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Nazis in the Trump White House

Patrick Martin

13 February 2017

Viewers of the Sunday morning television interview programs were given their first long look yesterday at a top Trump aide, Stephen Miller, the so-called “chief policy adviser” at the White House. What the American public saw was repulsive. If Hollywood casters are looking for someone to play the role of an SS officer in the next World War II movie, they’ve got their man in Miller.

Miller appeared on Fox News, ABC, NBC and CBS. Eyes fixed straight ahead in a glassy stare, his replies to questions consisted exclusively of pre-programmed lies about the unlimited powers of the president in the areas of immigration and national security. He denounced the federal judges who halted the enforcement of Trump’s executive order banning all refugees and visitors from seven Muslim-majority countries.

ABC’s George Stephanopoulos was compelled to point out that Miller was lying through his teeth, and challenged him to provide a shred of evidence for his claims of massive vote fraud depriving Trump of a majority of the popular vote. Even Fox News interviewer Chris Wallace seemed taken aback by the performance.

Asked directly why Trump was leveling personal attacks on judges, the media and even fellow Republicans, Miller employed the central demagogic theme of the Trump cabal to justify its

assault on democratic rights. “Our position is that we are the ally of millions of hard-working forgotten men and women all across this country,” he declared, “and President Trump is their champion. That’s our coalition. Our coalition is millions and millions and millions of decent patriotic citizens who just want a pay raise, who just want a good school, who just want a safe community.”

This was said, in bullying tones, about a billionaire president who opposes even an increase in the minimum wage, let alone a genuine rise in the living standards of working people, and whose cabinet picks are pledged to destroy Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, public education, workplace safety regulations and all other forms of social protection for working people.

And who is this “chief policy adviser?”

Miller was profiled by both the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* on Sunday. The 31-year-old aide has been an ultra-right activist since his teens. Born into an upper-middle class liberal Jewish family, something went seriously wrong in Miller’s personal development.

He developed a fascination with the extreme right. At Duke University he found a friend in Richard Spencer, the anti-Semitic white supremacist neo-Nazi who has been promoted by Breitbart News. After college, Miller went on to become a spokesman for a series of ultra-right figures in Congress, including Representative Michelle Bachmann and Senator Jeff Sessions. Early in 2016, he joined the Trump campaign, eventually becoming the candidate’s chief speechwriter and a frequent warm-up act at Trump campaign rallies.

Miller is one of a trio of high-profile fascists in the White House. The ultra-right views of White House “chief strategist” Stephen K. Bannon have been widely publicized in the American media, from cover stories in weekly magazines to profiles in major daily newspapers. Bannon ran the ultra-right Breitbart News until last August and made it a focal point for so-called alt-right.

A *New York Times* profile published Sunday noted Bannon’s familiarity with the work of Julius Evola, an Italian racist and anti-Semite whose writings were a staple of Mussolini’s fascist dictatorship, and who has been cited as an inspirer of the Greek neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn. Bannon cited Evola’s writings in a speech to a Vatican conference of right-wing Catholics in 2014.

A lesser-known but equally repugnant figure is Michael Anton, recently appointed as director of strategic communications for the National Security Council, making him the second-highest press spokesman for the White House after Sean Spicer. A former speechwriter for New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Anton was a Bush White House aide, in which capacity he fervently backed the decision to invade Iraq. He moved on to communications positions with right-wing publisher (and owner of Fox News) Rupert Murdoch and with Citibank, and then a post as a managing director of the huge hedge fund BlackRock.

Last week, William Kristol, publisher of the neo-conservative journal *Weekly Standard*, revealed that Anton was the author, under a pseudonym, of a screed issued last September and widely circulated in right-wing circles titled *The Flight 93 Election*. This essay portrayed a Trump

victory as the sole hope for the survival of America (and implicitly compared Hillary Clinton to the Al Qaeda hijackers of the doomed United Airlines flight on September 11, 2001).

Anton made an explicitly racist appeal for support for Trump, claiming that “the ceaseless importation of Third World foreigners with no tradition of, taste for, or experience in liberty means that the electorate grows more left, more Democratic, less Republican, less republican, and less traditionally American with every cycle.” As a result, he warned, the 2016 election was the last chance for “my people,” i.e., white Americans.

This argument is so openly racist and authoritarian that Kristol, himself a longtime right-wing Republican operative and warmonger, compared Anton to the jurist Carl Schmitt, a notorious Nazi apologist.

The White House has over the past half-century provided employment for many unsavory and criminal types. But the Trump administration represents an entirely unprecedented descent into the lower depths. The presence of political filth like Bannon and Miller in positions of great power and influence in the White House signifies a terminal crisis of American democracy.

There have already been suggestions, from *New York Times* columnists Paul Krugman and Roger Cohen, among others, that the Trump administration plans to seize on the next terrorist incident as the justification for the abolition of democratic rights. Cohen even cited the precedent of the Reichstag Fire, the pretext manufactured by Hitler to impose emergency rule in Germany.

These columnists offer no explanation as to how this situation has arisen, let alone any proposal as to how the accelerating descent toward a police state can be stopped. As is typical of Democratic Party propagandists, they say nothing about the obvious connection between the breakdown of democracy and the socio-economic realities of contemporary capitalism.

The threat of dictatorship arises directly out of the oligarchic character of American society. Trump, Bannon, Miller and Anton did not emerge from a Munich beer hall, but from Wall Street and the corporate elite. Trump is a real estate and casino billionaire, with close ties to the media bosses. Bannon was a Goldman Sachs executive and his media venture, Breitbart, has been underwritten by hedge fund billionaire Robert Mercer. Anton served Rupert Murdoch, then CitiBank, then BlackRock, the world’s largest hedge fund.

There is a growing movement against the Trump administration and its attacks on democratic rights and the social interests of the “bottom” 90 percent of society. This movement requires a clear political strategy and program. It must be anchored in the working class and armed with an uncompromising anti-capitalist and socialist perspective. We urge the readers of the *World Socialist Web Site* to fight for this perspective.