Trump’s rant against Jews and the growth of anti-Semitism in the US

Patrick Martin
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Donald Trump declared Sunday morning that American Jews should “get their act together” and provide him greater support than his current dismal standing in the polls among Jewish voters. The would-be dictator claimed that while he had been a staunch ally of Israel during his four years in the White House: “Our wonderful Evangelicals are far more appreciative of this than the people of the Jewish faith, especially those living in the US.”

This statement published on his Truth Social platform ended with the scarcely disguised warning that Jews should convert to the Trump camp “Before it is too late!” Prominent Jewish spokesmen in both Israel and the United States denounced what one called “a former US president using threatening language about American Jews at a time when antisemitism is on a global rise.”

Trump was speaking, not just for himself, but for the fascist elements who now dominate the Republican Party. Georgia Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene embraced the neo-Nazi “Great Replacement” theory at a recent pro-Trump rally in Arizona, condemning the Biden administration for alleged plans to “replace” white, Christian Americans with black and brown immigrants.

Doug Mastriano, candidate for governor of Pennsylvania, blasted his Democratic opponent, state attorney general Josh Shapiro, labelling him an elitist who had attended “privileged, exclusive, elite” schools and had “disdain for people like us.” The anti-Semitism was clear in context, since Shapiro attended a Hebrew Academy in the suburbs of Philadelphia, the Jewish counterpart of a Catholic high school.

These statements are just the crudest and most open in a much broader trend. Republican campaign ads and speeches in 2022 attack Jewish billionaire George Soros nearly as often as Joe Biden. Soros is a major financial supporter of the Democratic Party as well as an anticommunist who has funded “color revolutions” across Eastern Europe in conjunction with the State Department.

Republican candidates have long used the name of Soros, who escaped the Holocaust in Hungary as a child, as an anti-Semitic dog whistle. Among Republican-aligned white supremacist circles, the “Great Replacement” is presented as a Jewish conspiracy with Soros as its main backer. That was the premise of the neo-Nazi march in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017.

The rise of anti-Semitism in the United States is not limited to and cannot be explained solely by the increasingly fascistic politics of the Republican Party. The Democratic Party has participated in the redefinition of American politics and history largely in racial terms. While the Republicans seek to appeal to rural and suburban whites, the Democrats seek to combine racial minorities and sections of the white upper middle class, particularly women and gays, through identity politics.

The Democrats have sought in every way to suppress the consciousness of the common class interests of working people of every race, nationality and gender.

The Biden administration has been notably slow to condemn the remarks of Trump, Greene and Mastriano, among many others, waiting 24 hours after Trump’s online warning to “US Jews” before saying anything. And this was only in answer to a question asked of White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre in the routine daily press briefing Monday. There was no public statement and Biden himself said nothing.

Even this muted opposition to anti-Semitism has an entirely hypocritical and opportunist character. The Democrats condemn the anti-Semitism of Trump, but cover it up when it serves their own purposes, particularly when it comes to US foreign policy, whose main focus is the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian government has elevated the Nazi collaborator and mass murderer Stepan Bandera to the level of a “founding father,” erecting monuments throughout the country. This is not just an ideological embrace; the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion, which marches with the icons of the Waffen SS, has been integrated into the Ukrainian army and hailed as national heroes for their role in the war with Russia. Leading Democrats, including Representative Adam Schiff, chair of the House Intelligence Committee, met with the Azov Battalion during a recent visit to Ukraine.

The question of anti-Semitism has deep historical resonance. It is not merely a survival of the primitive, medieval bigotry rooted in the Christian churches and in rural prejudice towards a population found mainly in the towns. Modern anti-Semitism arose in the late 19th century, particularly in Europe, as a

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weapon of the capitalist class aimed at diverting class tensions and providing a convenient scapegoat for mass anger over deteriorating social conditions.

This urban anti-Semitism fused with the older, traditional version, under conditions of the collapse of capitalism in the Great Depression. Combined with violent hostility to socialism and the workers' movement, it became the ideological foundation for Hitler's Nazi Party. With the backing of the capitalist class, the Nazis took power in Germany to suppress the threat of working-class revolution. Commanding the resources of the strongest imperialist state in Europe, they carried out the most monstrous crimes in human history.

Anti-Semitism assumes a particularly toxic character during times of extreme social and economic crisis, emerging in explosions of violence, like the 2018 attack on the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, directly inspired by Trump, in which 11 people were killed by a fascist gunman, and in countless lesser incidents. This is a trend not only in the United States, but throughout Europe, including in Germany.

Anti-Semitism cannot be fought on the basis of moral appeals to the conscience or on vain hopes that in the 21st century such prejudice has been made obsolete by progress or growing tolerance. Anti-Semitism is fueled by the contradictions of the world capitalist system, and these contradictions have become more rather than less acute with the development of technology and the increasing global interconnectedness of humanity.

Still less can anti-Semitism be fought on the basis of Zionism, that bankrupt embrace of the outmoded and reactionary framework of the national state. In this historical period, globalization makes every national state—let alone a tiny one based on the expulsion or suppression of the previous inhabitants—a trap for its population.

It must be pointed out that the oppressive policies of the state of Israel towards the Palestinian people, including the provocative actions of fascistic "settler" groups on the West Bank, weaken the global sympathy for the Jewish people that was a legacy of the Holocaust.

In addition, the persistent campaign to smear any defense of the Palestinian people and opposition to Zionism as anti-Semitism, waged with particular force in Britain and the United States, undermines resistance to bigotry and cultivates an element of cynicism towards that issue.

Particularly pernicious is the manufacture of the myth of "left-wing anti-Semitism," which seeks to separate the Jewish people from the socialist and working-class movement which has always been their foremost defender and ally, and their hope for the future.

The Fourth International, the world Trotskyist movement, has always stood at the forefront of the global struggle against anti-Semitism. As Leon Trotsky wrote, in our founding program:

> Before exhausting or drowning mankind in blood, capitalism befouls the world atmosphere with the poisonous vapors of national and race hatred. *Anti-Semitism* today is one of the most malignant convulsions of capitalism's death agony.
>
> An uncompromising disclosure of the roots of race prejudice and all forms and shades of national arrogance and chauvinism, particularly anti-Semitism, should become part of the daily work of all sections of the Fourth International, as the most important part of the struggle against imperialism and war. Our basic slogan remains: Workers of the World Unite!

In the midst of World War II, when the Roosevelt administration was turning a blind eye to the Nazi death camps, blocking entry of Jewish refugees and rejecting appeals to bomb the train tracks leading into Auschwitz, the Executive Committee of the Fourth International declared:

> The Fourth International, leader of the workers in the struggle for world socialism, welcomes the Jewish toilers into its ranks. Only by world socialism can the Jews, above all the Jewish workers, and all the oppressed nations and races be saved from the terrible fate world capitalism has inflicted on them and the even worse fate it has in store for ever-increasing numbers of them. Only in world socialism will human brotherhood become a reality and anti-Semitism a hideous memory.

These statements remain the basis of a principled struggle against anti-Semitism, which requires the political mobilization of the working class fighting for socialism and internationalism. Only the overthrow of capitalism on a world scale can put an end to anti-Semitism and provide genuine freedom and security for the Jewish people.

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