

The Utopian

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Statement of the Utopian Tendency

WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE CUBAN PEOPLE!

By Rod Mehling



The Utopian Tendency unequivocally supports the Cuban people in their effort to determine their own future.

Beginning on July 11, demonstrations broke out in over a dozen cities across Cuba. Most immediately, the demonstrators were protesting severe shortages of critical supplies, including food and medicine, and also demanding vaccination against the Covid-19 virus. In many local protests, demands for the right to free speech and protest were raised, and some voices called for fuller freedoms and an end to dictatorship. Reports also noted strong participation in the protests by Black people and youth, rap

and visual artists. These protests are the most widespread in Cuba's six decades of Communist rule.

The Cuban people have every right to oppose their authoritarian, repressive government. They have every right to free speech, freedom of assembly, and a free press. They have the broader right to demand freedom and liberty in all walks of life, and to call for an end to decades of 'Fidelista' rule.

We urge the incipient movement of the Cuban people to beware the false promises and deceitful intentions of the US government. The movement should chart the most independent course possible. If the movement continues, as we hope it does, we urge the maximum unity of all sections of the Cuban people, trabajadores and campesinos in particular, around a program and outlook that seeks to meet the deepest needs of the vast majority of the Cuban people. To achieve this program, we believe the Cuban people must aim at overthrowing the entire Castroist regime.

The Utopian Tendency resolutely and uncompromisingly opposes US imperialism.



For well over 100 years, the United States has sought to control, distort, and subvert the economic and political sovereignty of the Cuban people. This has been accomplished through imperialist invasion and occupation, the support of US puppet dictators (most notably, Fulgencio Batista) and,

after 1959, repeated attempts to subvert the newly-established Castro regime. These efforts included the Bay of Pigs invasion, the myriad CIA-directed assassination plots against Castro ("Operation Mongoose"), and efforts to sabotage the Cuban economy, including an economic embargo that continues to this day.

The United States has no right whatsoever to exercise any influence or control over Cuba. Any such intervention denies the Cuban people their fundamental right to self-determination.

We demand: US hands off Cuba! End the economic embargo immediately! US out of Guantanamo Bay!

The Utopian Tendency is a determined opponent of the current Cuban regime.

The response of the Castroist government to the popular movement was swift and severe. The day after the protests began, security forces fanned out across the country arresting scores of Cubans, including many well-known dissidents and civil rights activists. A number of Marxist-oriented socialists were also arrested. Eyewitnesses reported that plainclothes police, counterintelligence officials, and Communist Party militants were part of 'rapid-reaction brigades' used against the protesters. Several reports noted the boldness of the demonstrators in response to state security forces, particularly significant in light of the tight totalitarian rule exercised for decades by Castro and the Cuban Communist Party.

These actions are consistent with the entire history of Castroism. Following the 1959 overthrow of Batista, Castro moved quickly to establish a dictatorship. He merged his forces with the already-existing Communist Party and established a political and personal monopoly of power. Rival political parties were banned, opposition political figures were exiled, imprisoned, or executed. Newspapers and radio stations were heavily censored, judicial appointments were controlled personally by Castro, and a Castro-appointed cabinet controlled all legislative and executive powers. Thousands of so-called 'enemies of the state' were executed. An island-wide "security" apparatus (the "Committees in Defense of the Revolution")

was established to spy on ordinary Cubans. The threat of US imperialist intervention--a very real one--was used continually to justify the establishment of a totalitarian government controlled by a single dictator, el jefe maximo, Fidel Castro.



Like so many so-called 'communist' regimes, the present Cuban government and its forerunners since 1959 have used Marxism and socialism as covers for a brutal dictatorship that usurps the rights of working and oppressed people and subjects them to totalitarian control. The USSR, the satellite regimes of Eastern Europe, Communist China, North Korea, Cambodia, Vietnam, 'African socialism,' and "Bolivarian socialism" in Venezuela under Chavez and Maduro are only some of a long line of authoritarian/totalitarian societies that masquerade as 'people's democracies.' These societies, Cuba included, are state capitalist in nature; they are societies in which powerful and wealthy elites rule over and exploit the people through totalitarian states.

While we defend Cuba against attacks by US imperialism, we do not support in any way the Cuban dictatorship against its people. Rather, we unconditionally support the Cuban people's struggles for freedom of speech, press and assembly and their demands for food, medicine, and

decent living conditions. We also support, and hope for, a deeper struggle to overthrow the Castroist regime and replace it with a democratic, egalitarian, and cooperative society.

This statement is issued by the Utopian Tendency, which publishes *The Utopian—A Bulletin of Anarchist & Libertarian Socialist Thought*. Previous statements of the Utopian Tendency and issues of *The Utopian* publication can be found on our website: utopiantendency.org

Vaccine Apartheid: Inequitable Access to Vaccine Lies Behind the Death and Suffering

By Jack Gerson



Vaccine Apartheid: Inequitable Access to Vaccine Lies Behind the Death and Suffering **By Jack Gerson**

The arrival of effective vaccines against COVID-19 dramatically reduced death and hospitalization rates in countries able to carry out mass vaccination campaigns, providing hope that the pandemic can be brought under control. That hope persists: while vaccines are not as effective in preventing symptomatic infection from the Delta variant as they were against previous variants, they remain nearly as effective in preventing infections serious enough to require hospitalization. But the pandemic will not be brought under control so long as much of the world's population remains unvaccinated. Covid-19 spreads and mutates most rapidly in unvaccinated areas, causing sickness and deaths and likely producing new

lethal variants that will spread to more fully vaccinated countries. We see this now, as more transmissible and resistant variants have emerged, especially the Delta (Indian) variant, far more transmissible than previous variants. (Another highly transmissible variant of concern, the Lambda variant, has swept through Peru and neighboring South American countries, and has recently been detected in the U.S.)

No one will be safe until everyone is safe.

That message has not been heeded by affluent countries and pharmaceutical corporations that dominate manufacturing and distribution of the vaccines. Promises were made, but those promises were not kept.



Consequently, on August 4, the World Health Organization (WHO) called for a temporary moratorium on the use of Covid-19 vaccine booster shots by wealthy countries, saying the global priority must be to increase supplies of first doses to countries that are still struggling to protect health workers and older adults. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus set a goal of vaccinating at least 10% of the population of every country by the end of this year.

"I understand the concern of all governments to protect their people from the Delta variant. But we cannot and should not accept countries that have already used most of the global supply of vaccine using even more of it while the world's most vulnerable people remain unprotected," Dr. Tedros said.

This would seem to be a no-brainer. High income countries (like the U.S., the UK, the EU, Israel, Canada, ...) have cornered the world supply of vaccine: they have bought more than enough to fully vaccinate their entire populations and have options to buy much more. Meanwhile, low-income countries have struggled to get any vaccine. Thus, only 1.5% of Africans have been vaccinated—in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, barely one half of 1% have been fully vaccinated.

Behind the Wave of Suffering and Death: Vaccine Apartheid

As recently as this spring WHO had hoped that donations from affluent nations and vaccine manufacturers would make it possible to vaccinate at least 20% of the population of low-income countries—hardly adequate. Now, we see from Dr. Tedros's statement, the target is 10%, and even that seems optimistic.

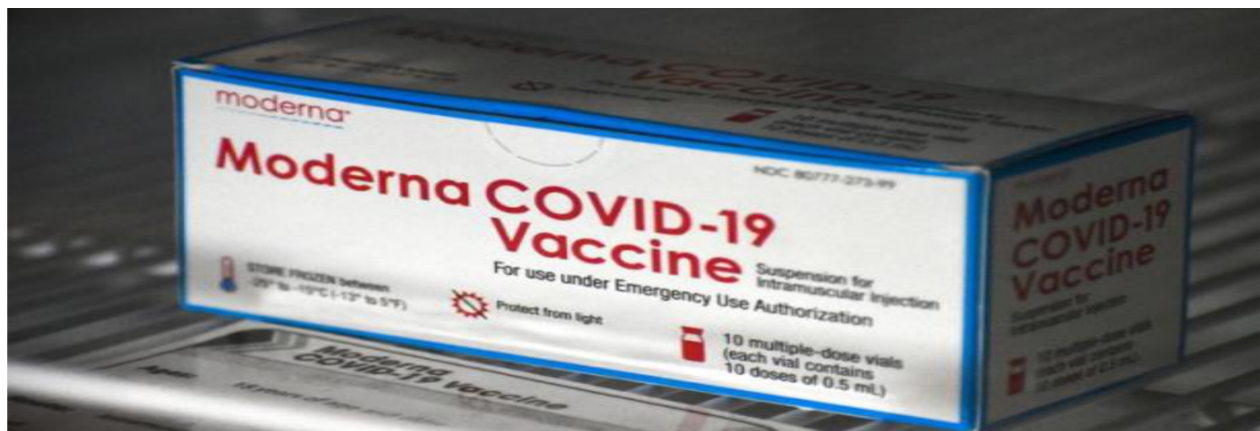


Helen Clark, former New Zealand prime minister and co-chair of an influential Covid panel, affirms that affluent countries have bought up many more vaccines than they require, and for the most part only redistribute surplus vaccines as they approach their expiration dates.

NY Times investigative reporters Selam Gebrekidan and Matt Apuzzo explain that "By partnering with drug companies, Western leaders bought their way to the front of the line. But they also ignored years of warnings -- and explicit calls from the World Health Organization—to include contract language that would have guaranteed doses for poor countries or encouraged companies to share their knowledge and the patents they control."

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist of WHO, put it this way:
“Inequitable manufacturing and distribution of vaccines is behind the wave of death which is now sweeping across many low- and middle-income countries that have been starved of vaccine supply,”

Indeed, the profiteering by vaccine manufacturers and hoarding by affluent nations recapitulates what transpired during the 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak. Then, too, affluent nations cornered the global vaccine market and virtually locked out the rest of the world. The 2009 flu outbreak should have been a dress rehearsal for how to respond to the current pandemic. But that flu outbreak fizzled out, far less lethal than had been anticipated. And no lessons were learned. Instead, the corporate pharmaceutical manufacturers were once more allowed—even encouraged—to profiteer, and the affluent countries locked up global supply by outbidding the rest of the world. Only this time, our luck ran out. This pandemic hasn’t fizzled.



Left to their own devices, the giant vaccine manufacturers will continue to profiteer, and the affluent countries will continue to hoard vaccine. So, it should come as no surprise that the day after WHO called for prioritizing distributing vaccine to the poorest and most under-vaccinated countries, Moderna reported that it has stopped taking new orders for 2021, having already signed \$20 billion of advanced purchase agreements for this year for its highly effective Covid vaccine. Moderna has already signed \$12 billion in advanced purchase agreements and \$8 billion in purchase options for 2022 and has already taken advanced purchase orders for 2023 from Israel and Switzerland. It looks like Moderna plans to be selling rich countries most of its vaccines for the foreseeable future. Moderna, like

Pfizer, is out to maximize profit and so charges what the market will bear. As far as Moderna and Pfizer are concerned, that's just fine. In the words of Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel, "As a company, I don't control what people use a product for." (This calls to mind Tom Lehrer's 1960s-era folk song about Werner von Braun, who went from designing armed missiles for Hitler to the U.S. space program ("When the rockets go up, who knows where they come down. That's not my department' says Werner von Braun."))

WHO's urgent call to prioritize supplying enough vaccine to vaccinate the most vulnerable 10% in each country in the world should be a no-brainer. Even out of narrow self-interest—to retard development of new and more potent variants—we need to vaccinate the world's unvaccinated. That's the highest immediate priority.

A Sea Change Is Needed



A shift in global vaccine distribution is essential. But it's not enough. It's not enough to just redistribute what's currently being manufactured. There needs to be enough vaccine to ensure full vaccination for all who opt for it -- in all countries. This will require a sea change in manufacturing as well as distribution. Patent walls need to come down. Technology needs to be shared and transferred, so that manufacturing is decentralized, and

assistance in getting manufacturing going and up to speed takes place around the world.

With that in mind, in May 2020, WHO created the COVID-19 Technology Access Program (C-TAP) to provide a space where developers of therapeutics, diagnostics, and vaccines can share intellectual property and know-how with qualified manufacturers around the world. Well, it's now fifteen months later, yet **no** vaccine manufacturers have signed on to share their manufacturing technology.

[In May 2021, U.S. President Joe Biden said that patent walls should be lowered for Covid vaccines. But that was just a pro forma statement with no teeth and no follow through. Big Pharma issued a statement on its web site taking Biden to task for messing with "innovation"—even though most of the key innovation for the mRNA vaccines was done in government and public labs, and the rest with public funding, including \$10 billion disbursed to pharmaceutical manufacturers in spring 2020 by "Operation Warp Speed."]

Groundhog Day

Unless priorities are turned upside down and our health needs are put ahead of corporate profit and state control, the following scenario is likely to play out again and again: after the US and its affluent friends are fully vaccinated, some vaccine will be made available to developing nations – some excess doses donated from the US et al, more made available by pharmaceutical companies, perhaps at cut rates. But by then, it's likely that new variants resistant to this year's crop of vaccines will have emerged, and in response Western pharmaceutical companies will be producing booster shots and next-generation vaccines. The US and its rich friends will corner the market on these. This could recur over and over, with the haves being the first to get protected and the have-nots being left unprotected again and again.

There are alternatives

This does not have to be. The rapid development of the Covid-19 vaccines shows what can be done when the research community shares information and works cooperatively. It gives us a glimpse of what could have been

done over past decades when Big Pharma, acting as rent-collecting patent holders, blocked development.

Vaccines might have been developed in advance of the pandemic, including vaccines capable of stimulating immunization against a wide range of coronaviruses. For example, five years ago virologists at Baylor University College of Medicine applied for funding to develop a vaccine that would be effective against all coronaviruses – a pan coronavirus vaccine. They were denied funding. Now such research is underway. Research is further along on developing vaccines effective against any SARS-Cov-2 variant. Clinical trials will soon be under way on antiviral nasal inhalants capable of preventing infection by blocking the virus's entry.

Such research should take place in all health-related areas, and it should be done collaboratively with knowledge freely shared. It shouldn't take a pandemic to make that happen. The resulting products should likewise be made available to all, especially those most in need. The covid vaccines should not be the intellectual property of Big Pharma corporations, sequestered behind patent walls. They should be in the public domain, freely accessible, no profits taken. More biotechnologically advanced countries should help others to develop manufacturing and distribution capabilities. Vaccine should be made globally available, not hoarded by rich countries and denied to poor ones.



It's well past time to take down patent walls that prevent access to vital health care, be that vaccines, therapeutics, access to medical professionals or hospitalization. Indeed, it's time to take the health of the world's people out of the hands of the pharmaceutical and health insurance industries. For

decades, they have held back development and provision of what people really need by prioritizing their profits and their control over what we all need.

Covid-19, alas, is not likely to be the last global health crisis, nor even the last viral pandemic that we will face. The pharmaceutical industry has demonstrated that it won't be ready in advance, will only act if it is guaranteed gigantic profits, and then will act in ways that favor the rich and put the poor in harm's (and death's) way.

What's needed is a reorganization of the way health care, public health, and biomedicine is organized and delivered, locally and globally. Human lives should not have a price tag; health should not be sacrificed to profit. To make this happen will require a radical reorganization of social priorities and society itself. It's not too soon to organize and fight for that.

On “Critical Race Theory”

By Ron Tabor

(Editor’s note: The document below was originally put forward for a vote; it was subsequently withdrawn and resubmitted as discussion document.)

Part I

As the discussion of what is being called “Critical Race Theory” rages in school districts, states, and the mass media throughout the United States, I have the following thoughts to offer, based on what I’ve been able to discern so far.

Note: I am not up-to-date on the various versions and offshoots of contemporary Critical Race Theory/Critical Race Studies. I also have no interest in quibbling over words. However, I do believe that there is something real agitating parents, teachers, and employees in various school districts around the country over the issues of curricula and pedagogy, along with teacher training, that address the questions of racism and related subject matter in the history and current reality of our country. Although the term “Critical Race Theory” may be a misnomer for what such people are protesting, I believe it is neither far-fetched nor reductionist to believe that a body of ideas that might reasonably be described as “Critical Race Theory” inspires and motivates such “anti-racist” curricula, pedagogy, and training. As a result, I will use the term as a kind of shorthand throughout this article.

Despite what the liberals and leftist promoters of Critical Race Theory (CRT) are now contending, teaching CRT and its associated social studies/civics/history curriculum in public (and private) schools represents a lot more than merely discussing the issues of racial oppression and racism (including slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, etc.), as they have expressed themselves in American history. As far as I can tell, Critical Race Theory is a fairly well-defined body of thought that offers a specific analysis of these issues, moreover, one that presents itself as

the Truth, in opposition to all other analyses, which are defined, ipso facto, as racist and illegitimate. CRT, in other words, is an ideology. Moreover, this ideology today is meant to inspire a full K-12 curriculum in public (and private) schools across the country, along with a defined pedagogy, that is, a prescribed set of methods designed to inculcate this ideology in the minds of the children and teenagers in our schools.

Despite claims to the contrary, all the anecdotes tell the same story: that the liberals who oversee and influence our educational system increasingly wish to organize the history/social studies/civics curriculum in our schools around the issue of race/ethnicity, to the virtual exclusion of all other issues; that they wish teachers and students (and their parents) to obsess about race and skin color and to identify and evaluate each other on this basis, with white being associated with privilege (and oppressor), and Black and Brown being associated with victim (and oppressed). In addition, teachers have complained that during training sessions, teachers, teachers' assistants, and other school employees are segregated by races. Teachers also describe how the theory and its related tenets are being presented as the Truth and that students are being discouraged from challenging or even questioning it.

I am opposed to the government (the state) imposing CRT ideology on students (and their parents and other members of the school community) through a mandated school curriculum. For this reason, I support the opposition that has developed among parents and teachers around the country to the imposition of CRT in their schools, even if this struggle has, at least so far, been largely organized by, and may redound to the political advantage of, conservatives. (However, centrist liberals and others are also organizing in opposition to CRT.)

My opposition is based not only on the content of Critical Race Theory (and the pedagogy attached to it). I am opposed to the US government (or any government) inculcating defined ideologies in its students and citizens through the school system. Even if the ideology in question were one I completely subscribed to, I would still oppose its imposition through a mandated school curriculum. This is a major point of difference between my own, anarchist, stance and the position of statists of various

persuasions, including both liberals and conservatives (and, of course, Stalinists), who want the state to impose their respective ideologies on the American population.) I recognize that virtually any history/social studies/civics curriculum that is going to be taught in the US public schools today (at least on the elementary and middle school levels) will be based on ideological tenets that justify the existing economic, social, and political system. Within that context, however, I prefer such curricula, and the methods used to teach it, to provide opportunities for - indeed, to encourage - students to offer various interpretations of, and even challenges to, those tenets.

Despite my opposition to CRT, I am vehemently opposed to the passage of legislation on the state (let alone the federal) level that bans CRT from being taught in schools. This is for two reasons. First, if the parents, teachers, and the other members of the school community in any given district do want CRT to be taught to their children, I support their right to have this done. Second, I see no way that such legislation can avoid being used to ban other types of curricula and to substantially infringe on the free speech rights of teachers, other members of the school communities, and people in general. However, if the majority of parents (and teachers) in any given district do not wish CRT to be taught in their local schools, they have the right to make that decision and to have that decision honored.

Although some have claimed that Critical Race Theory is merely a legal theory that refers to the effects of racism on the American justice system, this is a simplification. In fact, there is a broader set of ideas within which this legal theory is embedded and which it reflects. This is the sense in which I use the term Critical Race Theory. What follows is my attempt to outline what this theory is and why I, and apparently others, object to its being the basis of mandatory curricula in our public school system.

I wish to state clearly upfront: There is much in Critical Race Theory that I agree with. Specifically, I agree that racism has been a fundamental feature of American society from its inception to the present day and that it has had a profound and deeply negative impact on the history of the United States and on its people, particularly Black people and other racial

minorities. I believe racism infuses, and has always infused, every aspect of US society, and that today it affects and corrupts all economic, social, political, and cultural institutions of the United States and the attitudes of all its people. On that (and perhaps more), I agree. However, I believe that there is much in the history and current structure of the country that Critical Race theory either ignores or whose impact it systematically (and intentionally) downplays. In other words, the picture CRT offers of the history and nature of American society is extremely one-sided and distorted. Among other things, the theory denies the existence (or downplays the importance) of economic class, that is, the social hierarchy based on wealth and power. Beyond this, despite its claim to be a systemic and/or structural analysis, CRT is, at bottom, idealist and extremely moralistic. Specifically, it demonizes white people (and "whiteness" in general) and blames them, and their attitudes and alleged "privileges," for virtually all the problems, historical and contemporary, of our nation. In so doing, CRT lets the ruling elite and the system over which it rules - capitalism - completely off the hook. Whatever its intentions, CRT promotes the elite's traditional "divide and rule" strategy, stoking the already frightening political and cultural polarization of the country, that is, in traditional language, dividing the working class to secure its rule. Because of all this, the solutions CRT pretends to offer to overcome the country's racism are, at best, limited, and at worst, highly damaging. In fact, they may well make our political situation, and especially the plight of oppressed minorities, even worse than it now is.

Why I Oppose Ron's CRT Document

By Frank R.

1) Going after "CRT" is mistaking a putative part for the whole, and it's doing so carried by the rising tide of an organized and astroturfed moral panic campaign by the right. I think the draft document features many

problematic and misguided notions, the largest being confusion over just what we are opposing and/or supporting. We should oppose the right-wing moral panic campaign against “CRT” while approaching the question of what is being taught at which schools with a desire to investigate and then, if called for, to criticize. We should direct our criticisms not at “CRT” but at the whole cluster of reformist, divisive, and authoritarian politics that plague the left/liberal movement/culture as a whole—race reductionism, woke liberal authoritarianism, and pop-fronty cross-class “antiracist” alliances. My reasoning is as follows:

2) The moral panic campaign against “CRT” begun by Christopher Rufo—former visiting fellow at Heritage Foundation, Lincoln Fellow at the Claremont Institute, research fellow at Discovery Institute (Christian think tank), and Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute—was picked up by his think tanky friends at Discovery and Manhattan. Over the winter, between the election and the Inauguration, ALEC and the Heritage Foundation began webinars concerning “CRT.” Organizations formed—No Left Turn and Parents Defending Education. Right-wing news outlets—*Breitbart*, *Washington Free Beacon*, *The Daily Wire*, and, of course, FOX reported everything from parent protests at school boards to leaked lessons. Tucker Carlson came on board and the next day Donald Trump (while still president), who ordered any federal government antiracist training banned. After Biden overturned Trump’s ban, the state legislatures went at it, banning “CRT,” or banning teaching US history that includes events and attitudes the right would rather not recognize, or whatever other vague prohibitions seem to fit their purpose. Recently, Senator Tom Cotton jumped on board the Kool-Aid train promising to introduce a “CRT” ban at the federal level.

3) The conservative moral hysteria against “CRT” is actually a hodgepodge of conservative grievances including teaching “unpatriotic” history and uncomfortable moments in US history, pointing out racism in society and in the structures and institutions of this society, discussing white supremacy, and even recognizing the existence of LGBTQ people, as well as teaching “white privilege” and labelling people “oppressors” and “oppressed” by race. That is, “CRT” is anything around which a moral panic can be built. Christopher Rufo has made clear this political strategy all

along: "We will eventually turn [CRT] toxic, as we put all of the various cultural insanities under that brand category. The goal is to have the public read something crazy in the newspaper and immediately think 'critical race theory'" (WaPo 5/29/21).

4) Throughout the campaign, think tanks and right-wing organizations and media have been active in purveying anecdotes of "concerned parents" and "concerned teachers" who oppose the imposition of "CRT" in their innocent children's schools. The majority of these "concerned" persons are libertarian or conservative activists, as are those who do the reporting. (Note, for instance, Legal Insurrection's K-12 page under the "CRT" tab.) Some of these think tankers win themselves big salaries and political power by coming up with reasonable-sounding arguments to mislead and deceive people so that they support the right-wing agenda. Their anecdotes are then spread by right-wing publications and other media, and through further libertarian or conservative think tanks. Once again, it's an obviously astroturfed moral panic campaign. Ron's document wishes us to extend blanket support to these "concerned" activists. Though I believe we should defend these persons and other parents and teachers from when their jobs are threatened, I believe lending them blanket support to be de facto endorsing their campaign.

5) Ron's document is unwisely reductive in its approach to Critical Race Theory/Critical Race Studies/ Critical Race Theory in Education, perceiving it as a monolithic and totalitarian threat. The document states: "Despite claims to the contrary, all the anecdotes tell the same story: that the liberals who oversee and influence our educational system increasingly wish to organize the history/social studies/civics curriculum in our schools around the issue of race/ethnicity, to the virtual exclusion of all other issues . . ." and "In addition, teachers have complained that during training sessions, teachers, teachers' assistants, and other school employees are segregated by races" (Tabor, "On Critical Race Theory"). But "all the anecdotes" refer to the ones authored by libertarian/conservative think tank members or journalists. There are left-wing critiques of race reductionism, but they aren't so panicked and hyperventilating. My friend Glynis tells a story of a high school administration concerned about racial disparities in test scores and responding with a school-wide concentration

on equity. Whatever the problems (and there are quite a few) with policies and programs devised from this concern, the individual teacher can still bring her own and her students' concerns into the classroom. The related anecdotes of teacher training or study groups divided by race are also not the case at Glynis' high school. In sum, CRT in Ed-derived trainings and teaching are not standardized and monolithic.

