

# Trump's fascist tirade at Mount Rushmore: Anticommunist hysteria and the conspiracy for dictatorship

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5 July 2026

The speech delivered by Donald Trump Friday on the eve of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was an expression of both the terror gripping the capitalist oligarchy and the escalating conspiracy to establish a dictatorship in the United States.

Speaking before the Mount Rushmore monument in South Dakota, Trump declared war on a substantial and growing section of the American population. There is, he asserted, “a resurgence of the communist menace in our land,” which he called “a mortal threat to American liberty... the greatest threat to our country, including World War One, World War Two, Pearl Harbor, or even 9/11.”

He continued: “Such doctrines can be given no quarter in a democracy.” Socialists, he stated, stand outside the nation: “You can be loyal to Karl Marx or you can be loyal to America. You can be a communist or you can be a patriot. You cannot be both.” And he pledged, “for all to hear, that the citizens of the United States of America will vanquish communism quickly.”

The logical corollary is that socialists must be treated as enemies of the state, against whom the methods developed over a quarter century of the “war on terror” can be turned. The direct target of Trump's fascist diatribe are those who supported and voted for members of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) in Colorado and New York over the past month, which Trump and the right-wing media have presented as the imminent communist takeover of America.

In the two weeks before Trump spoke, nine young people who participated in a Fourth of July protest last year outside the Prairieland immigration detention center in Texas were sentenced in federal court to prison terms of 30 to 100 years, convicted at trial on charges including “material support for terrorism.”

Trump also fused his anticommunist campaign with the mass deportation machine. The “menace,” he said, comes “including from newcomers to our country,” while “the Communist Party [that is, the Democratic Party] is made up of illegal immigrants, criminals and everybody that doesn't want to work.”

Beyond the hysterical denunciations, Trump's speech is a declaration of political intent, a conspiracy to overturn the results of the midterm elections and consolidate a presidential dictatorship. “We can only lose the midterms if we allow ourselves to lose the midterms,” he told the crowd, “if we are foolish, stupid and unwise.” He demanded the immediate passage of the SAVE Act, which would require documentary proof of citizenship to register and photo identification to vote, disenfranchising millions of working class voters.

If this were done, Trump declared, “we will not lose an election for 100 years,” echoing Hitler's proclamation of a “thousand-year Reich,” albeit diminished to one-tenth. An election whose outcome is guaranteed in advance for a century is not an election. And a governing party that can lose only by “allowing” itself to lose has announced, in advance, that any defeat will be treated as illegitimate.

This has been seen before. Throughout 2020, Trump proclaimed that the only way he could lose was through fraud, denouncing mail-in ballots for months in advance so that the lie would be ready when needed. When he lost, he declared victory anyway, demanded that state officials “find” him votes, and organized slates of fake electors. Trump summoned a mob to Washington on January 6, 2021, and incited it to storm the Capitol to stop the certification of the election.

No one in the ruling class was ever held to account for the fascist coup attempt. The Democrats, in the name of “moving on,” blocked any serious investigation of the

conspiracy's roots. Four years later, Trump returned to the White House, where, on his first day in office, he pardoned some 1,600 insurrectionists.

The lesson Trump drew from 2020 was not that coups fail, but that they must be prepared more thoroughly. Trump now commands a purged military that he has already deployed against American cities, a paramilitary force in ICE operating outside all legal restraint and a largely pliant Supreme Court majority.

In 2020, the pretext for overturning the election was phantom fraud in the counting of ballots. Now, the framework for the attack on democratic forms of rule is openly political, the struggle against socialism. Trump is not merely claiming that votes will be miscounted. He is asserting that certain votes, those cast for candidates he brands communists, are illegitimate in themselves.

Trump's hysterical denunciations reflect a deep fear gripping the capitalist oligarchy. He spoke three days after a member of the DSA unseated a 15-term incumbent in the Democratic congressional primary in Denver, which followed the New York City congressional primaries in June, the Democratic mayoral primary in Washington D.C. and the election of Zohran Mamdani as mayor of New York last November. Trump responded to those results in language he would repeat almost verbatim at Mount Rushmore.

The ruling class understands that these votes register something far deeper, a broad radicalization of workers and young people confronting impossible living costs, endless war, the genocide in Gaza and a government functioning as the executive committee of the oligarchy. Trump's shrieks about the "communist menace" are the oligarchy's acknowledgment that growing numbers have begun to identify capitalism as the source of the crisis.

No less significant than the speech itself, however, is the response, or rather non-response, of the Democratic Party. Not one statement has been issued by Schumer, Jeffries or the Democratic Party leadership in response to Trump's fascist diatribe. The Democrats share the anticommunism of the Republicans. The House, with broad Democratic support, passed a resolution "condemning socialism" last November, and the party establishment spent the spring pouring money into the primaries against the very candidates Trump now menaces.

Confronted with a choice between the danger of dictatorship and the danger of socialism, the Democrats fear the latter far more.

As for Mamdani, hours before Trump spoke, the DSA

New York City mayor delivered his own carefully staged address from behind George Washington's desk at City Hall. Most significant is the fact that Mamdani, who has met with Trump twice in the White House, could not bring himself to name the president or to warn of what is being prepared. The DSA is a faction of the Democratic Party, and its response to the threat of dictatorship is the same as that of the party to which it belongs.

Trump's tirade, delivered on the eve of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, amounts to an official proclamation that the principles embodied in that document are, for the ruling class, a dead letter.

Trump speaks not just for himself, but for the capitalist oligarchy that he represents. Democratic forms of rule are incompatible with a society in which nearly 1,000 billionaires command \$8.4 trillion, in which the top 1 percent holds as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent combined and which has just minted its first trillionaire.

The same crisis that drives the oligarchy toward dictatorship is driving the working class into struggle. In the past year, workers have shut down the Long Island Rail Road, struck the schools of San Francisco and walked out of hospitals in New York, Chicago and New Jersey. And at the stroke of midnight on July 4—in Philadelphia, the city where the Declaration of Independence was adopted—1,600 electrical and gas workers walked off the job at PECO, the first strike in the utility's 145-year history.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote in its statement marking the 250th anniversary, the right to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" is "entirely bound up with the struggle for social equality." The crisis of capitalism has reached the point, the statement concluded, where "the defense of democratic rights can be carried forward only through a revolutionary struggle against the capitalist system itself."

Trump's speech demonstrates that this fundamental conclusion will impose itself ever more directly in the period ahead.



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