

The Price of Eggs: Why Harris lost to Trump

By [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#)

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*It takes some skill to make **Donald J. Trump** look good. Two Democrats have succeeded in doing so: **Hillary Clinton** in 2016 and **Kamala Harris** in 2024. The conceit of both presidential campaigns, and the belief that attacking a staggeringly grotesque moral character for being such, was laughable. (When a Clinton mocks groping philanderers and creepy molesters, one must reach for, well, the Starr Report?) In certain countries, abominating and execrating your political adversary for being a moral defective might work. In the United States, such figures can draw benefit from being outside the constraints of law-abiding society. They are quite literally outlaw spirits that still speak of that nebulous notion called the American Dream while encouraging everyone else to come for the ride. Realising it involves treading on toes and breaking a few skulls on the way, but that's the expectation.*

From the start, the Democrats had tied themselves in knots by convincing **President Joe Biden** that he could not only last the tenure of his office but run against Trump. Doing so, and deriding those wishing to see a change in the guard, created a needless handicap. Throughout late 2023 and early 2024, it became clear that the party worthies were doing their best to shield Biden's cognitive decline. The sham was cruelly exposed in the June 27 debate with Trump.

Panic struck the ranks. With little time to regroup, Vice President Harris was close at hand, selected by Biden as the appropriate choice. But Harris landed with a punctured parachute weighed down by the crown of presumptive nomination. There were to be no opponents (the 2016 challenge of Bernie Sanders against Hillary Clinton which annoyed the party mandarins would not be repeated), no primaries, no effective airing of any challenge. It was easy to forget – at least for many Democrats – that Harris's 2019 bid for the nomination had been spectacularly poor and costly. An ailing president would also keep his occupancy in the White House, rather than resigning and giving Harris some seat warming preparation.

While the change caused the inevitable rush of optimism, it soon became clear that the ghost of Hillary's past had been working its demonic magic. The Harris campaign was unadventurous and safe. All too often, the vice president hoped that messages would reach the outer reaches of the electorate from cocooned comfort, helped by a war chest of fundraising that broke records (\$1 billion in [less than three months](#)), and a battalion of cheerleading celebrities that suggested electoral estrangement rather than connection.

Then there was the problem as to what those messages were. These, in the end, did not veer much beyond attacking Trump as a threat to democracy, women's rights and reproductive freedoms. They tended to remain unclear on the issue of economics. From

foreign to domestic policy, Harris failed to distinguish herself as one able to depart from the Biden program in her own right. Instead, it was hoped that some organic coalition of anti-Trump Republicans, independents, Black voters, women and American youth would somehow materialise at the ballot box.

In a September 16 meeting with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, longtime allies of the Democratic Party, Harris [failed to convince](#) its leaders that she would protect the livelihood and jobs of workers better than Trump. Within a matter of days, the union publicly revealed that it would not be endorsing Harris as Democratic presidential candidate, the first since 1996.

Her interviews were minimal, her exposure to the outside treated with utmost delicacy. The Republicans, on the other hand, were willing to get their hands dirty with an extensive ground campaign that yielded electoral rewards in such battleground states as Pennsylvania. The [Early Vote Action](#) effort of conservative activist Scott Presler proved impressive in encouraging voter registration and increasing absentee and early vote counts. His efforts in securing votes for Trump from Pennsylvania's Amish community were strikingly successful.

Trump, in sharp contrast to his opponent, was so exposed to the point of being a potential assassination target on two occasions. He showed the electorate he was worth the tag. He personalised with moronic panache. He babbled and raged, and made sure he, as he always does, dominated the narrative. Alternative media outlets were courted. Most of all, he focused on the breadbasket issues: the cost of groceries, housing and fuel; the perceived terrors of having a lax border policy. He also appealed to voters content with reining in the war making instincts so natural to Harris and neoconservatives on both sides of the aisle.

Fundamentally, the Democrats fell for the old trick of attacking Trump's demagoguery rather than teasing out their own policies. The Fascist cometh. The inner Nazi rises. Misogyny rampant. Racism throbbing. This came with the inevitable belittling of voters. You cast your ballot for him, you are either an idiot, a fascist, or both. Oh, and he was just weird, said the unknown and already forgotten ear-scratching Democrat vice presidential nominee **Tim Walz**, whatever that means in a land where weird is so frequent as to make it its most endearing quality.

It is remarkable that Trump, a convicted felon, twice impeached in office, a person so detached from the empirical, the logical, and the half-decent, would be electable in the first place. Even more remarkable is that such a figure has won both the Electoral College and the popular vote. The glorious Republic likes its show and elections like marketing exercises. Its defenders often pretend that those reaching its highest office are not mirrors but transcendent figures to emulate. Trump – in all his cocksure hustling and slipshod approach to regulation and convention – shows many in the electorate that the defect and the defective can go far.

A few final lessons. The Democrats would do best to listen to those who would otherwise vote for them. Focus on the economy. Talk about the price of eggs and milk. Ditch the lexicon on ill-defined terms of supposedly useful criticism such as fascism, a word the users

almost always misunderstand. And always be careful about pundits and pollsters who predict razor small margins in elections. Polls, and people, lie.

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Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He currently lectures at RMIT University. He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG). Email: bkampmark@gmail.com

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