Furthermore, a little investigation of Legal Insurrection's own nationwide map of colleges and universities impacted by "CRT" underlines the hyperbolic nature of the right-wing freak-out and the murky hodgepodge of rightist grievances collected under the "CRT" label: UVA at Charlottesville, the site of the Unite the Right rally where Heather Heyer was murdered in a racist attack via automobile (something Republican legislatures are working on making legal—that is, aiding and abetting murder) now factors equity into all admissions and hiring practices and mandates anti-racist education for all people in the university community, including diversity and anti-racism training and a Mellon Foundation-sponsored undergraduate program on "Race, Place, and Equity." Harvard will possibly allow every area on the campus to be renamed and mandates a new core course, "Race and Racism in the Making of the United States as a Global Power." Grinnell College in Iowa has made a \$50,000 contribution to a BLM chapter (ouch?). UCLA does have a Center for Critical Race Studies in Education and—recent update—will send in mental health professionals rather than police as first responders; my own alma mater, the University of Illinois at Chicago, is renaming the John Marshall Law School as a result of student petitioning; U of I at Urbana-Champaign will be offering seminars on parenting and the 2020 election and "white-supremacy in parenting"; the university where I taught for 25 years, Roosevelt, has a social justice emphasis but did not even make the list. Truth is, "all the anecdotes," could we gather them, would be quite varied.

6) Ron's document also comes off as intolerant of academic disciplines/areas of study, treating CRT/CRS/CRT in Ed. as grave dangers against which we must stand in line with the above-mentioned "concerned parents and teachers." Part of the problem here is that the document is uncertain concerning what it opposes. It really wants to go after race reductionism and woke liberal authoritarianism, but much of its information

rests on articles and anecdotes from the right, and, in fact, the document takes its lead from them. Furthermore, we know that academic disciplines can produce both important observations and hypotheses as well as hypotheses and observations that are divisive, intolerant, inappropriate, or misperceived. As Zine Magubane explains in the video "Recognizing Race Reductionism with Scholars of Sociology, History," sociology began by transforming class and political economic questions into concerns of race. Yet she herself is a sociologist doing work that runs counter to race reductionism, and other sociologists have done informative work regarding class, race, gender, and many other social concerns (see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*). Anthropology began as an ethnocentric discipline but developed into one from which many important observations have come (see James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*). Furthermore, the spread of ethnography to other disciplines has meant important work (see Linda Ho, *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street*). Then there are contributions by people connected with or influenced by CRT, Ian Haney Lopez (*Dog-Whistle Politics*) and Michelle Alexander (*The New Jim Crow*), respectively. It bears mentioning that the attempt to tie CRT/CRS/CRT in Ed. to the Frankfurt School and read the latter as totalitarian, reformist, etc. in order to denigrate CRT is hyperbolic and borders on treating an area of study as a political party.

7) In discussions leading up to this document, the Utopian discussion group has been lectured on how our tendency has been one of criticizing both sides of an issue or supporting a movement or national liberation struggle while also criticizing its leadership, as in the cases of the civil rights movement and the US war on Vietnam. (At the same time, great impatience is on display any time someone reminds the group or refers to "things we already know"). But Ron's document is not really in line with this past. Instead, the document offers blanket support for the "concerned parents and teachers" with no criticism of them and next to no recognition that these "concerned" people are part of—or even leaders and spokespeople for—a right-wing authoritarian moral panic campaign. And no mention of the fact that this panic is one in a long line of attacks on public schools and the students and teachers who depend on them. In sum, the lessons we learned while Trotskyists are being misapplied in, at least

in this instance, an unacknowledged, unintentional rightward shift towards the libertarian.

8) Ron's document fails to recognize that the right-wing panic campaign results in part from the loss of federal, intelligence, and media power the Republicans have reaped resulting from the Trump years, Covid, and, most importantly, the massive protest movement against racist police murders after the murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmed Arbury, and George Floyd. This Republican campaign is also being energized by racist demagogues like Tucker Carlson and libertarian/conservative think tanks that have pushed a neoliberal economic and social agenda for decades. Further, the Republican Party is hopeful that the anti-"CRT" campaign will be a major base-energizer and vote-getter looking ahead to 2022 and 2024. It is part of an assault on our rights at the state level—rights to vote, to protest, and to teach and learn.

9) It is true that the liberal administrators who run various schools and school boards have responded to the protests by starting up or stepping up "politically correct" "antiracism" programs/mandates and that the right has found these programs/mandates a convenient target. It is also true that the think tanks and the Republican Party have been seeking out any possible "culture wars" to create and profit from. Dr. Seuss didn't take them where they wanted to go, and attacking teachers, public schools, and universities has been a standard of GOP policy since the years of the Reagan regime. We should recognize this campaign for the slick libertarian-coated GOP come-back effort that it is. Parents and teachers caught up by this campaign may well not realize they are being manipulated and deceived by the same think tanks, organizations, and politicians who since the 1980s devised campaigns to fight the right to abortion, to rally people around anti-LGBTQ prejudice, to "end welfare as we know it," to spread Islamophobia, to implement "broken windows" policing, to "death panel" Obamacare into oblivion, to devise the "birther" follies, to close down public schools and reroute the funds to charters, and on and on for forty plus years of neoliberal regimes. Whatever just grievances these parents and teachers have will be channeled in directions the politicians and think tankers will want to go: repressive laws against teaching (as well as against voting and protesting); electoral victories in 2022, 2024, and beyond; and a shift

in consciousness against genuine anti-racist and classwide attitudes and demands. We should be exposing this divisive moral panic campaign for what it is, just as we should oppose the Biden regime's and liberal/left's panic campaign around 1/6.

10) Both the Democrats (and their left/liberal friends) and the Republicans (and their libertarian and far-right friends) divide the working class and oppressed people and both sides, to one degree or another, take our energy and consciousness away from the very real economic and social inequalities and basic needs of working and oppressed people in our society. This division of working class and oppressed people via electoralism and its "biproductions"—that is, every social or cultural struggle becomes one in which the two parties (who differ only in the bases they lie to) try to convince people (voters) to fight and/or mobilize with an eye toward the next election. Note that it is also true that neither side of this "culture war" has put forward classwide solutions to the problems in education and the public schools in the US. One would think poverty and the resultant barriers to learning would be at the top of any agenda. This is one major area on which we should focus.

Also:

- I believe we should oppose the right-wing moral panic campaign.
 - We should also develop a document that analyzes the problems of contemporary left/liberal theory and practice—including race reductionism, woke liberal authoritarianism, pop-fronty cross-class "antiracist" alliances, etc.
 - We should oppose all race reductionist and liberal authoritarian overreach on a case-by-case basis. No blanket attacks on teachers or schools.
 - We should defend everyone's jobs, no matter their political views.
-

Re: Ron's "CRT" Document
From: Christopher Z. Hobson
To: Utopian Discussion Group
Date: 2021-07-13 9:30 pm

Everyone,

I plan to vote against Ron's document (if there is a formal vote; in any case, I'm indicating non-support here). The motivation has already been stated in my two posts on this topic (6/23; 7/1, incorporating the 6/23 post). Briefly, I oppose the teachings Ron points to (and have said so), but I don't believe CRT/CRS is limited to the views Ron describes or that they definitely characterize CRT/CRS, especially as a unified and totalizing ideology, as Ron presents it. My view, as stated before, is that there is some overlap between CRT/CRS and the ideas Ron describes, but they are not the same.

I will not be putting forward a counter-document. My points have been stated already and have even gained some positive feedback, but haven't affected the discussion overall. If I am wrong about CRT/CRS, that should appear clearly over time, and if I am right, it will be better for the Utopian that someone said no to a mistaken view.

I do reserve the possibility of offering amendments on some specific points in Ron's document.

Chris

Re: Ron's "CRT" Document
From: Christopher Z. Hobson
To: Utopian Discussion Group
Date: 2021-07-31 11:30 pm

NOTE: This is an edited version of a comment I originally posted two days after the preceding one, on July 15, 2021

Everyone,

Yesterday, Ron sent an off-list email expressing a willingness to discuss concrete points I might suggest to correct what I see as problems in his approach to CRT/CRS. I do appreciate his reaching out and his willingness to discuss. However, I told Ron that I don't think proposing and discussing concrete points as indicated is likely to be very useful. I'll add here that I don't think I can suggest much that would bridge the gap. The differences are largely on whether CRT/CRS functions as a tight ideology founded on ideas of whites as oppressors, black and brown as victims on the basis of skin color, and with a repressive attitude to any questioning of its views, as Ron indicates, or is a broad trend in teaching and scholarship that often (at least) doesn't involve such ideas, as I've said. Ron can distinguish the CRT that he's talking about from the broader set of ideas that I'm referring to, if he accepts the distinction. Of course, that is up to him.

I'll add, in possibly paradoxical explanation for what follows, that after posting twice on this issue, I added a 3rd post, and now a fourth, largely in response to Rod's urging (repeated this afternoon) that people who disagree with Ron's view should say so. I'm now anxious to exit from a discussion that, from my point of view, isn't very productive.

Nonetheless, I do want to add something more, in anecdotal form, since I think anecdote can often be more revealing than formal statements. Here are two:

* At my college last summer (2020), after the George Floyd protests, a faculty discussion group self-organized that consisted largely of white faculty who focused on becoming more aware of their "unconscious racism." They used Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility* as their main reading. I didn't join the group. From what I could tell, however, most of these faculty were not proponents of critical race theory/studies, but radicals of various stripes who found some merit in ideas of rooting out unconscious racism. There were also others who weren't in this place at all, such as an African American professor who has done interesting work on how the white 19th century painter Winslow Homer portrayed African American holidays (not from the standpoint of analyzing Homer's attitudes, but using

the paintings as evidence of AA practices). All in all, this wasn't a group following CRT/CRS. (It has been much less active this past academic year.)

* A contrasting example: In a recent job search, a leading applicant described her specialization, in part, as "premodern critical race studies," so CRS is definitely part of her approach. She focuses on travel narratives and other documents (14th-15th centuries) on early European-African contacts. As discussed in her materials, and a Zoom presentation she gave earlier at another university that I watched, she partly uses these documents to show the formation of European attitudes on Africa/Africans, and, additionally, reads them against the grain for evidence of how Africans, as historical actors, managed their early contacts with Europeans. On classroom approach, she emphasizes striving for "an inclusive and safe space for differing ideas and cultural identities" that encourages students to "critique texts as social, political, and historical artifacts...without effacing the cultural and ethnic experiences they bring to this work." Whatever else this is, it's clear what it isn't: an analysis of whites as oppressors and black/brown people as victims based on their skin colors, or an oppressive classroom in which critical voices are shut off, the key points in Ron's exposition.

The lessons I would draw from all this are: (1) white-guilt thinking, etc., can exist independently of CRT/CRS; (2) CRT/CRS thinking does not necessarily involve white-guilt/oppressor thinking, etc. As I've said before, these overlap but are not the same. And (3) CRT/CRS, overall, is best assessed not through specific statements by its supporters, but by what the field is doing and how it develops.

With all that stated, and apologies for possibly dull examples, I do plan to quit this phase of the discussion, while possibly posting on some related issues later. Of course, I will read the voting version of Ron's document carefully when available, but at the moment, I don't see any reason to alter my planned vote.

Chris

The Nature of January 6— A Discussion



Everybody,

FYI: [‘He screwed the country’: Trump loyalty disintegrates - POLITICO](#)

A few thousand Trump supporters, who could easily have been controlled by competent police work, break into the Capitol, smash a few things and wave some flags, while the leaders of the "Free World," the "Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave," cower under desks and behind seats. This is being called a "coup," an "insurrection," "terrorism," and a threat to "American Democracy."

Does anyone else on our list find this scene hilarious?

Ron

Ron, Judith, and Everyone,

Here's Politico's photos from yesterday.

https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2021/01/trump-u-s-capitol-riot-photos.html?fbclid=IwAR1j60q5gVN6I1DBwUzC92Xm5dKIDRLh0HpxGHiz2CjYa6KhzYWE_X-pCw8

The guy in the first picture carrying the Confederate flag around looks like somebody who's been asked to bring the flag in so they can finish with the electoral ceremony.

Yes, Ron, I do find this quite funny. "It's a sad day for America," and all the other attempts at commentary that rises to the depths of the occasion adds to it. And I heard the security people swooshed Pence to a bunker? Biden badgering Trump about "insurrection."

The entire "coup" hysteria on the part of the Democratic Party has been way over the top since I first started hitting the media. So now it adds up to a bunch of silly legal challenges and a frat party in the Capitol Bldg. All over social media I'm sure Black people and some on the left are commenting that had this been a bunch of demonstrators for Black lives, the police would have been out in force in riot gear with helicopters and a tank or six.

One question is whether the Proud Boy coup may be used to create further restrictions on demonstrations at the Capitol or other measures. I'm sure the Congressional "leaders" were actually frightened and would be happy to testify to that effect. And the Dems have been more than willing to ride the hysteria train since Trump has been elected. Not willing to actually do anything that would help refugees at the southern border or people in need of financial help during the pandemic, but willing to engage in charges that trump has committed treason and bullied Ukraine in a "quid pro quo" situation--all kinds of scenarios that have been aimed at gaining voters while keeping people quiet--"wait for the FBI report on Kavanaugh," "wait for the great Mueller, who has all the good on Trump's treason," "sit and watch the impeachment proceedings as Schiff babbles about needing to 'fight [the Russians] there [in Ukraine] so we don't have to fight them here [in the good old USA].'" More restrictions on demonstrations or other "law and order" measures would be consistent with the Democratic Party's desire to keep people off the streets and out of the halls of Congress.

Frank

Ron,

I'm just glad they at least didn't call it "anarchy"!

Judith

Well Judith,

David Ignatius of the Washington Post branded those storming the Capitol as Anarchists and Joe Scarborough of MSNBC went off saying we have to crush this movement and be ready to likewise come down heavy on antifa anarchists and the radical left if they get out of line during Biden /Harris governance. I enjoyed the cowering and disgusted by the hype and hysteria of branding yesterday's events as terrorism.

Mike E.

All,

In watching detailed and varied footage of the January 6 protest at the Capitol, it appears to me that the level of violence carried out by significant elements of the crowd was much higher than it seemed from initial footage of the event as it was progressing. In addition, I would argue that many in the crowd were significantly armed (though not with guns that were used). I suspect there was an awareness that guns would trigger a more immediate and violent suppression of the protest than would take place otherwise. For the moment, I'm not drawing any conclusions from this appraisal, but I think it is important to note.

I also think that there was a dynamic to the protest that we perhaps have not considered fully enough. Yes, Trump called the rally, and he encouraged some form of storming of the Capitol. This was accompanied by incendiary rhetoric from him and from others (go Rudy and Junior!). I continue to hold the view that Trump was not carrying out a coup—where were the plans, the coordination with other forces, the endgame, etc.? Rather, it was a last desperate effort by Trump to create a level of distraction/turmoil that might somehow block certification of the electoral results for hours or days, with the hope that anything might happen then--who knows? (One indication that it was not more than

this was the fact that Trump didn't use the opportunity that the level of violence provided to declare martial law.) True as that may be, a very significant level of violence *did* take place and that violence was in part directed against the police and other 'forces of law and order.' Moreover, I do not discount as incendiary or hyperbole that there were elements of the crowd who might have made a deadly assault on anyone from Pelosi to Pence had they had the opportunity. I don't think we should minimize this level of violence--although its immediate effect was a thoroughgoing defeat for Trump, it was in many ways a victory for an aggressive and ascendent far right.

I think the above helps to explain why an event that was almost certain to ruin Trump took place. I don't think Trump expected the level of violence that took place, and therefore he didn't think his actions would be characterized (and widely believed) as 'insurrection' or 'treason.' Far less likely in my mind, Trump might have hoped for a deeper level of violence, and planned to parlay that into something bigger in some manner. If true (I don't think it is), the word 'coup' would have much greater relevance. A third explanation, one that can coexist with the other two, is that Trump is too stupid and too incompetent to have known precisely what he was doing or what the possible end games were. (There is certainly more than enough evidence from nearly five decades of Trump to support this theory.) In my mind, what squares the circle here is that the most violent and determined elements of the assault on the Capitol and its occupants should NOT be seen as 'Trump's base.' By this I don't mean they were 'Antifas in disguise.' Rather, there is a very substantial network (even if often uncoordinated) of far-right groups who are highly nationalistic, highly authoritarian, highly xenophobic, and extremely racist, sexist and homophobic. While they may support Trump being President, their concerns and goals--a civil war, Armageddon, fortress America, racial genocide, virulent anti-Semitism, the liquidation of the left, etc.--are both different and far more extreme than those of Trump and his election woes. This 'network' includes Klan and Nazi elements, but these 'old school' groups have been infused with enormous amounts of fresh new blood, from the Proud Boys to QAnon to countless other groups. (Mike is far more familiar with the specifics of many of these than I am.). I realize that there is nothing new in saying that such groups exist.

However, what I am emphasizing, and think we should give emphasis to, is that the program of these groups is not *electoral*--it is *revolutionary*. Thus, Trump and Trumpism, the January 6 protest, and the presence and actions of the extreme right groups as a substantial element within the protest, represented *a confluence of substantially differing agendas*. Trump provided the cover, the climate in which these groups could flourish more openly, aggressively, and far less beyond the pale than has been the case in decades. This accounts for January 6 in my view.

So? We have frequently talked about Trump and Trump's 'base' in terms that may not have sufficiently noted this differentiation and its significance. Thus, while we have been correct to argue that Trump was not staging a coup, it is important to make clear that others operating under Trump's broad banner *were*--they were taking a run at seeing how far they could go in making a revolution. We have also correctly insisted that Trump's base includes many people who are not racist, xenophobic, authoritarian bigots, and that substantial numbers of working and oppressed people turned to Trump out of an understandable hatred of the Democrats and the elites. But perhaps in making this point, we have not sufficiently recognized/emphasized the extent to which there is a *base within the base*--a base of far-right insurrectionists who are more numerous, better-organized, more sophisticated, and more prepared to act than they have been in a long time.

Perhaps others have evidence that contradicts this analysis; if so, I welcome discussion that can get us closer to the truth. Perhaps people will feel that I am saying little or nothing that is new; if so, we can examine this as well.

Rod

Hi everyone,

I'll weigh in very briefly. I agree with Rod that this wasn't a coup attempt. However, if someone tells me it's a coup, I won't disagree with them. To me it looked like Trump was having his last (?) temper tantrum at everyone

else's expense. Who knows whether he really knew that the day would play out the way it did, but we know that he watched it live on television and enjoyed it.

What Trump *has* done though, perhaps without much forethought (though Trump has been, from day one in his adult life, a white supremacist. It's interesting that there are basically two mass movements now in the US - the far right and the George Floyd protests. Whereas the far right is getting itself very organized on an ongoing basis, the left seems to me to organize around specific events like the police murders of George Floyd and Freddie Gray; the Women's March on Washington; and Occupy Wall Street (which imploded, from what I could see, due to a lack of direction).

Biden has always been a corporate shill, and neoliberalism figure heavily on the list of cabinet appointees, but much is still unknown - this is not the America of the Obama years. It will be interesting to see how the next few months play out.

□

Susan

All,

I picked up this article from Pro-Publica. As they say, they were given some 1,000 videos that had been posted on Parler by people in the crowds inside and outside the Capitol Building. The article is something of an overview and characterization of the crowd. There are links to the video moments described, and also at the bottom of this article, links to others, including a page loaded with videos Pro-Publica sorted through. I've only made my way through the article I am posting here. Probably there's just too much to watch, but reading or watching what we can, we can get a better picture of what the various goings-on were like.

<https://www.propublica.org/article/inside-the-capitol-riot-what-the-parler-videos-reveal>

Frank

To All,

Rod thanks for your post. I am in agreement with your comments. More in a bit. My comments will be more in the line of added comments/elaborations on your points. Susan thank you for your brief comment as well. Though brief, your observations particularly in regards to the different movements' general characters: more seemingly unitary on the right vs. more sectoral on the left is worth pursuing. I think some critical lessons can be drawn here. Frank, thanks for the Pro Publica /MacGillis link. Like you I haven't pursued the subject Parler videos and have only read the 11 paged MacGillis article on the character of those taking/entering the Capitol. It rings true to my observations and knowledge of the popular and political dimensions of the Right that day and in the preceding two decades. If list members have not read this piece, I strongly urge all to do so.

Back to Rod's post. As more coverage is released one can get a fuller flavor of the militancy and at times ferocity of elements at the leading edge of the Capitol break in. The way this coverage is being shaped and wielded by the Dems and their CNN, MSNBC et. al. propaganda arms needs to be viewed critically. For health reasons I have to rein in my rage at their socially irresponsible actions at inflaming the societal divide. They are bad actors no less criminal than Trump and company. Here I could relate a litany of distortions and dangerous notions they are pushing from the other side of the Trumpian divide but I won't and shouldn't have to on this list. Once again read the MacGillis piece Frank posted for one.

I was less taken aback by last Wednesday's events. Similar dynamics have occurred in the wake of or at the leading edge of numerous left actions large and small. Parallel groupings and de facto combative united fronts with preps, armed in various senses and dressed for street clashes are commonplace. There exists on some planes active mimicry, borrowing of tactical and political techniques within the competition of far right and left groupuscules. One new feature to the landscape is the rise and growth of currents hard to pin down on the left /right continuum (Boogaloo Bois for one example). A not negligible amount of amateurish, wacky and conspiracy infused politics is in the air regardless of left or right. Some

crude and comical if not so potentially dangerous. Some polished and passing for rational and principled but equally dangerous.

While I agree with your assertion that the "aggressive" right achieved a victory, that is in the sense of a fraternity of the trenches and veteranship in truly dramatic events that shook the elites. They will grow. Today's *Wall Street Journal* had an article that stated in the days before Wednesday The Proud Boys' Parler site had 7,000 followers. Afterwards it shot up to 340,000 or some such before Parler's take down by a Big Tech united front pulling the internet rug from under Parler.

My reservation is in the use of the description "ascendant " This milieu composed of diverse sects. There are a range of self-styled militias (sometimes half a dozen to a dozen in one state), different in sizes, outlooks and in flux over time. Frank in an earlier post highlighted the presence of Matt Heimbach in the wake of his Traditionalist Workers Party debacle now in the National Socialist Movement. The NSM for years had been the most open Nazi formation, always in overt uniform and heraldry projecting itself about the country. Recently its long-term commander Jeff Schoep bailed and is now attempting to make a living off his new role as anti-extremist activist. Matt and whatever NSMers were in Washington appeared to be dressed down and are most likely groping their way as they go. Being Capitol vets will give them some capital (forgive the pun), but can they shore up their project. The American Front was there if that means anything. There were other groupings whose flags and dress I was unfamiliar with. Of larger size were Oath Keepers and III (3) Percenters, but their role that day and the future is driven by a different right perspectives and base demands than the to-date smallish Nazi cadre groups. Also, moving amongst the Capitol occupiers were South Vietnamese, Tibetan, and South Korean flags. There were larger contingents of these communities and more numerous respective flags that remained in the larger pro-Trump body of demonstrators. One Romanian flag with a hole cut in the middle was in the bum rush on the building. This is the flag of the 1989 violent insurrection and overthrow of the hated communist Ceausescu regime.

Last but not least are the large numbers of QAnon militants. It is a massive internet grown phenomena constructed around a cult of Trump. Given Trump's fortunes and Big Tech push back a movement this volatile could evaporate as quickly as it materialized. Granted individuals from it would tend to disperse amongst the wider movement but with no clear outcome.

I expect as do you Trump will be ruined. Without big Trump events will the far-right fringe that so easily and frequently came together carried by the opportunities and sense of cover and direction provided by Trumpismo soon have another significant victory to fill its sails. Yes, it is a fact and a problem going forward. However, it has a lot of consolidation, strategizing, and needs the rise of a capable secondary leadership in conjunction with a primary level charismatic figure or few. It has sucked in this regard to date. Potential does not mean realization.

Government pressure may prove to play no small role in cramping its field of action. Repression, paranoia and desperation will undoubtedly impel some elements to increased terrorist acts. The liberal /left needs to quit cheapening the term with their classifying Wednesday as terrorism. Though billed as targeting dangerous white supremacists, the sword of state repression is double edged not only with regard to it coming down on the left and righteous popular insurgencies. It can provoke terror acts and prisons can hothouse revolutionaries of the right as well as the left.

Post Trump there will be a political ferment /sorting out within the much larger conservative and populist populations represented by the 75 million anti-Democratic voters. This will all have its effect on the fascist and proto-fascist right. Awareness of and tracking these coming developments is critical in forging perspectives for the period ahead.

Mike E

Mike, Susan, Frank and All,

Mike: Thanks for the valuable insights and information provided in your post. More below.

Susan: I share Mike's view that your comment on more 'unitary' (right) and more 'sectoral' (left) is a worthwhile perspective to pursue. I wonder whether, if we were 'inside' the right, we would find it as sectoral as the left? I don't have enough of a basis to know. Your 'events' (left) comment has merit, though much of the left does have a broader program (some form of supposed socialism or some more explicit form of welfare-state capitalism/socialism). Further thoughts on this?

