

# Democrats join Republicans in passing fascist “Crucial Communism Teaching Act”

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A spectre is haunting Washington — the spectre of communism.

Earlier this month, in a robust 327-62 bipartisan vote, the US House of Representatives passed a McCarthyite bill requiring high school districts to indoctrinate children with fascist propaganda created by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOC).

156 Democrats joined 171 Republicans in voting in favor of the “Crucial Communism Teaching Act.” Democratic “yea” votes for the bill included a majority of the “Progressive caucus,” including California Rep. Ro Khanna and Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, as well as the Democratic leadership in the House, including Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (New York), Minority Whip Katherine Clark (Massachusetts), Caucus Chairman Pete Aguilar (California) and former speaker Nancy Pelosi (California).

In an attempt to head off growing interest in Marxism and socialism, the “Crucial Communism Teaching Act” calls for the development of “civic education curriculum” to ensure that high school students in the US are taught blatant lies. The bill calls for the creation of a curriculum that includes a “comparative discussion of certain political ideologies, including communism and totalitarianism, that conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy that are essential to the founding of the United States.”

The VOC is not an academic institution, but a far-right “non-profit” created in 1993 by an act of Congress to advance US imperialist propaganda. Founders of the VOC included Lev Dobriansky, Lee Edwards and Zbigniew Brzezinski. All three men are lifelong opponents of equality, friends to fascists and servants of US imperialism.

Dobriansky taught at Georgetown University, served as

ambassador to the Bahamas in the Reagan administration, and was also the chairman of the anti-communist National Captive Nations Committee (NCNC). The co-chair of the NCNC was Yaroslav Stetsko, a leader of the Nazi-aligned Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) during WWII and the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations.

Brzezinski was a top US imperialist strategist for decades and security advisor to Democratic President Jimmy Carter. In addition to supporting the Shah’s counter-revolution in Iran and Central American death-squads, Brzezinski backed the arming of the Islamist Mujahedeen in Afghanistan.

Finally, Edwards helped found the right-wing group Young Americans for Freedom in 1960 and was a former chairman of the VOC. In an obituary posted last week, the VOC noted that Edwards “started or helped sustain key anti-Communist organizations, such as the National Captive Nations Committee, the Committee for a Free China, and the American Council for World Freedom.” Edwards worked on Barry Goldwater’s 1964 presidential campaign, taught at Georgetown University and was a fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

The legislation advanced by the VOC calls for teaching “that communism has led to the deaths of over 100,000,000 victims worldwide,” and that “1,500,000,000 people still suffer under communism.”

The 100 million figure is a lie that originated in *The Black Book of Communism*, a 1997 book by Stéphane Courtois, and other European academics who have distanced themselves from the volume following its publication due to the numerous errors and falsehoods contained within it. Courtois reached his outrageous figure by, among other things, counting Nazis who died fighting the Red Army during World War II as “victims of communism.”

Courtois's book seeks to present Nazism and Communism as "twin evils," with the former more acceptable to Courtois. Early in the book he contrasts the "100 million" supposedly killed under communism with the "approximately 25 million" who were victims of the Nazis.

The legislation passed last week not only seeks to whitewash the crimes of Nazism, but to prepare students for future war with China. The bill demands that the curriculum focus on "past and present communist and totalitarian regimes," namely, "the treatment of Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) by the People's Republic of China" and the "increasingly aggressive posture by the People's Republic of China toward Taiwan, a democratic friend of the United States."

While demonizing official enemies of US imperialism, the bill calls for propaganda lectures that include "oral history resources." These "resources" are to include "personal stories, titled 'Portraits in Patriotism,'" which will feature "victims" of communism and proponents of "freedom and democracy."

The passage of the bill reflects immense fear within the US ruling class that large sections of the population, including millions of young workers and students, will be looking for a revolutionary alternative to the unending war, inequality, austerity and fascism offered by the capitalist system.

In a press release introducing the legislation last year, far-right Florida Republican Maria Elvira Salazar, a Cuban exile, noted that a poll conducted by the VOC in 2020 found that "1 in 5 millennial" people and "1 in 3 members of Gen-Z view communism favorably." A 2022 poll conducted by the Pew Research Center found that 36 percent of US adults viewed socialism "somewhat" (30 percent) or "very" (6 percent) positively, while only 57 percent viewed capitalism favorably, an 8 percent decrease compared to 2019.

The passage of the bill comes under conditions where President-elect Donald Trump has promised to carry out a mass deportation operation targeting not only immigrants, but also his political enemies, chiefly "communists and Marxists." Last June, Trump promised to use "Section 212 (f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act" to "order my government to deny entry to all communists and Marxists." Trump has also

called for a new law to address "the ones that area already here, that grew up here..."

Far from defending the democratic rights of the population to the threat posed by Trump and his oligarchic backers, the Democrats are moving swiftly to accommodate Trump and work with him and the Republicans in order to prosecute imperialist war against Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

VOC "experts" have been welcomed to Washington to advance "humanitarian interventionist" arguments to justify US militarism. Adrian Zenz, a German researcher and senior fellow at the VOC, received bipartisan support in Congress last year for his "research" on the "Uyghur genocide" in China.

Former Wisconsin Rep. Mike Gallagher praised Zenz for playing a "paramount role in bringing these atrocities to light." Illinois Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi likewise praised Zenz's "research" for supposedly demonstrating that the "mass ending of Uyghur births clearly meets the definition of genocide."

Neither Gallagher nor Krishnamoorthi has characterized the over 14-month US-backed Israeli mass murder and ethnic cleansing in Gaza as "genocide." Krishnamoorthi was one of the 156 Democrats who voted in favor of the "Crucial Communism Teaching Act."



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