



RICHMOND CA— Civil rights icon Rev. Phil Lawson speaks against deportations as oeople of faith hold a vigil outside the Richmond Detention Center ,where immigrants were incarcerated before being deported, not long after the first election of Donald Trump as US President . Seven years of vigils and demonstrations finally forced Contra Costa County to cancel its contract with ICE and the Center was closed. Lawson passed on January 28 at 92. Phil Lawson Presente!

## **Trump’s Executive Orders – The return of Cold War repression**

MR online. Originally published: The Reality Check on January 29, 2025 by David Bacon (more by The Reality Check) (Posted Feb 03, 2025)

In 1950, Nevada Democratic Senator Pat McCarran said he wanted to save the United States from communism and “Jewish interests.” His solution was passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, known as the McCarran Walter Act (MWA), and its complement, the Internal Security Act of 1950 (also known, confusingly, as the McCarran Act).

Both laws defined much of the legal framework for Cold War repression. They created an era of political trials and deportations, designed to terrorize progressive political leaders, enmesh them in endless legal battles, and where possible imprison and deport them. At the same time, mass deportations, like those of the early 1930s, grew exponentially, while contract labor schemes, once prohibited by Federal law, filled the country’s fields with braceros.

A week into the executive orders issued by the Trump administration, a similar set of McCarran-like measures are reviving this Cold War strategy. Anti-immigrant hysteria and repression have seemingly been a permanent part of U.S. public life, and the past election demonstrated clearly its prevalence in both political parties. But once

in office, the Trump administration is acting on what many hoped were empty threats. Its blueprint for a new assault on migrants and political rights is not just a rightwing continuation of business as usual, but an effort that takes its cues from one of the worst periods in U.S. political history—the Cold War. Chief among the legal structures that defined that era were these two laws.

The McCarran immigration measures were planned to “preserve the sociological and cultural balance of the United States,” in the words of the McCarren Report that laid the basis for the McCarran Walter Act. The means to accomplish this included waves of deportations, making naturalization harder to achieve, and screening out “subversives” among people wanting to come. Although legal protections against deportation at the time were few and largely unenforced, the MWA ended almost all of them, leading Senator Hubert Humphrey to say that deportation with no due process “would be the beginning of a police state.”

Many of Trump’s executive orders mirror that intent. One expands the use of “expedited removal,” which denies court hearings in deportation cases unless a person can prove they’ve been here for more than 2 years. Another Trump order revives the Alien Registration Act of 1940-44, but takes it much further, by making it a felony for any non-citizen to fail to register. Undocumented people would not be able to register without being immediately held for deportation, but failing to register would also be a crime. According to the American Immigration Council,

by invoking the registration provision, the Trump administration is threatening to turn all immigrants into criminals by setting them up for the ‘crime’ of failing to register.

In the immigration raids that followed the passage of the McCarran Walter Act, agents rounded up people at work, on the street and seemingly everywhere. In 1954 over a million people were picked up in the notorious “Operation Wetback.” Trump’s border czar Tom Homan, who headed the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency in the last Trump administration, announced at his new appointment that mass immigration raids will begin again. They will now include schools and churches, while earlier priorities directing enforcement to concentrate on “criminals” rather than families have been ended.

Rhetoric that immigrants were threats to the social order was prevalent in the Cold War, and is a constant refrain in today’s political discourse. The MWA barred entry of people guilty of “moral turpitude,” which included homosexuality and even drinking too much. A political bar (only overturned in 1990) prevented accused Communists from entering the U.S., and was applied with special ferocity to poets—from South African poet Dennis Brutus to Chilean poet Pablo Neruda to Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, whose novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, is now a hit on Netflix, was banned from the U.S. as a Communist after he received the Nobel Prize.

Non-citizen Communists, anarchists and other accused “subversives” in the U.S. became deportable, even people guilty of teaching, writing or publishing in support of “subversive” ideas. In 1952 the Supreme Court upheld the deportation of Robert Galvan, who’d been brought as a 7-year old from Mexico in 1918, married a U.S. citizen, had four children and worked at the Van Camp Seafood plant in San Diego. During World War 2, when the U.S. was an ally of the Soviet Union, he’d belonged to the Communist Party for two years, then a legal political party. He was nevertheless deported under the MWA’s ban.

Part of that ban has never ended—being a Communist Party member is still grounds for denying a citizenship application. Repeating this history and using similar language, Trump executive orders allow certain

organizations to be declared “foreign terrorist organizations,” opening the door to prosecution of any organization with radical politics and relationships with an organization outside the U.S.

