
Step by Step, Toward Fascism

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03/05/2025



American progressivism speaks openly of "dictatorship" and "fascism" to describe Donald Trump's second term, but since February 5th, ordinary citizens have also expressed concern about his values and democracy.

Within the hundred days of his "honeymoon period," before the contradictions emerge, he is being showered with criticism, and millions have participated in actions in dozens of cities, defending various rights violated by his extreme measures.

The "Hands Off" protests feature crowds outraged by illegal deportations and budget cuts to social services, while the wealthiest even those in the ruling elite are seeing their personal businesses flourish.

Last Saturday, they repeated demonstrations in defense of federal employees forced to resign "voluntarily" or simply fired, to denounce measures that undermine the environment in favor of oil, mining, and other conglomerates, in rejection of attacks on freedom of expression in universities and the media, and on immigrants. Seriously, Americans are already fearing whether they will be the next target.

These marches and actions constitute a "grassroots pro-democracy, pro-constitution, anti-executive overreach, and nonviolent movement." This is not Democrats against Republicans, nor even the left "conspiring to overthrow capitalism," but the community against the Trump administration and its attacks on democracy.

Commondreams.org highlighted the signs in front of the Ohio State Capitol: "Ban the fascists, not the books." Apparently, disgruntled Republican voters were also part of the protest, as another slogan carried read: "Trump and Vance are traitors."

The signs for this label of fascism can be as dramatic as the deportations of immigrants accused of being part of criminal gangs without evidence or due process, the dismissals of public service personnel deemed to have dubious loyalty or criticize measures taken by the White House executive branch, and even the exclusive use of English in official paperwork.

For example, the U.S. National Weather Service no longer translates its notifications for non-English speakers, which could endanger their lives during extreme weather events. The contract with the translation provider has been terminated: recently, an artificial intelligence company that provided the reports in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, French, and Samoan for the nearly 68 million people who speak another language at home, 42 million of them Spanish. Of course, the official explanation doesn't reveal the explicit xenophobia implicit; it only states that the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) considered it too costly.

In a nation proud of its Constitution protecting freedom of expression, its President has tightened the screws on universities and colleges, preventing them from allowing any action against the Israeli genocide in Palestine, which he calls anti-Semitism, and has cut off their funding for not eliminating diversity, equity, and inclusion policy programs and for not repressing pro-Palestinian voices.

More than 1,500 students have had their visas or legal status revoked for their activism, and some are being detained without due process. They have sued the Trump administration, but this persecution also provokes fear and dangerous self-silencing. Furthermore, Trump continues to ignore court orders against these deportations and detentions...

The repression is spreading, according to Reuters, as Secretary of State Marco Rubio has ordered a review of the social media accounts of visa applicants who have traveled to the Gaza Strip in the past 18 years.

Children's rights have no place when he seeks to end birthright US citizenship for children of migrant parents, a measure currently under discussion in the Supreme Court. He has proposed eliminating the Head Start program, part of former President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty, which provides free childcare to more than one million low-income parents. They will also cut off meals, developmental screenings, and medical care for nearly 800,000 children. Veterans of their wars are no better off. And this is just the tip of the iceberg...

Independent Senator Bernie Sanders, who is touring the nation with Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortes under the slogan "Fight the Oligarchy" and who is being heard by far more than those who attended his campaign rallies, said:

"We are fighting a president who daily undermines our Constitution and threatens our freedoms of speech and assembly, and whose agents are detaining innocent people in the streets, putting them in unmarked vans and transporting them to detention centers. That's what happens in dictatorships, not democracies. And we will stop these outrageous actions the president is taking."

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