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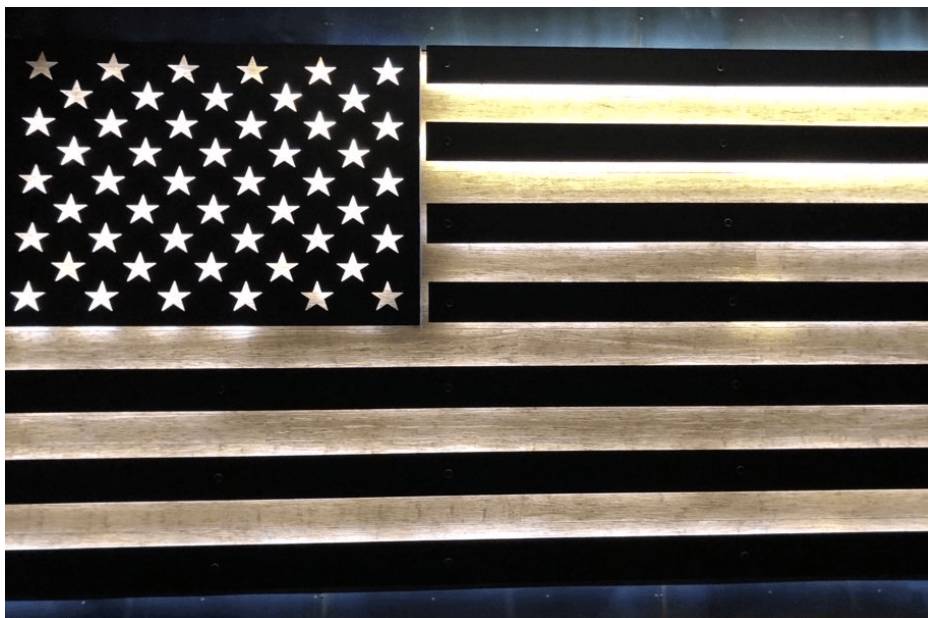
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by PAUL STREET
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The Rolling Constitutional-Fascist Coup in the World's Most Dangerous Nation



Photograph by Nathaniel St. Clair

“We Want to Get Rid of the Ballots”

We are in the middle of a rolling authoritarian and even fascist coup that is working with and through the United States Constitution to no small degree. To be sure, Trump is doing everything in his considerable power to undermine a “normal” bourgeois-constitutional election. He’s working to sabotage mail delivery in an election that will depend on mail-in ballots thanks to the pandemic Trump has fanned. He’s deploying armed right-wing “poll watchers” to intimidate minority and other Biden voters. He’s encouraging terrorist street actions and intimidation by white “tough guys” (bikers, militia members, cops, and soldiers)

before, during, and after the election. His party will mess with voting sites and access in majority Democratic jurisdictions.

Trump claims again and again that the only way he can lose is “if the election is rigged.” This is understood by his armed “tough guy” base as a call for “civil war” if vote count doesn’t go his way. It is possible pretext for suspending the election and declaring invalid the tens of mail-in ballots required by the pandemic that Trump has fanned across the nation – the novel coronavirus that is now part of the widely hated Trump’s electoral/anti-electoral strategy. It a possible “justification” also for declaring martial law, as he is being urged to do by some of his far right friends (e.g. neo-Nixonian lunatic [Roger Stone](#) and the Fatherland News’ fascist frau [Jeanine Pirro](#)) to squash protests against his fake Election Day victory.

Listen to this [recent exchange](#) between Trump and an American reporter:

Reporter: “Win, lose, or draw in this election, will you commit here today for a peaceful transfer of power after the election”?

Trump: “Well, *we’re going to have to see what happens. We want to get rid of the ballots, and we’ll have a very peaceful — there won’t be a transfer, frankly. There’ll be a continuation. The ballots are out of control, you know it....*”

The orange wannabe fascist strongman *will not commit to a peaceful transition.*

Surprised? You shouldn’t be. As former longtime Trump confidante and fixer Michael Cohen and the senior Trump administration official [“Anonymous”](#) have warned, this is no laughing matter. Trump means it when he says he wants to be president for life and has no intention of leaving the White House without violence.

