

Trump White House leads fascist attack on socialism at Conservative Political Action Conference

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This year's Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), an annual gathering of far-right warmongers, political cretins and Republican sycophants sponsored by the American Conservative Union, has assumed an openly fascist character. The three-day event, being held in National Harbor, Maryland, has adopted as its dominant theme the call for a crusade against socialism first proclaimed by President Donald Trump last month in his State of the Union Address and expanded upon before an audience of far-right supporters in Miami.

Among the speakers who have thus far given the White House stamp of approval at this year's gathering are Vice President Mike Pence, aide Kellyanne Conway, Trump's chief trade adviser Peter Navarro, chief White House economic adviser Lawrence Kudlow and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross. Trump is scheduled to address the conference today for the third consecutive year as president.

The event opened Thursday with a five-and-a-half-minute video collage presenting the Democratic Party as a looming socialist threat from which only Trump and his supporters can save America. Prominent Democrats, including Bernie Sanders, Kamala Harris, Kirsten Gillibrand, Elizabeth Warren, Beto O'Rourke, Nancy Pelosi, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar, are depicted as racist and anti-Semitic socialists who are seeking to open the southern border so they can provide free health care to illegal immigrant gang members.

The video concludes with footage of President Trump at a political rally declaring that "America will never be a socialist country."

The video set the tone for the entire affair, which reflects both the ruling financial-corporate oligarchy's

fear of the growth of the class struggle and popular support for socialism, and its determination to mobilize the most reactionary and backward social forces behind the establishment of authoritarian rule in defense of capitalism. It is highly significant that Trump is now openly raising what has always been the central focus of fascism—the war on socialism—and that the socialist threat is being defined primarily as domestic, rather than foreign.

According to those addressing the CPAC conference, socialism is any social program or regulation that might impinge on the profits of the rich, ranging from the progressive social reforms won by the working class in the course of the 20th century, including Social Security and Medicare, to the hollow promises of a Green New Deal and Medicare for All coming from the Democratic Party today. The aim of this anti-socialist hysteria is to complete the social counterrevolution that has been underway for the past four decades and crush the resistance of the working class.

In his speech, Pence made clear that this fascist attack on socialism will be the centerpiece of Trump's 2020 reelection campaign. This line of attack is aimed at putting the Democrats on the defensive, compelling them to deny any attachment to "socialism," while mobilizing far-right and fascist elements in support of Trump's reelection. But what is involved is more than an electoral tactic. Trump and his advisers, and the financial oligarchs for whom they speak, are seeking to create the basis for a fascist movement, whether through the Republican Party or outside of it.

Running throughout the event is an undertone of violence and incitement against the real or perceived enemies of "God and Country." One panel discussion

being held today bears the title, “Left for Dead: Are There No Limits to the Progressive War on Humanity?”

Sebastian Gorka, a former Trump advisor who once declared his support for a neo-fascist paramilitary outfit in Hungary, led the way on Thursday, using his speech, ostensibly dealing with the threat of Russia, to declare that the biggest threat to the United States is “socialism here in America.” He cited a recent poll by the right-wing Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, which found that a majority of young people in the US would prefer to live under socialism or communism than under capitalism.

Gorka declared that those Democrats promoting the Green New Deal “want to take away your pickup truck, they want to rebuild your home, they want to take away your hamburgers.” He added, “This is what Stalin dreamt about but never achieved.” He said his audience was on the “front lines of the war against communism coming back to America under the guise of ‘democratic socialism.’”

Right-wing radio host Glenn Beck launched a full-throated defense of the staggering levels of social inequality created by capitalism against the prospect of equality under socialism. “Socialism aims to make mankind what we are not and can never be,” Beck warned. “It works to create a state of being that does not exist in the natural world and it does it the only way it can, the only way it does, equally poor, equally enslaved and all equally dead.” He went on to attack democracy, saying, “Slavery by majority vote is still slavery.”

Taking up these themes, Vice President Pence extolled the virtues of “freedom” versus socialism, warning that the Democrats would bring the dire social and economic conditions that prevail in Venezuela to the United States. Amid chants of “USA! USA!” from the audience, he proclaimed, “The moment America becomes a socialist country is the moment that America ceases to be America. And as the president said 24 days ago, so we must say with one voice, ‘America will never be a socialist country.’”

Kudlow, a multi-millionaire former banker who took in \$4 million a year as a media pundit on CNBC, urged his listeners to use the upcoming election to “put socialism on trial” and “convict” it.

Trump and his far-right base have been emboldened

by the Democratic Party and the media, which have made no criticisms or warnings about his declaration of war against socialism. When asked at a CNN town hall this week about Trump’s remark that the US would never be a socialist country, Bernie Sanders dodged the question, declaring that he believed in human rights. Questioned about Trump’s attack on socialism following his State of the Union speech, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez called it a personal attack and evasion of political issues. Campaigning for president in New Hampshire last month, Kamala Harris announced, “I am not a democratic socialist.”



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