

Socialism haunts the American ruling class

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In the two months since Donald Trump vowed in his State of the Union Address that “America will never be a socialist country,” the right-wing demagogue president and the Republican Party have embraced anti-socialism as the defining theme of their campaign in the 2020 elections.

Speaking at the National Republican Congressional Committee Dinner last week, Trump declared that he will be running in 2020 to fight a “socialist takeover” of the United States. “I love the idea of ‘Keep America Great’” as a campaign slogan, Trump said, “because the socialists will destroy” the country.

Trump’s rhetoric is increasingly being embraced by the Republican Party as a whole. Last week, Utah Congressman Chris Stewart announced the formation of an “anti-socialist caucus” in the House of Representatives. This “anti-socialism movement” would serve “as a bulwark to stop the advancement of socialist policies and legislation,” Stewart said.

“If we fail to recall those dangerous times,” he added, “the primitive appeal of socialism will advance and infect our institutions.” Socialism wants to “destroy freedom, democracy and the rule of law,” the congressman declared.

Republican ideologue Pat Buchanan went farther, declaring that the 2020 election would be a choice between Trump and socialism, in which “Trump would be the nation’s last line of defense against the coming of a Socialist America.”

While Trump and the Republicans express it in a particularly crude form, both major parties of the American ruling elite are united in their hatred and fear of socialism. Last week, JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, who was known as Barack Obama’s favorite banker and who has been a major donor to the Democratic Party, centered his annual letter to shareholders on a denunciation of socialism.

Dimon’s bank received tens of billions of dollars in government bailouts and many billions more from the

Obama administration’s ultra-low interest rate and “quantitative easing” money-printing policies. He told his shareholders that “socialism inevitably produces stagnation, corruption” and “authoritarian government,” and would be “a disaster for our country.”

These statements express the fear that pervades the ruling class over the growth of political opposition within the working class to social inequality, which is fueling an international strike wave. Last year, more than half a million US workers went on strike, a 20-fold increase over 2017.

Last week, Ray Dalio, the former CEO of the hedge fund Bridgewater Associates, published an essay warning that the United States may be on the brink of social revolution. He wrote: “Disparity in wealth, especially when accompanied by disparity in values, leads to increasing conflict and, in the government, that manifests itself in the form of populism of the left and populism of the right and often in revolutions.”

He added that “we are now at a juncture in which” the growth of social inequality, unless reversed, would lead to a “great conflict and some form of revolution.”

Stratfor, the private intelligence service, warned that the 2020 US election represents a “global inflection point,” marked by the intersection of soaring social inequality and a crisis of global dominance for the United States. “The ‘socialist’ label is being bandied left and right,” it wrote, “as a way of questioning the very survival and moral legitimacy of US capitalism.”

What haunts the ruling class is not left-talking figures within the Democratic Party such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, but rather the objective impulse toward mass working-class struggle and hostility toward capitalism. Though only as yet in its initial stages, the growth of the class struggle will inevitably bring about a development of explicit anti-capitalist and socialist sentiment.

Facing an international economic, social and political

crisis for which they have no answers, the ruling elites around the world are promoting extreme right-wing movements. All of these movements rose to prominence, like Trump, by promoting xenophobia and economic nationalism, but they are increasingly expressing their essential social character, in keeping with all fascist organizations, in their extreme hatred of socialism.

In France, President Emanuel Macron has made overtures to the far-right National Rally and praised Marshal Philippe Petain, the war-time Nazi collaborationist dictator. In Britain, Brexit has been used to mobilize right-wing extremists, who have murdered Labour Party MP Jo Cox, plotted to kill another Labour MP, violently assaulted Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, and repeatedly desecrated the grave of Karl Marx.

But this process has taken its most dangerous form in Germany, whose ruling class gave the world Adolf Hitler, where the media, the political establishment and large sections of academia have systematically promoted and defended leading figures within the far right. When the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) drew attention to the right-wing extremist views of Humboldt University Professor Jörg Baberowski, who declared that “Hitler was not vicious,” the IYSSE was attacked not only by the media, but also by the university administration, which steadfastly defended the hero of the far right.

As the Socialist Equality Party wrote earlier this year:

Fascism is not yet, as it was in the 1930s, a mass movement. But to ignore the growing danger would be politically irresponsible. With the support of sections of the ruling class and the state, right-wing movements have been able to exploit demagogically the frustration and anger felt by the broad mass of the population. In this situation, the fight against the resurgence of extreme right-wing and fascistic movements is an urgent political task.

The efforts of the American ruling elite to promote a fascistic movement against the growth of socialist opposition within the working class underscores the

critical importance of the meetings being held across the US by the Socialist Equality Party and the IYSSE, beginning this week, under the title “The Threat of Fascism and How to Fight It.”

The meetings will be addressed by Christoph Vandreier, the deputy national secretary of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) of Germany and author of the newly released book *Why are They Back? Historical Falsification, Political Conspiracy and the Return of Fascism in Germany*, who will bring the lessons of the struggle against fascism in Germany in the 1930s and today to an American audience. Many of the meetings will also be addressed by David North, the chairman of the WSWS international editorial board and the national chairman of the SEP in the United States.

We urge all of our readers to attend Vandreier’s lectures and participate in a discussion of the socialist strategy to mobilize the working class against the threat of fascism. As David North, explaining the importance of these meetings in the development of an international movement of workers and young people against the fascist danger, told a German audience recently: “Almost overnight, to the extent that people become aware in this country of the threat they face, we anticipate an enormous growth of social and political opposition. But what will be required is a very high level of historical and political awareness.”

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