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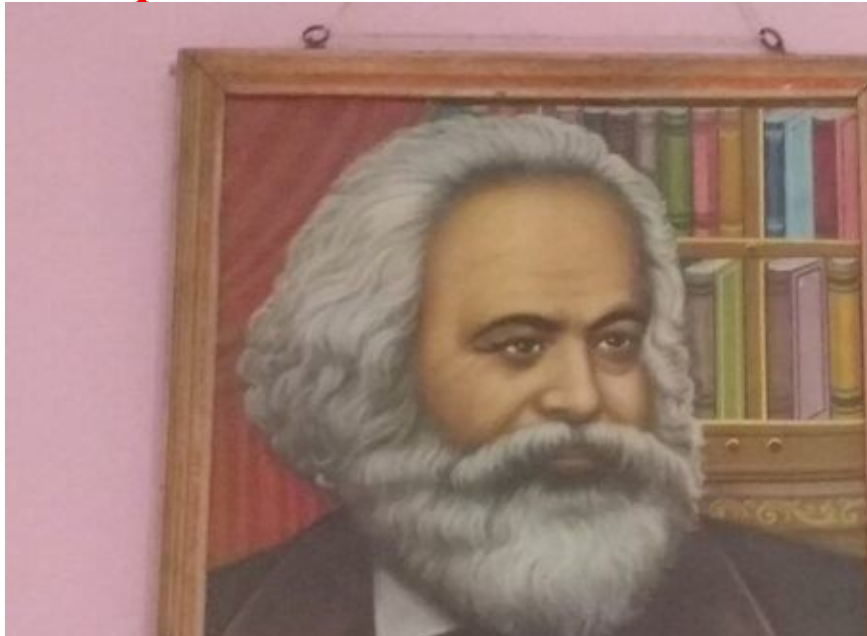
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## *Why the Republi-Fascists Can't Stop Calling the Capitalist Democrats "Marxists"*



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### **The Capitalist Democrats...**

The Democratic Party is a militantly capitalist entity and always has been – and not just in the neoliberal era. The much beloved New Deal Democratic president Franklin Roosevelt, himself a wealthy member of the capitalist establishment, boasted that he had saved the US American profits system by overseeing reforms that helped deradicalize the populace in the wake of the great capitalist failure known as the Great Depression.

The leading post- New Deal neoliberal Democratic politicians and policymakers of my adolescence and adulthood, from Jimmy Carter through Joe Biden have all sworn and

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demonstrated their fealty to the capitalist order in numerous ways that I (along with many others) have written about and documented at great length.

Nancy Pelosi meant it when she was asked by a young Bernie Sanders fan to comment on the high popularity of the word “socialism” among US youth: “we’re capitalist and that’s just the way it is.”

With a net worth well over \$100 million thanks largely to the parasitic accumulations of her investor husband, Pelosi had some selfish reasons to cancel discussion of alternatives to the system that has given the top tenth of the nation’s upper One Percent as much wealth as its bottom 90 percent.

“We’re capitalist and that’s just the way it is” has been the shared consensus opinion of all but a tiny share of the Democratic Party’s candidates, operatives, officeholders, policy wonks, ideologists and, of course, funders for all of my six decades-plus on this continent.

### **...Considered “Socialist,” “Radical Left,” and Even “Marxist” by Republicans**

All of the above is meant to introduce a question that has been rolling around in my mind since the “Tea Party” rebellion against the supposed “Marxist-Leninist Black nationalist” US President Barack Trans-Pacific Partnership Obama, who was in fact a “deeply conservative” servant of the wealthy Few and their vast corporate and financial holdings:

*Why this recurrent wild-eyed Republican/FOX News denunciation of the dismal, dollar-drenched neoliberal capitalist-imperialist Democrats as “radical Left,” “Marxist,” “socialist,” “communist,” and the like? Why do Republicans rail on and on about the “socialist” and even “Marxist” menace supposedly represented by a party that bends over backwards to demonstrate its fealty to the Lords of Capital – this in a country where Marxist and socialist forces are (dangerously and depressingly) marginalized?*

The charge has gone ballistic in the Trump era, of course, with the false neo-McCarthyite, paranoid-style accusation of supposed socialist radicalism now routinely hurled at the bourgeois and (since the mid-1970s) neoliberal Democratic Party. Many readers here have probably heard or read about numerous Republicans from Donald Trump on down absurdly calling the recent indictment of Trump a politically vindictive “weaponization of the legal system” by “the radical socialist left,” as if the Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg and the 24 grand jurors who recently voted to charge Trump are members of a communist organization.