Remember Cohen’s testimony to Congress last year: “Given my experience working for Mr. Trump, I fear that if he loses the election in 2020 there will never be a peaceful transition of power. *That is why I agreed to come before you today.*”

“Trump,” Cohen warns in his book [Disloyal](#), “will never leave office peacefully....Whoever follows Trump into the White House, if the President doesn’t manage to make himself the leader for life, as he has started to joke about – and *Trump never actually jokes* – will discover a tangle of frauds and scams and lawlessness. Trump and his minions will *do anything* to cover up that reality, and *I mean anything*” (emphasis added).

This isn’t dystopian political science fiction. This is really happening here and now.

“The Reichstag is Burning”

Trump’s critics rarely call Trump a fascist, but they don’t really have to. Along with other ways in which he checks off all the overlapping boxes – vengeful nationalism, Social Darwinism, cult of personality, demonization of the press, virulent “them and us” racism-nativism, an obsession with national borders, hyper-masculinism, reactionary/fake populism, savage ethnocentrism, recurrent theatrical hate-rallies, anti-urbanism, wacky conspiratorialism, the encouragement of violence against political enemies, a death cult (including the sacrifice of his own older and more informed supporters), a relentless propaganda

war on truth, a vicious and largely petit-bourgeois base, obsessive anti-Marxism, false conflation of centrists and liberals with left radicals (Trump has recently suggested the right-wing corporate Democrat Joe Biden has gone [beyond “socialism” to “communism”](#)), hatred of intellectuals, the deployment of paramilitary forces to crush dissent, the encouragement of armed militia beyond and within government forces and more – Trump’s hatred for the “normal” constitutional rule of law and checks and balances is part of what marks him as a 21st century fascist.

Key parts of the American establishment are coming around to something that a small number of left and liberal intellectuals, myself included, have been saying for years: Trump and his backers are objectively fascist. Listen to this remarkable passage from a *Washington Post* Op-Ed by centrist Dana Milbank last Friday:

“America, this is not a drill. The Reichstag is burning. For five years, my colleagues and I have taken pains to avoid Nazi comparisons. It is usually hyperbolic, and counterproductive, to label the right ‘fascists’ in the way those on the right reflexively label the left ‘socialists.’ But this is no longer a matter of name-calling.

With his repeated refusals this week to accept the peaceful transfer of power — the bedrock principle that has sustained American democracy for 228 years — President Trump has put the United States, in some ways, where Germany was in 1933, when Adolf Hitler used the suspicious burning of the German parliament to turn a democracy into a totalitarian state.

Overwrought, you say? Then ask Yale historian Timothy Snyder, a top authority on Nazism and Stalinism. ‘The Reichstag has been on a slow burn since June,’ he told me. ‘The language Trump uses to talk about Black Lives Matter and the protests is very similar to the language Hitler used — that there’s some vague left-wing conspiracy based in the cities that is destroying the country.’

Asked on Sept. 23 if he would commit to a peaceful transfer of power if he loses the election, President Trump said, ‘We’re going to have to see what happens.’

Trump, as he has done before, has made the villain a minority group. He has sought, once again, to fabricate emergencies to justify greater powers for himself. He has proposed postponing elections. He has refused to commit to honoring the results of the election. And now, he proposes to embrace violence if he doesn’t win.

‘It’s important not to talk about this as just an election,’ Snyder said. ‘It’s an election surrounded by the authoritarian language of a coup d’état. The opposition has to win the election and it has to win the aftermath of the election.’ If not? There won’t be another ‘normal’ election for some time, he said.” (Washington Post, September 25, 2020)

Look at *Huffington Post* commentator Paul Blumenthal’s [recent reflection](#) on “The Nightmare Scenario That Could Hand Trump a Second Term”:

“Trump has the backing of a [broad network of heavily-armed militia groups, far-right street-fighting gangs, white supremacists](#) and [a pseudo-religious cult that believes Trump is a](#)

demigod operating in secret to prevent the apocalypse. Trump has primed these supporters to potentially reject the election results with his false statements about voter fraud and absentee voting. He also routinely celebrates violence against his opponents, casting them as subversive, alien threats to the American way of life. The Republican National Convention featured a married couple as primetime speakers solely because they pointed guns at a peaceful protest that they imagined threatened their property. The calls for violence coming from some Trump supporters, such as Stone and disgraced Health and Human Services official Michael Caputo, likely will only increase as the election draws closer.”

Nasty Stuff That’s Fully Constitutional (Sorry)...

Like the arch-authoritarian wannabe dictator he is, Trump would love to do away with all limits (constitutional and otherwise) on his power if he could. He and his party and backers are ready to deploy extra-legal means to keep power.