Frank: Thanks for the MacGillis article--most informative,

Some comments on Mike's comments, and the discussion of the character of Jan. 6 and the right in general:

1) I couldn't agree more on the role of the Democrats and MSNBC/CNN and Co. They are seeking to tar the broadest possible number of people and the broadest possible section of the Republican Party with the most incendiary terms they can come up with. To listen to some of it, I'm amazed to find that we are still a 'democratic' republic, with a two-party system, and an inauguration about to happen. You would think the Bastille had already fallen. (Oh, wait, did it?) It is interesting to note that 'taking maximum advantage of the immediate moment' *without regard to truth* is the *same thing* in the long-run as a plan to maximize future repressive capacity and latitude--it really doesn't matter too much what individual people are aware of at any given moment.

2) I think I understand your comment that you were 'less taken aback' by Wednesday's events. I accept, as Frank has also pointed out, that there are forerunners to January 6, left and right (you refer to it as 'similar dynamics'). While it may be drama in some measure, it is still the case that, though it is not my Capitol, it is the Capitol for much of the nation, and while they are not my Senators/ Representatives, they are that for much of the nation. I do think it was singular in some measure due to this, as you agree when you write of the 'truly dramatic events that shook the elites.'

3) I think your point that a 'new feature to the landscape is the rise and growth of currents hard to pin down on the left /right continuum...' is really

important. While I am reluctant to move too far off my assertion that the overwhelming thrust of those at the leading age of the assault were hard right and racist, I do agree that revolutionary opposition to the 'system' is taking increasingly diverse and hard to identify forms. I think the point here, at least the one that I would like to believe, is that the situation has some fluidity, which is a good thing.

4) We agree that the far right is likely to grow as a result of Wednesday's events; you point to some evidence of this based on the enormous increase in followers on the Proud Boys' site. That said (as I write, it's Monday night), nothing but rag-tag groups and individuals have shown up at state capitals, seemingly both diverse and directionless. I think this tends to support your questioning of my term, 'ascendant.' The coming lack of Trump and the current/immediate focus of government repression on the forces of the right may, as you suggest, significantly stall the growth of the far right.

5). It strikes me that one important factor in all this is guns/military training. There is no question in my mind that forces on the far right are far more likely to own, practice with, and use guns--*and incorporate them into their governmental opposition*--than is the left. Give me 100 people with guns and a 1,000 people with picket signs, and I'll take the people with guns (even if I have to give up two touchdowns). Liberals will say that this points to the importance of gun control; we need to say that it underlines the importance of our opposition to gun control (give me a government with guns and a people without them, and I'll take the government, even if I have to give up 10 touchdowns).

6). In the narrower political realm, the Republicans are taking a beating, and the Democrats are having a field day. US electoral politics doesn't play out on the far left or the far right. Trump has discredited enough Republicans in the minds of enough people to constitute a substantial (though not necessarily mortal) wound to the Republican Party. We can now watch the Democrats exercise every Executive Order and high-handed parliamentary tactic that they spent the last four years denouncing. This doesn't bother me--it's their job, it's what they do. But we will also now watch all sorts of liberals and progressives cheer this on, seemingly

oblivious to their denunciation of yesterday. As I said at the outset, 'taking maximum advantage of the immediate moment *without regard to truth is the same thing as*'...well, it's the same thing as almost any scurrilous thing you can think of.

Thanks for the discussion.

Rod

Rod, Mike, et al.,

Thank you all for your insightful comments. Although everyone from the hard core to the tourists at the Capitol on 6 January may have been outwardly united around giving Trump a second term, I sense significant divisions among them. I believe these will be exacerbated once Trump loses his position and likely gets indicted for financial crimes, lawsuits and brushes with bankruptcy, for starters.

First, there's a split between those who want to stay around/within the Republican Party (and which personality--Trump, including Junior; Cruz; Cotton; Rubio; Hawley?), and those who would split but stay within electoral politics and established institutions. If one man were to personify this, I nominate the retired Air Force officer standing in the Senate who berated his fellow occupiers for not showing 'respect' to the chamber while brandishing a pack of zip ties. Second, within those who reject electoral politics, there's the division, mentioned earlier on this thread, between those who are pro-police and those who are willing to fight them. Others may know more on this, but my first impression is that this latter difference also is one between those who are willing to work with cops and military to 'reform' the U.S. into a more oppressive capitalist white supremacy v. those (white nationalists?) who aim to start a race war to break up the U.S. altogether into white ethno-states.

Also, and others may know more on this as well, I sense a growing convergence between the latter accelerationists and parts of the anti-cop movement from the summer. My reference is Portland, where after three months the BLM demonstrations devolved into groups seemingly doing

nothing more politically than nightly battles with the cops. (Last week a Portland Police unit trying to talk down a mentally disturbed man with a knife was loudly interrupted by such a group with a bullhorn. Fortunately, in the end no one was hurt). Finally, although the protest Sunday at the Oregon state capitol was small, the participants were not dressed in the usual olive or camo gear, but for their flags, could easily have passed as a Black Bloc.

Peace & Health,

Bill

Everyone,

https://greenwald.substack.com/p/the-new-domestic-war-on-terror-is?utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=email&utm_source=copy

Hopefully the above works. It is Glenn Greenwald on the present and coming response to Jan. 6 on the part of the state and the owners of social media.

I am hoping the link below will also be viewable. I went to the New Yorker's web page and picked it up, so it should work for you all too. If not, you could try going to the New Yorker online too. A reporter for the New Yorker was among the crowd on Jan. 6 and followed the initial group of people who got into the Capitol Building and the Senate. What is interesting here, and what Mike E. has referred to, is how respectful the group "invading" the Senate is--to the place itself and the guard who asks them to leave (it does look like some of them come back though).

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/video-dept/a-reporters-footage-from-inside-the-capitol-siege>

Mike, I'm glad you found the MacGillis article helpful. I certainly thought it was. I read it and followed the links, and I am sure it's the best thing I've seen/read that gives one a sense of the day and the composition of the crowd. I also encourage everyone to read/view that article and

accompanying video moments. (And, Mike, "gaining capital from the Capitol" is a good one).

Frank

Everyone,

Sunday, Michigan's State Capitol was to be the site of one of the 50 states' possible "armed insurrections." 100 folks gathered, and many of these according to the State Police/ National Guard were the press. Days before members of the Southeast Michigan Militia addressed several major media saying they were not attending and urged others to not attend. They stated they wanted to minimize any chance of violence. They stated the violence in DC was not a good thing but understood the frustrations that led to it.

One group of Trump followers had a visible falling out and near scuffle over one of their numbers being aggressively threatening towards a woman from the press. Maybe a dozen armed Boogaloo Bois with one reading a statement of support for BLM and calling on all popular movements to not fall prey to attempts to promote division in the face of a common enemy.

Another group of older white working-class dudes carrying green and pink dayglo toy guns showed. They were using a facetious militia name. They said they were Bernie supporters and dismissed what they thought were exaggerated fears of armed militia violence.

On Rod's 6 points:

1) Further illustrating the "taking advantage of the present moment without regard to the truth" was epitomized by two Democratic Congressional members I heard yesterday repeat again and again that the Capitol event was an ARMED insurrection.

2) I agree that it happened in the Nation's Capital is a big deal. As to the level of violence, I have been in and am aware of a goodly number of events just as intense with some exceeding that day in combativity and violence. But appreciate your point.

3&4) No argument that a good number of the leading edge involved far right and racist affinity groups. The unity of purpose and to the degree there was any plan that day will be hard to sustain and duplicate on other terrains and in the days ahead. This doesn't mean they will not see a growth as distinct organizations. Within hours of the dramatic upshot of hits on the Proud Boys Parler site. The main tech capitalists took action that crippled Parler and 2 other venues the PB and many of the other groupings use.

5) The question of the gun in politics. Cannot dispute the hard right is further along in this area. I think, however, those more or less removed from ongoing radical movement involvement and situated in some of the major liberal dominated centers are not aware of the extent guns have and continue to be incorporated into left/anti-racist activities. This is more evident in the Midwest, South etc. though not there alone. Guns open and concealed are carried at rallies, at marches/countermarches and armed protection of public forums are commonplace.

On the down side, on the right left and often indeterminate (Boogaloo for example) a not negligible part of this development has been fueled by generations raised on gaming culture. Combat enactment, the pursuit of martial values' meaning and importance all come into play. This can bring about incidents of being in over one's head and stupidity. It is often a substitute for developing a revolutionary agitational politics. One stakes out being a rev by being armed, masked, and often mute.

Separate from this is the number of veterans of the US wars on both sides. Unsurprisingly the veterans right and left tend to be better at putting things into perspective.

This all said there needs to be a sharp intervention against all welcoming of civil war notions now prominent in far right and far left perspectives. This must be done while defending arms and rooting out social pacifism that ultimately abandons individual and social self-defense to the state and its police and security organs. One can see this surrendering to the protection of the state taking shape in the present moment.

6) I agree with your "US electoral politics doesn't play out on the far left or the far right " and Bill's pointing to areas of contention /sorting out on the wider right.

On the conspiracy bust that Ron posted. The precedent is being relayed and reinforced that any planning for direct action that results in any property damage or injury as conspiracy.

Mike E

To All,

Again, I'd like to thank Frank for his posts that keep the appropriate focus on the liberals and the danger they represent. I jumped back to this thread involving Frank's 2nd posting of a Glenn Greenwald piece for a couple of reasons. If folks haven't carefully read them, I suggest you should. Being linked to the above Greenwald post I would ask that you scroll past the brief comments section to the link to Greenwald's "My Resignation from The Intercept " and weigh this as well. I think it holds lessons for our list if it is going to move in the direction of playing any role in creating a truly distinct, social revolutionary outlook that stands out from the liberal-left pro capitalist/authoritarian morass. Greenwald of course is fighting to uphold journalistic integrity and not creating an anarchist current able to clearly demarcate itself from the fogs and quicksands of the left swamp. To my mind, the ideological homogeneity that Greenwald identifies as fostering trends of repression and censorship in the press is likewise crippling any really independent development of a movement that is anti-capitalist, opposed to statism, and for the defense and expansion of personal liberties. For too long we have been comfortable in the role as a loyal opposition within US society's Left Movement (it might as well read Party). I believe we must shed ourselves of both a mindset and what has been in effect a basing of nearly all our strategic calculations on a narrow field of struggle. I am not proposing ignoring or ceasing activity in this portion of society but more fully embracing the world as it truly exists. In other words, engaging in political combat and addressing the concerns of other strata and individuals as well. Those of us who went through the RSL and our full-blown critiques both theoretical and from practical engagement

with the breadth of the left need to update, resharpen, and act on this knowledge before it is lost as we pass. The handful from other generations in our orbit share some similar insights from their experiences. We tend to have mistaken monolithic notions of and exaggerated fears of the right. Some of our worlds entirely revolve around a left thoroughly entangled with liberalism. Our welcoming the emergence of masses of youth to political activity and the streets has not been coupled with a critical assessment/awareness of some of its problematic foundations and notions. There is a hesitancy to seriously analyze a youthful cult of activity based on a reformist /adventurist mix and a blindness to some of its truly authoritarian undercurrents.

For some time, when thinking of how many everyday people view the present political landscape the 1972 Scottish band Stealers Wheel ditty 'Stuck In The Middle' starts playing in my head. Most poignant to my mind is the one lead in to the chorus of " Cause I don't think that I can take anymore " followed by "Clowns to the left of me, Jokers to the right ..." Hell, within popular parlance the Democrats are increasingly seen as the "left" and Trumpist Republicans as the "right." Under these terms 155 million voted for either left or right. Those of voting age refusing to vote numbered some 59 million. Given the proliferation of lesser evil balloting, consider that of those who cast votes 30% or nearly 47 million are neither registered Dems or Republicans. I have a full range of deeper arguments for the position but for this stage of this discussion and a clear unambiguous statement of where we are coming from why not Neither Left or Right! But Anarchist and Revolutionary! Or for wider levels of agitation say Against Right and Left! For Working Class Independence and Power! This would be daring but I'm game.

I am urging at this stage of discussion people to consider what it would mean to at least rid one's own mindset and approach of this right/left dichotomy. Susan appears to interpret points that I have raised prior to this as a perspective of having right and leftwing organizations and activists mechanically unite around rough areas of agreement. I am not proposing this. What I am proposing that we educate and agitate looking for folks alienated or finding shortcomings with the propositions, practices, and programs of both camps. Personal experience as a quite out anarchist,

revolutionary, and anti-racist has shown me a wide range of people having a taste/thirst for such discussions. Many have expressed a creative mix (synthesis) of liberal -conservative or even more left -right concepts and are often quite conscious of doing so. Some have been quite out there and original, weaving in various religious and/or conspiratorial schema. A few have direct experiences and critiques of left or right groupings but from a standpoint of never having their lives fully immersed in such. A total immersion in the left cuts against preparing one to converse in the language of— i.e., the vocabulary and concepts used by—these people. The best people whatever their frames of reference are trying to arrive at some stance of justice as well as liberty and personal responsibility in their lives. We should seek them and not be closed off to those shaped to some degree by other political cultures.

If something distinct and with some increasing impact and weight in this direction could be built, ferment in some rightwing milieus may occur. I can envision cases where individuals or groups take shape that are worthy of joint work. To discuss that now is a case of putting the proverbial cart before the horse.

Another reason for attaching to the Greenwald thread is there is a layer of bloggers /podcasters out there whose followers may represent potential for such a third camp approach. Greenwald himself has a following and respect amongst a current of conservatives. I am not aware of Glenn ever identifying as a left person but his husband Dave Miranda a former Rio council member is a current congressman and leading figure not only in Brazil's LGBT movement but also The Party of Socialism and Liberty. Greenwald is a frequent guest on what many demented leftists regard as the hopelessly rightist Joe Rogan Podcasts. Rogan a well-known comic and mixed martial arts practitioner and commentator who lies somewhat out of conventional political labelling but is eclectically somewhat libertarian. His podcasts feature a wide range of topics and figures but are certainly anti-political correctness and call out culture. Then there is Michael Malice (Krechmer) a serious anarchist more akin to the Rothbardian tradition, born in Ukraine and popular with strains of conservatives and diverse libertarian scenes. I could go on with examples but will end with evolutionary biologist Bret Weinstein of the Evergreen College incident

fame. He makes the rounds on a number of serious discussions but also hosts some interesting podcasts with serious young Black conservative intellectuals that can't be easily dismissed as stereotypical Republican or crude conservative career and appearance fee anglers. I am not promoting any of these individuals' specific politics but am pointing out the existence of a large cooperative/cross-talking milieu and corresponding huge audience with a serious approach to societal issues and dangers. They all seem open to some degree to transcending the left-right trap. Serious people shaped on the left dismiss it at peril of their own ignorance and irrelevance.

The above doesn't begin to do justice to what I believe are other dimensions historical, practical, and theoretical that speak to going in the direction I threw on table with this post. I will try and lay these out day by day.

Mike E

Everybody,

FYI: ['He screwed the country': Trump loyalty disintegrates - POLITICO](#)

A few thousand Trump supporters, who could easily have been controlled by competent police work, break into the Capitol, smash a few things and wave some flags, while the leaders of the "Free World," the "Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave," cower under desks and behind seats. This is being called a "coup," an "insurrection," "terrorism," and a threat to "American Democracy."

Does anyone else on our list find this scene hilarious?

Ron

Ron,

To repeat what I wrote to you [in personal correspondence]: there is no doubt that there were elements of farce in the whole event, as there usually is in anything touched by the clown-in-chief. But there was an element of farce in the Beer Hall Putsch, which laid the basis for Hitler's later ascension to power. Tens of millions of people voted for Trump. Thousands of

deluded people were prepared to violate the norms of democracy yesterday, and justify this as a *defense* of democracy. A couple of hundred actually broke into the building. Sure, they have damn good reasons to hate the Democrats and their wing of the establishment, but so had the Germans to hate their state and establishment, which the social democrats protected and promoted. As you say, the Trump voters were not all motivated by racism and support for Trump's racism and nativism. But even the non-racists were *not turned off by his racism*, enough to not vote for him.

The failures of the cops and other security forces was not just inefficiency. It was connected to sabotage at the top and to sympathy with the rioters at the bottom.

Of course, this was nowhere near a fascist coup. Conditions are far from that. Only a small number want it. But if conditions worsen (as I expect, over time, with ups and downs), then there will be further polarization into far-right and left, the ruling class could feel threatened and this could turn out to have been a (sloppy) rehearsal.

Wayne

All,

I very much agree with Ron's comments on the so-called 'coup' or 'insurrection.' I have spent the past 24 hours discussing with friends, colleagues and students the real meaning of these words, and the aspects of this situation that simply don't conform.

Although it doesn't change the fundamental analysis, I think Ron is wrong to characterize the protesters as unarmed. I think there is evidence that suggests it is likely that some (How many?) were armed. That said, there is no evidence I know of (yet) that those arms were used. In addition, there is credible evidence of bombs having been planted. How true, and how many, remains to be seen. I would also stress, as many of my students did, the difference between the response to this protest/riot (I don't think riot is a stretch), and the response to Lafayette Park (and hundreds of other protests of people of color, leftists, unionists, etc.) vs. the response to this event. I think 'Keystone Kops' misses the boat on this issue.

Most importantly, though, a 'coup' by 2,000 protesters, lacking the support of any section of the military, the industrial elites, or the population, is in my mind an absurdity. As I have pointed out to my students, if we use the

words, terrorists, insurrection, coup and fascism to mean anything that is unlawful or that we do not like--we render those words meaningless in the face of the real thing.

Today's *NYT* has an article that takes a more 'sophisticated' approach to the advocacy of the 'coup' baloney. I will forward it shortly. It acknowledges that this was not, 'technically' (by an commonly agreed upon definition) a coup. However, it goes on to discuss the 'other form' of a coup--the slow erosion of democratic principles, and it implies--its readers will certainly infer--that this is what is at stake in this situation. Conveniently (as fake news as any other), it does not mention that the 'coup leader and eroder-in-chief' was just defeated in a constitutional election, that the courts of the country and its legislative branches upheld that defeat, and that power is passing in two-thirds of the government from the 'coup-sters' to the other party. So much for the sham, and Democratic Party-serving attempt to call yesterday's events a coup.

Rod

To All,

I firmly believe that not by any serious measure can the events being weighed be characterized as an insurrection or coup. The mainstream media's acceptance/promotion of such to my mind is a mix of centrist and liberal hysteria seeded with a good measure of calculated, partisan political hype. I also find it difficult to seriously entertain postings from the self-styled revolutionary milieu that entertain said flights of fancy. All strikes me as a continuation the "revolutionary" self-important political fiction and poetics that infused various analyses /takes on this past year's sustained leftish Black Lives Matter and spinoff sustained street protests from those groupings and individuals. My observations and feeling around the Capitol events are as follows:

Largely uncovered by the media, police counts put the Ellipse/White House area pro- Trump rally at between 40 to 50 thousand. Seeing only one aerial shot, however, it did give me the impression that very well may be accurate. When the time came a major portion of that crowd proceeded the approximately 2 miles to the Capitol area. The advance on and at times forced entrances into the main Capitol building appeared to be carried out and sustained by somewhere around 2,000 plus individuals and small groupings. The bulk of the mass that marched on the Capitol remained (for how long I don't know, but it would be informative to know) close by but

never closed the distance. On your viewing screen they were just out of the camera's vista below the screen out from the building's lowest steps back on the flats.

There are 2200 Capitol police. 500 were on duty. Obviously, that changed as the day went on. In the dark early morning hours well before shit broke, I listened to piece on security preps for the day. The threat of violence was seriously discussed, but the prospect of violence at either the White House rally or at the Capitol seemed to not be in the calculations/planning. The focus was on anticipating clashes between antifa type groups vs. Proud Boys etc. in areas peripheral to and most likely after the main Trumpist actions were over. There seemed to be a general assumption that whatever the rhetoric the big events would remain tame, flexing on their numbers. The rightists' bangers would respect the flow and tenor of the main event., while the leftist bangers, limited in numbers, would prowl looking for more manageable obliging targets of opportunity in adjacent areas as the day played out. In short, the focus was on a repetition of patterns noted in recent other clashes, i.e., the often referred to multiple stabbings, etc. The much-publicized pre-emptive arrest of Proud Boy leader Enrique Tarrio was part of these preps.

I believe Trump and his inner circle planned a day of political theater to cohere Trump's base into a force for battles, shoring up its substantial grip on American conservatism vs. not only the Dems but other currents looking to refurbish or advance its claims and concerns in the wake of his presidency. Cruz and Hawley's stunts in the Senate Chambers were all part of this staged drama. They were positioning themselves as players and possible heirs. All were clear on the gig being up but wanted to vacate the presidency with momentum and the banner of the heroic fight. Trump himself stated they were to go to the Capitol to cheer on the fight inside. Don Jr.'s and Rudy's more physical rhetoric was just for show like all the other fraudulent 'standing up for America and working men and women' bullshit that's come before. I think it's safe to assert that they hadn't anticipated 5% of the crowd taking real action. Neither had the cop command structure. As I pointed out they seemed focused on other flashpoints/ scenarios. I don't think it entered their minds that an essentially official Republican /Presidential event needed tight policing. Recent rather large pro Trump actions in D.C. remained obedient and well behaved. Reports that Trump watched TV and seemed to get off on the action even if true should be given little weight. This clown seethes with resentments, and again and again has proven himself unable to stick to an idea or course of action or plan. How many times has he radically switched

course in 24 hrs.? He cannot discipline his emotions at times for even minutes. Look at last night's performance where he denounces the Capitol militants. What serious coup plotter would even entertain an alliance with this jerk devoid of discipline, courage, and honor.

Mike E.

Frank and All,

Thanks for posting these excerpts.

What they should make clear to everyone is that every time Rachel Maddow and Company falsely shout 'coup, insurrection, terrorist, fascist', they are paving the way for the repressive forces of the state to be used more easily and effectively against those who have long been the overwhelming targets of repression—African Americans, Native Americans, gays, women, worker struggles, and the struggles of exploited and oppressed people generally. Those on the left (or in our own milieu) who give this hyperbole the slightest credence are aiding and abetting something very sinister.

Rod

P.S. if we use the words, terrorists, insurrection, coup and fascism to mean anything that is unlawful or that we do not like--we render those words meaningless in the face of the real thing.... So much for the sham, and Democratic Party-serving attempt to call yesterday's events a coup.

Rod,

I don't agree. To say that an effective coup was really out of the question (due to opposition from most of the capitalist class, the military, the majority of the population, etc.) is true enough. It had no chance of succeeding. But that is not the same thing as saying **that an attempt was not made**. Of course, a reasonable fascist would have realized it was hopeless beforehand, at least by Jan. 6. But we are talking about Trump and about the Proud Boys. Certainly, there were aspects of farce about the whole thing, but then anything Trump does, no matter how vile, tends to have elements of farce.

For months now, Trump and his followers, within the official Republican Party and within the popular movement around him, have sought to overturn the results of the national election, depose the elected president, and replace him with Trump as de facto dictator (combine his authoritarian acts in the past with his "promise" to hold new elections "later"--under the

gun). They have tried to break the laws using tricks involving state officials and legislators, courts, and now an attack on the capitol--all justified by use of the Big Lie that Trump really "won the election in a landslide." In short, they wanted a coup (using democratic rhetoric). As the months rolled on and the "legal" efforts failed, most of the Republican leadership realized that no coup was going to happen, but Trump continued believing it was possible (believing his own propaganda). And the ranks of his followers never caught on. Trump may have Hitler's charisma with (part of) the masses, but not his skill in political maneuvering.

When all else failed, Trump called up his crazed followers. The core of this was out-and-out fascists, neo-Nazis and Klansmen, plus armed "militia" groups, plus new-fangled fascists such as the Proud Boys and Boogaloo Bois. Calling these folks fascists hardly "*render[s] these words meaningless.*" (Certainly, we must oppose calling them "protesters.")

There were relatively few guns noticed or used by the fascists, although they were there. This was probably because (1) unlike other cities where armed rallies were held, D.C. is not an open carry place; you can be arrested for just showing that you have an (unlicensed) firearm. (2) The rioters had not planned on a shoot-out with the Capitol cops or indeed any clash with them, although when push came to shove, they were willing to fight them. (Since then, it is reported that the Proud Boys etc. have become disillusioned with the cops; the Boogaloo Bois were always anti-cop, at least in theory.)

The Democrats and liberals (not quite the same categories) are playing this for all it is worth, naturally. But the fascists are also pleased with the outcome, according to reports. They stopped Congress from counting the electoral ballots for about six hours. They seized the capitol. They shook up the system. Now they are proud of what they did, according to their social media exchanges.

Was it a coup attempt? It was not Hitler's seizure of power (which was actually officially "legal," Hitler being appointed Chancellor by the elected President of the Weimar Republic). But perhaps it was comparable to the Nazi's earlier "Beer Hall Putsch." This had elements of farce too, and Hitler ended in jail--where he used his free time to write *Mein Kampf*. About Trump's future I cannot say, but we can predict that the fascists will be with us for quite a while. And the flabbiness of the left towards it will also be with us, unfortunately.

Wayne

Wayne,

Even if for argument's sake there was an attempt, it certainly was by very few people and not organized. There was no proclamation, even attempted, of non-certification by a 'Patriots' MAGA Assembly' or whatever. There was no attempt to have an insurgent 'session'. Rather it seemed like most people just enjoyed breaking into this seat of state power, walking around, and taking selfies (my own favorite is the Florida man smiling and waving with the House lectern--which someone else fraudulently offered for sale the next day on E-Bay). But while much of what happened had more characteristics of Animal House than a coup, I agree that the fascists who were there will be around in the future--and grow in the face of the DP's corporate program and the party's left hangers-on.

