

MAGA's Counter- Revolution

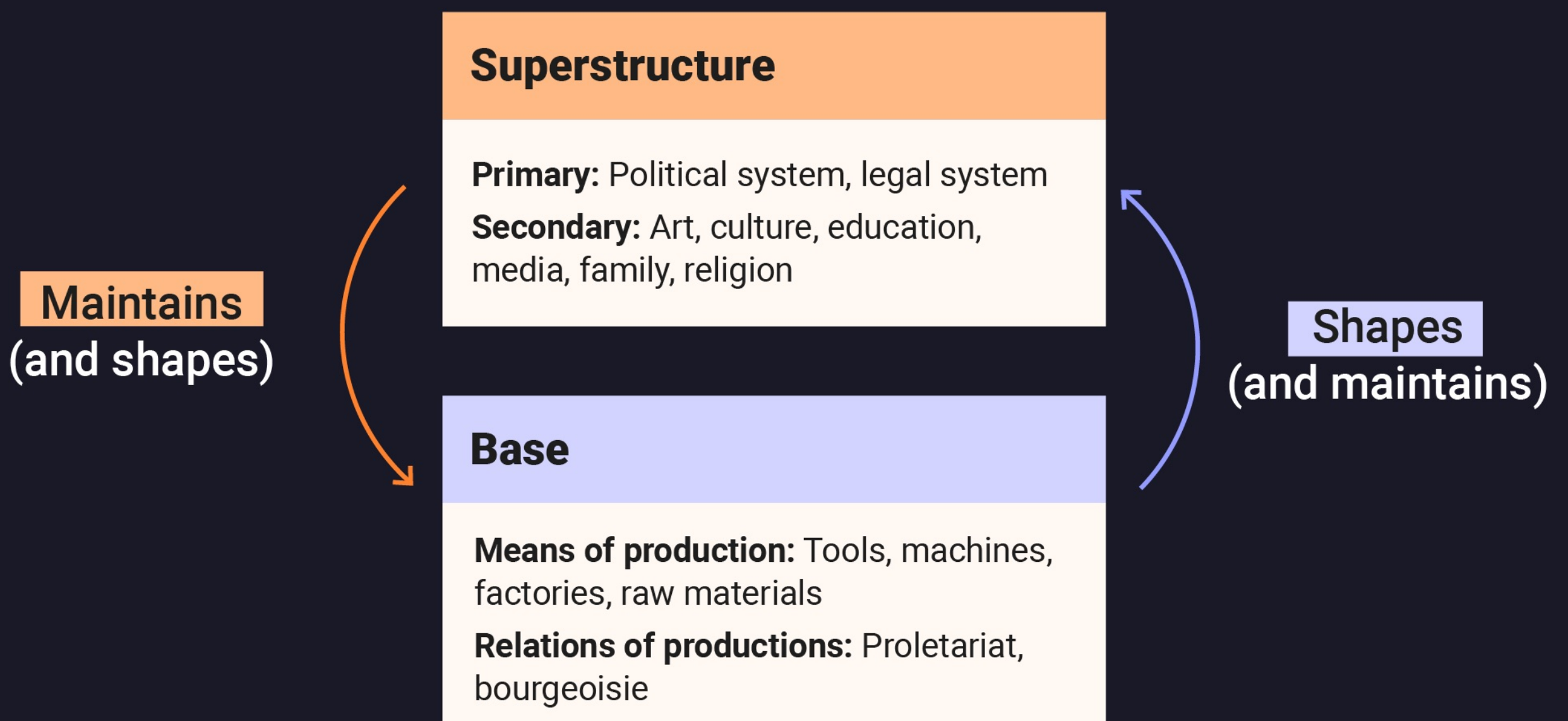
ANALYSING THE NORTH
ATLANTIC FAR RIGHT PT. 2

Donald Trump's Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement exemplifies the North Atlantic far right's pseudo-populist strategy.

It aims to transform the neoliberal superstructure of US politics in order to restore the profitability of the neoliberal base.*

To understand MAGA's origins, we first need to go back into history →

***What is base and superstructure?** The base is the economic mode of production (i.e. the manner in which things are produced) while the superstructure is the political, legal, and cultural systems that maintain it, e.g. private property rights are codified in law. While it is the base that usually determines the superstructure, the superstructure can also influence the base.