That said, this is all unfolding within the American constitutional framework to a remarkable degree. Hitler, it is worth recalling, rose to power in significantly “constitutional” and electoral ways.

Let us not pretend that the Constitution is our great people’s trump card in the struggle against Trump’s rolling white-nationalist coup or that Trump is not relying on it to stay in power. Or that Trump and his allies aren’t using the constitutional framework inherited from the profoundly anti-democratic 18th Century U.S. Founders to their authoritarian advantage.

In his haunting 1958 book *Brave New World* revisited, Aldous Huxley warned of a kind of fascism wherein “the quaint old forms – elections, parliaments, Supreme Courts, and all the rest – will remain” while “the ruling oligarchy and its highly trained elite of soldiers, policemen, and mind manipulators will quietly run the show as they see fit.” It was a poignant alarm to raise, but we should not underestimate the significant extent to which America’s “quaint old forms” – so quaint as to date from the time of horse-drawn buggies and Black chattel slavery before the cotton gin – are actively enlisted in the authoritarian project today.

Let us not imagine that we the people – the supposed and imaginary sovereign force in the preamble to the nation’s deeply conservative charter – do not ourselves have to go beyond “normal” constitutional channels to unseat him.

...The Democracy-Flunking Electoral College

In 2020 as in 2016, “COVID-45” has the openly anti-democratic and right-tilting Electoral College working in his favor this time as before. Biden will have to best Trump by many millions of popular votes to prevail in the reactionary Electoral College. That is absurd and authoritarian, but it is *fully constitutional*. Under the rule of the slaveholders’ 1788 Constitution, citizens in the self-described homeland and headquarters of democracy do not elect “their” president based on direct popular vote. Constitutional Simon Says. (It is great

fun to try to explain the insane U.S. Electoral College system to people from other countries where democracy is less of an institutional illusion.)

...Legal Voter Suppression

At the same time, the Party of Trump is using noxious but fully legal and constitutional means like state-level voter identification and felony disenfranchisement laws to, well, disenfranchise millions of minority and other likely Democratic voters across the country. Earlier this year, a right-wing federal appeals court ruled that the right-wing governor of Florida can render upward of 750,000 disproportionately Black felons unable to vote without first paying off their (typically unaffordable) court fines and fees.

This may be terrible but it's legal and constitutional, just like the savage right-wing gerrymandering of many hundreds of Congressional and state legislative districts across the country.

...Constitutionally Protected Fascist Truth Inversion

There is of course *nothing technically unconstitutional* about Trump using his insanely politicized bully pulpit to spew endless fascistic distortions, lies, and smears, including: the claim that the nation is under “radical Left”-“terrorist assault”; the bizarre description of corporate Democrats as scheming “totalitarian” “Marxists”; the false claim to be overseeing a fully tested and safe COVID-19 vaccine before the election; the ridiculous depiction of the pandemic as an act of bacteriological war by his great enemy China; the chilling demonization of the nation's largely nonwhite cities; the bizarre claim that Black and brown mobs will come to “erase the suburbs” under a Biden presidency; the wacky charge that Biden hates religion and wants to “hurt God;” and the *reckless, violence-provoking claim that “the only way” he “can lose is if the election is rigged” – a call for Civil War if the process doesn't go his way.* All this and more Orwellian distortion, including Trump's sick smearing of the mail-in presidential ballots required by the pandemic he spread across the nation, is constitutionally protected free speech. So is his not-so-veiled call for violence to reverse an electoral outcome that favors his opponent – and to murder “terrorist” Black Lives Matter and “Antifa” protesters in the streets.

...A High Court Well to the Right of the Populace to Certify Election Theft

Trump, his personal attorney general William Barr, and their white nationalist ally U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell could barely contain their glee at news of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's (RBG's) death. They are moving quickly to replace her with the far-right jurist Amy Coney Barrett – a real-life “Handmaid's Tale” Christian Fascist[1] – to round out a 6-3 Republican high court that will stand far to the right of the populace on every relevant social and policy issue.

Beyond using the high court to eliminate women's rights, gay rights, immigrant rights, Black civil rights, labor rights, anti-poverty programs, Social Security, and environmental protection, the White House, the Republican Party and the Senate Majority Leader hope that

a more fully right wing court can guarantee a second term (how about a third?) for Trump if Biden wins the Electoral College count.