Also, not previously mentioned, was Shepard Smith's revealing reporting on CNBC, during which he said more than once that 'the people' have 'invaded', 'overrun'--I forgot the exact verb--the Capitol.
Peace & Health,

Bill

Folks,

About the danger in the loose use of words like "coup" and "insurrection": I think that the biggest danger probably is that they are being broadcast and amplified by the mainstream media and politicians from conservative Republicans on the right through Bernie et al on the left, with of them overwhelmingly supporting—indeed, demanding—beefed up state security and surveillance, and for restrictions on freedom of speech, and, especially, that we should all wish that Biden and the Democrats (and "responsible" Republicans like Mitt Romney) restore good old American democracy (aka, business as usual conducted by the same reliable mass murderers we've known for so many decades). Thus, 6200 National Guard will be stationed in Washington DC for at least the next 30 days (and I'm pretty sure will be paraded around to make everyone "feel safer"); Twitter, Facebook and now Amazon are unilaterally deciding who can and can't have access to the dominant social media communication; there's a clamor for more FBI snooping ("intelligence"); etc. We can be pretty sure that this won't just be used against the Proud Boys.

I draw a couple of other lessons from this: First, that there were a fairly small number who acted on Trump's (and Giuliani's, and Flynn's ...)

summonses to "fight," "trial by combat," "take back the country," etc., by breaking into the Capitol. But it does appear that somewhere upwards of 25,000 showed up at the rally—most from out of town—and I think they represent a much larger constituency (millions) who are frustrated, angry, and in despair about their lives and what the future holds for them and their families and friends, don't trust the system and conventional bourgeois politicians at all, and saw Trump as either an alternative or a giant middle finger to the system that's wrecked their lives. Unless they are presented with and won to an alternative for reorganizing society on a cooperative, democratic, and communal basis from below, they represent a potential base for a right-wing demagogue in the not-so-distant future with more of a plan and more discipline than Trump. The increased state surveillance and police powers and restrictions of freedom of speech and assembly will only provide more fuel for this.

Jack

Wayne,

Thanks for your thoughts. Words rarely mean one thing, so there is a great deal of room for interpretation in this discussion.

Let's start with the notion that Trump is a fascist. Can we agree that when crowds have yelled 'fascist pigs' at cops controlling (even provoking) a demonstration/riot, this is hyperbole? The cops may be brutal, agents of the state, even racist or right wing, but to call them 'fascist' robs the word of its meaning. What then is its meaning? As I suggested, definitions don't necessarily settle the issue. Following is Robert Paxton's definition. (Paxton was cited in a discussion of coup/not coup by Mike S.). I am sure we could both cite elements of Paxton's definition to support our respective views.

Fascism may be defined as a form of [political](#) behavior marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, [humiliation](#), or victimhood and by compensatory [cults](#) of unity, energy, and [purity](#), in which a mass-based party of committed [nationalist militants](#), working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons [democratic liberties](#) and pursues with redemptive [violence](#) and without [ethical](#) or [legal](#) restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion. (The Anatomy of Fascism)

So, we have to dig deeper than definitions. Let's begin with routes to power. Hitler, Mussolini and Franco each came to power by

substantially different routes. Hitler, as you mentioned, was appointed Chancellor by President von Hindenburg in January 1933 in full accord with the Weimar Republic's constitution, after having gained more votes than any other single party in democratic elections. (Hitler was asked to form a minority coalition government in which the Nazis were given a small number of the cabinet seats.). Important conservative elites supported and in fact urged this course on Hindenburg because Hitler and the Nazis would be 'useful' in crushing the significantly strong workers movement and, in particular, the growing Communist threat. Mussolini's route was more complex--a constitutional appointment by the King in 1922, but one that came in concert with a threatened insurrection (the 'March on Rome') and a backdrop of two years of widespread Blackshirt *squadristi* violence against workers and farmers organizations, socialists and communists, and even elements of the liberal democracy. Franco came to power via a civil war which was largely an insurrection against a constitutional Republican government.

If Hitler came to power constitutionally, what makes him (and the Nazis) fascists? We don't doubt that they were (although many historians question the usefulness of the label, arguing that Nazism, Italian fascism, and Francoism have as many important differences as they have attributes in common). Hitler built an armed mass movement (centered in the paramilitary Brownshirts) that openly proclaimed its commitment to end bourgeois democracy, establish an authoritarian dictatorship, demand unswerving allegiance to a powerful state, eliminate all voices of dissent, establish a society based on a highly nationalist and racist definition of 'community' (*Volksgemeinschaft*), gain resources and 'living space' (*Lebensraum*) at the expense of 'inferior' (Slavic) peoples, and create a new and expanded empire via militarism/war. And, of course, Hitler and the Nazis promised to eliminate German Jews from their roles (and perhaps their physical presence--this was not spelled out) in German society. All this was spelled out in *Mein Kampf*, and, importantly, these were not just words--whether in the Munich Beer Hall *Putsch* or in the massive violence committed at the local governmental and worker organization level, the program was an *action program*. Equally significantly, once in power Hitler and the Nazis moved with lightning speed (18 months) to eliminate all opposition parties, a free press, labor unions and, finally, opposition to Hitler within the Nazi Party (Night of the Long Knives). The post of President was eliminated, Hitler proclaimed himself *Fuhrer*, and the army was forced to/agreed to swear an oath of personal allegiance to Hitler, rather than to the German nation. In short, virtually every element of bourgeois democracy was eliminated (even while capitalism and the Catholic and

Protestant churches remained functional, if controlled). Based on the above, there can be little (no?) question that Nazism *is/was* a variant of fascism.

In what ways are Trump and Trumpism similar and different from Hitler and the Nazis? Are either the similarities or differences great enough to lead to a conclusion that Trump is or is not a fascist? Trump came to power constitutionally; he was elected President. Issues of Russian interferences/disinformation, the actions of James Comey, and perhaps other events arguably make the 2016 election something less than 'clean'-but less-than-clean has long tradition in US elections (1976; 1960; 2000 are prominent examples), and fascism (or a coup, to get ahead of ourselves) this history does not make. Trump has a history of inflammatory rhetoric: The Central Park Five; birther-ism; anti-immigrant statements; racist sentiments more broadly. He also had elements of anti-elite populism (which became more pronounced under the influence of Steve Bannon). A Little Red Book of Trump quotes would certainly reveal a man with strong authoritarian tendencies, pronounced nationalism, and barely hidden racism. *But none of these things make a fascist out of Trump.* If they do, where do you place Pat Buchanan, Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, George Wallace, Huey Long, Tom Watson, the Democratic Party (1830-1900), etc.? Words like racist, populist, authoritarian tendencies, misogynist, homophobe, militarist (and perhaps many others) may be used appropriately to describe some or all of these people, but not the word 'fascist.'

Let's move beyond rhetoric. Trump served as President for four years (maybe). He said many things, but which institutions did he overthrow? It can be argued that his rhetoric tended to undermine the/strength of a so-called free press, but what newspapers, radio or tv stations or internet-based sites did he close down? (The biggest shutdown of a channel of 'free' communication that I know of just took place with the shutting down of Trump and others Twitter and Facebook accounts--by two millionaires/billionaires directly accountable to no one). Are there still three branches of government, multiple political parties (trapped in a traditional two-party system), free trade unions (trapped in long standing bureaucratic corruption), legal protests (often attacked by state forces as they long have been)? Yes, yes, yes, and yes. Was the 'fascist' voted out of office in an election as 'free' as any previous (that is, not really free, but not really different)? Did Trump try to alter this outcome through rhetoric, lawsuits, all sorts of chicanery and, yes, a violent protest by 2,000 people at the Capitol (I don't quarrel with calling the rioters, but 'insurrectionists'?

and 'terrorists' simply mangles important meanings of words)? Yes, he did. I am sorry, but arguing that over the past four years he 'might have' done this or that, would have 'wished that he could have' done this or that, or 'maybe still might be thinking of doing this or that' do not an omelet make.

All of the above does not even address the *context* for Trump's presidency. Arguably a time of division and conflict and, at a real stretch, instability--but one mimicked and exceeded countless times in the recent, not-so-distant, and distant past. Countless times. *Nothing* about the state of US capitalism and the needs of the corporate or other elites would lead them to support the jettisoning of the two-party constitutional system that has served them so well (mostly) for nearly 250 years. Is capitalism, or 'the system,' being threatened by a vibrant, aggressive, radicalizing, near-revolutionary class struggle? (Unless you join with some in our milieu who mangle a different set of words in describing the BLM movement as 'revolutionary proletarian.') Yes, the Republican Party, facing historic electoral/democratic trends that could lead to its marginalization, was in a crisis and, yes, it responded to that crisis by hitching its wagon to Donald Trump (in search of a new and expanded base), but that is a very different sort of crisis, with a very different plot--one that has obviously resulted in an even more catastrophic crisis for the party. The point here is this: *using what may or may not be the fantasies that lie within Trump's small but megalomaniacal brain as the basis for terming Trump and his supporters a fascist/fascist movement does not make it so.*

Who is served by calling Trump a fascist or terming this week's invasion of the Capitol building 'insurrection,' 'sedition,' 'terrorism.' Why the very same people who were served by using such rhetoric when the Black Panther Party entered the Sacramento, CA Capitol Building carrying rifles. The very same people who denounced rioters in the most extreme, hyperbolic terms throughout the 1960s/70s. The people who have done so in relation to the Black Lives Matter protests, throwing in the word 'anarchist' for good measure. The perpetrators of the Alien and Sedition Act, the 1919 Red Scare, the jailing of Eugene Debs, the rounding up of Japanese Americans in internment camps, McCarthyism; and on the list goes. I urge people to wake up to the dangers of engaging in/supporting this rhetoric/hyperbole.

Finally, it is important to note that it serves the Democrats well to repeatedly use the terms 'seditionists,' 'insurrectionists' and 'terrorists.' As should be clear from the past four years, the repeated use of words and phrases can go a long way to make what is false, 'true' (that is, believed

and embraced). The more the Democrats can convince people they are battling a fascist/insurrectionist/terrorist 'sedition,' the greater their power--after all, they turn themselves into the *only* 'democratic' party. And, regardless of whether they are thinking in these terms now or not (some are), it also sets them up for easier repression of *anything* that is threatening. Needless to say, this includes us--and the movement we hope for.

Finally, a few words on the 'coup.' I would be repeating much of the same argument (at its root) to discuss why I think it is widely off the mark--and dangerous--to term this week's events a coup (attempted coup, failed coup, farcical coup, partial coup). Bill has just posted comments on this that I agree with. I will add this: please make a convincing argument that Trump, *stupid as he may be*, intended or expected the following: the insurrectionists enter the Capitol, a significant wing of the Republic Party comes over to the seizure, and with the support of the Capitol police and the National Guard, they hold 'Congressional power'--voila!--a coup has been staged. Balderdash. Some will say: no, no, no, you miss the point, Mehling--the goal was to 'alter' the democratic process regarding the peaceful and appropriate transfer of power. Of course it was--but that's not a coup, nor is it coup-like, or a quasi-coup. If protests (rioters is an okay term with me) had convinced more Republicans to vote with Cruz and Hawley to change the Electoral College vote, **good on protests! I like to think that protests have power!** Has everyone forgotten that mass protests against the War in Vietnam, particularly following the January 1968 Tet Offensive *limited the options the US government had to prosecute the war?* It was done in the streets, not at the ballot box. Sometimes activities were illegal. Most/many of the activities of the civil rights movement were breaking laws. Flint and other auto workers forced union recognition and collective bargaining through the illegal occupation of factories. (Guess what--some of the people sitting in were armed!) Do you really want to call the Vietnam protests 'insurrection?' The sit-down strikes 'terrorism?' The civil rights movement 'sedition?' All these and other activities, near, virtual, partial, planned, or possibly could become . . . coups d'état? Not me.

Rod

Rod,

A very thorough response! However, ***I did not call Trump a fascist.*** I said that the movement which attacked the Capitol was fascist. The Proud

Boys, the Boogaloo Bois, the III percenters, and other such lovelies were fascists. They wish to overthrow the bourgeois representative government by violence to create a bourgeois dictatorship. Sure, led by Trump and raising his Big Lie they claim to be defending representative democracy, but the core groups at least have a clearly authoritarian goal. They are fascists.

I do think you underestimate Trump's attack on the established government. He attacked Congress, denying it its oversight functions (including rejecting legal subpoenas). He de-professionalized and politicized the executive branch, from the FBI to the FDA, from the DOJ to the weather bureau. The whole apparatus was bent towards his personal will. He was packing the military, despite its strong cohesion. The federal judiciary was packed, with some judges who were merely conservative but others who were wildly reactionary. All of these processes would have gone much further had he been re-elected.

Trump was backed by a powerful propaganda machine, and he increased its power by discrediting the "mainstream media" for many. Tens of millions lived inside the bubble of his lying propaganda, unwilling to trust the standard media, believing whatever he and his mouthpieces told them. Okay, this wasn't fascism as such, but it was a turn towards much greater authoritarianism than we have had for a long time.

And okay, whether to call it an attempted coup is unclear. What did Trump expect to happen? What did the Proud Boys expect? It is difficult if not impossible to say for sure. Perhaps they just wanted to see how far they could go. Perhaps they really thought they could overturn the election results (certainly many of the ranks of the movement did). That this was impossible and showed poor planning, delusional thinking, and farcical actions, really tells us little about what they thought they were doing.

These fascists will be with us for some time, nested among the tens of millions of otherwise decent but deluded Trump supporters, approximately 40 % of the population, deeply opposed to the government **from the right**. We cannot deal with them by denying their threat.

Wayne

Everyone,

I find myself in overall sympathy with Wayne's post yesterday (included

below Rod's reply; I'm not including the one just sent, which I haven't considered) and thank Wayne for continuing to press his point. I'm struck by a strong element of denialism in many comments during this discussion, an effort to minimize the importance of the Jan. 6 events and shift blame to the Democrats/liberals, easy targets for us.

I think the incursion into the capitol building was more serious than "hilarious" (Ron), and that the (belated) police response, including evacuation, etc., was more than "Keystone Kops" (Ron). This was not a coup or insurrection as the mainstream has said but was a serious attempt to halt or delay certification of the results of a majority vote, as well as a serious assault on a symbol of constitutional democracy and was a warning of other attempts to come. Millions of ordinary people sense this, and I think they, rather than some of the posts in this thread, have it right.

I would agree that the most serious immediate danger is a repressive response by the liberals against the rights of Trump (social-media bans, possible impeachment and barring from future office) and more importantly, indirectly against Trump's many millions of followers.

However, for the future I think we must face the dangers of an authoritarian mass movement. Jack is right that Trump's voters, and the smaller but still massive movement to overturn the election, are alienated from the system, but I think he is wrong in attributing the alienation solely to factors we are favorable to. There is a strong element of cultural deprivationism, the idea that "the country is being stolen from us," with "us" meaning many things including "white," "socially conservative," etc. Logic-chopping about what does/doesn't constitute fascism seems a little beside the point. "Trumpism" will do, that is, a movement in which grievances of this kind coalesce around an authoritarian leadership figure.

I think the movement evidenced on Jan. 6--including the mass demonstration at the White House, the smaller one plus incursion at the capital (recognizing that these were not the same), and some sizeable portion of Trump's voting base--is, in intent and potential, a serious step toward an anti-democratic mass movement, and that this represents the main significance of the Jan. 6 events.

Chris

Wayne, Chris and All,

Wayne: Thanks for the clarification. (In defense of my reading skills, you also wrote: "Of course a reasonable fascist would have realized it was hopeless beforehand, at least by Jan. 6. But we are talking about Trump and about the Proud boys." Singular fascist, and 'and' both have meanings.).

We still may have differences, since I am not as ready as you are to term the protesters/rioters 'fascists,' though I note that in this email you refer to the 'core' as being 'out and out fascists.' This makes your view a bit unclear. I am not prepared to characterize the protest as a whole as 'fascist'; I think this fails to capture what I perceive was the widely varied makeup of the crowd. (I defer to Mike, who tracks the right far more closely than I do, on the composition.) Here, I will just ask that people remember this: The crowd was asked by 'their President' (the President of the United States of America) to take bold ('wild') action, and to 'show no weakness' in the face of an attempted coup by the Democratic Party. Repeated lies really do convince people of things. Lies from the President of the United States carry a certain weight. I am not suggesting that being lied to, per se, excuses people or doesn't make them something they may have become. Undoubtedly, some elements of the crowd were extreme racists, anti-Semites, misogynists, homophobes, and xenophobes, *without* Trump's rhetoric, and some people were ginned up by those words, but I think there is reason to be careful about an overly broad brush (for reasons I discussed in my previous email).

Chris: I have significant disagreements with you. Let me begin with areas where I think we agree. 1) Fascism is a real and serious danger, in the United States and elsewhere. Anyone who minimizes what a danger fascism is, doesn't understand what fascism is. Events of the last four years reveal the ease with which false messages can be turned into 'truth,' dissenting messengers can be discredited, and the more racist and authoritarian elements of our society can be enabled, and mobilized around a right-wing, nationalist program with strong racist overtones and undertones. Anyone who thought 'it can't happen here' has hopefully woken up. 2) I share your criticism of the 'Keystone Kops' reference; as I said in a previous email, if for no other reason than the response highlighted a marked difference with the response to a Black/anti-racist/left protest. 3) You write: "This was not a coup or insurrection as the mainstream has said but was a serious attempt to halt or delay certification of the results of a majority vote, as well as a serious assault

on a symbol of constitutional democracy and was a warning of other attempts to come." I couldn't agree more. It was an attempt to halt or delay certification of the election. So were the speeches on the floor of the House and Senate (rebuffed, firmly, by 'democratic process'). So were the countless lawsuits to overturn the elections (rebuffed, firmly and endlessly, by courts often appointed by Republicans, including Donald Trump). So, by the way, was Nixon's fostering of an information burglary of DNC Headquarters. So were . . . you know how much longer I could go on. 4) I share your view that, among Trump's base, "There is a strong element of cultural deprivationism, the idea that 'the country is being stolen from us,' with 'us' meaning many things including "white," "socially conservative," etc." I don't believe I have ever suggested otherwise; I have suggested that is not an accurate description of 40-50% of the Republican side of the country

Where do I disagree? Nowhere, not in a single word, did I "shift blame (for the events at the Capital--RM) to the Democrats/liberals, easy targets for us." I did point out that the language being used to *describe* the events is language that plays to the Democrats power interests (and the repressive abilities of Democrats, Republicans, and the elites in general). Is there something you disagree with in this? It is also possible that I may have said, somewhere, that in the long run, Democratic Party betrayal of promises to its working class, African American, etc. base would drive many people into the hands of the right and the far right. This has been fundamental to our worldview since forever. Do you disagree? You write: "Logic-chopping about what does/doesn't constitute fascism seems a little beside the point. 'Trumpism' will do, that is, a movement in which grievances of this kind coalesce around an authoritarian leadership figure." If I understand your sentence correctly, it has two meanings: 1) arguing that Trump is not a fascist and Trump's movement does not represent fascism is 'logic chopping;' and 2) that 'Trumpism' is indeed fascism. I am not going to repeat my arguments as to why Trump is not a fascist, why he doesn't head a fascist movement, why it is important to understand the difference, who is jacking up the vocabulary/hyperbole and how and why it serves them. I simply stand by it.

Rod

Everybody,

I stand by everything I've written about the events at the Capitol building last Wednesday.

I completely reject the claim that the invasion of the Capitol was a serious threat to "American Democracy." In fact, I think the idea is positively absurd.

First, look at the numbers! In the last election, Donald Trump got the second highest number of popular votes in the history of the country. Since Election Day, he has claimed incessantly that the election was stolen. He challenged the state-by-state results in the courts and got shot down every time, even by judges he appointed. He also pulled out the stops to get as many of his supporters as possible to Washington on January 6 to protest the certification of the vote of the Electoral College by Congress. Yet, the result of all that work was paltry. Trump had, at best, 30-40 thousand people there. (It's worth remembering in this context that in January 2017, over a million people demonstrated locally for the Women's March; also, that far, far more than 30-40,000 people marched in the many Black Lives Matter demonstrations this past summer.) Moreover, of the 30-40,000 demonstrators at Trump's rally, only 2,500 to 3,000 people decided to break off from the main march and attempt to invade the Capitol. Last, I suspect that many, if not most, of those 2,500-3,000 were not people who could accurately be described as Nazis, white supremacists, or far-right extremists. In fact, I saw quite a few Black people, Latinos, and Asians among the occupiers. Moreover, the crowd was not at all organized, people did not act in unison, they had no plan, and there were very few firearms. As Bill pointed out, no proclamation had been prepared, and no provisional committee (junta) was formed. Many people just seemed to be enjoying themselves after having invaded the "sacred halls of American Democracy." Yes, there was some violence: some police personnel, news people, and others were threatened and/or injured; while several people were killed (although it still isn't clear to me who was primarily responsible for the deaths). Yet, none of this would have happened had the police, particularly its leadership, acted even modestly competently. Even had the process of certifying the election had actually been disrupted, it would have been continued at another time and/or place. How does this, in any way, shape, or form, constitute a serious threat to "American Democracy"? How was this, in any reasonable meaning of the terms, a "fascist coup"?

Despite this, the Democrats have worked intensely to fan the flames of mass hysteria, calling the rowdy (but ultimately rather tepid) demonstration an "insurrection," "an attempted coup," and "domestic terrorism," and whipping up patriotic fervor about the need to defend "our democratic institutions." The Democrats' purposes should be obvious: 1. to mobilize as many people as possible, among both the elite and the

population at large, behind their efforts to finish and consolidate their takeover of the legislative and executive branches of the federal government; 2. to put their factional opponents, the Republicans, on the defensive; and 3. to set the stage, legally and politically, for the repression of "extremist elements" of both the right and the left, and for the overall tightening of state control.

In this context, it seems to me that the main efforts of our group ought to be aimed at exposing what the Democrats are up to and why. This means aggressively debunking the liberals' false claims about the demonstration and what it represented. It means resisting the panic and hysteria they have been working so hard to whip up. And it means exposing the illusions that most people have in "American democracy": that it is truly democratic, that it somehow expresses the will of the people, rather the interests of the US ruling class and its various factions. This means we have to challenge those illusions, not pander to them. The way to challenge Trump's claims that the system is rigged, is not to counter that "American Democracy" really works. For 50 years, we've been claiming the opposite, that despite its democratic forms, the American political system really represents the rule, the policies, and the interests of the rich. To effectively counter Trump, we should not be joining the Democrats' claims that the system really does represent the will of the people, that the voting process is fair, but to explain, concretely, how the system works, to explain that Trump is part of the elite he denounces, and that he seeks to use, for his narrow purposes, the very system he insists is rigged. To Trump, the system is only "rigged" when he can't use it to get his way.

Finally, despite the deaths and injuries, I still find the situation comical. The political elite of the most powerful country in the world that proclaims, based on its intelligence, its moral rectitude, and its courage, the right to rule the world, cowering under desks and behind benches in the "hallowed halls" of its so-called democracy in the face of a motley, disorganized crowd of the people it pretends to represent—to me, yes, that is funny.

Ron

All,

Ron has clearly laid out what is unfolding before us. It succinctly summarizes what happened Wednesday. The 3 points in the 3rd to last paragraph clearly lay out what the Dems and the so-called progressive milieus are up to. Point 3 the tightening of the state and its

repressive apparatus should be a major concern. If anything is truly frightening it's that so many on the left are rallying behind what one conservative journal glad to be rid of Trump, calls the liberal's Reichstag fire moment. We should remain unequivocally opposed to the Democrats as a party of capital and empire. They bear a major responsibility along with the Republican establishment for Trump's rise to prominence. We must reject falling into an "anti-fascist" trap baited by the liberals and many on the left. I am sick and tired of Trump and his irresponsible behavior. I am also totally fed up with an anti-Trumpism that irresponsibly contributes to a hardening dead-end politics of the 50/50 divide.

It is asinine to sum up the politics, social mores, and innermost aspirations of 73 million folks into one white supremacist bloc. I am fully aware of various problematic and dangerous currents attached to or growing out of the Trump movement. I am willing to bet I know far, far more than any on this list about them and their capabilities, real and unreal. From my work and wider connections, I know a good number of Trump voters and those who migrated out of it. But also, some that remained as his voters and merit respect as individuals. In the 90s I became rather familiar with the militia movement and its twists and turns then and since. Let's not stereotype. How many know the Dayton mass shooter fancied himself a left anti-racist partisan and was part of an anti-Klan mobilization one week before his murderous rampage.

I will strive make more regular contributions to the list. I am trying to pull myself out of a slump brought on after maintaining a high level of activity for nearly 3 decades post the disbanding of the RSL and looking at what little there is to show for it all. Let's hold to first principles and try and build what we can and hold fast against the coup sham as a starting point.

In closing, I relish the fact that the political class has gotten a good scare, but this will make them more dangerous. I expect some weakening and divisions in what until now has been the Trump movement. Also, there will be an increased ferment in those more radical right forces and new wave of individuals taking part in or identifying with the Capitol action. This and mounting repression will undoubtedly result in some violent, even high-profile incidents but the kneejerk response shouldn't be to see such as the leading edge of a unified right-wing juggernaut. A groundwork for an outward acting revolutionary force independent of both camps and able to break down the 50/50 divide needs to be laid thoughtfully but with a little quickness in its step.

P.S. I hope a bunch of them pissed themselves or worse.

Mike E.

