Trump’s fascist Thanksgiving diatribe

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On October 3, 1863, three months after the Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, Abraham Lincoln issued the proclamation that established Thanksgiving as a national holiday, to be observed on the last Thursday of November. In the midst of “a civil war of unequaled magnitude and severity,” he asked Americans to give thanks “with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience,” to remember “all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers” in the war, and to pray “to heal the wounds of the nation.”

On Thursday morning, the present occupant of the White House marked the holiday with a fascistic and culturally illiterate diatribe on Truth Social. Addressing himself to “ALL AMERICAN PATRIOTS,” Donald Trump extended mock holiday greetings to a list of enemies that includes government statisticians, the “Radical Far Left,” Somali immigrants and others his administration has deported, and journalists.

The distance between the two texts measures the degradation of American political life. Lincoln wrote in the midst of a revolutionary war to abolish slavery. A year later, in his next Thanksgiving proclamation, he gave thanks that the nation had “largely augmented our free population by emancipation and by immigration.” Trump, presiding over a war of aggression and the mass expulsion of immigrants, provides a proscription list written in the language of fascist gutter politics.

Trump began by wishing a happy Thanksgiving “to even those who issued fake Economic Numbers, just prior to the Election,” and denounced the revision of third-quarter growth from 3.4 percent to 4.3 percent as “A RECORD SETTING ERROR, and one so grave that it should be immediately investigated.”

In fact, the Commerce Department issued its advance estimate on October 29 and revised it on November 25, both on schedule, as more complete data came in. By CNBC’s calculation, the revision was tied for only the 16th largest since 1990. Trump is demanding an investigation of statistics that showed the economy growing faster than first reported, and insinuating that the midterm elections that repudiated him overwhelmingly were tainted by fraud.

He then turned to the “Radical Far Left,” those “looking to change our Court System to that of Sharia,” and those “who want to redistribute Property, so that all of the hardworking people that have built up, over a lifetime, a certain Wealth, will now be forced to distribute it throughout the Country, even to those who refuse to work.”

In denouncing those who would “redistribute Property,” Trump speaks for an oligarchy that will tolerate not the slightest incursion on the wealth it has amassed through speculation and exploitation. In Trump’s vocabulary, “hardworking people” are households worth an average of $204 million. “Those who refuse to work” are the 5.6 million people who lost food stamps in the year to August.

Then came the Somalis. “I want to thank the 2% of our Somalian population that have a job, and are actually willing to work, without receiving Government Assistance,” Trump wrote. “These are wonderful American ‘citizens,’ and should be allowed to stay in our Country, and celebrate Thanksgiving with us. The others should be thrown out, immediately.”

Census data show that about 72 percent of Somali Minnesotans are in the labor force, a higher share than among Minnesotans as a whole. They work in food processing plants and home health care and drive trucks. Nearly 60 percent were born in the United States, and the great majority are citizens. The scare quotes around “citizens” make the meaning plain: the president is calling for the expulsion of American citizens on the basis of national origin and religion.

Trump wrote this less than two weeks after Mohamed Yusuf, a 51-year-old Somali American Uber driver,

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was nearly killed outside Minneapolis. According to court documents, a passenger he picked up early on November 14 told him he did not like the name Mohamed. This came after Trump's statement calling Somalis "garbage," and, in the context of a campaign against Representative Ilhan Omar, declaring "The people of Minnesota must fight back."

Last Thanksgiving, Trump used his holiday post to attack Minnesota's Somalis, days after announcing the end of their Temporary Protected Status. Weeks later, some 3,000 federal agents descended on the Twin Cities, where they killed Renée Good and Alex Pretti. No one has been charged since.

Trump's Thanksgiving diatribe is the administration's answer to the November 3 elections, in which tens of millions of voters in every part of the country repudiated Trump, expressing mass hostility to the war against Iran, the assault on immigrants, the gutting of social programs and the drive toward dictatorship.

Three days after the vote, Trump named the fascist Stephen Miller as White House chief of staff. Trump has ordered the Justice Department to investigate Democrats who raised the prospect of impeachment, and this week it was reported that a federal grand jury is hearing evidence against Omar, who, Trump said in October, "could go to jail."

For their part, the Democrats, who will control both houses of Congress in January, have responded with unanimous pledges to work with Trump. The day after the election, House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries declared the Democrats "ready, willing and able to find bipartisan common ground." Barack Obama said voters wanted "a politics that brings people together rather than divides them."

The formula was supplied by New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America. On November 5, Mamdani urged Democrats to seek "a place of shared purpose" with Trump. Asked at the *New York Time*s DealBook Summit on November 18 whether he would still call Trump a fascist, he said "Yes," and added, "we both love the same city." On Thursday, the other party to this affection called for the expulsion of nearly an entire community of Muslim immigrants.

Trump's warning about those seeking to impose Sharia Law on American courts repeats the line of the Republican campaign against Michigan Senator-elect Abdul El-Sayed. El-Sayed has responded to his victory by courting the man who branded him a terrorist. Asked on *Meet the Press* on November 22 whether he would meet Trump or Vice President JD Vance, he replied, "Those plans are in the works. I'm open to speaking with anybody."

In less than a month since the midterm elections, the political dynamic that will define the next two years has been set. Trump, repudiated at the polls, is escalating his assault on the working class and the Constitution. The Democrats, with majorities in both houses of Congress, are pleading for collaboration. Their differences with Trump, such as they are, center on foreign policy, above all the war against Russia in Ukraine, which they want to escalate. What unites both parties is fear of the movement developing from below.

That movement is growing. The vote on November 3 was only its most diffuse expression. The task is to give this opposition a conscious political leadership, uniting workers of every nationality and religion in a common struggle against the capitalist oligarchy and both of its parties.

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