### **“A Marxism State of Mind”**

Five weeks ago, Donald “Take Down the Metal Detectors” Trump took things to a new level of paranoid anti-Marxism at the annual convention of the Conservative Political

Action Conference (CPAC). There he claimed that “Marxist thugs, radicals” have turned “our once beautiful USA” into a “crime-ridden, filthy, communist nightmare....I used to say that we will never be a socialist country,” Trump said. Now, however, since his eviction from the White House and the rise of Joe Biden’s supposedly stolen presidency, Trump said, “*that train has passed the station long ago of socialism. It never even came close to stopping, frankly...We’re now in a Marxism state of mind, a communism state of mind, which is far worse. We’re a nation in decline.*”

Yes, Donald Trump proclaimed the end of Barack Obama and Joe Biden’s Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution!

Apparently believing that the United States has progressed from the mere dictatorship of the proletariat to full communism beyond class, Trump promised counter-revolution: “we’ll kick the communists out.”

(Trump, who was mentored by Joe McCarthy’s legal counsel Roy Cohn, has got the present “Marxist thug” writer right at least: I transitioned from revisionist socialism to MSOM [“Marxism state of mind”] and CSOM [“communism state of mind”] years [well, decades] ago and wish more folks on “the left” would do the same.)

### **Fascist Ideology Requires It**

Forget for a moment, if you can – I can’t – that this country and the world are in dire existential need of socialist revolutions to replace a capitalist-imperialist order that is quite literally destroying life on Earth. That critical matter aside, what’s behind this preposterous but pervasive Republican charge that the plutocratic, deeply conservative Dems are Marxists, socialists, and communists?

No small part of the answer, I suspect, is that the Republican Party over the last fifteen years and with particular intensity since the rise of Trump has gone fascist and *that anti-Marxism and anti-socialism are critical ingredients of the political and ideological virus that is fascism*. The very logic of the fascist world view requires a big menacing socialist enemy even when no such enemy objectively exists.

This, I think, is one of two absent or at least underdeveloped pieces in the Yale philosopher Jason Stanley’s brilliant ten-point analysis of fascist politics. The first thing missing (if implicit) in his widely read book *How Fascism Works* is fascism’s explicit rejection of parliamentary bourgeois democracy and its violent determination to introduce a new authoritarian political superstructure. The second thing missing (though this is also implicit and hinted at in Stanley’s book) is obsessive anti-socialism and anti-Marxism.

### **Why Look for Evidence and Reality in *Anything* the Republi-fascists Say?**

Then there's the many-sided falsity and madness of most of what the Republi-fascists say. It's a mistake to look for rationality and empirical evidence behind most of what the nation's rightmost major party and its adherents believe or purport to believe. Three of Stanley's ten fascism-defining points are critical here: constant political propagandization, anti-intellectualism, and "unreality," seen in the Republi-fascists' attachment to wild conspiracy theories. Look, folks (to steal a line from Biden), this is a party that:

preposterously clings to the massively false claim that Donald Trump won the 2020 presidential election.

ridiculously claims that the January 6 Capitol Riot was a minor and mostly friendly affair – a curious description of a bloody physical assault on the US legislative branch meant to provoke a crisis cancelling Joe Biden's election.

lethally denies decades of scientific research on the deepening climate catastrophe. It purveys thoroughly mythical narratives of voter fraud.

passes state laws criminalizing the accurate teaching of any history that does not match its white nationalist myths about when "America was great."

is full of anti-vaxxers and book banners and people who ludicrously believe that American grade school children are being taught graduate and law school-level critical race theory (CRT) by "socialist" elementary teachers and that CRT is "Marxist."

thinks there's a giant "radical Left" organization called Antifa exercising vast power in connection with "deep state" forces who want to collapse America's fossil fuel industry in service to supposedly communist China.

contains and elevates people who think that the Democrats are party of a child-eating globalist conspiracy funded by George Soros.

believes that small fetal cell clusters are living human beings with as much claim to civil and legal rights life as fully grown women.

is loaded with fundamentalist Christians who take the endless wild, often bloody, and vindictive stories in *The Holy Bible* as revealed truth and who believe that Armageddon is at hand. (Many of the more unhinged *Bible*-thumpers in the party believe or claim to believe that the slithering sociopath Trump is God's Chosen One sent to Earth to lead the select to heaven.)

I could go on listing the ludicrous and even psychotic things Republi-fascists believe. Seen against the backdrop of their overall madness, the Republi-fascists' idea that the Democrats are "Marxists" and "socialists", and that the nation is haunted by "the radical Left" seems par for the course and relatively mild.

## Hints of Plausibility

At the same time, there are perhaps just enough tiny hints of the seeming truth of the at once neofascist and neo-McCarthyite narrative to give Republi-fascist anti-socialism/-Marxism a slight scent of plausibility. Democratic voters and Democratic-affiliated organizations do stand to the *comparatively* social-democratic, environmentalist, anti-racist and feminist left of the ever more right-wing Republicans (this is not very hard to do, of course). This reflects the Democrats' base in highly unequal, poverty-plagued, and racially and culturally heterogenous metropolitan areas with a good number of highly educated professionals and a decent smattering of liberal and leftish intellectuals and colleges and universities – polyglot cities that are viewed with classically fascist fear and loathing (see [this book](#)'s ninth chapter) by “red” (try brown) state Republicans.