It may be disgusting and immoral for Trump to ram a 6-3, appointed-for-life right-wing court down the throat of a majority progressive nation but it is also fully constitutional. The Constitution – drafted and passed by and for slaveholders and merchant capitalists for whom democracy was the ultimate nightmare in the time of Louis XVI – says he can.

The Supreme Court’s awesome power of penultimate national judicial review was designed by the absurdly venerated Founders as an explicitly anti-democratic aristo-republican check on the egalitarian sentiments of the populace.

Whoever Trump appoints will stand far to the right of U.S. public opinion but not to the right of the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate, which rules on White House nominations to the high court.

It might seem absurd that the U.S. Senate is majority-Republican given the fact the Trumpified Republican Party is widely hated and deeply unpopular in the United States. But this irrationality (from a democratic perspective) is *constitutional*. The nation’s hallowed charter grossly exaggerates the Senate voice of the nation’s whitest, most reactionary, Republican, gun-addicted, racist, and proto-fascistic regions. The Constitution assigns two Senators to each U.S. state regardless of (steep) differences in state population (“Red” Republican Wyoming, home to 573,720 Americans, holds U.S. Senatorial parity with “blue” Democratic California, where more than 39 million Americans reside).

William von Barr will mount a noxious but (sorry) fully constitutional court challenge to any election count or maneuver that doesn’t go their Dear Leader’s way. And with the help of a more fully right-wing Supreme Court, the fascist party will prevail when the election’s outcome, which they will contest if doesn’t go their way, comes before the nation’s final judicial authority.

...Deadly Serious “Contingency Plans”

In the Trump era, it’s always worse than you initially thought. We have recently learned from The Atlantic that Trump’s team is considering “contingency plans” to bypass the outcome of November’s election. While we’re used to state Electoral College elector slates being selected based on the popular vote, *Atlantic* correspondent Barton Gellman chillingly reminds us that “*nothing in the Constitution says it has to be that way.*” Citing Republican Party sources, Gellman reports that Trump’s campaign is discussing proposals “to bypass election results and appoint loyal electors in battleground states where Republicans hold the legislative majority. Trump,” Gellman explains, “would ask state legislators to set aside the popular vote and exercise their power to choose a slate of electors directly. The longer Trump succeeds in keeping the vote count in doubt, the more pressure legislators will feel to act before the [December 8th] safe-harbor deadline [for appointing Electoral College Electors] expires.”

A Trump campaign legal adviser told Gellman that in this scenario, “the state legislatures will say, *‘All right, we’ve been given this constitutional power. We don’t think the results of our own state are accurate, so here’s our slate of electors that we think properly reflect the results of our state.’*”

Reinforcing the sense that this is *a very real threat* is the fact that Republicans control both houses of the state legislatures in numerous battleground states.

Republican schemes to replace popularly elected state-level Electoral College slates with unelected slates of Trump loyalists appointed by state legislators is in accord with “our” 18th Century Constitution. That will certainly be the ruling of a 6-3 right wing Supreme Court if cases of competing Electoral College slates comes before it.

Constitutional Pipedreams

A Little-Known Amendment

Readers may have heard that the Constitution contains a provision for the election to be thrown into the House of Representatives if nobody is able to achieve 270 Electoral College votes required for victory by January 8th of next year (as could happen if some state Elector slates are nullified, as occurred in 1876-77). One might assume that this would spell victory for Biden since the House is majority Democratic. But that’s not how it works. It won’t matter in that case that the House is controlled by the Democrats. The MAGA Party of Authoritarian White Nationalism wins if the presidential contest goes to the House because – under the Twelfth Amendment to the holy Constitution (1804) – the House’s verdict is based on which party controls the most House delegations by state, not which party has the most individual House representatives. The Republicans have a majority in 26 state delegations to the House, Democrats control 22, and 2 House delegations — Michigan and Pennsylvania — are evenly divided. That would hand the election to Trump (though the outcome of this year’s House races could change the math).

But even if the House were to (magically) side with Biden in such a case, the Trump-Barr regime would refuse to accept the lower Congressional body’s decision. Herr Barr would take the matter further to a Supreme Court certain to function as the White House’s authoritarian handmaid.

Re-Impeachment?

And, no, impeaching Trump a second time in the House in an effort to supposedly force the Senate to take up a new removal trial and thereby prevent it from approving Trump’s right-wing Supreme Court nominee before Biden can become president and rescind the nomination of a far-right justice will not work. File that under “Grasping at Straws.” There is nothing in the Constitution or in subsequent election case law that compels the racist and sexist pig McConnell to take up new Articles of Impeachment before overseeing the approval of Trump’s coming horrific nominee.