The Civil Rights Revolution

On December 1st, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man. **This simple act of defiance sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the broader Civil Rights Movement.**

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed, and one year later, in 1965, the Voting Rights Act was signed into law. These two pieces of legislation **marked the formal end of legal apartheid in the US.**

Source: Becker, Civil Rights and the U.S. Revolution (2005).

Image: Rosa Parks sitting on a bus in Montgomery. Britannica.

TEXAS



CLIMATE VANGUARD



Image: The States' Rights Democratic Party (Dixiecrats) split off from the Democratic Party over its increasing support for racial integration. Led by arch-segregationist Storm Thurmond (depicted right), the Dixiecrats were the last gasp of the Democratic Party's pro-Jim Crow hegemony in the US South. AP.

It has been argued that the Civil Rights Movement is better classified as a **Civil Rights Revolution**. While it was not a socialist revolution that transformed capitalist social relations, **it was a cultural revolution that fundamentally disrupted the US political superstructure.**

It broke up the Jim Crow political bloc, a “legislative cartel” that was not only white supremacist, but also rabidly anti-union, anti-communist, and anti-semitic. By stifling any progressive reforms for racially minoritised and/or working people, it served as an “attack dog” in defense of US capitalism.

The Golden Age is Over

Released from the grip of the Jim Crow political bloc, **the Civil Rights Revolution paved the way for other progressive reforms.** This included increased access to healthcare (e.g. Medicare and Medicaid Act 1965), investments in education (e.g. Elementary and Secondary Education Act 1965), and environmental protection (e.g. Clean Water Act 1972).

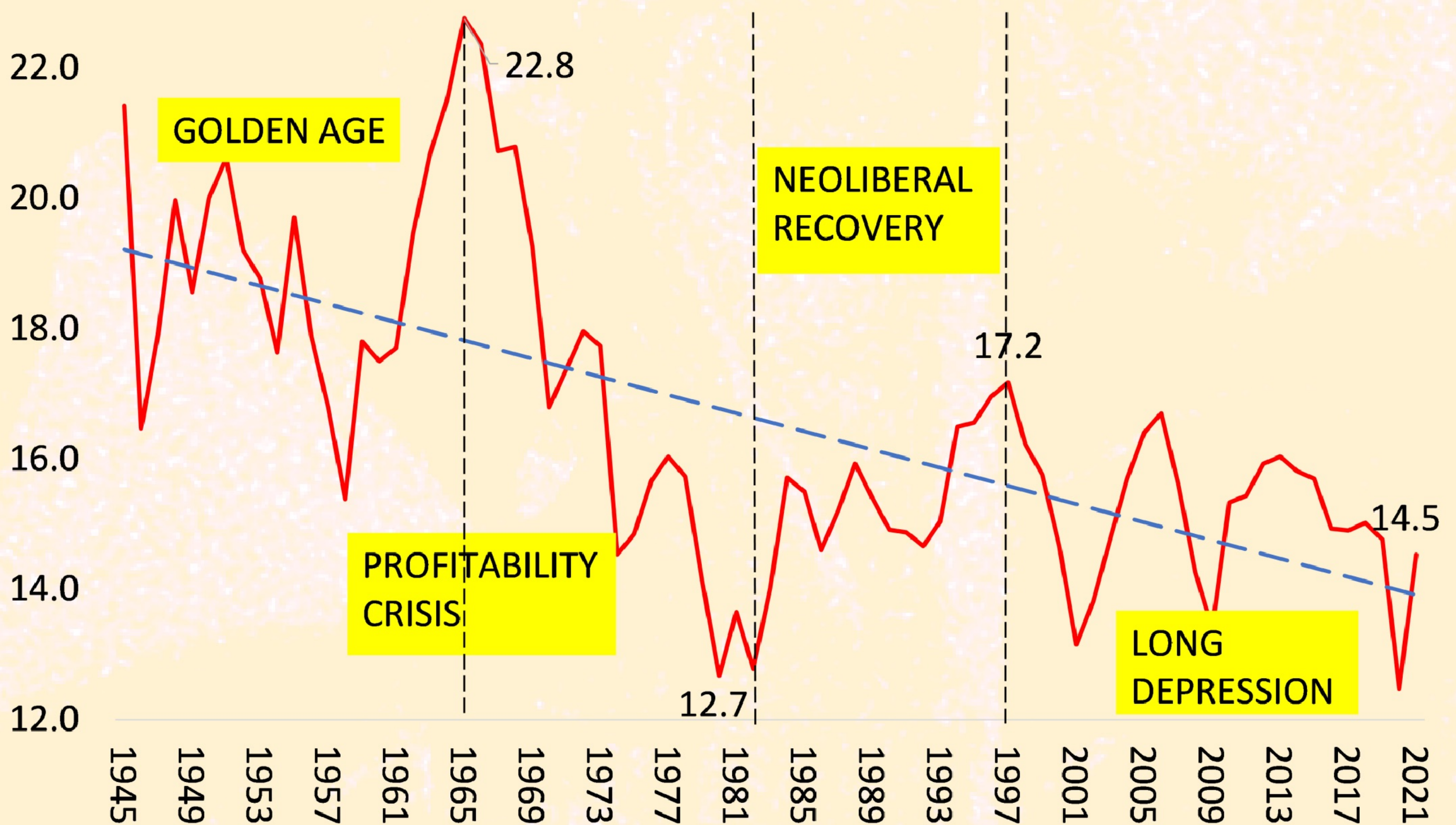
It was precisely at this point, 10 years on from the beginning of the Civil Rights Revolution, that the US rate of profit began to fall.*