Much of McCarran’s Internal Security Act was eventually declared unconstitutional or repealed, but this took years in some cases. Meanwhile it was enforced with a vengeance. It required “Communist organizations” to register, set up the Subversive Activities Control Board, and authorized the construction of concentration camps, like those used against Japanese-Americans during WW2. The FBI made lists of people to be detained in them. Even picketing a Federal courthouse became a felony. When Trump called out Federal troops to prevent Portland’s BLM protesters from demonstrating in front of the Federal building there, during his first administration, it was the same prohibition.

Using the national security pretext, the U.S. barred the entry of over 100,000 people in 1950. The Trump orders focus in the same way on finding rationales for denying entry. The Biden administration, in its last year, had already made policy changes that stopped people from simply arriving at the border, crossing it and asking for asylum. In his first week Trump closed off entirely the ability of people to apply from the Mexican side as well, shut down the app that set up appointments for applicants, and stopped processing asylum applications. Pursuant to another order, from now on anyone applying for any type of visa from anywhere must support U.S. “ideological values,” again setting the basis for political exclusion.

The purpose stated by the McCarren Report, to “preserve the sociological and cultural balance of the United States,” was implemented in the McCarran Walter Act’s immigration quotas. During World War 2 the U.S. had to drop its blanket prohibition on Asian immigration, the heritage of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Immigration Act of 1924 (nicknamed the Japanese Exclusion Act). Quotas were then set in 1952, country by country, to accomplish much the same end. China, India, and each Asian country had a quota of 100 people per year. Germany, which had just been defeated in the war, had a quota of 25,814, and Great Britain had the biggest, 65,361. Quotas for European countries were so large that they were rarely filled.

The quotas have their modern echo in Trump’s executive orders. In his first administration he stopped the entry of people from seven Islamic countries, in the “Muslim ban.” Huge crowds of protestors shut down airports across the country to free migrants caught by the government’s action. The Supreme Court, however, upheld the government’s ability to implement a modified ban. A new Trump executive order again enables the President to bar entry to people from specific countries.

The virtual ban-by-quota of people from China was part of the anti-Chinese hysteria fomented after the victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949. Again, political repression was linked to immigration enforcement. As mass deportations spread against Mexicans in the Southwest, agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service fanned out through Chinatowns during the 1950s. They accused families of falsifying the documents of “paper sons” and “paper daughters” many years earlier, and then revoked their residence visas.

Maurice Chuck, a progressive activist in San Francisco’s Chinatown, was sent to Federal prison. Politically motivated deportation proceedings targeted other leftwing activists, from Harry Bridges to Ernesto Mangaoang to Claudia Jones and many others. Some won their appeals at the Supreme Court, while others were expelled from the country. Today, when the Trump administration threatens to classify organizations as “foreign terrorists”, to invoke the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, and to revoke the tax exempt status of non-profit solidarity groups, its actions are direct descendants of this earlier Cold War repression.

The McCarran Walter Act and the Internal Security Act were two legal battering rams used to produce fear and paralysis among immigrant communities and their allies in progressive organizations. Their alliance had helped organize unions in the 1930s and 40s, and defended communities under attack. The Zoot Suit movie dramatizes the work of the Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, founded by the Communist Party, in fighting the police frame-up of Mexican youth in Los Angeles in the Sleepy Lagoon case. Leftwing Mexican organizations fought earlier deportation waves as well—the Congreso del Pueblo de Habla Española and the Asociación Nacional Mexicano Americano. Min Qing, the Chinese American Democratic Youth League, spread radical ideas, promoted progressive community politics, and defended immigrant families. All were attacked by the anti-communist juggernaut.

The history of the 1950s is also a history of deportation cases fiercely fought. The alliances people were able to preserve became seeds of the civil rights movement that grew as the McCarthyite era sputtered to a close. The Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born helped found the Civil Rights Congress, which protested lynching in the South, and sent a petition calling it out to the United Nations, “We Charge Genocide.” Today’s Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance, founded by members of the legislature’s Black Caucus to oppose the Bush immigration raids, walks in these footsteps.

It is important for the social movements that face the Trump administration today to know this Cold War history. It’s not just that we’ve been here before, and need to learn what history can teach us. Today’s executive orders, and the hysteria they feed that goes beyond the MAGA base, have the same purpose. Their intention is to frighten communities, people of faith and unions into paralysis, and to break alliances between immigrants and progressive movements that can help defend them. But MAGA is not new. As a growing civil rights movement spelled the end of the Cold War assault, the social movements of today among immigrants, unions, churches and legal activists, armed with self-knowledge and history, can stop this one too.

