



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on January 28, 2024

## Leftists Worry #Resistance Will Flounder If Trump Wins

With Donald Trump now the Republican presidential nominee in all but name, the potential of his return to the White House is very real — a possibility not lost on Democrats.

However, some voices on the Left are worried that, far from reigniting the fervent #Resistance movement that organized in response to Trump's 2016 victory, a Trump win in 2024 would have a demoralizing effect on the Left that would result in a weaker, more subdued opposition.

In a recent piece, [Politico](#) senior editor Michael Schaffer makes the case that the political landscape this year is very different than what it was in 2017, when “Donations to progressive advocacy groups soared. Traffic to political media spiked. Protests filled the calendar. A day after Trump’s unimpressively attended inauguration, the massive Women’s March became the second-busiest day in the history of the capital’s Metro system.”

David Brock, the founder of left-wing Media Matters and leader of various anti-Trump efforts, told *Politico* that Trump winning in November would make it “very difficult to keep some of these large progressive organizations funded robustly — people will look back on that and think it didn’t work.”

Similarly, Ian Bassin, a member of the Obama administration and founder of Protect Democracy, said: “The civil society, pro-democracy, grassroots movement, I worry, if he prevails, will feel incredibly defeated and deflated. That could lead to a total reversal of the dynamics from the beginning of 2017.”

Schaffer contends that political energy historically tends to follow a countercyclical pattern, with the party out of power exhibiting more passion and energy. This explains the surge of liberals who were active in terms of financial contributions, newspaper subscriptions, and purchasing symbolic items during the Trump administration — as well as the decline in engagement once they perceived a diminished threat upon Biden’s ascension to the presidency. This shift is exemplified by the underwhelming reception of Joe Biden’s book and a downturn in the progressive political merchandise industry.

But even as Trump leads in several general-election match-up polls against Biden, the progressive movement is surprisingly stagnant, shying away from developing well-funded and detailed contingency plans.

“I reached out to a number of people atop groups that leaned into the battle against Trump during his



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presidency — and found few of them willing to even ponder a future where he’s in the White House, let alone discuss their plans for rekindling the resistance,” Schaffer writes.

He cites longtime fundraising consultant Dave Gallagher, who likens the current mix of apathy and despair among the Left regarding Trump to the declining interest in climate-change activism that has been exacerbated by a lack of “progress” on the issue.

“There was this kind of collective moment, three, four or five years ago, where the climate funders started to say, you know, we’re not really making progress,” explained Gallagher. “Environmental funding has basically been level or flat or in slow decline.” He added that merely relying on fear is not as effective for fundraising as offering hope — and hope has been lacking among the leftist climate-change crowd thanks to successful opposition from the Right.

Schaffer goes on to argue that without an organized, well-funded resistance along the lines of leftist efforts in 2017, Trump could be much more successful in realizing his agenda following a theoretical 2024 victory. He points to initiatives such as the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025, which would allow Trump to bring a more structured and systematic strategy for a significant governmental transformation. Moreover, a Trump victory would probably expose internal divisions within the defeated party, diverging from the unity hastily forged during the surge of resistance in early 2017.

Project 2025 is an initiative launched in 2022 by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, with the goal of preparing for a potential second term for Donald Trump or another Republican president. It would go hand-in-hand with Trump’s promise to purge the federal government of unaccountable career bureaucrats (many of whom are ideologically leftist and globalist).

The project includes a “Mandate for Leadership” document outlining conservative policy priorities for each federal agency in the next administration. This aims to provide a roadmap for swift implementation upon entering office. As part of the project, Heritage Foundation is also running a “Presidential Administration Academy” to equip conservatives with the necessary skills and knowledge to serve in executive branch positions. This includes training on federal government bureaucracy, policy implementation, and political communication.

Bassin, the Protect Democracy founder, gave his opinion that “Trump was not expecting to win in 2016, and so he was somewhat flat-footed when he started office. Whereas on the other hand, civil society and the grassroots were energized in reaction to their surprise at him winning and organized quickly, before he was able to get his feet under him.”

Now, however, leftist intellectuals’ fear is that low enthusiasm among the progressive base coupled with a Trump who now knows his way around Washington (and is already making preparations to counter the obstruction that held his policies back during his first term) could create the perfect storm for the Left to be dealt a crippling blow in 2025.



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