Hello again to all,

I do want to make clear that I agree with Ron on the danger of the Democratic Party working up "domestic terrorism" legislation. As I see it, the Democrats have been taking advantage of Trump's pre-election disparagement of the US intelligence community to hook up with them and with sections of mainstream media to create a powerful propaganda machine. They've been using it for the Russia-Trump stuff, the bogus impeachment/ defense of Biden and son, and now the rhetoric and reports that pave the way for Biden's favorite event--repressive legislation.

A number of significant trends can be perceived in Trump's response to the election, the riot, and the Dems' response: 1) the continued power shift to the executive that has been going on since Nixon tried and got his hands slapped. This is (at least in part) what some on the left and the liberals have mistaken for Trump's Bonapartist or fascism, etc. And they were at one time saying this kind of thing about Dubya; 2) there's been a trend on the part of the GOP to mobilize its base, or to at least put up with a mobilized base, since at least the Reagan/evangelical alliance. Obama's election inspired the Koch-funded Tea Party, and many of those people became part of Trump's base. The Democratic Party really doesn't like a mobilized base unless they can quickly turn it into something electoral. As I mentioned before, there's been a lot of "Wait! wait! wait!" instructions from Democratic leaders--southern border? Pelosi says no to impeachment because it's "an electoral issue." So, the imprisoned refugees and victims of ICE raids can wait from the time the Trump regime started separating families until the 2020 election for any sign of hope (and, it turns out, Biden's in no hurry on immigration policy). Wait for the FBI to investigate Kavanaugh, Wait for Mueller. Wait for the bogus impeachment while Schiff blathers on about needing to fight Russia in Ukraine to prevent having to fight them in the US; 3) a fairly recent trend for the intelligence community to prefer the Dems--they got bossed around and abused by Cheney, then Brennan and Obama supposedly got along really well (possible buddy movie?), then Trump disparaged the intelligence community and the "reports" on Trump-Putin and pee pee tapes rolled in. Then reports of strange sonic devices used by the Russians (?) to rattle the brains of US personnel in Cuba (which turned out to be crickets). Then the stories of Russian bounties on US soldiers in Afghanistan. All of these and more the

product of a media/intelligence community/Dem alliance to (at least) pressure Trump to follow the standard US imperialist agenda and (bigger benefits) to propagandize the citizenry about the evils of Russia, Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, China. For the sake of arms sales and future wars; 4) And I doubt I have to say much about this, but there has been a bipartisan trend toward the more authoritarian (I've even read it described as strategies of counter-insurgency) to go along with the continued neoliberal economic policies.

I also agree with Rod on the possible further dangers from the fascists and other far right nationalist types. And I agree with Mike E on the Trump supporters. There are a few in my extended family. Beverly's as well.

Finally, I did/do think that Ron's observation on the hilarious nature of the "leaders of the world" hiding from the guy with the horns and the painted face is apt. Though I heard that staff members were frightened and felt for them. On the other hand, though I'm not for disarming people as a result of school shootings, I do think the "leaders of the world" finding themselves in the position of a number of US children/teens when their schools were assaulted--well, that is instant karma.

Frank

All,

See the following:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/17/us/politics/proud-boys-charges-capitol-riot.html?referringSource=articleShare>

Some may think it sacrilege, but I think we should be as skeptical about a Proud Boy 'conspiracy' as we would have been about Sacco and Vanzetti, the Scottsboro Boys, and the Central Park Five.

I don't trust the government. Innocent until proven guilty.

Rod

Rod and All,

They do seem to be working overtime to make some kind of case when everything has pointed to their evidence being flimsy. I wouldn't trust it. I'd also remember after 2017 when a relative handful of anarchists broke some windows in DC, something like 200 people were busted and charged with ridiculously long sentences and that turned out to be crap.

Frank

Maybe there is a failure of imagination too at work here: they can only conceive of there being a strategy/plan/conspiracy.

Any mob all going to the same place will look a little bit as if they are all acting on a plan.

I do believe though that there were a few people in the mob who did have some sort of orderly take-over of the building and legislators in mind, thwarted when their quarry was out of reach.

Robin M

Are you kidding me? Is it not expected that any of us will be and have been targeted by the state? That is a given with FBI files piled up already. To liken the Proud Boys who are white supremacists and Nazi sympathizers to anyone like Sacco and Vanzetti is beyond me. These are the same people who would have been protecting the Nazis we chased out of the Midwest. The same guys that attacked BLM supporters.

Sorry, but I don't give a damn what anyone does to them!

Roni

Roni,

So, if I understand correctly, justice in your book works like this: the repressive machinery of the state should be feared and opposed if it is moving against people you agree with politically (perhaps regardless of whether they are guilty or innocent?), and the repressive machinery of the state is to be welcomed, cheered on—how else to interpret your comments?—if it is being used against those you disagree with politically.

Let me make one thing perfectly clear: I would fear living in your state and would probably be part of its revolutionary opposition.

Rod

So let me ask you this. If the Proud Boys called a demonstration to defend them from the state, would you go out and support them? Isn't that the question? To me it's whose side are you on. These people don't just talk, they act. They don't just promote hate against people they act on it.

The state protects them not us. You watch what happens to "the jail time"

Roni

Roni,

What I will say is this. Standing for freedom against the state must involve defending the rights of those with whom you disagree; otherwise, it is not freedom. This (like anything) doesn't cover all cases and situations in a blanket fashion—but it is a starting principle. You do not seem to share it.

Rod

Their rights do not include depriving me of mine.

Robin

Everybody,

I agree 100% with Rod. I do not intend to side with the US government (the state) in the prosecution of any private group, whatever their politics. The Capitol riot is being used as an excuse to go after the Proud Boys for their ideas, not for their actions. (Are people like us next on the government's list?) We never (ever) called for the government to ban the Nazis and the Klan, and I do not do so today. And I am not convinced that the Proud Boys are the same as the Nazis or the Klan. Their main leader is (or was) a Black Cuban; their second leader is Samoan. Aside from what the liberal media is telling us, what does anyone on this list (aside from Mike) really know about them. Moreover, in today's world, I am as much afraid of the (ignorant and arrogant) totalitarian liberals, who want to use the state to ban and/or outlaw (aka cancel - Dr. Seuss??!!) anyone or anything that does not agree with them, as I am of the Proud Boys. I am particularly concerned about people who call themselves anarchists (such as the Antifa thugs and others) but who have the same totalitarian mentality as the people they claim to be fighting. To me, to be an anarchist means something; it is not the same as being a radical liberal.

As for Robin's comments, those thoughts are precisely the same as those who wanted to curb the rights of or even outlaw the Communist Party in the 1940s and 1950s and who would treat anarchists (us) that way today. A couple of weeks ago, Chris circulated a petition making the rounds among academics against attempts to blacklist anyone who served in the Trump administration from getting hired in academia. Do you support such a blacklist, Robin? Civil liberties are precisely for those with whom one disagrees.

Ron

To All,

I am in solidarity with the concerns raised by both Rod and Frank. It's sad to see liberal hysteria expressed so baldly on the list. So sad, nay pathetic that some people are so blind so roped in in to the exaggerated and often outright dishonest liberal / neocon propaganda offensive. Roni asserts the

Proud Boys to be white supremacists and Nazis who would have defended the Klan /Nazi forces we challenged in the past in the Midwest. I'm frankly tired of people who beat the drum loudly about matters they know nothing of, they invest no real thought in and have been absent from all direct experience of and activity for decades.

The Proud Boys are a proto-fascist development. Drawing flip and politically primitive conclusions, i.e., simplistically reducing them and like developments to being Nazi white supremacists helps us nor anyone else in assessing or dealing with the present political moment. Just a few items for mention: The PB program has a plank rejecting racism and since inception have had Black and other non-white ethnicities as members, including leading militants. As I noted in a previous post (clearly ignored) there have been occurrences in the past year where PB and other pro Trump elements have physically excluded KKK and Nazi factions from joining demos. They are open Western Civilization chauvinists, explicitly patriarchal and while openly welcome Gay men are hostile to Trans folk etc. given their embrace of binary sex roles. Their main mission and recruiting pool go back some years in facing off with Antifa types as well as BAMN /RWL. This largely took shape in response to sections of the left's frequent breaking up and assaults on conservative figure's largely campus speaking engagements. They did show at the Charlottesville Unite the Right Rally but in the wake of that fiasco distanced themselves from the Spencers, neo -Confederates, and avowed racials. They to date have killed no leftists but one of them has been killed by a leftist. They have been a pole of attraction to those wanting to confront the more in your face obnoxious left types. I say none of this to defend them but to stress successful strategies to combat and check the Right have to be informed by more than mindless howling. The Proud Boys and others of their ilk are a problem but to collaborate /acquiesce in enhancing government's ability to build untruths atop partial truths in order to vilify and jail "extremists" is a dangerous and lazy game.

Mike E

Robin

To All,

One should be cautious in putting too much stock in the SPLC. Linking of various individuals or groupings to unsavory associations is an increasingly well-honed art practiced by careerist intelligencers and exposé writers across the political spectrum. I'm not going to waste time here responding to every tidbit cited in this specific SPLC piece.

The PB's high profile/notoriety has led to flows of growth/and ebbs. Promotion by liberals of the white nationalist narrative has as with any organization led to the gravitation of such elements seeking what they are told exists. The life of growing organizations is fluid and can be transformative. PB hasn't been static as with life it evolves. That is why I called it proto-fascist.

The SPLC itself is a proven well-known entity shaped in Clinton era law and order liberalism. Collaborating with police agencies and governments against not only racist violence but equally targeting direct action anti-fascist/anti-racist organizing. Reliance on the government has been its foremost principle. In the wake of the Seattle anti-WTO actions where Black Blocs and anarchist militants first burst in a big way into the public arena, this very SPLC ran several shabby pieces tarring the emerging anarchist movement with the fascist brush and a racist course.

The Center for Democratic Renewal was created and lasted for some years as anti-racist/anti-fascist educational and organizing resource for the grassroots anti-Klan and Nazi movement. The CDR was despite some weak points movement friendly while SPLC was essentially hostile to popular initiative and helped shape police strategy in dealing with the anti-Klan mobilizations as well.

CDR grew out of 2 National Anti-Klan Network conferences. The first was in Atlanta, the second at Howard University in DC (I recall Rod being present). Later in the 90s/ early 2000s, the rise of second wave Anti-Racist

Action confronted a significant and sustained wave of rural, small town and big urban multiple KKK, Nazi, and racist Skinhead campaigns. ARA gleaned what it could from SPLC sources but never trusted them and correctly assessed SPLC as a hostile force. ARA did keep channels open to CDR. I was a founder/ participant in this 2nd mass manifestation of ARA (its mailing list reached 34,000) which called uncountable actions bringing out dozens, to hundreds and several times thousands against liberal efforts opposing face to face counter actions. There is no time for a full account here but suffice to say SPLC is a proven, self-conscious police, and ruling class asset.

To Robin I say your case for embracing the libs/neocons needs to be built on more substantial knowledge and practice.

Mike E.

All,

Imagine we are a small group of anarchists who believe both that the Proud Boys are proto-fascist thugs and that the state is cooking up conspiracy charges against them. Then imagine we had a newspaper (or, these days, online newspaper) and/or the ability to hold a forum. Wouldn't we make both points? Wouldn't we explain the history of the Proud Boys, explain the 1/6 riot and the Congressional/media response to it? And wouldn't we explain that the FBI has been "investigating" every person and group that they can (Three Percenters, Oath Keepers, Proud Boys, etc.), and "organizing" people on social media to help them identify rioters, for the purpose of cooking up conspiracy charges? And wouldn't we say the state has no ethical right to try to create a conspiracy out of a riot? And, explaining what the capitalist state is and why it exists, wouldn't we say it has no right to judge or punish these people—even if they broke windows, even if they ran around the Capitol building, or entered the Senate chamber on an "information gathering mission" and held a prayer session, even if they were misguided patriots and asshole racists? Wouldn't we explain that saying, "I don't care what the state does to these assholes" is conceding power and authority and the right to judge to the capitalist state?

Frank

Everybody,

I would like to return to our previous discussion of whether we should or should not support the government's crackdown on the Proud Boys and other far-right organizations. I particularly want to indicate my opposition to what I understood to be Roni's position. It seemed to me that Roni clearly indicated that she would explicitly support or otherwise welcome such a crackdown, and by implication, advocate that our entire group adopt that position. If this is indeed Roni's view, I consider it to be thoughtless, shortsighted, and completely contrary to anarchist/libertarian principles. (If this is not what Roni meant, I request that she clarify her position).

Even before we considered ourselves to be anarchists/libertarians (that is, when we were in the RSL and called ourselves Trotskyists), we never called on the state to ban or outlaw the Nazis, the Klan, and other right-wing racist organizations. On the contrary, we always tried to convince people we worked with and attempted to organize not to call on the state to outlaw the Klan and Nazis, and more generally, not to look to the government or to rely on it in any way. This was not only because the government would, at best, be an unreliable ally, but even more important, because any statute, law, or precedent that legalized or justified the repression of right-wing organizations would eventually be used, and even more harshly, against left-wing organizations and more generally, against workers and other oppressed people fighting for their rights. It would seem obvious that if that is how we felt when we were not anarchists and explicit libertarians, then we should hold to that position even more so today.

To hold to that position—that we do not support, defend, or otherwise acquiesce in government repression of right-wing groups—does not indicate specific tactics that we are obligated to pursue. It does not necessarily mean, for example, that we issue positive statements in defense of the political rights of those groups, that we organize and/or take part in demonstrations and/or picket lines in support of those organizations, that we defend the rights of such groups to speak on campuses, etc., although I would not absolutely rule out any of these and other possible measures. All these are tactical questions that would need to be assessed as circumstances warrant. What it does mean, above all, is

that we must be absolutely clear in our own minds that we do not call on or look to the state in our fight against right-wing, racist organizations. A little history might be useful here. In 1941, after the Comintern changed its attitude toward World War II when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of the US militantly defended the US government's prosecution of the (Trotskyist) Socialist Workers Party under the Smith Act, which essentially declared the SWP to be a treasonous and seditious ("un-American") organization. As a result of this, several SWP leaders were tried, convicted, and sentenced to prison. Several years later, the Communist Party itself was prosecuted under the Smith Act. The CP was found guilty, several of its leaders were sentenced to lengthy prison sentences, and the party was virtually destroyed. Because of its previous support for the Smith Act prosecution of the SWP, as well as for other reasons (such as the CP's blind support of the Soviet Union, which was not known for its defense of civil liberties), the CP was not in a strong position to defend itself.

Earlier historical events speak better of the left. On September 6, 1901, US president William McKinley was assassinated by Leon Czolgosz, a young steelworker who claimed to be an anarchist. According to Emma Goldman's account in her autobiography, *Living My Life*, Czolgosz knew very little about anarchism and in fact had had little contact with the anarchist movement. Despite this, despite the fact that the assassination provoked a wave of anti-anarchist (and anti-left) hysteria, and despite the fact that Goldman herself rejected acts of individual terror, she and her allies in the movement rallied to Czolgosz' defense. Despite their efforts, he was tried, convicted, and electrocuted. My point here is to show that even though Czolgosz' act represented an "attack of American Democracy," the anarchists firmly opposed the state. They insisted that the US government, with the blood of millions of people on its hands, had no moral right to judge, let alone punish, let alone execute Czolgosz. Do we believe that the US government, with over a century more of blood on its hands, has the right to suppress the political rights of the Proud Boys, who, after all, were guilty of far less than Czolgosz? (Or is Roni advocating the suppression of the Proud Boys merely for expressing their views?)

I am not sure if Roni fully thought through her position before expressing it and arguing for it in our discussion. If what she wrote does reflect her attitude, then I vehemently reject it and will fight as hard as I can to defeat it. If her position or anything close to it were ever to become the official position of this organization, I would immediately resign.

Ron

Folks,

I agree with what Ron wrote. In fact, even the IS—or at least its predecessors the Workers Party and the Independent Socialist League -- opposed state suppression of free speech and other civil liberties of Nazis (and Stalinist). Here's a long piece by Hal Draper that makes this point together with examples:

<http://csh.gn.apc.org/Archives/Free%20Speech/Main/Draper.htm>

Jack

All,

I agree Ron. Interestingly, when I go back and look at what I wrote, it was simply this:

"Some may think it sacrilege, but I think we should be as skeptical about a Proud Boy 'conspiracy' as we would have been about Sacco and Vanzetti, the Scottsboro Boys, and the Central Park Five."

In response, Roni wrote:

"Are you kidding me? Is it not expected that any of us will be and have been targeted by the state? That is a given with FBI files piled up already. To liken the Proud Boys who are white supremacists and Nazi sympathizers to anyone like Sacco and Vanzetti is beyond me. These are the same people who would have been protecting the Nazis we chased out of the Midwest. The same guys that attacked BLM supporters. Sorry, but I don't give a damn what anyone does to them!"

To make the point again: I very much give a very big damn what the US Government does to them. I oppose every step the US government takes to strengthen its repressive machinery. (As most on this list know, since the email exchange over opposition to US government prosecution of the Proud Boys, the news broke of charges against 1/6 people for 'sedition'--this only underlines the points Ron makes in his post.

Chickens *do* come home to roost. Further, I prefer to be on the side of 'An injury to one is an injury to all.'

Rod

Ron and other Utopians,

I would like to return to our previous discussion of whether we should or should not support the government's crackdown on the Proud Boys and other far-right organizations.

It occurs to me that the discussion might be clearer if we disentangle issues of **fact** from those of **principle**. Let me ask a question, using a thought experiment. Let us imagine that the Proud Boys or whomever were really programmatically explicit, clearly, a fascist organization, and openly anti-Semitic and white supremacist (instead of merely "European chauvinist"). Suppose they really had planned and organized an attack on the government to overturn bourgeois democracy and replace it with a president-for-life dictator. Supposed they made a serious attempt to carry this out, through violent, bloody, actions--even if it eventually failed. And suppose the agencies of the existing bourgeois-democratic state were cracking down on them, **not** for their **beliefs** but solely for their illegal and anti-democratic **actions**.

This is not the case (as even I recognize). But suppose it were true? Would you-all still oppose "*the government's crackdown on the far-right organizations*"?

Let me add that the issue is **not** whether "*we should or should not **support** the government's crackdown,*" as you mistakenly put it. It is

whether we should or should not **oppose** the government's crackdown. You (Ron) imply that you are against this crackdown. You imply that you would **defend** the Proud Boy's against government prosecution **even for actions** (assuming that they have carried out such actions). Of course, I know that there is a continuum between speech and actions, but there is a functional distinction: you can call me names, but not punch me in the nose.

Again, this is different from demanding that anyone accused of bad actions should have due process, trial by jury, legal defense, and all other rights-as we should. This is as true for the Proud Boys or my hypothetical fascists as it is for the Mafia or local pickpockets. If the FBI violates such rights, they must be condemned and opposed.

But the main issue is to distinguish in principle free speech (and the right to associate and to demonstrate) and illegal, violent, actions carried out in order to overturn bourgeois democracy and establish dictatorship. Certainly, this was the tradition of the Independent Socialists and others, whom Ron and Jack cite. In Hal Draper's piece defending freedom of speech (cited by Jack), he writes:

Take the above-mentioned historical analogy with the Nazis in Weimar Germany: it is wholly false. It is simply not true that the truly scandalous behavior of the courts in Weimar Germany revolved around "free speech for Nazis" cases. The judges of this very democratic republic were letting Nazi thugs go scot-free even in cases where they had been caught red-handed in murder, assault, beatings of Jews and radicals, breaking up of trade union headquarters, and similar actions. Action, not speech. If the Nazi movement had confined itself to speeches (including fascist speeches), it would never have been the danger it was. No rights to free speech had to be curtailed by a millimeter in order to have an abundance of grounds for rounding up the entire Nazi leadership years before they became even a clear and present danger. And this was not an accidental fact but inherent in the nature of the fascist movement as such: this movement never made the slightest pretext of depending on persuasion or education for power. ...

Actions, not speech: this is the key. In contemporary America, for example, socialists are for laws making racist acts a criminal offense. If a landlord discriminates against blacks, browns, yellows, or bearded whites in renting or selling, a real democracy would crack down on him with the forces of law and order; but this has nothing to do with illegalizing his right to express any stupid or reactionary opinions on any group. (Any more than I would want to be restricted in my right to express my own opinions on the subject of Southern rednecks, liberal suburbanites, Democratic politicians, middle-class Negro businessmen, Jewish shopkeepers in Harlem, and an extensive spectrum of other types.)

Frank's argument, based on revolutionary anarchist opposition to the state, implies that we cannot ever make demands on the state, which is the view of Crimethinc and others. But the state is real and must be taken into account, one way or another.

However, I am not suggesting that we campaign **for** greater government prosecution of the Proud Boys or anyone else. Let the government take care of itself. I am for independent mass action against the fascists and quasi-fascists. But neither do I defend them from the government--as I would if it were a case of their free speech being attacked.

Whether this view is consistent with that of Roni, I do not know. I am speaking for myself.

Solidarity,
Wayne

Wayne,

That is all too hypothetical-theoretical for me to understand and respond to. It seems obvious to me that we are not yet at the point you describe or anywhere near it. When it does appear imminent, please contact me, and I will tell you what I think.

Ron

Hi, Ron et al,

First, let me say AGAIN that I know the state will use the attack on the right to go for us, the left etc. Even without them going after the right wing they would do it, have done it, and will continue to go after all those who oppose them. It's their function.

As it stands now, I have a problem. In general, I agree to defend all against the state despite guilt or innocence. I am for free speech and for freedom despite what Rod thinks. I would support the racists' right to distribute their ideas, have demonstrations, etc. And, as we have done in the past organize actions against them. However, I have a problem with KKK, Nazi's, White Supremacists and others who are for genocide when they take action against the people they feel are inferior: Blacks, Latinx, Asians, Women, Jews, LGBTQ, Transgender and in general anyone who does not fit their idea to what western civilization should be or who has the right to a decent life or life at all. (There were Jews who supported Hitler, so a few diverse members does not change a racist organization).

The way I look at the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers (mostly ex-military and ex-cops from what I've read) and others are no different from the state. In Portland and Seattle, they (PB's) called on the state to assist and the state did. They easily got into the Capitol because they were let in. They knew they could. In addition, I assume the state was monitoring them and knew exactly what they were going to do. They didn't stop them and were even willing to sacrifice their own. Doesn't that seem odd to you?

Additionally, in Minneapolis, the right wing (not sure which group it was) went into neighborhoods—some Black, some not—and burned and looted so it looked like black folks did it. Not sure how other cities went in terms of the looting during BLM demos, but it was different groups at night. It looked to me like Black folks went for high end stores so what about neighborhood small businesses (some of whom gouge with high prices in poor minority neighborhoods.) I say this to point out the hatred that these right-wing groups have for diversity and the lengths they go to prevent it.

So, in support of the PB and the others, would you call on folks to go to demos to do it? To actively support them? The KKK and the Nazis? If for some reason the state goes after them? That's my point. In no way would I ever defend them. I'm a Jew with a very diverse family that I would defend with my life.

Isn't that what defense means. So, tell me?

Peace out,

Roni

All,

I do hold the position as Ron stated: "that we do not support, defend, or otherwise acquiesce in government repression of right-wing groups"--does not indicate specific tactics that we are obligated to pursue . . .

What it does mean, above all, is that we must be absolutely clear in our own minds that we do not call on or look to the state in our fight against right-wing, racist organizations." Regarding our history of fighting the KKK and the Nazis, it never occurred to me to look to the state because it was always so clear, time after time, that they were there to protect them, not that they were unreliable. Years and years of the state or their surrogates out and out murdering Black leaders—Malcom X, Fred Hampton, MLK—made it quite obvious just what they would do to stop any growing Black movement. As you say, it is a tactical question as to how you express opposing state suppression of racist, misogynist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic. groups like the PB, Oath Keepers, 3%ers. Tactically, as in a demonstration, I would spend no time defending them, because I am convinced that in most circumstances that we would be on opposing sides, with them coming after me. They, on the other hand, have frequently called on the state for protection, or have worked hand in hand with the state against BLM demonstrators. Yes, the people must shut them down which is a dilemma when there is no revolutionary movement. Just as when the state prosecutes Trump, it does nothing but bring a smile to my face.

Sally

Sally and All,

Sally writes, 'I do hold the position as Ron stated: "that we do not support, defend, or otherwise acquiesce in government repression of right-wing groups—does not indicate specific tactics that we are obligated to pursue... "'

Sally then uses Ron's reference to 'tactics' to undermine the PRINCIPLES that Ron articulates. Sally makes three arguments:

- 1) A revolutionary perspective is for revolutionary times...and these are not those;
- 2) Opposing state repression is a matter of circumstances (confusing the principle with how one tactically responds); 3) We don't defend people from the state if we might be on opposing sides. (Another 'tactical decision'?)

Sally may say she didn't say these things; read what she wrote.

Rod

Roni and All,

Roni writes: "I know the state will use the attack on the right to go for us, the left etc. Even without them going after the right wing they would do it, have done it, and will continue to go after all those who oppose them. It's their function."

What is Roni actually arguing here?

First, that events in history are determined and inevitable (Marxists may agree, but I don't). Thus, according to Roni, it is irrelevant whether we oppose the state or not, because the state "will continue to go after those who oppose them. It's their function." So, Roni, why fight against capitalist exploitation? Isn't it inevitable that capitalists will exploit?

Second, Roni says that 'in general' she 'defends all against the state'. . . but not this time. Why? Well, because the Proud Boys are part of the state. (Read what she wrote.) Now, I argued vehemently that what happened on

1/6 was not an insurrection or coup d'état (it wasn't). But I never suggested it wasn't a violent demonstration/riot. Watch the footage again—or is this 'fake news'? It was a pitched battle that went on for hours—many people were injured and some were killed—on both sides. Theater? Now, the state (the real state, not your fictitious state) is going after the Proud Boys (and others) on SEDITION charges. I suppose you can respond to facts with conspiracy theories, but I've had enough QAnon—don't need more.