It's unlikely that the deeply conservative House Speaker Nancy Pelosi would try the re-impeachment gambit even if it could work. The establishment Dems complain about the Republicans playing "raw power politics" with the Supreme Court because they are secretly ashamed over their longstanding feckless failure to do the same thing.

Court-Packing Fantasies

The reptilian neoliberal hack [James Carville is right](#): "*if this election is remotely close, [the Republicans] will steal it*" with a 6-3 Supreme Court as their trump card (though a 5-4 court might have been sufficient). Given all the standard electoral manipulation, the right-tilting Electoral College, and the remarkable circumstances created by COVID-19 and Trump's reckless comments on mail-in voting, *it seems almost certain that the election will be considered "remotely close."*

The best hope to constitutionally counter the menacing absurdity of a 6-3 right wing high court is for a Joe Biden presidency and a Democratic House and Senate to pass legislation expanding the court's size and to then appoint at least four new justice – this while granting statehood and thus four more likely Democratic U.S. Senators to Washington DC and Puerto Rico. But these too are probably pipedreams predicated on the dismal Democrats taking a significant majority in the Senate and then stepping up to wage a real parliamentary war. Pitiful Joe Biden (see below) has already said that he would never move to expand the court. And what's to stop vicious far right Republicans who might follow him into the White House and Congress from countering with another expansion later?

The Constitutional Awfulness of Biden-Harris

Elite strategists who have [gamed out different 2020 election scenarios](#) see just one potential circumstance that doesn't land the nation in a bloody constitutional crisis: a sweeping and decisive Biden landslide in both the popular vote and the Electoral College. Good luck with that! The deeply conservative corporatist clown Joe "You Know the Thing" Biden is a despicably poor and slow-witted candidate who stands far to the big business, imperial and racist right of the Democrats' majority-progressive base. The tired old neoliberal warmonger the Democrats have insulted their base and the world with as their pathetic answer to "the most dangerous criminal in human history" (Noam Chomsky's [accurate description](#) of Trump) is a cognitively challenged sub-contender who says one absurd and offensive thing after another: "they [Jim Crow Senators] never called me boy;" "put on the television, I mean the record player" (a supposed solution to the educational "achievement gap"); "you ain't Black if you aren't voting to me" (said to a popular Black radio talk show host); "poor children can do just as well in school as white children;" "you know the thing" (substituted for the preamble to the American Declaration of Independence when he couldn't remember the words); "Donald Trump is the first racist president in American history," etc. Biden tells Millennials he has "no empathy, give me a break" for their situation in America. He says he would veto Medicare for All (supported by 7 in 10 Americans) if it came to his desk as

president. He has signaled that his economic policy will be about neoliberal austerity, which guarantees right-wing victories in the 2022 Congressional election and the 2024 presidential race were he to somehow slip into the White House (assuming he lives long enough to become by far and away the oldest president ever inaugurated). Kamala Harris, another miserably failed centrist and mass-incarcerationist presidential candidate, isn't much better even if she is younger and more lucid.

Thanks again, Obama. (Please read my postscript)

While unusual for the extreme incapacity of its nominee, the Democrats' 2020 presidential ticket runs in the depressing and demobilizing Clintonian grooves of the dismal dollar-drenched Democratic Party – aptly described by Sheldon Wolin in early 2008 as “the Inauthentic Opposition” – of the Neoliberal Era (1970s to present). Much of this has to do with the role that big-money campaign contributions and corporate media play in determining the outcomes of the nation's ever more preposterously expensive elections. Wealthy corporate and financial campaign backers and bankrollers make it clear that Democratic politicians' claim to represent the progressive and populist values of the nation's majority is for show only. Any serious move to make policy in accord with majority progressive public opinion will mean a loss of the backing and media approval required to run viable campaigns. Policies pre-empted by the nation's unelected dictatorship of money include any moves to break up the media oligopoly and create seriously public media.

And the distorting influence of money in U.S. elections and policy is attributable in no small measure to the Constitution. The Founders created the Supreme Court as a critical, presidentially appointed-for-life check on the popular will. And in two landmark decisions, *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) and *Citizens United* (2010), the high court has ruled (in standard violation of majority public opinion) that private campaign contributions are “free speech” and that there are no limits to be legally set on how much the rich and powerful can invest in tilting things their way. With Supreme Court approval, the American money-politics system subjects U.S. candidates to what US Congressman [Jamin Raskin \(D-MD\)](#) once accurately described as “the wealth primary” – the requirement that one either possess vast personal wealth or access to others' largesse to make viable runs for office.

