Trump would have been swamped by millions more votes.

Instead, a stagnant reservoir of people continued to be saturated by the race hate of Fox News and talk radio bigots. Political consciousness always lags behind present conditions and needs.

There's a French saying that the dead grip the living. That doesn't just apply to the 18th century relic called the Electoral College, which was devised by slave masters. The not-so-dead hand of bigotry used to justify the African Holocaust also cast a vote for Trump.

This counterrevolution to Black Lives Matter was allowed to metastasize like a cancer. Biden didn't slow it down when he urged cops to shoot people in their legs instead of their chest or head.

The support of reactionaries, like former Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, was eagerly sought by the Democratic Party establishment. Snyder was one of the criminals responsible for the lead poisoning of children in Flint, Mich. How was his endorsement supposed to help win the votes of poor and working people for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris?

'Law and order' on the ballot

Trump made the election a referendum on racism. He attacked the Black Lives Matter movement and cheered the assassination by U.S. marshals of anti-fascist activist Michael Reinhoehl. Trump supporters declared the killer of two anti-racists in Kenosha, Wis., to be a hero.

Police across the country mobilized for Trump. Minneapolis; Portland, Ore.; and Kenosha, Wis. — cities where people rebelled against the cops — were demonized by Trump and his cheerleaders at Fox.

White people account for at least three-quarters of the population in Minnesota, Oregon and Wisconsin. Despite Trump's race-baiting, the White House bleach salesman lost all three states.

The capitalist economic crisis, which was beginning even before the pandemic broke out, also benefited Trump.

Many people think massive unemployment will automatically cause workers to rebel. But it can also demoralize and disorient. Because of widespread housing segregation, the main contact of many white workers with Asian, Black, Indigenous and Latinx people is on the job. Being fired severs that connection.

The thousands of union strongholds that were destroyed by deliberate deindustrialization also helps political reaction. The United Mine Workers' loss of thousands of members in West Virginia was a big reason for that state's move to the

right.

“Law and order” was first used as a slogan in the 1968 presidential election. Back then, the labor movement was much stronger. It waged a last-minute fight that dialed down the vote in the North for the segregationist George Wallace, who was running for president.

A half-century later, the big losses in union membership because of automation and plant closings made it that much easier for Donald Trump to get to the White House.

The 1992 closing of the Bethlehem Steel works in Johnstown, Pa., threw thousands of union members out of work. It helps explain why 68 percent of the vote there in Cambria County is going for Trump.

On the other hand, the transformation of Las Vegas into a union town is why Nevada voted against Trump.

Don't starve, fight!

It's been over three months since the last federal supplemental unemployment check went to workers. Bans on evictions are scheduled to be lifted with families being thrown on the street.

Meanwhile a thousand people a day are dying of the coronavirus.

Things won't be magically turned around if Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are elected. Working and oppressed people have to mobilize.

The only reason Congress approved the \$600-per-week unemployment checks was because capitalists feared millions of workers being suddenly fired. We have to make them fear us again.

Ninety years ago, when the Great Depression broke out, there was no unemployment

compensation or food stamps (now called SNAP benefits).

The Communist Party and Unemployed Councils raised the slogan, “Don’t starve, fight!” Millions of people fought for jobs and the right to organize unions.

We have to do the same thing today. Struggle is the only way forward.

Special, special thanks to Black, Indigenous and Latinx voters who made the difference in Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Nevada and Arizona. They punched Trump in the nose!