Roni's third argument is that she will never defend the Klan or Nazis (against state repression I presume, since that is what we are discussing). And never defend Stalinists? And never defend capitalists? And never defend...? Until they come for you????

Oh, by the way, Roni, while we are playing the IDENTITY POLITICS card, I am a Jew, too.

Rod

Rod and All,

And I thought I was agreeing with Ron. I would ask the same question as Roni. What would you do to defend the PB and friends?
That is addressed to all, but to Rod especially,

Sally

Rod,

You write "So, Roni, why fight against capitalist exploitation? Isn't it inevitable that capitalists will exploit?"

Yes Rod, by definition. That's what capitalist do exploit.

So please answer one question as you're so good at sniping and diverting try just answering one.

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO DEFEND THE PROUD BOYS FROM THE STATE? IF THE STATE TAKES UP ARMS VIA THE POLICE, WILL YOU GO AND DEFEND THEM WHEN AND IF THE PB'S ARE ATTACKING THE MINORITY COMMUNITY AND THE STATE DEFENDS THE MINORITY COMMUNITY? Even though that will not happen much would you defend them against the state?

Roni

Sally, Roni, and All,

Sally: I think you were agreeing with Ron in appearance and disagreeing with him in substance.

Appearance: "I do hold the position as Ron stated: "that we do not support, defend, or otherwise acquiesce in government repression of right-wing groups—does not indicate specific tactics that we are obligated to pursue... "

Substance: "Yes, the people must shut them down which is a dilemma when there is no revolutionary movement. Just as when the state prosecutes Trump, it does nothing but bring a smile to my face." In other words, when we're not in a revolutionary period (which is most of the time), let the state prosecute . . . it brings smiles to your face. (Oh, wait, you were referring to Trump. But what you said--and what I believe you mean is: ***Just as when the state prosecutes Trump.***

Appearance: "As you say, it is a tactical question as to how you express opposing state suppression of racist, misogynist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic. groups like the PB, Oath Keepers, 3%ers."

Substance: "Tactically, as in a demonstration, I would spend no time defending them, because I am convinced that in most circumstances that we would be on opposing sides, with them coming after me." In other words, because you are on 'opposing sides,' you "would spend no time defending them."

Would you state that you defend them against state repression??? That is the concrete issue we are debating.

In my view, you do not agree with Ron's position, but are straddling the fence, trying to have it both ways. That's how I see it, politically. It isn't personal, and it isn't an insult.

Wayne doesn't think we should have a position of defending the Proud Boys. I think he is dead wrong. But that's not an insult or a personal attack. Roni vehemently attacked my suggestion that we might consider defending the Proud Boys, and said that, as far as she was concerned the state could 'have at them.' I think she's dead wrong. That is not an insult or a personal attack.

And, yes, I think there is a freedom-denying logic to these views. That is not an insult or personal attack. It is what I believe.

Rod

Rod,

So, Rod, tactically in a demonstration would you support the PB's yes, or no?

Roni

Roni and Sally

Roni: On your first point, you miss my point. Of course, the state will exploit. Is that a reason not to fight back???? (I assume you will answer no.) But that is the very reason you give for not opposing state repression (charges of sedition, for example) against the Proud Boys. You write that it is irrelevant whether we oppose the state or not, because the state "will continue to go after those who oppose them? It's their function." Don't fight the state because it will keep doing what it is doing??? Don't fight the capitalists because they will keep doing what they are doing??? How much plainer could this be?

Roni: On your second point, you now write: The real state allowed the demonstrators in while all their intelligence pointed to something was going

to go down. Moreover, if it had been BLM people who got as far as those who were there Jan 6, I think the real state would have mowed down.

You have two arguments here: 1) One may be true (if exaggerated): That BLM protestors would likely have been treated more viciously than Trump supporters. True as it may be, that isn't a litmus test on who and what we defend and why. (Guess what--it's a kissing cousin of ranking oppression). 2) Your second is that the state allowed the demonstrators in. I can only say that you are a victim of MSNBC and the 'fake news' that Trump referred to.

Sally: What would I do to defend the Proud Boys? I would take the position that the capitalist state is going after the January 6 protesters, *including but hardly limited to the Proud Boys* in a manner that is designed to enhance its repressive powers against **ALL** opponents of the state. This is the meaning of calling January 6 an insurrection or a *coup d'état*. This is the meaning of comparing it to 9/11. This is the meaning of raising the level of the charges *to the highest level the government has* (short of murder) --**sedition**. Sedition is *treason*. Do you not understand the significance of remaining silent in the face of this level of repression and intimidation (leaving aside the absolutely incomprehensible position that the state is 'on their side.' This is a conspiratorial theory of the capitalist elites, one that is all too rampant on the left.)? *This is what we* (Mike, Jack, Frank, Ron, me) *are trying to get across*.

WHY WOULD WE BE ARGUING IF YOU AGREE???

Rod

Roni,

Do you mean, would I participate in a demonstration against government repression that included the attack on the Proud Boys as part of its thrust? While tactics are tactics, and I therefore cannot say I would do so at all times, in all circumstances, the basic answer is a resounding **yes, I would!**

Rod

Rod,

No Rod, that's not what I asked.

"So, Rod, tactically in a demonstration would you support the PB's yes or no?"

Not one that was randomly against government repression but one about the government specifically against the Proud Boys. Defense is defense is defense.....

Roni

Roni,

You're just wrong that "defense is defense is defense." Defense against who or what? I think we all know that if the PBs are attacking a protest for Black lives or for Asian lives or for support for Amazon strikers or anything like that, we'd be defending against them. In this case, the neoliberal state in the hands of Mr. Repressive Laws himself, Joe Biden, is taking advantage of a riot at the Capitol building to silence speech and press, and to create support for sedition charges and more repressive laws. In this case, we defend against the state's attacks. Also, how we defend people or groups is up to us. It depends on the context.

I do also think and will say again that I agree with Mike that the focus on the Proud Boys is way problematic and most likely a distraction--most people at the rally and most people at the riot were not PBs. We're mostly talking about Trump supporters. (And I keep hearing stories about people who were at the riot who supported Obama in 2012--even Clinton in 2016.)

Wayne, I'm sorry that I somehow "implied" and caused you to think that I don't think we--or rather a mass, working class movement--can make demands on the state. I don't think we cannot demand (and I love double negatives). It's good to have democratic rights and good to defend them. Still, I think the state has no ethical or moral right or reason to exist, and no right to judge, surveil, imprison, or murder anyone. I do realize that the

state does these things anyway. It is generally not a good thing for anybody when the state does. Aside from the political reasons of solidarity and humanity for opposing state repression, there's also the fact that punishment just makes things worse. Put the 90% of presently unaffiliated (or semi-affiliated) rioters (10% PBs, III%, and Others; 10% QAnon, which means not all that "affiliated") in prison today and watch Aryan Brotherhood, Aryan Circle, European Kindred and other white-supremacist prison gangs recruit. Well, and probably with that other 10% too. Think that makes things better? You think we should just say "well, their actions . . ."?

Frank

Everybody,

I have a request of and several questions for Roni.

1. Request. Please provide us with a concrete, straightforward statement of your position.
2. How is your position consistent with anarchist/libertarian principles, or isn't that an issue for you?
3. How does your position differ from the position promoted by the hysteria-mongering campaign emanating from the (very pro-capitalist) media outlet, MSNBC?
4. Are you really unconcerned that a state-sponsored propaganda campaign and outright repression against a currently legal organization might eventually be leveled at other organizations, including left-wing groups, such as Antifa and the Utopian?
5. Are you unaware that campaigns, such as the current one against the Proud Boys, have a tendency to get out of control and to build up momentum beyond what the original promoters intended? "McCarthyism" emerged from Harry Truman's relatively mild loyalty-oath edict of early 1947.

6. If it came down to the circulation of blacklists of the names of members and sympathizers of Proud Boys that would prevent them from getting jobs in certain industries, whether or not they were accused, tried, and convicted of committing specific criminal acts, would you support that?

Ron

Roni,

I wrote about my willingness to support, in principle, a demonstration against government repression THAT INCLUDED THE ATTACK ON THE PROUD BOYS AS A PART OF ITS THRUST.

What about this does not answer your question???

If you asking me whether I would support a demonstration against state repression that ONLY was about the Proud Boys, then: 1). I think this is a completely abstract, hypothetical question, that has virtually no likelihood of occurring, and I don't see your point unless you are looking to jettison everything you've said so far to claim that that is all you ever meant (when you wrote 'have at them?'). 2). Over 400 people involved in January 6 have been charged with crimes; only a tiny percentage of them are Proud Boys. In this context (the REAL context), I would likely see a demonstration that was ONLY defending the Proud Boys as akin to a pro-Proud Boys rally, and of course I wouldn't participate. Why would the question even be asked?

Rod

Hi Ron and All,

I'll try to answer Ron question by question to clarify!

1. Request. Please provide us with a concrete, straightforward statement of your position.

I oppose state repression in general. In all cases is that the principle? Will you defend Trump? Will you defend child molesters against prosecution from the state? Where do you draw the principled line or is it a tactical question?

2. How is your position consistent with anarchist/libertarian principles, or isn't that an issue for you?

I don't know if my position is consistent, but I guess I thought Rod was arguing the "principled" position of supporting them by going to rallies to free the PB's exclusively.

3. How does your position differ from the position promoted by the hysteria-mongering campaign emanating from the (very pro-capitalist) media outlet, MSNBC?

I differ from them by recognizing that they along with the rest of the pro-capitalist media are hyping this up to support the authoritarian measures of the Democratic Party. They think the DP can do no wrong.

4. Are you really unconcerned that a state-sponsored propaganda campaign and outright repression against a currently legal organization might eventually be leveled at other organizations, including left-wing groups, such as Antifa and the Utopian?

Yes, I'm concerned. I think that's true. But I would not attend a rally to support a right-wing organization.

5. Are you unaware that campaigns, such as the current one against the Proud Boys, have a tendency to get out of control and to build up momentum beyond what the original promoters intended? "McCarthyism" emerged from Harry Truman's relatively mild loyalty-oath edict of early 1947.

Of course.

6. If it came down to the circulation of blacklists of the names of members and sympathizers of Proud Boys that would prevent them from getting jobs

in certain industries, whether or not they were accused, tried, and convicted of committing specific criminal acts, would you support that?

No, I wouldn't support that, but I would not go to a rally called by the PB's to free the PB's. I would go to a rally against state repression which may include the PB's, but that is highly unlikely. I cringe at the thought of attending that rally because there would be the danger of a proto-fascist organization attacking a portion of that rally if it were diverse.

Does that answer your questions Ron, because I answered as honestly as I'm able?

Peace out,

Roni

Everybody,

First, in answer to Sally's question about specifying our position:

In fact, the shoe is on the other foot. I am defending our historic position (which, it seems to me, should be more obvious now that we define ourselves as anarchists/libertarians.) It is Roni who is proposing to change our position, so the obligation is on her to tell us what her position entails. Our traditional position says nothing about what we are obligated to do except to recognize that we do not call on the state to repress political groups we don't agree with, do not urge other groups to call on the state to repress groups they disagree with, and do not support the state when it does suppress groups we or other people disagree with. Beyond that, what we might do, if anything, is something that we would discuss in terms of concrete circumstances. Our position says nothing about being obligated to support, call, or join any demonstrations in defense of the political group under attack or do anything else, such as sign petitions, join lawsuits or make public statements. It seems to me that Roni somehow has gotten it into her head that when we say we do not support state repression against the Proud Boys, we are automatically obligated to join demonstrations defending the Proud Boys, make statements, sign petitions, etc., etc. In

what looks like a panic reaction, Roni has decided that we should overturn our libertarian position and adopt a statist and profoundly authoritarian one. Roni's position evinces a Stalinist mentality: when the state represses groups or people we don't like, we cheer it on, without thinking that someday that juggernaut might be turned on us. Remember the Communist Party cheering on the US government's prosecution of the SWP under the Smith Act!

Second, Roni's attitude toward state repression—the state will always repress the good people, so why worry about encouraging it to go after bad people?—reveals an astounding level of historical ignorance and an even more frightening lack of political insight. Aside from a few recent circumstances in which, for example, police have dispersed specific demonstrations (e.g., some of the Black Lives Matter protests or at the end of the Occupy Wall movement), there has been relatively little intense state repression in this country for some years. There was the aftermath of 9/11, when the government and the media stoked mass hysteria against people from the Middle East, believers of the Islamic faith, and in fact anybody who looked even vaguely Arabic. Meanwhile, the Bush administration seriously restricted civil rights, especially of those suspected of being "Islamic terrorists": indefinite detention (some for years, even decades), torture, and other atrocities. Before that there was, as we know, serious repression during the 1960s. Yet, that was fairly mild compared to what occurred earlier in the 20th century, in the period during and after World War I, and in the aftermath of World War II, during the "Red Scare" and the "McCarthy Period." During these eras, the entire country was turned upside. Mass panic/hysteria was stoked by the government and the mass media, people were seized from their homes by mobs and beaten up or lynched, thousands of people were arrested, tried by kangaroo courts, convicted, imprisoned, deported, and executed; many more lost their jobs and were blacklisted; others had their businesses destroyed and lives ruined. Does Roni know anything about this? Does she care? Oh yeah, the state always represses, so why not support a little repression against some groups we don't like? It's frightening to me that somebody who's been in our group for so many years can say something so glib, so thoughtless, and, to be blunt, so stupid. In fact, mass repression, which is usually accompanied by mass hysteria, comes in waves: once unleashed,

it's hard to stop, and it can go on for years and wreak enormous havoc. We might not be under systematic state repression right now, but the situation can turn on a dime. And it seems to me that, right now, the federal government, controlled by the Democrats and egged on by the left, is preparing serious repression against people and political groups they are labeling "domestic terrorists." That's what's behind the current campaign in the liberal media, above all, on MSNBC. But all Roni sees is an opportunity to go after the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, and the III Percenters. It's easy to imagine the feds going after Antifa. How does Roni know we're not on the list? All I can say is: Be careful what you wish for! No to state repression!

Ron

Hi Ron and All,

Below is how Ron responded to the state repressing Antifa/Black Bloc. If in fact anyone of either Rod, Ron or Mike had done something similar with PB's et al, talking about and disagreeing with their politics perhaps I would not have had so much "hysteria" and thought defense meant real defense. That's why I kept asking the question.

Mike came later and called them "proto-fascists". Jack came later and did something similar.

It may well be that my politics differ as Ron stated. But hopefully full and open discussion is still part of the group's wish. If you want that to continue, then hopefully you do it in a more comradely way. Some of the folks on this list I consider good friends despite what disagreements we have. My biggest "principle" is that the fight against all oppression and oppressors continue and that we keep our humanity central to how we function as human beings.

Ron's Antifa position

"I think our position on this issue ought to include the following points, among others:

1. We defend antifa/Black Bloc organizations and individuals from attacks and repression by the state.
2. We criticize antifa/Black Bloc tactics as elitist and authoritarian and detrimental to the task of building a mass movement that can win over a majority of people in this country.
3. We differentiate between the current antifa/Black Bloc tactics and the organized defense, armed if necessary, of movement demonstrations, organizations, and individuals from attacks by Nazis, white supremacists, other right-wing groups, and the forces of the state.
4. We seek to explain and win over to this position to all those concerned to resist the attacks of the racists and the state, including members of the antifa/Black Bloc organizations.

Roni

Hi all,

I'm probably not going to say anything that hasn't been said already in this very long thread, but maybe going over a few things again in a slightly different way may move things forward. (I'm not optimistic about that, but I will give it a try anyway.)

1. The state is, now and in the coming period, a greater threat—in my opinion, a much greater threat—to civil liberties, democratic rights, and everyday life—than is the far right. The threat has been building for some time, but has qualitatively increased over the past decade with an enormous increase in state surveillance and integration of corporate snooping with state surveillance; and, especially, with the limits on human contact imposed by "sheltering in place" lockdowns and associated mandates, which de facto greatly limit the right to assemble (in-person meetings, demonstrations, workplace organizing) and have allowed the state, often in the form of unelected officials, to assume near-dictatorial control of many aspects of society. This has not been entirely accidental -
- legislation restricting civil liberties was passed in the Bill Clinton

administration, foreshadowing the Homeland Security legislation in Bush the Second's first term; and the National Security Council under Obama began planning for at least partially emulating China's cyber-surveillance of citizens—but the pandemic has provided popular (although certainly divided) support for de facto restriction of the usual functioning of civil society. This is ominous.

2. Biden is being hailed by the mass media and most liberals and left liberals for (a) not being Donald Trump (e.g., increasing access to anti-covid vaccination); and (b) programs to increase state intervention in the economy. This increases tolerance, and even support, for the increased state surveillance and restriction of civil liberties (I find that most left liberals and left reformists want mask-wearing and vaccinations to be required / mandated), and many think that automated cyber-contact tracing is a good idea (even though it would mean state (and Google/Apple) knowledge of your location 24/7.)

3. Biden's foreign policy, a return to the traditional Cop of the World big stick bipartisan policy in place for most of the post-WW II period (and especially since Jimmy Carter and Zbigniew Brzezinski kicked off Trilateralism in 1978), is given a thumbs up by the media and a pass by most of the liberal left. Biden's "America Is Back" is smiled upon by the same folks who mocked Trump's "Make America Great Again."

4. It's not that there's no danger from the right—especially from white supremacists—and these need to be monitored and when necessary confronted directly. But not by looking to the state like the liberals' cry of "State, help us!" Today, the major threat to civil liberties and what remains of democratic rights is from the state. And the state arrests and employment of sedition laws against the far right are, at least in my opinion, aimed at suppressing dissent—aimed at opponents of state control and the restriction of civil society. Should we surface on the radar, they will be used against people like us.

Jack

Everyone,

Ron's response is a cop-out. I make a distinction between **actions** and **speech**, unlike Ron and Rod. I agree that we revolutionaries should defend fascists and quasi-fascists from the state when their speech is attacked. But, unlike Ron, I say we should **not defend** them from the state when they commit violent and anti-democratic actions (not-defending is not the same as **supporting** the state's actions against the fascists). This is the historical revolutionary socialist position. I don't see how Ron does not understand this point.

To return to the facts of 1/6 and after: *"Kelly Meggs [is] the leader of the Florida chapter of the Oath Keepers...Prosecutors cited several of Mr. Meggs' private Facebook messages....Mr. Meggs noted that he had 'organized an alliance' among the Oath Keepers, the Proud Boys, and the Florida chapter of the Three Percenters....By the day after Christmas,...Mr. Meggs...was focused on overturning the results of the election....He wrote a message announcing that 'Trumps staying in' and planned to use the 'emergency broadcast system on cellphones' to invoke the Insurrection Act, effectively establishing martial law. 'Wait for the 6th,' Mr. Meggs wrote, 'when we are all in DC to insurrection.' "* (NYTimes 3/25/21; p. A16) Again, the point is their **intentions**, behind their actions, not that they had any reasonable chance of overturning the election and establishing martial law (a dictatorship), which they didn't.

In the 1950s, I think, there were people who were called "anti-anti-communists." Not that they were pro-communist, as such, but that they opposed "anti-communism" (which at the time meant the McCarthyite witch-hunt). Ron, Rod, Mike E., and others might be similarly called "anti-anti-fascists." Of course, they are complete opponents of fascism, but they support the fascists and quasi-fascists against the government when the reactionary mob engages in violent **actions** against bourgeois democracy.

Wayne

All,

Jack, yours are four very good points. I'd also add that press and speech rights are under state-corporate attack, and the state is finding ways to go after people's guns.

Wayne, what if Hal Draper's position is wrong when it comes to state attacks in the form of criminal prosecution? What if we have defended Weathermen and George Jackson Brigade and others from the state even though we condemned their actions? We would never say we support the Weathermen or GJB's politics or actions, but wouldn't we oppose the state's judging or punishing them?

And I'm linking the full NYT article. I think, Wayne, that you are making it sound much more ominous and organized (and less kooky) than it was.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/24/us/politics/oath-keepers-proud-boys-capitol-riot.html>

Frank

To All,

Roni in reading your posts there appears to me to be two areas in which you lack a grasp of the facts on the ground so to speak. A major misconception of the realities in regards to these two areas seem blind you as to what people are saying and generate a desperate flailing-about character to your responses.

First of all, I said in a previous this has been over focused on the Proud Boys. On the PBs, you seem to believe this to be an outfit that has been defined and characterized to date by organizing attacks on Black, Brown and other oppressed people. This has not been the case. It's rise in notoriety and numbers has come largely as being seen as defenders of conservative and "pro-American" speakers, forums, and Trump demos from antifa, BAMN, etc. physical disruption and attack. No small part of its powers of attraction with the Right has been the participation in its ranks

of a few prominent Black, Brown and Jewish militants and its avowed avoidance of racializing politics.

In the period of both the Trump movement's and the PBs' parallel growth in numbers and prominence, the overt racist national socialist, neo - Confederate and Klan formations while experiencing some measure of growth stumbled, tripped, and stalled. In part on aspects of their own internal pathologies and in part limitations connected to overt racist proselytizing and association with offensive acts of terror. PBs stature was further elevated with Trump's embrace during the fall election campaign. At this point the Democratic machine threw the white supremacist charge. Unsurprisingly, emerging racist elements began gravitating towards a PB identification as overnight this charge became accepted wisdom and wider populations across the political spectrum took it in hook, line, and sinker. Barely one week after Trump's embrace and Biden's response, Kyle Chapman, a Bay Area proponent of white grievance and closet Nazi, launched racial slurs at PB national leader Enrique Tarrio and called for a split in PB on overt racist lines. Is Chapman an agent provocateur, Nazi factionalist or both? White nationalists /supremacists have long cast critical and envious eyes towards the prestige PB acquired, physically holding its own against the left and needling many antifa on their general inability and unwillingness to articulate their positions in debate.

Weeks later Tarrio's own collaboration with the FBI began emerging. None of it appeared to be for the purpose of targeting the Right or Left. Tarrio had been busted at some earlier point on moving stolen goods. The Feds pressured him to use his Florida and PB connections to move deeper into criminal activities. To act under their orders as a player/agent penetrating south Florida Cuban/Mafia organized crime networks. Even before the FBI revelations, a leading Oregon PB (and Jewish) figure expressed dissidence to what he saw as a drift into criminality and wanted to reaffirm PBs focus on combatting the "fascist Left. " Note he and many in PB have viewed Antifa and others as left fascists/opponents of all refusing to uncritically bow before the new "wokeness"> parading under the banner of anti-fascism.

Much of this perhaps ranges too far afield, but I've been wanting to get this objective look at what the PBs have been to date out for all's information. In regards to the present need to oppose the government moves, there are some things to keep in mind. Once again, it's not all about the Proud Boys. It's about government/liberal - progressive overreach, dishonesty, and the setting of dangerous precedents, to put it mildly. PB despite its nationalistic, distorted reaction to a wave of aggressive identity politics has not been involved in a wave of racially motivated thuggishness or terror. Opposition to it must be directed at its inability to extricate itself from its own attachments to rightist alliances and a hierarchical/statist world view. This said, I would say don't be overly preoccupied with liberal falsehoods or the organization's own downsides. Between the FBI's previous hooks and the weight of the Jan. 6th charges the state has significantly crippled it. If pieces of it stand at all post all this, they face real questions as to direction. Despite several assertions to the contrary on your part, Roni, they and others are not exactly receiving the kid gloves treatment.

This brings me to the second misperception of reality that recurs in your posts. You keep repeating that this past year's BLM and related protests have faced much harsher treatment than what the Capitol protestors now face. This leads us to the question of the alternate reality/ facts that inform your positions.

Overall, the liberal / left anti-police and de facto anti Trump outpourings of this past year have been dealt with by the responsible (solely in the sense of jurisdiction) police and political structures in a restrained fashion. Of course, given the sheer size and near continuous scope of these protests, there will be many examples of abuses and outrage. The general political reality was in areas of the largest and most sustained protests the predominate political and police authorities in charge were part of /managed by Democratic Party forces. These local state forces, the heavily liberal media, and other allies had to politically exploit these mobilizations, allowing them to continue through the countdown to the election for anti-Trump purposes. On the other hand, there was a tightrope to walk applying enough force to corral the significant militant spin off, attacks on police, looting, etc., that occurred almost nightly. Property and municipal

functioning had to be defended and damages limited. The Covid shutdown generated/hot-housed immense reservoirs of foot soldiers, stripped of school and job obligations adding to the immensity of it all.

1.4 billion in direct damages were inflicted on predominately small businesses in this period. Excluding the ongoing police involved killings that happened through this stretch 30 deaths occurred in and around these protests. Some from personal beefs that flashed within demos, some at the hands of looters killing folks protecting businesses, one in a case of a demonstrator killed defending 2 people from armed robbery at the hands of other demo participants and of course 2 in the Kyle Rittenhouse incident in Kenosha, plus the Federal guards in Oakland.

The Trump regimes' ability to unleash repressive actions was drastically limited by primarily jurisdictional issues. The fact that in many locales highly recognizable and militant demonstrators racked up multiple arrests and quick rerelease should be instructive. There were multiple cases of individuals racking up 5, 6 , 7, and 8 busts. Not exactly a sustained and terrible repression. Think now of what has issued from one event Jan. 6th.