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Cold WarJacobinPresident Donald Trump

The forever charade

Canadian hands in Congo drip with the blood of millions

Monthly Review Essays

Seven Decades of China-Brazil Friendship: Cultural Diplomacy, Agrarian Reform, and the Cold War

Tings Chak

| | MR Online

This year, Brazil and China celebrate fifty years of official diplomatic relations. The importance of the Sino-Brazilian relationship cannot be underestimated in the context of the rise of the Global South, the decline of U.S. hegemony, and the emergence of a New Cold War. With a look back into the history of bilateral relations, how [···]

Lost & Found

Neofascism in the White House

John Bellamy Foster

| | MR Online

In this republished essay from 2017, John Bellamy Foster discusses how U.S. neofascism in certain ways resembles the classical fascism of Italy and Germany in the 1920s and '30s, but with historically distinct features specific to the political economy and culture of the United States in the opening decades of the twenty-first century.

### Trending

This post-85s entrepreneur appeared on Xinwen Lianbo (CCTV News) as the founder of the AI startup DeepSeek, participating in a high-level national symposium and delivering a speech. Interview with Deepseek Founder: "We're done following"

Michael Burawoy died on Grand Avenue this week after being hit by a driver. Within hours of his death, a flower memorial popped up in his honor, with many of his former students stopping by. Credit: Bryan Culbertson Sociology world mourns after hit-and-run driver on Grand Avenue kills legendary labor scholar

The freight terminal at the Lobito port, Angola. The Lobito Corridor: U.S. imperialism's latest plot against the Democratic Republic of Congo

The Columbia Gates at Broadway and 116th St. (a public street that runs through campus) have been closed to through traffic since April, when Gaza solidarity encampments took place at the university. Uptown Radio 'People are speaking in whispers'

US President Donald Trump and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House in Washington, DC, on 4 February (AFP/ Andrew Caballero Reynolds) Gaza ceasefire in jeopardy as Trump casts doubt on phase two and three

Trump's tariffs Trump's tariffs to enrich the oligarchy

TRUMP / USA Trump and the crisis of hegemony in the United States

Trump-Netanyahu The Gaza "war" was a lie, as is the ceasefire

[Source: primevideo.com] Silent propaganda on U.S. imperialism breeds confused Americans

AT HIS BEST AND BLUNTEST: Oberst in 2010 performing at the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass music festival in San Francisco Photo: danisabella/CC Where is the 21st-century protest song?

Popular (last 30 days)

After giving what was clearly a Nazi salute at Trump's inauguration, Elon Musk brazenly posted a series of Nazi-themed puns on X such as "Bet you did nazi that coming." Even the Zionist Anti-Defamation League condemned these Tweets, after defending Musk's salute as "an awkward gesture in a moment of enthusiasm." Nazi billionaires: Fascism in the Elon Musk family tree

This post-85s entrepreneur appeared on Xinwen Lianbo (CCTV News) as the founder of the AI startup DeepSeek, participating in a high-level national symposium and delivering a speech. Interview with Deepseek Founder: "We're done following"

Neofascism in the White House

The flag of the People's Republic of China flies at the Embassy of China in Ottawa. Photo from Flickr. China's economy in 2024 continued to far outgrow the U.S.

Palestinian Ceasefire Agreement 'Complete surrender': How Gaza defeated Israel and what it means—analysis USAID Director Mark Green (L). Venezuelan opposition diverted \$116 million delivered by USAID

An M23 soldier stands guard overlooking Bunagana, a small town in North Kivu Province in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo by Al Jazeera/Flickr. Canadian hands in Congo drip with the blood of millions

DeepSeek AI Open source vs. closed doors: How China's DeepSeek beat U.S. AI monopolies

Claudia Sheinbaum address the people and celebrate 100 days as the President of Mexico. Photo: X. With 350,000 in attendance, Claudia Sheinbaum's Zocalo rally shows Mexico's fourth transformation is thriving

China Tech DeepSeek's geopolitical impacts

MR Press News

EXCERPT: Colonial dreams, racist nightmares, liberated futures (from the introduction to A Land With A People) February 5, 2025

NEW! THE PHYSICS OF CAPITALISM by Erald Kolasi (EXCERPTS) February 5, 2025

The ceasefire is just a pause, and pauses don't heal wounds (Contributer to A Land With A People in 'New Lines Magazine') January 24, 2025

An ideological product of imperialist countries (Western Marxism reviewed in 'ML Today') January 20, 2025

The "Welfare State," the productive worker, and "disability" (David Matthews interviewed for Post-Capitalism Podcast) January 7, 2025

Climate & Capitalism

Earth's water cycle is off balance for the first time in human history February 9, 2025

Ecosocialist Bookshelf, February 2025 February 8, 2025

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US government knowingly promotes deadly fertilizer December 28, 2024

Extreme heat killed over 1300 Hajj pilgrims in 2024 December 19, 2024

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