Between 1945 and 1965, the “Golden Age” of US capitalism, the rate of profit increased from 6% to over 20%. But from 1965 to 1982, the rate of profit fell by almost half.

***What is the rate of profit?** The rate of profit measures the amount of profit capitalists make as a proportion of their total investment. The rate of profit is the basis for capitalist investment. If it is too low, then capitalists will stop investing in production, leading to economic stagnation and social crisis.

US non-financial sector rate of profit on capital (%)



Lewis F. Powell Jr., a former US Supreme Court justice, captured the hysterical mood of the bourgeoisie in a 1971 memorandum to Eugene B. Sydnor Jr., an official in the US Chamber of Commerce:

No thoughtful person can question that the American economic system is under broad attack.* This varies in scope, intensity, in the techniques employed, and in the level of visibility.

There always have been some who opposed the American system, and preferred socialism or some form of statism

(communism or fascism). Also, there always have been critics of the system, whose criticism has been wholesome and constructive so long as the objective was to improve rather than to subvert or destroy.

But what now concerns us is quite new in the history of America. We are not dealing with episodic or isolated attacks from a relatively few extremists or even from the minority socialist cadre. Rather, the assault on the enterprise system is broadly based and consistently pursued. It is gaining momentum and converts.



Although profitability was partially restored through the introduction of neoliberalism in the 1980s, it began to decline again from 1997 onwards. Michael Roberts calls this recent slump the **“Long Depression,”** a period which includes the 2007-2008 Great Financial Crisis (GFC) and the COVID-related economic shutdown.

Ever since the Civil Rights Revolution, **the ruling class has struggled to find a political formula to replace the Jim Crow bloc,** one that could reliably suppress the demands of working and oppressed people in order to protect capital’s rate of profit.

It’s with this context in mind that we must analyse the rise of Donald Trump and the MAGA movement →

The Golden Age is Here?

Donald Trump's rise can be analysed from two different class perspectives.

Working class

The economic misery caused by decades of neoliberal deindustrialisation and the GFC, as well as general dissatisfaction with US imperialist wars, has led large sections of the working class to support Trump.

In Trump, they see an insurgent "outsider" who could "drain the swamp" of the nation's "enemies" (i.e. globalists, immigrants, feminists, queer people) and restore economic prosperity.

Capitalist class

Although only certain factions of the capitalist class supported Trump in 2016, there now exists a much broader support base, including from the crown jewel of US capital: the technology sector.

In Trump, they see a political formation that can restore the profitability of US capital. By waging war on the gains of racially minoritised, queer, disabled and working people, they hope to re-create the political superstructure of the Golden Age of US capitalism. In other words, they want to eradicate the progress of the Civil Rights Revolution.



Donald Trump's MAGA movement is the ruling class' antidote to capitalist stagnation. Its pseudo-populism mobilises economic grievances of the working class in support of a political counter-revolution that can reinvigorate US capitalism.

As Lenin once said, "fascism is capitalism in decline." Although today's North Atlantic far right, represented by the likes of Donald Trump, has not yet resorted to outright fascism, it has initiated a political process in that direction.

It is up to the Left to build social power behind a project that can truly overcome capitalism's contradictions – eco-socialism.