We have not recoiled from solidarity with the year of anti-police protest or defense of its participants while holding critiques of its limitations and flawed notions. The presently dominant ruling circles are going after and attempting to make intimidating examples of elements allied with their factional opponents. They went light on those who suited their own factional purposes. It is critical to understand that precedent or momentum granted the new holders of state power can be turned on those it went light on yesterday.

May I suggest Roni take time to reflect and school herself on the real state of affairs.

Mike

Everybody,

My main concerns in the current situation concerning the Capitol riot on January 6 are:

1. To argue that the event was not, in fact, an armed insurrection that seriously threatened "American Democracy." Instead, it was a (relatively small) riot that got out of control because of incompetent intelligence and police work.

2. To make the case that the Democrats and their Socialist allies are attempting to prove that the riot was an insurrection that really did threaten American Democracy, and that they are doing this for both factional and repressive political purposes, among them:

- (a.) to vilify the Republicans and to consolidate and enlarge the Democrats'/Socialists' hold over the electoral majority they won in the last election;

- (b.) to stoke up hysteria among the general population about the threat to the country represented by white supremacist and other right-wing organizations, which threat, in my opinion, is far, far less than what is being insinuated by the Democrats and Socialists;

- (c.) to use this hysteria to build popular and political support to enact legislation that would legally establish that the right-wing groups involved are not legitimate political organizations but are, instead, "criminal enterprises" (essentially, conspiracies), whose leaders and individual members can be investigated and charged under the RICO statutes and thus denied the political rights and liberties that are owed, under the US Constitution, to all American citizens.

3. To warn the left and others that such legislation, once in place, would become a powerful tool in the hands of the government, should the need arise, to investigate and criminalize left-wing and popular organizations, and to prosecute their leaders and members.

4. To warn all citizens that the political climate that the Democrats and Socialists are stoking will also be used as part of their campaign to cripple, and ultimately repeal, the Second Amendment, that is, to restrict and eventually eliminate the rights of citizens to own and operate firearms.

More narrowly, in answer to Wayne:

1. As I stated above, in my view, the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, the III Percenters, and the hundreds of ordinary Americans who invaded the Capitol on January 6, did not represent a serious threat to "American Democracy." They also did not assault Jews, Black people, Latinos, Asians, and LGBTQ people, nor did they trash Jewish-owned businesses or the headquarters of trade unions or other popular organizations. Since I do not consider breaking into government buildings, smashing their windows, damaging their furniture, and rifling politicians' desks to be criminal acts that ought to be punished, I can't get worked up over the rioters' actions while inside the Capitol. Nor do I believe that attacks on the police should constitute crimes that we on the left, especially anarchists, ought to be running around insisting be prosecuted. So far as I know, the demonstrators did not directly kill anybody; one cop died as the result of being bear-sprayed, which I doubt was the sprayer's/sprayers' intentions. (Do we know how many people have died over the years as a result of being pepper-sprayed by the police?) Another police officer committed suicide, but I don't accept blaming the rioters for this; who knows what else was going on in the individual's life? Meanwhile, a cop directly shot and killed a woman who was doing nothing more than trying to break through a door or a window. (Was there no other way to stop her?) So, I'm not sure which criminal acts Wayne is so concerned about. I should also make it clear that I do not consider the Capitol to be a "sacred site," some symbol of "American Democracy," that the rioters somehow "desecrated."

2. If trying to point out all the above—basically, to tell the truth about what really happened on January 6 and how it is being utilized by the government—adds up to appearing to defend the Proud Boys and the other right-wing groups involved, so be it. As I see it, I am defending them from lies and unjust government prosecution and persecution.

Whatever the intentions of a handful of participants, the rioters did not constitute a right-wing anti-democratic conspiracy.

On intentions:

3. In the late 1960s/early 1970s, the Weather Underground planted bombs that were meant to kill people; the bomb that blew up the Greenwich Village townhouse and several people in it was meant to be planted at an NCO (not even top brass) dance at Fort Dix. Their goal was to destabilize, if not overthrow, "American Democracy." Had they succeeded in seizing power, they most likely would have set up a totalitarian dictatorship (Pol Pot anyone?) Yet, if they had been prosecuted for their crimes, would we have simply "not supported" the government or would we have actively defended the Weather people? Despite the fact that we despised their politics, it seems to me that we would have and should have explicitly defended the Weather people. If they had, in fact, been close to reaching their goal, we might have taken Wayne's more nuanced position, but I doubt, under the circumstance, that that would have mattered much. Intentions matter, but so do circumstances.

4. More on intentions:

It is now known that during World War II and afterward, hundreds, if not thousands, of members of the Communist Party and other supporters of the Soviet Union, many of them employees of the federal government, were actively spying for the Russians (that is, sending them classified information), while many others, including some very prominent people, were regularly meeting with, and giving information to, agents of the Soviet intelligence agencies, the GPU and the GRU. It is also known that Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, along with Morton Sobell, Harry Gold, and others, were Soviet Spies. While many of these people may have been little more than naive New Deal liberals fighting for peace and justice, some of them did aim, at least ultimately, at overthrowing "American Democracy." When the government instituted loyalty oaths, prosecuted the CP leadership, the Rosenbergs and Sobell, etc., circulated blacklists, completely infiltrated the Communist Party with FBI agents and informants, etc., etc., even knowing what we now know of the CP and its activities, should we merely have "not supported" the government's repression? Or

should we have explicitly and actively opposed it, that is, supported the Communist Party's right to exist as a legal political organization and defending the individual victims of the "Red Scare," while propagating our vehement opposition to the ideology of that movement. Had the Communist Party (likely with Soviet help) been on the verge of seizing power, I might have advocated Wayne's more nuanced position, although, once again, I'm not sure that would have made any difference. Again, intentions matter, but so do circumstances. (Those who doubt the facts that I've presented here or who would merely like to know more about the events might consult *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America*, by John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and Alexander Vassiliev.)

4. As I wrote earlier, in September 1901, Leon Czolgosz (a young worker who called himself an anarchist but who in fact had limited knowledge of anarchism and little contact with the anarchist movement) assassinated president William McKinley. Yet, despite the anti-anarchist hysteria the assassination evoked (it's reasonable to assume that Czolgosz wanted to damage, if not overthrow, "American Democracy"), Emma Goldman and other anarchists actively defended Czolgosz. They did not merely "not support" the government's prosecution of the man; they actively opposed it, that is, they waged a campaign in Czolgosz' defense.

I'm not sure Wayne's abstract, hairsplitting approach helps here. What we need is concrete analyses of events, along with thoughtful deductions of the appropriate tactics to take in each set of circumstances.

Ron

All,

In response to Ron: (A) The "event" of 1/6 did not "seriously threaten" capitalist democracy by itself. But those who carried it out certainly **intended** to seriously threaten capitalist democracy (such as it is). They were the culmination of months of lies, attacks and threats against local ballot counters, attempted trickery both legal and illegal by Trump and his minions, and years of voter suppression. The "demonstrators" came to DC to "stop the steal," which is to say (whatever

they thought) to overturn the election results, stop the electoral ballot counting, prevent Biden from becoming the elected president, keep Trump in power, and call for martial law (establish a dictatorship). They did not intend to do this by persuasion but by extra-legal force.

(B) That they got as far as they did was not due to "incompetent intelligence and police work." It was due to an orientation by police toward surveilling the left and Black activists. It was due to deliberate hobbling of the police and National Guard by Trump's officials in high places. It was due to sympathy for the activists by many of the defending cops.

(C) While Ron is right to say that if things had gone a little differently (better police work, etc.), there might have been no storming of the Capitol, it is **also true** that if things had gone a little differently, in a different direction, the "rioters" might have assaulted and killed several legislators and their staff. (I appeal to Ron's anti-determinism.)

(D) Ron downplays the invasion of the Capitol, occupation of legislators' desks, beating and killing Capitol police, the woman who **merely** tried to climb through a broken window (for what purpose?), and so on. We are revolutionaries and do not care about such things, he implies. But the point is that these authoritarians of the far-right (fascists? semi-fascists? bad people?) were attacking capitalist democracy. In turn this means an attack on the limited democratic freedoms which U.S. working people still enjoy. I too do not care a lot about the "sacred" Capitol building. But I care a lot about defending bourgeois democracy against far-right authoritarian attacks--until we could hope to overthrow bourgeois democracy for worker's democracy and anarchy. For what seems to be the majority of the Utopians, this is simply not a concern (or not at least until fascist armies are already marching and murdering).

(E) What the liberals (or rather the Democrats, who are mostly "moderates" of the right) will do is mainly hypothetical. Meanwhile the Republicans have created a nation-wide tsunami of racist voter suppression laws. They threaten to overturn Roe v. Wade. They are driving down unions' powers and even existence. I say this not to plump up the Democrats, who are gearing up international tensions with China and Russia, raising the dangers of terrible war, among other evils. I am pretty

much in agreement with you-all about the Democrats and what they are doing. (For example, the liberal complaint that various "rioters" are being let out on bail before their trials, directly conflicts with the standard [liberal] demand that pre-trial detention not be used as punishment, but only to make sure that the accused will attend the trial.) But it is an error to essentially dismiss the danger from the right in order to focus on the Democrats, whose (temporary) power is held by a hair's width majority.

(F) Ron drags in the hunt for Commie spies in the Cold War. It does not excite me that imperialist powers should plant spies in each other's governments. I neither defend these spies nor attack them. But the anti-Communist witch-hunt was only peripherally about spies. Its aim was to whip up popular support for the Cold War and to beat back working class and popular rebellions (union expansion, Black civil rights, etc.). For these reasons I would have opposed the whole red-baiting drive, despite the evil of the Stalinists themselves. Indeed, it was important to defend the civil liberties of the Communists (as of fascists) in order to defend the civil liberties of all (as Draper says, as we defend the rights of criminals, not for their sake but for ours).

(G) As for the Weatheridiots, they were (or thought they were) motivated by opposition to US imperialism and racism, despite their totalitarian and terrorist conclusions. So, I would be against snitching on them to the cops, and even hiding them as they escaped underground--not with much happiness. In contrast, fascists who bombed and threatened to bomb or shoot others (such as the would-be murderers of Michigan's governor) do not deserve any support whatsoever, as far as I can see (aside from being for fair trials).

(H) To Frank: I have generally answered most of your points already. But you ask, "*what if Hal Draper's position is wrong when it comes to state attacks in the form of criminal prosecution?*" Actually, I am not sure how to read his comment on how the Weimar capitalist democracy treated the Nazis. Perhaps he is for calling on the bourgeois state to arrest the Nazis for their violent actions and punish them? (This is what the German Social Democrats did.) If so, I don't agree. While I would not object to the state arresting Nazis for murder and other violence, I would have warned the

workers and others to not rely on the state, not to trust the police and judges to really defend the people. Instead, the workers' needed self-defense forces, allied in a united front, to drive the Nazis from the streets. But Draper may only be pointing out the limitations of the Weimar Republic in protecting the workers and oppressed from the Nazis. He may be saying that the workers' parties and unions should have been pointing this out rather than relying on the state.

(I) Certainly, the semi-fascists were "kooky" and less organized than they wanted to be. They **were** kooks, and under the "leadership" of the Grand Kook, Trump himself. There's a reason someone called this the "stupid coup." Or the "insurrection that wasn't." But look up Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch, will you? Also stupid, disorganized, and kooky--that time. Of course, **if** Biden and the Democrats can pull everything together and return the U.S. to a condition of stability, prosperity, healthiness, and world peace, then there is no chance that the fascist forces will increase, improve their coordination, and threaten us ever again. Yay!

Wayne

All,

Wayne, I think you are seeing more of a conspiracy than exists. Your points A and B do this. The "intention" argument is really the Justice Department's maneuver and, to my mind, not anywhere near as clear as you think it is. Kelly Meggs, head of the Florida Oath Keepers, may have been serious when he talked insurrection, but he also may have been exaggerating to pump people up and get them to come to DC. Certainly, people at the Capitol building did say things that sounded bloodthirsty, but as in the article I posted on the two rioters allowed to make bail, it seems to have been pep talk. Also, there were cameras all over the place and some people were ranting in front of them, maybe for them. This was serious insurrection talk? I read today somewhere that one out of five defendants were ex-military, and yet nobody came to the insurrection with a gun? Or maybe a few did but left it in their cars? And B, yes, there certainly was incompetence. This has been the subject of investigation already. The other factors are that after a series of armed protests outside state capitols by

majority white and conservative people, the powers that be didn't think they'd see an assault on the "sacred" Capitol building. There also was Trump himself, who, let's face it, enjoyed that "they like me" and didn't want the rioting to stop. There may have been some Trump loyalists among Capitol police or some decision makers, but it doesn't add up the way you think it does. The first couple of days after the riot, the media was full of photos of the guys with the zip ties and the guy in military gear holding zip-ties, but when I saw the video of the latter guy in the Senate chamber, he was telling people to be respectful of the place, and that they were on an "information gathering" mission.

As to C and D, I don't see how the building gets broken into if the various "peace-keeping" forces in DC acted for 1/6 as they did for any other mass demonstration in DC. I know legislators and their staff were frightened, but that just underlines my first sentence. Your reference to "beating and killing Capitol police" is hyperbolic and misleading. There was fighting and Capitol police were beaten and injured. That is certainly true. But the media tried to tell us that Capitol police officer Sicknick died after being brutally beaten with a fire extinguisher. Now it's bear spray. The truth is they and we don't yet know why he died. In any case, Sicknick's death was not intentional, as was Ashli Babbitt's. And Ron is right to point to a history of police using pepper spray--and I will add tear gas, banned for use in war--and deaths that have resulted.

F, G, H, and I concern me less than E because I don't think history is simply repeating itself and we have democracy versus the Nazis. In fact, we have two political parties, each leaning towards its own variety of authoritarianism. We all understand the multiple dangers from the right, including dominionist Christianity, Islamophobia, imperialism, and overt white supremacy. The multiple dangers from the "left" include attacks on democratic rights (the First and Second Amendments are being attacked already, and it's difficult for me to see these attacks as "hypothetical"); Democratic Party/intelligence community/corporate media alliance to propagandize for--and when needed to create hysteria for-- military adventures, border security, social media "reform," competent "return to normal" rule-the-world-type imperialism ("the United States is back"), and

domestic terrorism legislation. And everything spun so that it sounds politically "progressive."

There's a myth on the left that the Republicans make things worse and then the Democrats come in and keep things about where they are so the GOP can have another turn at making things worse. But that really is not the case. Democrats have done a lot of damage, an awful lot of making things worse, and they intend to do more.

Frank

Utopians,

Thanks to Ron and Frank for serious responses to my comments. I am pretty sure I've reached my limits on this topic, short of some extreme remarks or incidents. Instead, let me **briefly summarize the discussion** as I see it:

(1) You-all (Ron, Frank, Mike E., Rod, and others) do not acknowledge **a difference** between government prosecution of fascists and semi-fascists due to their **speech and ideology**, versus prosecution of such people due to their **overt actions**. This is not a subtle point. You may call me names, but not punch me in the face. I am for defending their free speech (and right to associate, to demonstrate peacefully, etc.) but not for the right to trespass on the Capitol, assault police with sticks and bear spray, plant bombs, and threaten legislators.

(2) You-all continually downplay the significance of the Capitol invasion. I see it as the culmination--so far--of rightist Republican authoritarian strategies. These have not stopped, what with the tsunami of racist voter suppression laws at the state level.

(3) The traditional anarchist (and Marxist) tradition has been **to defend bourgeois democracy when it is under attack by right-wing authoritarian forces**. We do this, not for the sake of the capitalists and their minions, but in the interests of the working class and all the oppressed. However, we do not defend it in the manner of the liberals and

civil libertarians, but, if at all possible, in a revolutionary, movement-from-below (not by joining a popular front with the capitalist liberals). And we defend capitalist democracy against fascism (monarchism, whatever) only so long as the workers and oppressed are unable to overthrow it and replace it with workers' democracy and anarchy.

(4) You-all correctly point out the authoritarian aspects of the liberal Democratic program. But you seem to overlook the right-wing attack on free speech. *"Right wing legislatures trying to ban critical race theory from public schools and institutions were a far more direct threat to free speech than what's often called cancel culture."* (Michelle Goldberg, "The Social Justice Purge at Idaho Colleges," **NY Times** 3/27/21; p. A22)

Solidarity,

Wayne

Wayne,

I understand your feeling that the discussion may be exhausted, but who's to say?

Your points in order:

1). It was the Capitol Building of the United States of America that was attacked. This isn't the (weak and fragile) Weimar Republic; it's the most powerful empire in the world (yes, with a rival in China). The USA is not under threat of fascism; the people of the US (and much of the world) are under threat from US capitalism and imperialism. To see it otherwise, is to have LOST YOUR MOORINGS.

2) The last 150 years in the United States have seen a series of crises, some extreme, a series of insurgencies of the left, some sustained and even extreme, a series of insurgencies from the right, some sustained and extreme, and a tacking by the two capitalist parties that overall keep the system intact from more radical or revolutionary threats.

Post-Reconstruction Jim Crow was a nearly 100-year assault on the rights and freedoms of African Americans. Largely abandoned by both parties, Black Americans were at the mercy of plantation owners, the Klan, other terrorist organizations, and perhaps more deadly—the status quo. World War One brought catastrophe to the established empires of the world, and their peoples were the cannon fodder. The Democratic Party, the party of slavery and segregation, took the US into WWI, and it emerged as a strong world power. Under Wilson's Democratic Party, the USA invaded and toppled countless Latin American regimes in the interests of US business. During WWI it was responsible for some of the greatest repression the US population broadly had seen (except perhaps in the extreme conditions of the Civil War), and following WWI, it was the director of the Red Scare and the Palmer Raids. During the 1920s, lynchings were common, the Klan marched boldly in the streets by the tens of thousands. Republicans were in power, but the Democrats did nothing to stop this. Indeed, prominent Democrats were Klan members. A decade later, another catastrophe hit the people of the US and the world—the Great Depression. In Germany, due to UNIQUE circumstances that I won't go into here, the previously marginal Nazi Party experienced a vast upsurge in support, gained power, and quickly and efficiently replaced the weak and fragile Weimar Republics with a single-party, totalitarian state. In the US, an historically 'sound' democracy, a very different set of circumstance took place: while right wing movements emerged, a largely progressive and working-class movement that fought for social democratic/welfare state reforms was far more dominant. A very skillful Democratic Party politician navigated the upsurge in a manner designed to ensure the survival of the system in rough seas. Finally, the Democratic Party, aided by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, broke through Republican isolationism/neutrality, joined WWII, and put the USA four-square into the leadership of the capitalist/imperialist world. All the while supporting Jim Crow segregation. The 1950s, in addition to the chilling (bi-partisan) Cold War, saw extreme anti-Communism, including McCarthyism, massive and violent Southern Democrat-led segregationist and voting rights denial campaigns, the rise of the John Birch Society, and the reemergence of the Klan. I am not going to recount the sixties up until today, except to say it has largely been a back and forth see-saw between conservatism in various forms and liberalism in various forms, with movements of various stripes, and a

constant pro-capitalist, pro-repression role played by both parties. Why do I recite all this? Because NOTHING ON EARTH LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT WE ARE IN SOME EXTRAORDINARY CRISIS, ONE MARKEDLY DIFFERENT FROM THE CRISES AND RIGHT WING, AUTHORITARIAN MOVEMENTS THAT I HAVE SKETCHED ABOVE, ONE THAT CALLS FOR THE TYPE OF DE FACTO BLOC WITH THE LIBERAL BOURGEOISIE THAT YOU ARE ADVOCATING.

3) I think you have used and expanded your interpretation of the 'traditional anarchist (and Marxist) tradition' to bloc with the bourgeoisie/ruling elites/capitalist state in a manner and under conditions that is wholly beneficial, not to the working class and oppressed people of the US and the world, but rather to the machinery of state repression. Ron has provided a detailed case as to why this is so, and that case is amplified by the above discussion.

4). Yes, there are attacks on free speech from both the right and the left. So what?

Rod

Wayne,

One last, brief, thought.

Some of us believe the Democratic Party/liberal/state crusade to jack up 1/6 into an insurrection/coup, paint an extreme, existential threat to 'democracy' itself, and cast a wide net in terms of the number of people charged with serious crimes, including treason/sedition, poses a serious threat in terms of heightened levels of state repression. We think we should articulate this threat and warn of its danger to progressive and left movements, and working and oppressed people generally. You, in your own words, are 'indifferent' to what is happening; others (Roni, for example) say "have at them.'

The logic of our concern about the threat is to express our opposition to what is taking place. The logic of your indifference is to be, well, indifferent. So, tell me: how does your indifference help the working class, and how

does our opposition help the fascists? All your discussions of 'historic methodologies' do not shine the slightest light on this basic question.

Rod

Everyone,

I'm basically done with this discussion. Wayne cannot see the dangers in state overreach in regards to Jan. 6. To me there is no sharp distinction between prosecution for ideas and actions spurred by those ideas. Conspiracy to insurrection and sedition charges for what was essentially an emotion laden demonstration that got out of control in large part to poor to misfocused preps on the part of the police should be seen for what it is. It is a big grab in terms of prosecutorial precedent and police powers to be put in place for any future militant resistance from across the political or social spectrum. On the political front, "insurrection" is a grand act of hype on the part of the Dems and their neo con allies hoping to put as much of what constituted the Trump coalition as far on the defensive as they can. A more sober look at Trump and company's doomed political hijinks /theater and its post- election threat capabilities could serve to loosen the liberals' fear-based grip on its base, incipient social movements etc.

Wayne exhibits exaggerated notions of the political Rights' cohesion and offensive potential. Wayne cites the "tsunami" of state-by-state electoral turnout suppression initiatives, missing out on their somewhat desperate nature and limited ability to turn back the Democratic tide. To date no significant personages /efforts have risen to give the Right a positive programmatic thrust around which to build direction and momentum within its own ranks and amongst the large independent bloc. The *Economist* of March 6-12th reports on the growing drift of sections of Trump's evangelical base away from both him, his divisiveness, and the stolen election narrative. Then there are Trump's financial and legal issues going ahead. The Right is not going away to never return, but it presently doesn't constitute a well-toned and confident force poised to spring upon and make mincemeat of us all.

In point 4 of Wayne's Mar. 27th post, he says we are correct to point out the authoritarian aspects of the liberal program but abruptly shifts to citing a NYT piece of that very day by Michele Goldberg on an Idaho Republican legislator's introduction of a bill to ban the Teaching of Critical Race Theory. He then charges us with overlooking and not challenging "the right-wing attack on free speech." Myself and I am sure everyone else would not hesitate to oppose any and all state or college administration outlawing of political ideas. What troubles me is Wayne's refusal to recognize or oppose a much longer standing, widespread and advancing campaign by liberal/left identity politics partisans to censor, fire, and sanction all who don't bow to their dictates. His position absolves liberal and left bad actors of years of extensive and well documented campus and movement actions. Actions fueled by ideas that are at root totalitarian. Then to try by some possibly shell game sleight of hand to bring up one of several limited and late right reactions to the liberal/lefts' bullshit itself is bullshit.

I find it hard to believe Wayne is not aware of the extensive nature of these accusations against the left- liberals. I find it amazing that given Wayne's historical recognition of state capitalism and the authoritarian and even totalitarian potentials on the Left, he has chosen to ignore sharp outlines and practices in the present. I guess it's fair on my part to conclude that while he holds anarchist informed socialist preferences, he increasingly appears to have accepted bourgeois democracy as the only realizable bulwark against the Right and possibly if they are sufficiently on his radar the authoritarian Left. Nostalgia for the status quo ante?

I found point 4 to be either delusional or insulting. Perhaps Wayne is proceeding in Mr. Magoolike fashion and is oblivious to serious malignancies infecting the broad liberal /left? Is it a fear of touching this third rail of identity politics, not realizing its depth and breadth and hoping it goes away?

Mike E.

All,

I share Mike's views on this discussion, and in particular, his responses to Wayne's most recent post.

Among other things, Mike writes:

"(Wayne's) position absolves liberal and left bad actors of years of extensive and well documented campus and movement actions. Actions fueled by ideas that are at root totalitarian." Mike goes on to pose the question: How can Wayne possibly be unaware of these trends, and fail to join in opposing them? He adds: "I find it amazing that given Wayne's historical recognition of state capitalism and the authoritarian and even totalitarian potentials on the Left he has chosen to ignore."

As unbelievable as it may seem, Wayne has literally written that any actions against the state from the right are definitionally 'attacks on the working class' and should be opposed, and, conversely, any and all actions against the state from the left are definitionally 'actions in the interest of the working class' and should be supported.

Wayne has in fact retreated to a mindless use of abstract categories to answer any and all questions, while completely ignoring the real events of our time and their dynamics. This has led Wayne to a startling bloc with the US bourgeoisie, justified by a claim of existential, imminent fascist threat. Meanwhile, the repressive build-up, under a progressive Democratic wing of the bourgeoisie marches on.

Rod

Everyone,

I agree with Mike's latest addition to the discussion on the 1/6 riot and response. I also agree with Rod's, but that just came in as I set out to post this. Just a few more points.

