

A Nation of Sheep? Trump's Fascist Tactics Working All Too Easily



C.J. Polychroniou

04-19-2025 ~ Where are the nationwide protests? The national strikes against the destruction of what is left of U.S. democracy? As for the eerie complacency of the Democrats, it is hardly surprising why there is such a huge loss of trust in the leadership of the Democratic Party.

Trump's historic first 100 days are just around the corner. How is the U.S. doing? What are the global implications, including for climate and the environment, of Trump's policies to create a "[new world order](#)" and "[Make America Wealthy Again](#)? In the interview that follows with independent French-Greek journalist Alexandra Boutri, political scientist/political economist, author and journalist C.J. Polychroniou argues that both the future of U.S. democracy and of humanity as a whole are at great risk because of an ignorant, self-serving autocrat at the helm of the world's most powerful nation.

Alexandra Boutri: Trump's first 100 days are nearing the end. What have we learned so far about Trump's second term and his direction for the country?

C. J. Polychroniou: The first thing that ought to be said is that there are significant differences between Trump's first and second terms. This time he has a much clearer agenda, largely thanks to Project 2025, and is better prepared to

see it through to the end. The aim is to undo race and gender progress, restore white dominance, deregulate the economy and use whatever means are available to further enrich the super-rich, and use economic coercion to secure U.S. hegemony. It's a thoroughly anti-democratic, blatantly neofascist vision that spells serious trouble for the future of democracy, especially given America's fragile democratic convictions. Indeed, one of the most shocking things so far is the ease with which the country is heading toward a 21st century version of fascism under Trump's second term.

This disturbing development speaks volumes of the weaknesses of the U.S. labor movement as well as of the overwhelmingly apolitical nature of civil society. Where are the nationwide protests? The national strikes against the destruction of what is left of U.S. democracy? As for the eerie complacency of the Democrats, it is hardly surprising why there is such a huge loss of trust in the leadership of the Democratic Party.

Alexandra Boutri: Are we witnessing a revolution in the making?

C. J. Polychroniou: With regard to what Trump is doing to American society and its institutions, the right word is "counterrevolution." Trump is carrying out a fascist destabilization of society in order to stop a progressive agenda, establish new forms of political legitimacy, and suppress, if not eliminate, threats from below. With regard to foreign affairs, he sees the world as a zero-sum game. But it would be naïve to think that what he is after are the interests of the average American citizen. Trump has nothing but contempt for working people. He is both after a world order and an economic regime at home that enriches corporations and the ultrawealthy at the expenses of the many.

Alexandra Boutri: Why is the Trump administration so keen in controlling education and taking over cultural institutions, such as the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts?

C. J. Polychroniou: Exerting power over education, taking control of cultural institutions and silencing the press are primary aims of every self-respecting authoritarian regime that wishes to take over civil society in order to transform a country's political landscape and colonize the consciousness of its citizens. Mussolini did so in Italy; Hitler in Germany; Franco in Spain; and even the colonels of Greece. What Trump and the thugs surrounding him are doing are

precisely just that: they are trying to suppress ideas they despise, silence dissent, and convert citizens into a nation of sheep. Fascist goals, fascist tactics. Pure and simple. And, sadly enough, he seems to be doing it with great ease as a huge portion of the American citizenry has already been turned into a nation of sheep. Now it's only up to that small but courageous community of American dissenters and radicals to stand up to the ignorant and stupid autocrat.

Alexandra Boutri: China is standing up to Trump's bullying tariffs, but the same cannot be said about Europe. Why is that?

C. J. Polychroniou: You have here two entirely different situations. China is a single, unified country. The European Union (EU) is a group of 27 independent countries with different histories, cultures, languages, customs, and interests. These member states work together to promote peace, security and economic efficiency. But the EU lacks a unified military and a centralized fiscal authority. Moreover, Europe is more dependent on trade than either China or the U.S. And since the end of the Second World War, Europe's defense is also too reliant on the U.S. It is thus hardly surprising that EU senior officials have been desperately trying since the start of Trump's tariff actions to appear conciliatory and even willing to bend over backwards to appease America's new King. They were forced to impose [new tariffs](#) on specific U.S. products in retaliation for Trump's 25 percent tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. But don't forget that Trump even [rejected](#) EU's offer to drop tariffs. And, of course, the EU has now [paused](#) its countermeasures on U.S. trade tariffs as a response to the U.S. delaying by 90 days its so-called reciprocal tariffs.

China is not backing down because it can afford to do so. Its leadership knows that it can deal with the side effects of a trade war far more effectively—and less painfully—than the U.S. can. The extent to which Trump seems to understand the realities of the U.S.-trade relationship, let alone of the mechanisms that the Chinese government has at its disposal to deal with economic side effects, is highly questionable.

Indeed, it's safe to say that a U.S. trade deal with Europe will eventually take place no matter what. Italy's neo-fascist but politically savvy prime minister [Giorgia Meloni](#) may be able to secure an EU-U.S. trade deal in a fashion that no top EU official could, perhaps only because Trump is smitten with her. But what happens with China is anyone's guess. There are both economic and geopolitical

considerations behind Trump's hostility towards China. And the Chinese no longer view their country as a semi-peripheral country in the global capitalist world. China's global influence is growing, so its leaders are not going to be intimidated by Trump's chicken game over tariffs.

Alexandra Boutri: One last question. How would Trump's energy and deregulation policies impact the fight for climate change?

C. J. Polychroniou: When all is said and done, this is the most important issue of all facing the future of humanity. We have a planet on the precipice. I hate to sound pessimistic, but the odds are already stacked against us. Trump's manic energy and deregulation policies, which come on top of a mania to deny climate change, will make the task of net-zero emissions by 2050 simply impossible to achieve.

I say this because Trump's energy and deregulation policies will encourage other fossil-fuel hungry nations to continue with the further exploration and consumption of the poisons that are destroying the planet. In addition, and indicative of what's happening on the ground with regard to the fight against global warming, a new study by the [Political Economy Research Institute \(PERI\)](#) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst reveals that "governments throughout the world continue to subsidize both the consumption and production of oil, coal, and natural gas." Overall fossil fuel subsidies, for 2023, amounted to \$1.1 trillion. Obviously, such a staggering amount in subsidies to the fossil fuel industry seems to indicate that governments across the world only have worries about short-termism and think very little about the future of humanity. But that's what capitalism is all about, isn't it?

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