There is a small handful of national Democratic Congresspersons who occasionally claim to be “democratic socialists,” including a telegenic Latina Congressperson (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez) who once said that capitalism is “irredeemable” and a senior US Senator (Bernie Sanders) who has made two serious runs of the Democratic presidential nomination in the last two election cycles.

The nation's rampant identity politics and ideological confusion has helped identify “the left” and even socialism with racial minority and female and gay representation, not proletarian revolution. The “woke imperialist” Democrats are deeply invested in splashing a fake-progressive multi-cultural and cross-gender veneer on their capitalist and imperialist politics by putting Black, Latino, female, and gay faces in high places.

The Republi-fascists are not about to see or acknowledge the capitalism-imperialism behind the identity screen. Their white nationalist form of anti-socialism makes it a no-brainer for them to merge neoliberal identitarianism (what Nancy Fraser has oxymoronically called “progressive neoliberalism”) with Marxism and “a communism state of mind.”

There was in fact a leftish Occupy Movement/moment directed against class inequality and plutocracy that spread across the nation's cities and town like wildfire in the fall of 2011. That felt kinda radical and socialist even if it was really a mixture of populism and anarchism. And there have been major and often remarkably cross-racial rebellions against racist police brutality in major, medium-sized and even some small US cities and towns since the murder of Trayvon Martin in February of 2012. The George Floyd Rebellion was the biggest protest wave in American history. It sparked no small white-Americaner neofascist reaction, from Trump on down.

## **Alt-Fact Fascist Media**

Meanwhile, the right possesses a vast communications “alt-fact” network that permits it to circulate and reinforce its malicious and fantastic narratives free of empirical challenge and reasoned debate. From FOX News and its further right competitors One America Network and Newsmax to the vast right-wing talk radio network to the dark web chat rooms where fascists plot armed attacks on “the radical Left” and “the deep state,” the ever more mainstreamed far right creates its own alternative un-reality, where Donald Rumsfeld’s Orwellian statement holds “true”: “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.” False and malevolent things said and posted repeatedly across the bias-confirming and self-reinforcing right-wing echo chamber become facts in the minds of millions.

The Third Reich’s propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels would have appreciated this neofascist communications system. It’s not for nothing that he ordered the mass production and distribution of the *Volksempfänger*, the single-channel “people’s radio,” to broadcast Adolph Hitler’s vicious racist and expansionist, evidence-free propaganda directly into everyday Germans’ homes, hearts, and minds. “By 1941,” historian Allison Marsh notes, “nearly two-thirds of German households owned a *Volksempfänger*, and Goebbels had succeeded in giving Hitler a direct conduit into people’s homes via the airwaves.”

Our modern-day Goebbels, Tucker Carlson, has used Fatherland/FOX to poison millions of Amerikaner minds with false election theft and January 6 narratives he does not privately believe – and with a constant drumbeat of propaganda meant to convince masses that the neoliberal capitalist-imperialist Democrats are “radical Left Marxists,” and that the nation is in danger of socialist takeover.

Of course, nothing would be better for this country, continent, hemisphere, and world than an actual socialist revolution in the United States of America – the last thing the Democrats ever want to see, even if Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez did once properly call capitalism an “irredeemable” system.

### *A Telling Irony*

Even as the Republi-fascist party gets away with routinely, absurdly, and inaccurately excoriating the Democrats as “socialists” and even as “Marxists” (supposedly terrible things to be), the Democrats, with very few occasional exceptions, can barely if ever bring themselves to honestly, publicly, and accurately call the Republican Party of “Retribution” fascist. Adding to the irony, the Republikaners’ constant absurd demonization of the

Dems as supposed socialists and Marxists is a significant part of what helps us identify the current Republican Party today as a fascist organization.

More on why the F-word fits the Republicans[1] – and how this is messing with the American System – later this week.

+ *This is a slightly longer and updated version of an essay that appeared on The Paul Street Report two weeks ago.*

### **Note**

1. A partial preview: ‘let’s acknowledge something unpleasant about why the Republic-fascists steadfastly oppose even elementary gun control measures even as the nation experience one mass shooting after another. Let’s say what we know or ought to know out loud: the nation’s rightmost major party is now a socially, racially, and politically eliminationist and neofascist formation that embraces the rule of men over the rule of law. It channels and contains definite white-supremacist genocidal tendencies and sensibilities. As such, its leaders are happy about the fact that its adherents possess a wildly disproportionate share of the insane number of firearms and especially of the military style weaponry that is out and about in the US-American Armed Madhouse. It is pleased with the private arms status quo as it applauds demented politicians including a putschist ex-president who fascistically and absurdly call their corporate Democratic opponents “radical Left animals” and who speak in open terms about bloody “retribution,” “vengeance,” and “Civil War.”’

**Paul Street’s** latest book is *This Happened Here: Amerikaners, Neoliberals, and the Trumping of America* (London: Routledge, 2022).

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