



## **Communist America**

*The Fukushima Effect in American Politics*

**Lev Neymotin**

Uncompressed Thinking

The Fukushima nuclear disaster offers a warning far beyond nuclear power. The plant was designed with protections against a major earthquake. It also had protections against a tsunami. But when the earthquake triggered the tsunami, the two dangers became one cascading event. The earthquake disrupted outside power, and the tsunami disabled critical backup systems needed to cool the reactors. Defenses created to withstand separate threats were overwhelmed by their combination.

I see a similar danger developing in America. Communist ideology is dangerous enough. Radical anti-Western religious ideology is dangerous enough. But when the two merge politically, they do not merely add to one another. They amplify one another. Like Fukushima, the greatest danger may be in the combination, and in our failure to imagine what that combination could do.

I shudder when I read the almost giddy predictions from conservatives and mainstream Republicans that the Democratic Party's deep shift to the left, including its legitimization of socialism and communist ideas as viable platforms for government, will destroy the party and produce a landslide Republican victory in the midterm elections. My sense is that Trump may be thinking along the same lines.

These political commentators and talking heads are tragically delusional. Their predictions rest on the assumption that American “workers” and the middle class, to use Marxist terminology, have always supported capitalism and will automatically continue supporting it today. That assumption is dangerously naïve.

People do not usually vote for economic systems in the abstract. They vote for what is promised to them, especially when they are told that someone else will pay. Mamdani’s promises of free goods and services helped get him elected. Behind that appeal stands the old communist principle: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

This takes me back to Russia’s October Revolution, not the February Revolution. A clever and, importantly, charismatic leader named Lenin took the ideological weapon created by another clever, sage-looking political and economic theoretician named Marx and turned it into a program for gaining power. Lenin appealed directly to the “workers,” promising them political power, land, peace, and control over their own future.

We know how that ended.

Mamdani and a growing group of politicians like him are gaining power through the same basic Marx-Lenin appeal. Offer enough free benefits. Identify capitalism and the wealthy as the sources of ordinary people’s problems. Promise to transfer wealth and power in their direction. Then present the entire program not as an ideology, but as fairness.

The belief that American workers and the middle class will instinctively reject this appeal because America is historically capitalist is wishful thinking. Capitalism may have created enormous prosperity, but prosperity does not automatically create loyalty to capitalism. A charismatic political movement can transform dissatisfaction into grievance, grievance into entitlement, and entitlement into a demand for political control.

In America, however, this movement has an amplifier that did not exist in the same form in revolutionary Russia. The Bolsheviks declared religion an enemy and attempted to drive it out of public life. In the United States, radical religious ideology with a powerful anti-Western current is being quietly incorporated into parts of the political left. Just look at the evolving political landscape.

The distinction is important. I am not speaking about religion or religious believers generally. I am speaking about religious extremism transformed into a political force, particularly when it rejects Western democratic values while using Western democratic institutions to gain influence.

Communist ideology and radical religious ideology may appear to be separate forces, just as an earthquake and a tsunami are separate physical events. But once they merge politically, they can become a single cascading force. Each provides something the other lacks. Communism

supplies economic grievance, promises of redistribution, and the machinery of political control. Religious extremism supplies ancient identity, moral absolutism, and a determination that can extend far beyond ordinary political compromise.

That marriage could make the communist movement in America even more dangerous than the Russian model. Soviet communist rule lasted 74 years. When communist ideology becomes joined with a 1,400-year-old religious tradition, and when its most radical elements bring an absolutist, even suicidal determination to win, the result is radically different from the communism Russia experienced.

This is the Fukushima lesson. A society may be prepared to resist one threat and prepared to resist another. It may still fail when the two arrive together, reinforce one another, and overwhelm defenses that were designed to confront them separately.

This brings me back to the central delusion. Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, must refresh their Western brains. They must stop assuming that socialism and communism will automatically discredit themselves in the United States. History does not guarantee that Americans will recognize the danger before they vote for its promises.

We are taking enormous chances. A leader who combines Marx's ideological power with Lenin's political skill and charisma could inflict immense, possibly irreparable damage. Jeffries, AOC, Tlaib, Mamdani, and others may not be of that caliber. But their limitations should not make us comfortable. They may simply be preparing the political ground for someone far more capable.

Watch out.

We may wake up tomorrow and discover a new Lenin.