

COUNTERPUNCH ≡

OCTOBER 15, 2024

Is 2024, 1968 All Over Again?

JOE ALLEN



Writing recently in the *LA Progressive*, Stephen Rhode lamented:

I learned an important lesson in 1968.

My conscience could not allow me to vote for [Democratic Party nominee and serving Vice-President] Humphrey because of his unflinching support of President Lyndon Johnson's dangerous escalation of that illegal war. So I voted for Dick Gregory, the Freedom and Peace Party candidate. And Nixon was elected. I'll never forgive myself for that mistake. Humphrey only lost the popular vote by .7 percent. In thirteen states, the Electoral College was decided by a margin of 5% or less. I wonder how many other young idealistic anti-war voters helped elect Nixon by casting a protest vote or by simply staying home. He went on to perpetuate the war.

Today we face an election even more consequential than the one in 1968; it is existential.

Rhode's message to the Uncommitted campaigners and those who cannot make up their minds or even worse,

contemplating for a third party candidate such as Jill Stein of the Green Party, who is on the Michigan ballot. Rhode chastises the Uncommitted thinking about voting for Stein:

It would be a grave mistake if Uncommitted voters refuse to vote for Harris. They know full well that the plight of the Palestinian people will get worse and the prospects for peace in the Middle East will be dashed if Trump returns to power. Trump is a staunch supporter of Benjamin Netanyahu and his policies in Israel.

Strangely, Rhode doesn't seem to have noticed that the Biden-Harris administration are also supporters of Benjamin Netanyahu. They have handed Netanyahu's government \$18 billion dollars in financial aid, so far, and all the weapons that can be delivered to destroy Gaza and launch a regional war. And, Biden-Harris weren't supporters of Netanyahu, they would have cut-off diplomatic, financial, and military aid long ago, and we'd be having a different conversation right now.

Rhode extensively quoted recent editorial from the *Nation* magazine:

Leftists contemplating voting for a third party in protest of Harris's shortcomings—or out of discontent with our two-party system—need to ask themselves why their particular cause, or their personal discomfort, is more important than making sure that Trump, JD Vance, and their clique of congressional collaborators are defeated decisively, not only in the Electoral College but in the popular vote as well. Especially since we can already see Trump preparing another attack on the legitimacy of our elections.

Is it possible that the personal cause that the *Nation's* editorial writers are likely referring to is the genocide in Gaza and the prospect of a regional war? For one, I'm glad people are so thin-skinned. Wasn't it the unrelenting bombing of North Vietnam one of the major factors in

turning world opinion against the United States during the Vietnam War?

With just a few weeks left in the U.S. presidential campaign, the battle for votes in the upper Midwest and Pennsylvania is reaching a hand-wringing, fever pitch. The polls go-back and-forth about who is in the lead currently in all of these states, that will choose the president by the Electoral College, irrespective of the popular vote nation-wide. Former President Barack Obama, for example, has been deployed to Detroit to chastise Black men for not enthusiastically supporting Vice-President Kamala Harris.

The social democratic *In These Times* recently post an editorial by its senior editor Mile Kampf-Lassin, *The Warning Signs for Kamala Harris's Campaign Are Flashing Red*, wrote:

Harris has not yet rebuilt the fragile coalition that pushed Biden over the finish line four years ago. Compared with Biden in 2020, polls show Harris underperforming with voters of color, younger voters and seniors — all key for Democrats. And when it comes to lower-income voters and those with less formal education, Harris is being outrun.

If a few thousand blue-collar votes are likely to determine the outcome of the election, labor leaders frustrated at a sizable number of their members supporting Trump, have not used this opportunity to demand more concessions from the Democratic Party. With the exception of the Teamsters' Sean O'Brien, who's courting of the far right has bewildered many, labor leaders have largely decided to defend the Biden's administration's economic policies, something that large numbers of working class are not happy with, and paired their campaigning to uncritically follow that of the Harris-Walz ticket.

Former President Donald Trump's appeal to economic nationalism, tying the decline of the nation to the decline in living standards, have not been effectively countered. Meanwhile, Kamala Harris' courting of yesteryear's Republican neocons, such as former Vice-President Dick

Cheney and John Bolton, whom people many of the liberal-left once considered dangerous lunatics, is likely not to win any votes from those and their families who suffered death and disabled in their “forever wars.”

Most importantly, whether labor leaders or many people on the left, like it or not, U.S. imperialism and Zionism is on the ballot this year. For some of the surviving members of the Vietnam anti-war movement, they have developed political amnesia, it was the Vietnamese through the Tet Offensive that drove Lyndon Baines Johnson from the White House. Israel’s genocidal war in Gaza, has made a thin crack in the “lesser-evil” politics that have suffocated the left and broad social movements in this country for nearly a century. Hopefully, the crack will widen.

The question is this election is pretty clear: Which side are you on? Palestine or U.S. Imperialism.

JOE ALLEN is the author of The Package King: A Rank and File History of United Parcel Service.

**DONATE \$75+
RECEIVE A FREE
30TH ANNIVERSARY
T-SHIRT**

U.S. domestic only.
No international shipping.

**FALL
FUND
DRIVE**

**COUNTER
PUNCH**

COUNTERPUNCH
NO ADS. NO CLICKBAIT.
NO COMPROMISE.

CounterPunch

Tells the Facts and Names
the Names
Published since 1996
Copyright ©
CounterPunch
All rights reserved.
counterpunch@counterpunch.org

Administration

Becky Grant
Administrative Director
Deva Wheeler
**Director of E-commerce
and Sales**
counterpunchbiz@gmail.com

Editorial

Jeffrey St. Clair, **Editorial
Director**
Joshua Frank, **Managing
Editorial Director**
Nathaniel St. Clair,
**Associate Editorial
Director**
Alexander Cockburn, 1941
—2012

Mailing Address

CounterPunch
PO Box 228
Petrolia, CA 95558

Telephone

Nichole Stephens,
Administrative Assistant
1(707) 629-3683