The neoliberal awfulness of Biden-Harris 2020 is fully *constitutional*.

Seventy-Eight Days

Even if Americans can avoid a bloody constitutional crisis and actually “vote” (however indirectly under the insane system bequeathed to us by 18th Century slaveowners) the aspiring fascist dictator Donald Trump out, this virulently racist, arch-sexist monster gets to linger on as a so-called lame duck chief executive for 78 days after the formal Election Day. Constitutional Simon says. Think about the havoc this genocidal racist and nuclear arms-race promoting maniac can wreak in 78 bitter days of vengeful white nationalist hatred. The

notion of leaving this lethal and indecent fiend in power until the third week of January 2021 is insane.

The Constitutional Crisis is the Constitution

Some Americans I know are childishly proud of the fact that “our” Constitution has survived as the nation’s political and policy rulebook (I would say straight-jacket) since the time when late-feudal absolutism still reigned in Europe and powdered-wigged Founders rode in horse-drawn buggies while their slaves were tortured on tobacco, rice, cotton, and sugar plantations. How pathetic. Here we are more than 23 decades later, *slavishly captive to a charter that doesn’t even permit us to directly elect “our” president, with the only viable candidates offered to us selected in advance for us by the current version of the propertied elite that the explicitly anti-democratic U.S. Founders saw as exclusively and qualified for the making of policy*. Who would go to a dentist or a surgeon working with the same tools and knowledge as those used by pro-cavity dentists and pro-death surgeons in 1788?

The malignantly fascistic Trump owes no small part of his rise to power to this profoundly and explicitly anti-democratic parchment. He also owes his continuing presence in the White House (the Constitution has no provisions for votes of no confidence and snap elections to oust a monstrous president like Trump and removal through impeachment or the 25th Amendment is damn near impossible) and the strong possibility that he will come back for a second (perhaps third) term to “our” (their) absurdly venerated Constitution.

To no small degree, “our” (their) *archaic Constitution is the constitutional crisis*. It helped hatch the Trumpenstein and it is helping keep it in office for four or, God help us, more years.

The Best Way to Protest is to Protest: Only We Can Save We the People

The real way to get rid of Trump – an existential and authoritarian menace on numerous levels regardless of whether you agree with the description of him and his hard core base as fascist – is through a mass and prolonged popular rebellion in the streets beneath and beyond the “normal” constitutional channels. There is something you will not generally hear from the nation’s Inauthentic Opposition. It often seems that that Democrats’ key mission is to keep the people off the streets no matter how awful things become. “The best way to protest,” the neoliberal inaction hero and low-energy ex-president Obama intones, “is to vote.”

No. “Well, I’ll vote” just isn’t even in the ballpark of what time it is and what needs to be done. It isn’t even in the parking lot of the ballpark. It isn’t even in the side road leading to the bigger road leading to the highway leading to the small road leading to the parking lot of the ballpark.

I cannot tell readers how many Black Lives Matter protests I’ve been to where the only political demand beyond the *excellent local call for de-funding the police* is for people to vote, vote, vote. *Of course millions will and should take two minutes to try to vote Trump out*. But it needs be said loudly and repeatedly: *voting alone is not remotely sufficient to remove him*. *The best way to protest is to protest and in this particular and deadly election cycle,*

mass protests are going to be required even to have a remotely decent vote, insofar as such a thing is possible under our masters'/owners' deeply problematic major party and elections system. And, as Refuse Fascism says, those protests need to be organized NOW, with a pre-emptive aspiration, before the nightmare scenarios already unfolding before our eyes, can fully play out. We need a giant popular, united-front and nationally coordinated democracy movement presence in place before the coup hits Election Day.

Both/And & Beyond

Think about what a mass movement to remove the Trump-Barr-Pence-McConnell-Miller nightmare regime though BOTH electoral means AND mass street action could augur and prefigure for the future. Removing the regime is essential but it's about much more than that. After defenestrating the neofascists who menaced the nation and world with genocidal racism, ecological exterminism and more, we would grow and sharpen our popular tools to confront the *whole damn system*, Democrats included, that brought Trumpism-fascism into being and into the world's most dangerous office.