First, the riot. When do we not oppose the state making mountains of "insurrection" of molehills of riot, hunting down rioters all across the

country and enlisting the aid of liberals on social media to do so, threatening people with charges of “sedition,” talking prison time of 5 to 20 years? It is not always the case that the line is between words and actions. There are fascists whom we would try to organize people and communities to prevent speaking. On the other hand, we didn’t and wouldn’t try to prevent conservative voters and even militias from speaking and acting against what they perceived as a stolen election. The way the election went (in some places, early Trump leads followed by Biden wins) gave their belief in a stolen election at least as much credence as Hillary’s 2016 insistence (backed by the ever-honest intelligence community and liberal corporate media) that Trump teamed up with Putin and Wikileaks to defeat her. I’d go so far as to say the damage done to the liberals by Hillary’s intelligence-and-media-backed tantrum is, in its own insidious way, at least as debilitating to the nation’s and the people’s perceptions and perspectives.

Trump’s poisoning the minds of his base with “stop the steal” seems less thought out than Hillary, intelligence, and media friends’ “Trump treason” accusations—and note they just kept coming—Mueller can’t prove them, something’s wrong with him; not the US election in 2016, must be the Ukraine; can’t get him there, what about the insurrection. Russia, Russia, Treason, Treason, Treason. One wonders what happened to the Democrats like LBJ, who didn’t want to throw treason charges around even when the case could be made (Nixon) because it was wrong to rip apart the nation. These Democrats are a horse of a different color.

Third, the “insurrection” b.s. is a difficult sell when you have to take it to court and you have oodles of charges of—get ready for the horror—“trespassing.” So, the Biden admin wants to get rid of those. And they didn’t like outgoing prosecutor Sherwin yapping about “sedition” either. My analogy to those arrested at the 2017 anti-Inauguration for broken windows is holding up pretty well—except that the Biden administration has managed to see—at least somewhat—that they’ve really overblown their claims.

Fourth, I think we are going to have to fight not only against authoritarianism coming from right and left but also this appeal to punishment/appeal to the state on both sides as well.

Speaking of which, Ocasio-Cortez spent an hour and a half on Instagram (I only heard clips) and helped put together that congressional hour of recounting the frightening events of 1/6 in order to help build the case

against Republican congress members and the “domestic terrorism” laws—and I have a lot of empathy for someone in Ocasio-Cortez’s place, previously traumatized by sexual assault and now suddenly in a possibly dangerous situation. But Beverly and I have a young adult neighbor with an anxiety disorder who was twice in the mall when protestors for Black lives arrived and he was overwhelmed by panic each time. In both cases—1/6 and BLM—the protestors had a “bad rep,” but in both cases, they did not harm these individuals. Our young Latino neighbor talks to some people in the neighborhood about his experiences and thinks he may need more meds; Ocasio-Cortez campaigns.

I posted the *Left Voice* article in part for this reason. The author, Doug Greene, sets us up with “violent white supremacists” set to “destroy anything in their path.” Ocasio-Cortez “was not safe from threats.” She had a “terrifying encounter with a Capitol police officer” whom she at first mistook for a rioter because he pounded on the door, and yelled “Where is she?” He also looked at her “with tremendous anger and hostility” [Ocasio-Cortez] and told her she had to relocate. Greene then tells us Ocasio-Cortez is “a sexual assault survivor,” and susceptible to being further traumatized. Greene then calls for an investigation into the “horrific right-wing violence directed at AOC and The Squad.” And then we’re assured that his position is not a capitulation to the Democratic Party because state and cops won’t help and the investigation should “be democratically led by independent attorneys, antifascist organizations, and working class groups.” There are just so many problems here, and they center around misreading the 1/6 riot and the desire to call on the state to punish the bad guys for acts that were not committed—leftied up as it may be with those antifascists and such.

Fifth, I want to underline what Mike E said here: “What troubles me is Wayne’s refusal to recognize or oppose a much longer standing, widespread and advancing campaign by liberal/left identity politics partisans to censor, fire and sanction all who don’t bow to their dictates.” Briefly, the Democrats have also been gaining confidence in their ability to pull off a kind of authoritarian state that has the veneer of respect for the proper-sounding political clichés. They’ve been able to team not only with media friends but also with large sections of the intelligence community. Wayne’s idea about the great tradition of defending bourgeois liberal democracy might be right if things were really that simple—“in this corner, bourgeois democracy, weighing in at very liberal, and in that corner, white supremacist fascists, weighing in at lotsa Nazi.” But it isn’t. The US is a deadly imperialist racist sexist murderous oligarchy with a few endangered

bourgeois democratic rights remaining. Both political parties have been firing up their authoritarian engines for some time now. And both political parties are more concerned with getting their hands on state power than with just about anything else. James Buchanan, the neoliberal economist who began his career at the University of Virginia, aligning himself with "massive resistance" to forge a way around desegregation, went on to create Public Choice Theory (he got a Nobel for this), which boils down to the idea that those people claiming to be "public servants" are actually motivated—as we all supposedly are in the market—by self-interest. Now we have two political parties that act like they've been schooled in his work.

Frank

Everyone,

At the risk of being repetitive. All that is being posted I believe underlines the need for a revolutionary stance that says, "Away with all this shit." Both parties/movements whether Republican/Right-Conservative or Democratic /Liberal-Left are claiming to represent the working class and we all know they do not. A self-conscious and confident working class doesn't exist. There are frustrated and confused sectors of workers and productive independent tradespeople, small business folks, and other strata and individuals vital to a functioning and healthy social fabric scattered across the two parties, registered Independent as well as millions standing outside the whole political process. It's time to initiate efforts to educate, agitate and organize for the emergence of a clear militantly independent third camp force or whatever to take the field against the Democratic and Republican Parties. Partisans of working-class independence and power. Counterposing to all the politicks, careerism, and false representation, mass direct action, organization, and revolution, if the opportunity should arise. Developing demands and a programmatic framework that has the potential to unite workers and others across various sectors. Extend solidarity and hope to those marginalized by region, declining industries and past or ongoing racial and other oppressions. Cease the pseudo-revolutionary dismissiveness of the concerns and contributions of those commonly grouped under the small and middle entrepreneur label. Think out and root out of the movement all notions with potential to sow division or cause those with true sympathies

to stand aside. In short, lend whatever support we can to the rebirth of a non-sectarian revolutionary labor current in the workplaces and unions across this continent.

The same approach as above should be applied to work in the environmental and other social movements. That said, the importance of the labor movement cannot be downplayed. Just think of how different the political atmosphere and social developments around the pandemic could have been if the unions had initiated and shaped the early measures in response. Instead of largely sitting back and waiting on the Dems, as they did.

I am for a serious exploration and orientation to already existing and growing milieus of independent critics, freethinkers, and synthesizers. Those trying to objectively examine what ideas and constructs have failed and which may have possible utility in advancing life on the economic, social, and cultural fronts. Creative use of such without regard to past associations, ideological connotations, etc.

Greenwald and others mentioned are few among many. As individuals they may or may not end up on the same path as ourselves. Others may not attain or maintain relevance. Let's embark on a little seek and perhaps we shall find in pursuit of future allies, even comrades. There are mutualist and neo-Proudhonist projects in the mix.

As stated in a prior post, I believe it to be healthy and critical we stop considering and identifying ourselves as part of the left. In seeing it as the major to sole provider of future troops or close spiritual kin. In keeping with that same posting, I reassert, I am not for ignoring the left or refusing blocs and united fronts in common arenas. I am for political combat exposing its shortcomings, failures, and support for criminal regimes past and present as appropriate. I have no interest in disputing or rescuing the socialist label from being placed on Carlson or Bannon. I am interested in revolutionary innovation and advancement not in socialist policing. Leave that well indulged pastime to the socialists.

I long ago ceased defining myself as a socialist. I remain open about my debts to and origins in that movement historically. I am fully comfortable as Neither Left nor Right but an anarchist and revolutionary. I had intended to examine this a bit more here but I'm rather nauseous and run down at the moment having exited my 2nd surgery in 4 weeks just 2 days back.

Mike E.

All,

Why Don't I Support the Democrats?

Rod has repeatedly challenged me on my view that the Democratic Party is a lesser evil to the Republican Party's greater evil (an opinion which I find rather obvious). His challenge is: *Why then don't you support the Democrats?* While Rod is a revolutionary anti-capitalist, the same question has been put to me by liberals and "democratic socialists," from their perspective. Over the years I have written many articles on this topic. (See "*Why I Won't Vote for Obama.*"

https://www.anarkismo.net/article/7681?search_text=Wayne+Price)

Here I briefly summarize my reasons for not supporting the Democratic Party.

1. **The lesser evil is still an evil.** The Democratic Party represents parts of the imperialist-white supremacist-patriarchal capitalist class and its state. It is increasing US military might, including its nuclear arsenal. It is increasing tensions with China and Russia—risking nuclear war. Unlike the Republicans, the Democrats admit that climate changes poses an "existential" threat. But its proposed actions are too little to make the necessary changes. **The issue is not who is the lesser evil but who can save the world from mass destruction.** Neither party can.
2. **We cannot beat the greater evil by using the lesser evil.** At least not overall, and not in the long run. For decades, the Democrats have been supported by liberals, the unions, the African-American community, anti-war activists, environmentalists, and

other progressive forces. The result? Carter was followed by Reagan, Clinton was followed by G.W. Bush, and Obama was followed by Trump. Who will follow Biden? The Republicans have moved to the far right, and the mainstream Democrats have moved along with them (but a set of major crises and popular discontent has affected Democratic policies for now).

So far, these two points could be agreed with by radicals who propose replacing the Democratic Party with a Labor Party, a Green Party, or a Socialist Party. However, the problem is not the Democrats nor the two-party system. **The problem is electoralism—the strategy of running in elections in order to take over the state.** The problem is capitalism and this cannot be changed by working through the capitalist state. (See my *"Should the Left Call for a Third Party?"*

https://www.anarkismo.net/article/29595?search_text=Wayne+Price)

There is a long history of labor, socialist, communist, and now green, parties—which democratic socialists seem to never discuss. Many of these have gotten elected into national office. At best, in peaceful, prosperous, times, they passed moderate reforms. At worst, in times of crisis (such as today) they resulted in collapse, capitulation to the right, or military coups. It is unlikely that even Bernie or AOC, if elected president, could manage the imperial state and the capitalist economy to effectively deal with the decline of both.

Just as they could not use elections to establish socialist democracy, it is extremely unlikely that anyone on the left could mobilize the US working class majority to expropriate the bourgeoisie and overturn its state—and then establish a totalitarian-collectivist state capitalism. Stalinist-type rulers have only come to power through non-working class armies: the Russian imperial armies in Eastern Europe, the peasant-based armies in China, Yugoslavia, Cuba, Vietnam, etc. Otherwise, Communist Parties have mostly acted like reformist compromising social-democrats—with rare instances of ultra-left posturing, also unlikely to really mobilize the workers. (This leaves out the ambiguous Russian revolution—although even in this case, the population was overwhelmingly peasants, with a small layer of industrial workers.)

What do I propose instead of the strategy of electoralism? I propose advocating non-electoral mass action: union organizing, community organizing, strikes, marches, demonstrations, nonviolent civil disobedience, “riots” (rebellions), military mutinies, sit-ins and occupations of factories, of other workplaces, schools and universities, city centers, and transportation hubs—with the strategic aim of general strikes. And I propose building the organizations of revolutionary anarchists and anti-authoritarian socialists, rooted in the working class and the oppressed, to fight for a revolutionary anti-authoritarian perspective. (I am not claiming that these are new ideas, just that they are good ideas.)

That is why I don’t support the Democrats.

Wayne

Gun Control: Here We Go Again

By Mike E.

Predictably on the heels of the Atlanta and Boulder shootings the liberal ruling circles in alliance with their media allies and an array of political operatives have widened their campaign to greatly enhance governmental powers. "Gun Control" i.e., increased registration and surveillance of the population and the banning of assault type arms and larger capacity magazines has been brought into position aside their determined post Jan. 6th effort to give political, prosecutorial and police agencies a relatively free hand in wielding conspiracy, sedition and serious felony charges in dealing with popular direct-action protest.

Crocodile tears and many fake displays of heart felt anguish for the victims and the affected families pour from TV screens. Genuine hurt and fears stand in danger of being cynically manipulated by an authoritarian movement of "progressive" social engineers. As an anarchist and revolutionary I stand in general solidarity with all conscious and conscientious protests against the dangers posed by these attempts to advance an authoritarian agenda. I reject politically correct "appropriateness" testing as to where they fall on the political spectrum. What should be rejected and condemned are any manifestations of vilifying ethnic or racial groups, the so called "illegal" etc. and any terrorist acts of protest. These are questions of the moral health and ultimate effectiveness of any resistance to the partisans, witting or unwitting of a Leviathan state.

Solidarity with varied existing organized expressions of resistance is not enough. There remains the vital task of combating the authoritarian's flawed and dangerous program for addressing the very real and widespread problem of gun and anti-social violence. Each of us in our daily lives need to intelligently converse with a range of folks on this issue. We must stake out a counter position that contributes to deconstructing the liberal's authoritarian, simplistic, false and statist idea of a "solution".

What follows are some facts /problems to wrestle with that shape my thinking in this area. The order in which they are raised is not indicative on my part of any ranking in importance or weight:

- 1.) There are at least 17 million assault style weapons out there. A ban would do nothing but create a more extensive black-market

trade in such arms. That is on top of the already extensive one that exists to supply those with criminal records or other illegal intentions. The investigative/ surveillance and enforcement/ confiscation apparatus to hamper its functioning would have to be draconian. Think of the spinoff violence and potentials for police abuses emanating from such a project. Consider the flashpoints and tragedies stemming from not only resistance by bad actors but also responsible armed folk hesitant to unwilling to surrender arms able to match the threat capabilities of those in the hands of bad actors.

- 2.) Many gun control advocates have made clear their intentions to not pull up short of such radical action. They view victory on one measure leading to another in an unfolding progression. Even if this takes time. Willingness to leave some classes of weapons (hunting, limited fire self-defense etc.) untouched does nothing to answer the legitimate not negligible concern of numerous people of how to match technically superior armed criminal individuals and gangs or various stripes of terrorists. Many dismiss or scoff at those who point out the possible need to be prepared for individual or collective defense from one's own rulers. Some folks' scenarios regarding this may be askew to a bit crazy. I ask are you confident that 15 or whatever years down the line that in some fashion that may not be the case.
- 3.) Many progressive/liberal fears of armed rightists come into play. These fears are much overblown but not without some validity. Dangerous elements exist. They are not confined to liberal stereotypes. Most conservative to libertarian 2nd Amendment defenders are responsible and rational actors. Draconian measures supported by a progressive paranoia only threatens to needlessly harden existing divides and pour fuel on the fears of the less stable. I suggest more careful consideration of what the 2ND Amendment was trying to express be weighed in the present context.
- 4.) I return to the thrust of what I raised under the first point above. This time with communities of historically oppressed peoples in the forefront. My Detroit experience informs me 2 large portions of this heavily Black community would be in a conflicted and collision course with the drive for gun control. There is no vast chasm or lack of crossties in play here. We are speaking of one people. Two forces /dynamics are operative. There is an underclass poorly or not at all served by the existing economic or political structures. There are

well armed gangs some tied to larger criminal networks and enterprises. Many are not. These are close knit often neighborhood and family or so affairs seriously armed as well. They have one foot in aspects of the illicit or grey economy and another in the workaday world. They police and protect their block or two or outlying family enclaves. Not without self-interested biases and essentially tribal beefs abound. There also is a good number of hardcore ruthless individual or paired up desperadoes looking for predatory opportunities. The attendant and significant incidents of violence spawned by this setup is an ever-present fact of life for all.

There are the more fully working class and lower middle-class folks. They are more fully tapped into the mainstream economy but living interspersed with or adjacent to the more excluded, demoralized and at times desperate strata. The resulting sharing of social space has reinforced and fostered a widespread carrying of arms by this it is an insult to say more "privileged" layer. These more working-class folks also have family and friends living in more volatile situations and must be prepared to be first responders. The Detroit Chief of police recognizes this and his own department's limitations in response so has defended the right to an armed citizenry. This has led him to clash at times with the Wayne Co. Prosecutor and earned him NRA kudos. He is Black and the prosecutor he has squared off with was as well. An aggressive federally backed anti-gun offensive would engender resistance and undoubtedly have tragic repercussions within both the wings of the community. Keep in mind many of the law abiding and responsibly acting have past records/brushes with authorities and are illegally armed. Gun confiscators tell me how will your policies even begin to untie this Gordian Knot?

I am always puzzled by the charge it is so easy to legally purchase firearms. Since Michigan's falling in with Obama's rules, I am unable to purchase or own any firearm of any type. That is because of a 1970 incident on my record. I know plenty of less responsible and stable people than I that can not only own but also have been granted licenses to carry. I find this small tidbit instructive as well. To the sanctimonious, blind to the dangers of the state individuals that can't slow down and at least attempt to consider this question more responsibly I say stay out my face and go choke on your real or feigned hysteria.

Who We Are

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To look for Utopia means providing a vision for the future – of a world worth living in, of a life beyond what people settle for as experience clouds their hopes. It means insisting that hope is real, counting on human potential and dreams.

Utopians do not accept “what is” as “what must be.” We see potential for freedom even in the hardest of apparent reality. Within our oppressive society are forces for hope, freedom, and human solidarity, possibilities pressing toward a self-managed, cooperative commonwealth. We don’t know if these forces will win out; we see them as hopes, as moral norms by which to judge society today, as challenges to all of us to act in such a way as to realize a fully human community.

We can describe some of these possibilities: worldwide opposition to the imperialist domination of the global economy; struggles against dictatorship in China, Syria, Egypt, and Venezuela; fights for national liberation in Ukraine, Kurdistan, Palestine, and China (including those by Uighurs and by Tibetans); cultural movements for the defense and recovery of indigenous languages and histories; struggles throughout the world to guarantee women full sovereignty as a right, not a privilege, dismantling the patriarchal systems that institutionalize the domination and devaluation of women by men; changes in society’s acceptance of LGBTQ people and people with disabilities; and struggles against racism, for the rights of people of color, and for the rights of immigrants. There will — we hope — be similar utopian phases ahead in mass movements in the U.S.

But beyond these specifics, we are talking about something familiar to everyone, although difficult to get a handle on. In small ways, every

day, people live by cooperation, not competition. Filling in for a co-worker, caring for an old woman upstairs, helping out at AA meetings, donating and working for disaster relief — people know how to live cooperatively on a small scale. What we don't know, and what no one has found a blueprint for, is how to live cooperatively on a national and international scale, or even on the scale of a mass political movement. Nobody has described how the society we want will look, or how to get it, though we know what it will be: a society where people are free to be good, a society based on cooperation and peace, not dominance and aggression.

This is a good time to be publishing a journal dedicated to Utopianism, revolutionary socialism, and anarchism. Struggles of the red state teachers; activism in the Black and Latinx communities, and of women, lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, and queer people, indigenous people, environmentalists, and people with disabilities — these, we think, are all harbingers of another upsurge coming.

But these are perilous times as well. Destructive effects of climate change are already being felt. They will get far worse. They demonstrate capitalism's disregard for life — human and otherwise — and for the ecosystem. It is a graphic illustration of the need to reorganize the way in which we (human beings) relate to and organize the world around us, as well as our relations with one another, with other species, and with the entire ecosystem.

The collapse of the Soviet bloc and the fact that China's Communist political dictatorship is state-controlled capitalism (with gross inequality) have done more than just discredit authoritarian Marxism. They have also discredited, for many, the very idea of changing society fundamentally. Instead, we see many turning in desperation to the demagogues of the right, while others look to the statist reformists of the social democratic left.

Meanwhile, the fabric of the post-World War II world system, already fraying, is unraveling at its core, the U.S. and Europe. Rising anger at the gross inequality and assault on living standards of the majority has

resulted in the rise of right-wing movements throughout Europe and the U.S. Racist, anti-immigrant authoritarians have ridden this anger to electoral victory in the U.S., Italy, Hungary, Austria, and Turkey, to name a few.

In the U.S. and the UK, social democrats have also gained adherents (Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in the U.S.; Jeremy Corbyn in the UK). But these “democratic socialists” and “progressives” think that capitalism can be reformed, its rough edges smoothed. Their prescription to cure the predations of neoliberal privatization is to increase the scope and authority of the state, with their ideal being something resembling Scandinavian “socialism” (contemporary Denmark; Sweden of the 1960s) and/or FDR’s New Deal. So in the U.S. the leading demand is “single payer health care” — with no discussion of how this would not be a top-down, bureaucratic monstrosity, or how it would not come at the expense of another program.

But the cure for privatization is not to increase the power and authority of the state (be it by regulation, taxation, or nationalization) but to dismantle the state (the standing army and the cops; the nightmare bureaucracies) and to reorganize society, cooperatively and democratically from the bottom up, locally based and with emphasis on mutual aid. We are confident that new mass movements from below will rise again, in a massive surge, as did Occupy in 2011. And we hope and anticipate that, like Occupy (in its initial stages, at least), these movements will reject reformism and statism.

Another highly problematic phenomenon has been the rise of Islamist/Jihadist religious fanaticism, which exploits radical hopes for escape from western domination to build mass support for a tyrannical, socially regressive, and exceptionally brutal war against both non-Muslims and the great majority of Muslims. This development is partly a response to the collapse of secular anti-imperialism in Africa, the Arab world, and Asia in the past fifty years, and partly to continuing

European/North American domination of these areas, now made worse by an anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim backlash in Europe and the United States. The road forward lies in rebuilding a democratic, radical anti-imperialism, but how this may occur we don't know.

Moreover, with a few exceptions, revolutionary anarchist and libertarian socialist groups remain small and their influence limited. Various kinds of reformism and Marxism still attract radical-minded people. Indeed, the support for Bernie Sanders in the 2016 Democratic Party primaries and the growth of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) since the November 2016 elections show that various strains of left statism, reformist and Marxist, still attract radically minded people. Reformism and Marxism, and their corresponding movements, accept the state, capital-labor relations, conventional technology, and political authoritarianism. Nevertheless, despite the dominance of reformists and statists in the world of the organized left, over the past two decades the influence of anarchists and libertarian socialists has clearly increased (as was seen in the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization as well as the Occupy movement).

It is important to continue to work for freedom and to speak of utopia. This racist, sexist, and authoritarian society has not developed any new charms. It remains exploitative and unstable, threatening economic collapse and environmental destruction. It wages war around the globe, while nuclear weapons still exist and even spread. Even at its best — most stable and peaceful — it provides a way of life that should be intolerable: a life of often meaningless work and overwork; hatred and oppression within the family, violence from the authorities; the continuing risk of sudden violent death for LGBTQ people, women, and Black people; the threat of deportation of undocumented immigrants. The major reforms of the last period of social struggle, in the 1960s, while changing much, left African Americans and other Black and brown populations in the U.S. and around the world facing exclusion and daily police (state) violence, literally without effective rights to life. The videos we see every day (in which new technology makes visible what has

always been going on) reveal, like sheet lightning, the reality of the system we live under. For this society, from its inception, to call itself “democracy” is a slap in the face of language.

This paradoxical situation — a society in obvious decay but without a mass movement to challenge it fundamentally — is, we hope, coming to an end. As new movements develop, liberal-reform and Marxist ideas will show new life, but so will utopian and libertarian ideas. We work with this in mind. We have to do what was not done during the last period of really radical social struggles in the 1960s and 1970s. Among other things, revolutionary anarchist and libertarian socialist theory very much needs further development, including its critique of Marxism, and its ideas about how to relate to mass struggles, democratic and socialist theory, and popular culture. And we need to reinvigorate the ideals of anarchism/libertarian socialism and the threads in today’s world that may, if we can find them and follow them, lead to a future worth dying for and living in.

Based on all of the above, we state a few basic principles:

We fight for reforms, but we do not believe that capitalism can be reformed or transformed into socialism via reformism or reliance on the state, be that reliance via nationalization, parliamentarism, a social democratic New Deal, or any such statist scheme.

We are opposed to social democracy, electoralism, and the capitalist parties. Consequently, we are categorically opposed to supporting Republican or Democratic candidates (including “insurgent” Democrats such as Sanders, Warren, and Ocasio-Cortez), and third parties.

We are not pacifists. We are internationalists who, as well, support struggles for national liberation. We oppose neoliberal globalization, but also oppose the virulent racism and scapegoating being directed at immigrants, at women, at Black and brown people, at LGBTQ people, at religious and ethnic minorities. We are for fully open borders.

We support and encourage workers to organize. Organizing may take place outside the unions, inside the unions, or both inside and outside, depending on current situations and future developments. And organizing should not be limited to workplace issues, but should embrace broader social, environmental, and community concerns as well.

We are anarchists and libertarian socialists. We seek collaboration with all who share our core values, including those who consider themselves libertarian Marxists, although our view — of which we hope to convince them — is that Marx, far from being a libertarian, was an authoritarian centralist and statist.

This future, we state clearly, is an ideal, not a certainty. The lure of Marxism, for many, has been its promise that a new world is objectively determined and inevitable. This idea is not only wrong, it is elitist and brutal. If the new society is inevitable, then those who are for it will feel free to shoot or imprison everyone who stands in their way. That is the key to Marxism's development from utopia to dictatorship, which everyone except Marxists is aware of. Nor do we believe in an inevitable collapse of the present system — capitalism may be able to continue to push its way from crisis to crisis at the usual cost in broken lives and destroyed hopes.

We fight all oppression under capitalism and urge all oppressed people to work in a common struggle to end their own oppression and that of their sisters and brothers.

We believe people have to make ethical choices about whether to accept life as it is or to struggle for a new society, and then about whether the society they are for will be democratic or authoritarian. The only key to the future is a moral determination to get there, a dream of a world in which those who were obscure to one another will one day walk

together. We do not know where this key may be found, but we know the only way to find it is to search for it.

That is who we are.
