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Britain/USA

Ermine robes and baseball caps

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The closest thing to a Hitler rally most people alive today will have seen was Donald Trump's audience in Greenville chanting "send her back". [1] An enraged white mob was pouring out its racist fury against Ilhan Omar and Trump was basking in their mutual hatred of her. These people are the heirs of southern lynch mobs and church bombers. It's virtually inevitable that before the year is over some Trump supporters will start murdering migrants and black Americans. That is the logic of his choice of rhetoric.

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It's striking how closely Trump's invective against the "squad" of Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ayanna Pressley and Rashida Tlaib resembles the polemics directed against Jeremy Corbyn. All are labelled left-wing extremists, antisemites, friends of terrorists, enemies of their own country.

But while the squad are confronted with a racist mob in baseball caps, Corbyn is being heckled by an endless process of Oxbridge educated journalists, ermine robed members of the House of Lords and a right wing of the Labour Party which was perfectly relaxed about wars in Afghanistan and Iraq but is horrified by the prospect of an economic programme Clement Attlee might have thought a bit too soft on the rich.

The British ruling class is slightly more squeamish about its presentation but the message from Hodge, Mandelson, Robertson and the rest is exactly the same as Trump's message to the left-leaning Democrats and their supporters. They are trying to render illegitimate anything but unflinching obedience to American and British imperialism; they will do everything possible to prevent a meaningful transfer of wealth from the rich to the working class; they will not permit any real challenge to capital; they do not want ordinary people to get involved in politics in anything other than the most passive of ways; they will not tolerate any expression of support for the Palestinian people.

We are used now to Corbyn being compared to Stalin, Trotsky and Pol Pot. Labour's Deputy leader in the Lords, Diane Hayter broke new ground by observing that he reminded her of Hitler. It stretches the limits of plausibility that someone who got into the House of Lords by knowing what to say all through the Blair years would be careless with her analogies when talking about the current Labour leader. Hayter, who was sacked by Corbyn as Brexit minister in the Lords, has emerged as the martyr for a bunch of unelected peers who are engaged in a ludicrous prelude to a coup to unseat an elected leader with a huge mandate from the membership. The accents and outfits are posher than those of Trump's supporters, but their hatred of the Corbyn project is just as profound as that of the Trumpites for Ilhan Omar.

Trump, Duterte, Salvini, Bolsanaro and Orban pitch their language to their political base. It's crude, abusive, vulgar, violent, misogynistic. The people planning to bring down Corbyn avoid the misogyny and violence. What they share with the international hard right is an enthusiastic use of falsehoods and personal abuse as they try to smash the Labour left.

[1] <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/17/us/politics/trump-send-her-back-ilhan-omar.html>
<https://twitter.com/Channel4News/status/1151787819939110912>.

[2] <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/17/us/politics/trump-send-her-back-ilhan-omar.html>
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