

Hail Trump, Those Who Will Prevail Salute You

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Thousands of New Yorkers gathered in Times Square, Manhattan, during a "No Kings" protest, rejecting Republican President Donald Trump and what they consider an authoritarian drift of his administration.

Some years ago, a commercial for the well-known credit card Mastercard used a clever device: a young woman, a child, and an elderly man expressed the desire to make some crazy dream come true, to which the narrator responded: with Mastercard, it's possible. But the final sequence sealed the message unexpectedly (which paradoxically had the effect of reinforcing the previous excessive claims): a child ran to hug his father, and the voiceover declared, "No, Mastercard can't buy your son's love."

In a system where a human being's worth is often measured by the money they possess (their purchasing power) and not by their virtues and contributions to humanity, there are always those who believe they can buy anything. Donald Trump, a capricious and arrogant millionaire at the helm of a declining world power, only knows the recourse of force: the force of money and the force of weapons. Did he abuse other children in school, or were they abused by him? A tempting question for psychoanalysts. Trump buys and threatens, saying "my will be done," seated on the throne of the merchants who were expelled from the temple by Jesus. Everything seems possible: inciting coups d'état (the novelty: in his own country); practicing pedophilia; murdering boatmen who allegedly transport drugs in the Caribbean Sea (there are already more than one hundred) to intimidate a sovereign government that refuses to cede its natural resources; stealing oil tankers, foreign companies, or other people's assets; imposing sanctions and blockades on countries and their rebellious leaders; bribing or blackmailing weak rulers; (attempting) to annex territories rich in natural resources like Greenland or the Orinoco region; being complicit in the genocide of the Palestinian people and, despite all this, believing he deserves the Nobel Peace Prize and the devotion of subjugated peoples. Perhaps one day he will appear at the wedding of one of his Latin American lackeys and demand the "droit du seigneur" (the right to have the bride on her wedding night). Some childhood trauma has taken him back to Ancient times or the Middle Ages, when kings or emperors were remembered for the extent of their conquered territories and their bloody military victories. But he doesn't resemble the romanticized memory of Charlemagne; his face, his empty gestures, his arrogance, his historical ineptitude, are similar to those of Hitler and Mussolini.

But I stand by the idea that the crumbling Western empire is the last in human history. Enough of empires in decline and empires on the rise. Enough of empires. Multilateralism must lead us toward another possible world, where peoples exchange knowledge and wealth, where solidarity establishes true human hierarchies. The economic hegemony of the most powerful must not be based on the exploitation of the weakest. Of course, this is a matter of class, that is, of class struggle, both within each nation and externally. I heard a speaker online say that the use of the term colonialism places the cause of social contradictions in external factors and obscures the existence of class struggle within colonized countries.

Absurd idea: neocolonial aristocracies, as Che Guevara pointed out, are sub-bourgeoisies at the service of the metropolitan bourgeoisies. And the fundamental contradiction of the 20th century, as Che Guevara astutely observed, arose between exploited and exploiting peoples, following an inevitable pattern: the internationalization of the class struggle. Therefore, when a segment of subordinate nations rebels and attempts to take control of its own destiny, it challenges the entire imperialist system. It has always struck me as a great paradox, or perhaps a fully conscious ideological purpose, that science fiction films depict technologically advanced future worlds in which rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, conquerors and conquered coexist “naturally”—as if class contradictions had a genetic rather than a social (historical) origin.

Brute force, however, is born of impotence. Those who threaten and shout lack other means to command respect. Our America, by virtue of its geographical position, its riches, and its history, is once again the stage where Western imperialism, the current form of capitalism, is gambling with its survival. José Martí wanted a free Cuba and Puerto Rico as bulwarks against imperialist expansion. Cornered, displaced from other markets, the once-great nation needs to control the force in what he always called his “backyard.”

Trump’s lies lack sophistication; he doesn’t have time to construct them, and he believes he doesn’t need to: he speaks of a crusade against drug trafficking and releases an allied drug trafficker, the former president of Honduras, to help him subjugate his people; he speaks of restoring “democracy” in Venezuela and brazenly declares his intention to seize that country’s natural resources. The Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine is not lying. The union of our peoples, since the union of their governments will not always be possible, is the only alternative for salvation. “The trees must be lined up so that the seven-league giant cannot pass!” wrote José Martí on January 10, 1891.

Yes, Trump’s megalomania expresses, by contrast, the empire’s awareness of its downfall. Unlike our Fidel, who stipulated in his will that no center or street bear his name, and that no statues or busts be erected in his honor—a believer, like Martí, in the power of ideas—Trump follows the long tradition of the conqueror: the new over the old symbol, so that we remember the force of power. There are no scruples. Of the national holidays that provided free admission to his country’s national parks, Trump has eliminated two very significant ones: Martin Luther King Day and Juneteenth, which commemorates the abolition of slavery. In their place, he has incorporated his own birthday. The tycoon-president is sponsoring the construction of a gigantic American football stadium that will bear his name, and has added his surname to the Kennedy Center. “We don’t want kings,” was the slogan of the protesters in several American cities.

The year is ending badly, but I’m not going to describe what we all know or have experienced. It is true that Capital seems unstoppable in its diabolical “games” of death—in Gaza, in Ukraine, in the Caribbean Sea—that traditional multilateral mechanisms like the United Nations are proving useless, that right now, at this very moment, children are being killed by bullets or missiles, by hunger or disease, while the world celebrates the new year. But beware, the number of dissenters, those who resist and demonstrate an unwavering will to fight, is growing daily. The cry of gladiators, forced to fight, resonates strangely: Hail Trump, we who will defeat you salute you!

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