

“Anti-Communism Week”: The White House declares war on socialism

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“A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of communism.” So begins *The Communist Manifesto*, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in late 1847 and published in early 1848. Nearly 180 years later, that same spectre is once again haunting the ruling classes, not only in Europe, but throughout the world.

This is the essential significance of the White House proclamation, issued by the Trump administration on November 7, the anniversary of the 1917 socialist revolution in Russia, declaring November 2–8 to be “Anti-Communism Week” in America. Framing socialism as a threat to “faith, freedom, and prosperity,” the document warns of “new voices” supposedly repeating “old lies.”

The proclamation opens with the fraudulent assertion that “communism” is responsible for “more than 100 million lives ... taken by regimes that sought to erase faith, suppress freedom, and destroy prosperity earned through hard work.” This figure, endlessly repeated by right-wing ideologues, originated with *The Black Book of Communism*, a 1997 hack work that conflated every violent event in the 20th century—from civil wars to famines to Stalinist purges directed at workers and intellectuals, and carried out in alliance with imperialism—into a single death toll, blamed on “communism.”

The proclamation declares that “for more than a century, communism has brought nothing but ruin.” Nowhere in Trump’s statement is there reference to the crimes of capitalism and American imperialism: the First World War (22 million dead); the Second World War, including the Holocaust and the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (85 million dead); the Korean War (up to 3 million dead); the Vietnam War (as many as 3 million Vietnamese, plus 370,000 more in Cambodia and Laos), the mass

slaughter in Indonesia in 1965–66 (at least 1 million killed), or countless other crimes.

The White House refers in particular to “the 34 years since the end of the Cold War.” The dissolution of the Soviet Union by the Stalinist bureaucracy has been followed by unending and escalating imperialist barbarism—from Iraq to Afghanistan, from the bombing of Yugoslavia to the invasions of Libya and Syria, and now the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and the imperialist-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza. Imperialism is once again bringing humanity to the brink of world war, with Trump’s own “War Secretary,” Pete Hegseth, declaring last week: “This is a 1939 moment.”

What stands out, beyond the glaring deceit, is the utter hypocrisy of the proclamation. The White House declares that “communist regimes” have violated “the God-given rights and dignity of those they oppressed,” and pledges to “stand firm against communism, to uphold the cause of liberty and human worth.” It proclaims that communism “silences dissent, punishes beliefs, and demands that generations kneel before the power of the state.”

These lines are written by an administration that has worked to strip food stamp benefits from tens of millions of Americans; is deploying federal troops in American cities; has rounded up and disappeared immigrant workers and youth through ICE raids; and is carrying out a conspiracy to abolish democratic forms of rule and establish a presidential dictatorship.

In a society where workers die daily in preventable industrial disasters, and where the richest 1 percent control more wealth than the bottom 90 percent, the claim to defend “freedom” and “prosperity earned through hard work” is an insult to the intelligence and experience of the broad mass of the population.

Trump's "freedom" is the freedom of the oligarchy to plunder society, destroy the planet and kill with impunity.

Underlying all the lies and historical falsifications are the fears of a ruling class that is terrified by the growing opposition to capitalism. The immediate political context for the White House's proclamation is the New York mayoral election, in which over 1 million people voted for Zohran Mamdani, a self-proclaimed "democratic socialist." "Anti-Communism Week" was backdated to include the day of the election, November 4, and it warns darkly of those "cloaking themselves in the language of 'social justice' and 'democratic socialism.'"

A day after the White House proclamation, the editorial board of the *Washington Post*, owned by billionaire Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, launched a vicious attack on what it referred to as "Generalissimo Mamdani." The *Post* denounced the mayor-elect for "identifying class enemies ... and then crushing them."

The oligarchs as a whole are responding hysterically to the election of the mild social-democrat Mamdani, who in the days since the election has hastened to reassure them.

Melville's Captain Ahab spoke of Moby Dick as a "pasteboard mask," behind which stood an "inscrutable malice. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him." What the ruling class fears in the election is not Mamdani, who is no great whale, but the shifts in consciousness underlying his rapid rise—the spectre of revolution and expropriation.

Their hysteria arises from the fact that opposition to capitalism is rapidly growing internationally, expressed in different forms—the massive "No Kings" demonstrations on October 18, the overwhelming opposition to the Israeli genocide in Gaza, the "Gen Z" protests that are presently sweeping across Africa and polls showing that 67 percent of young people in the US have a positive or neutral view of socialism, compared to just 40 percent for capitalism.

An email has recently surfaced from crypto-fascist Peter Thiel, who has taken recently to giving speeches to his fellow billionaires warning of the coming of the Anti-Christ. In the email, he warns: "If you proletarianize the young people, you shouldn't be

surprised if they eventually become communist."

But this is the logic of capitalism and the rule of the oligarchy. The gap between the ultra-rich and the vast majority of humanity is unfathomable. Tesla shareholders have just handed Elon Musk a \$1 trillion pay package—equivalent to \$50 million per hour—while workers at Tesla plants begin at \$18 an hour and face relentless speedup, layoffs and wage suppression. Over the past decade, the 10 richest Americans have seen their collective wealth increase six-fold, even as tens of millions face layoffs, hunger and crushing debt.

The oligarchs have run amok. They are terrified of socialism because they understand that the emergence of a genuine socialist movement in the working class is the principal threat to their wealth and power.

For the ruling class, the real "crimes of communism" are not the actions of the Stalinist regimes but the legacy of the 1917 Russian Revolution itself. It was the October Revolution that demonstrated, for the first time in history, the capacity of the working class to take power. Every major gain won by workers in the 20th century was won through mass struggles inspired by the Russian Revolution. It is this legacy that the ruling class is determined to destroy—through austerity, war, dictatorship and political repression.

The experiences now unfolding in the United States and around the world are discrediting the politics that have passed off as "left" for decades—the upper-middle class politics of race and gender and the dead-end reformism of the Democratic Socialists of America, Sanders, Ocasio-Cortez and now Mamdani—the politics of tinkering around the edges of a historically bankrupt social and economic system.

What is required is the building of a revolutionary leadership in the working class, rooted in the Marxist program of Trotskyism. The Socialist Equality Party fights to unite workers and youth internationally in the struggle for socialism—for the expropriation of the oligarchs, the transfer of power to the working class and the democratic reorganization of economic life to serve human need, not private profit.



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