

The Musk-Trump blood feud and the US political crisis

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The eruption of a public conflict between President Donald Trump and his former budget adviser, Elon Musk—the world’s richest man—speaks to the extraordinary level of crisis and conflict within the state apparatus, generated by an intensifying economic crisis and mounting popular opposition to the corporate-financial oligarchy.

Musk officially left the Trump administration last Friday, his final day as a “special government employee” in charge of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), which has led the assault on federal workers and the shutdown of entire government agencies. At an Oval Office ceremony, Musk and Trump exchanged mutual praise and expressions of support. But within days, a bitter feud erupted between the two billionaire gangsters.

In interviews over the weekend and on Monday, Musk began voicing hostility to Trump’s “Big, Beautiful Bill” passed by the House last week, which extends Trump’s 2017 tax cuts for the wealthy set to expire at the end of the year. The centibillionaire did not oppose the tax cuts themselves, of course, but denounced what he called excessive “pork” in the bill. On Tuesday, he posted a comment on X calling the bill a “disgusting abomination” and urged senators to vote it down.

The conflict highlights significant divisions within the ruling class regarding how to implement extensive cuts in social programs, all at the expense of the working class—a goal that all factions of the political establishment agree on. JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon warned of the ballooning federal deficit and a looming “crack in the bond market.”

Musk has also denounced Trump’s tariff policy, which threatens both his own business interests—heavily reliant on Chinese markets and supply chains—and the

broader global interests of American capitalism. Financial commentators have specifically pointed to the surge in gold prices and the weakening position of the US dollar, developments that pose a serious threat to Wall Street and the stability of the global financial system.

The conflicts within the ruling class intersect with the corrupt personal interests of the individuals involved. Trump has threatened retaliation against Musk’s business empire, including the cancellation of “billions and billions” in federal contracts. Tesla stock plunged more than 14 percent on Thursday, wiping out \$152 billion in market value and costing Musk personally \$20 billion in a single day.

On Saturday, Trump withdrew the nomination of billionaire Jared Isaacman, a Musk customer and crony, to head NASA. Isaacman was Musk’s choice, viewed as a key ally of his lucrative—but technically challenged—SpaceX venture, which relies entirely on federal contracts.

Rolling Stone magazine reported that two Trump administration officials said the government could revive investigations into Musk’s business practices that were begun under the Biden administration, one of the main reasons for his pumping \$275 million into the Trump campaign and joining it in person during the final months before the election.

Trump added in another Truth Social post, “Elon was ‘wearing thin,’ I asked him to leave, I took away his EV Mandate that forced everyone to buy Electric Cars that nobody else wanted (that he knew for months I was going to do!), and he just went CRAZY!”

Musk, responding to Trump’s remarks, declared that it was “Time to drop the really big bomb: @realDonaldTrump is in the Epstein files. That is the real reason they have not been made public.”

This—no doubt true—statement was a reference to the criminal sex trafficking by multi-millionaire Jeffrey Epstein, who was found dead in a Manhattan prison cell in August 2019, officially declared a suicide, which no one believes. Trump and Epstein had longstanding friendly relations throughout the period that Epstein made his mark as a purveyor of young women to his billionaire clients.

Musk's post thus represents a serious threat to Trump, a dramatic escalation of the political warfare within the US oligarchy. He added in a further comment on X, "Mark this post for the future. The truth will come out."

By late Thursday, Musk was applauding X users who suggested that Trump be removed from office and replaced by Vice President JD Vance, and warning that Trump's tariffs would "cause a recession in the second half of this year." In response, former White House aide Steve Bannon called on Trump to seize control of SpaceX, because it carries out vital functions for the US military, and deport Musk to his native South Africa. Musk responded: "Bannon is peak retard."

In the eruption of ferocious conflicts within the state, the feud between Trump and Musk recalls the Night of the Long Knives, the 1934 bloodbath in which Hitler consolidated his dictatorship through the slaughter of hundreds of his political opponents within the Nazi party, most importantly Ernst Röhm, head of the SA brownshirts, and Gregor Strasser.

Overall, one has the picture of an oligarchy wallowing in criminality, filth and cultural degradation. Musk is the world's richest individual, brought to the very pinnacle of political power in the first months of the second Trump administration. The *New York Times* reported last week that Musk was a regular user of ketamine, Ecstasy, and psychedelic mushrooms and other drugs during the fall election campaign, and that his demeanor and conduct as head of DOGE suggested that this was continuing.

Trump's own stability is in question as well. A tabulation by the *Washington Post* found that he had posted 2,262 times on Truth Social during the first 132 days of his administration, including 138 separate posts on a single day. Over the weekend, Trump retweeted a bizarre conspiracy theory claiming that Joe Biden had been executed in 2020 and replaced by a series of robots. As for corruption, his personal fortune has risen

by \$1.2 billion since the election, according to an analysis by the *Wall Street Journal*, mainly through cryptocurrency operations marketed to his supporters.

The criminality and corruption of what was the Trump-Musk administration is only the most disgusting expression of the degeneration of the American capitalist class as a whole.

The political crisis unfolding in the United States exposes not only the character of the Trump administration—a government of, by and for the oligarchy—but also the nominal opposition. The Democratic Party has done nothing to resist the relentless drive toward authoritarian rule. As one Trump outrage follows another, the Democrats offer only feigned helplessness, maintaining the pretense that Trump is all-powerful and that they are powerless to act.

Sections of the trade union apparatus, including UAW President Shawn Fain, have embraced Trump's economic nationalism, presenting "Buy American" demagoguery as a defense of workers' interests. The nominally independent Bernie Sanders has backed Trump's attack on immigrants, and just this week, in response to Musk's criticism of Trump's tax bill, Sanders replied, "Musk is right."

There are no sides for the working class to take in this feud between rival factions of the ruling elite. However, the political breakdown within the ruling class opens the door for the working class to intervene independently, on the basis of its own interests and program.

This crisis is erupting out in the open as there are growing signs of opposition, with the popular response to immigration raids, and strikes in healthcare and the defense industry. The unraveling of the official political system, the sharpening economic crisis, and the growth of social anger are creating the conditions for a mass movement from below. What is required is the building of a conscious leadership that can give this movement direction and perspective.



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