"The real issue to be faced," Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr wrote near the end of his life, "is the radical reconstruction of society itself." The reconstruction project must include a new national charter based on popular sovereignty, [the U.S. Founders' ultimate nightmare](#). We need an actual democratic people's revolution, the first one to ever take place in the United States. If we do that, we will draft an entirely new charter, one that enacts instead of pre-empts and checkmates popular self-rule. One that abolishes the rule of capital and commodity, I might add. Constitutions matter but it should never be forgotten that a society in which everything and everyone is for sale is a hopelessly corrupt brothel waiting to become a full-on dictatorship.

Postscript: Beyond Hollow Resistance, Refuse Fascism

Once again, with Trump, [as with Obama](#) (and those two are related), *I told folks so*. I did the same on the transition from Obama to a Trump/Trumpism. And now (it bears repetition) we are in the middle of a rolling fascist, or, if that word is too much for some readers, a rolling authoritarian coup. Trump was the predictable and predicted outcome of the neoliberal viciousness of the Obama years and the nation that produced the deeply conservative Obama phenomenon and presidency. Trump's ongoing assault on the election is precisely what should have always been expected of him. Of course he's doing that. This is what a fascist/authoritarian/white nationalist does. These are all things I've been trying to raise alarms about. I spent years trying to warn people about the real nature of neoliberal corporate-imperial Obama and Obamanism. I have spent years trying to warn people about the real nature of neofascist white nationalist Trump and Trumpism. Now the logical outcome of it all is underway. To those who get it now (and by "it" here I mean not merely that Trump and Trumpism are fascist/authoritarian but that you can't meaningfully fight and undo Trump and Trumpism with the Hollow Resistance of Obama-Clintonite neoliberalism and

electoralism), I say “welcome.. Better late than never.” Life in the Inauthentic Opposition (Clinton-Obama world) sucks. We have a lot of work to do, not so much to “save” democracy, which was long gone under Obama (and Bush43 and Clinton42 and Bush 41 and Reagan and Carter and Ford and Nixon) as to rescue and sustain some semblance of it and the rule of law and then then to fight to actually create democracy (popular sovereignty/power to the people) in the organization of society and politics. Imagine. On all this and more see my new book *Hollow Resistance: Trump, Obama, and the Politics of Appeasement* (CounterPunch Books. September 28, 2020). And please go to the Website and the meetings and gatherings called by the left group Refuse Fascism (RF). RF’s consistent and courageous scall for the Puerto Rican-style removal of Trump and Pence Out Now is being richly born out yet again, to say the least. RF has called for mass non-violent protests beginning October 3 “that continue day after day through the elections, united by the demand: Trump/Pence Out Now!” As RF says: “The future is on the line — you and everyone you know and can reach — are needed to join in a historic undertaking that cannot wait another day. *Trump is already stealing the election and threatening even greater violence to stay in power.* Together, in all our diversity, from our many different political perspectives, every race and religion, different life experiences, young and old, we must share our skills, our moral courage and commitment, and our aspirations for a world not dominated by fascist terror to build growing daily nonviolent protests, not stopping until this fascist regime has been driven from power.”

Endnote

1. According to *Newsweek*, Amy Coney Barrett is affiliated with a Christian fascist group of the kind that inspired feminist Margaret Atwood’s dystopian novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale*. As *Newsweek* explains: “Barrett, a devout Catholic, and her husband both belong to the People of Praise group, current and former members have said, according to *The New York Times*. Their fathers have served as leaders in the group. The charismatic Christian parachurch organization, which was founded in South Bend, Indiana in 1971, teaches that men have authority over their wives. Members swear a lifelong oath of loyalty to one another and are expected to donate at least 5 per cent of their earnings to the group. Members of People of Praise are assigned to personal advisers of the same sex—called a “head” for men and “handmaid” for women, until the rise in popularity of Atwood’s novel and the television series based on it forced a change in the latter...Atwood herself has previously referred to the practices of a charismatic Catholic group motivating her to write *The Handmaid’s Tale*, set in the fictional Gilead, where women’s bodies are governed and treated as the property of the state under a theocratic regime.” The Barrett nomination even as RBG was not yet buried was a true Christian fascist throw-down.

Paul Street’s next book is The Passive Resistance: Obama, Trump, and Politics of Appeasement. It will be released later this summer by CounterPunch Books.

SEPTEMBER 28, 2020