

MAINSTREAM FASCISM-POPULIST FASCISM



The U.S. and its Vichy Political Parties have drifted so far to the fascist right that people such as Madeleine Albright and Hilary Clinton come across as the heroic vanguard of a political and ethical resistance to fascism. What is often unrecognized in the celebrated denunciations of fascism by these celebrity politicians is that their neoliberalism is fascism of the Mainstream. None of these politicians have denounced state violence, nationalism, the myth of American exceptionalism, and the forces that produce obscene inequality in wealth and power in the US, or the oppressive regime of law and order that has ruled America ruthlessly and without apology since the 1980s. Trump is merely the blunt instrument at the heart of a fascist neoliberal ideology. What is really objectionable to the neoliberals and - to conservatives as well - is the populist nature of Trump's wild card version of fascism. What is often ignored in the emerging critiques of fascism is the history of neoliberalism's legacy.

15 years ago, *The Nation* magazine published an essay by Sheldon Wolin (A long time Whale Gulch Local So-Hum, resident before his demise) called "Inverted Totalitarianism." The essay was printed under protest from the "liberal" editor/publisher herself and it ended Wolin's long association with *The Nation*. In his 2003 essay, Wolin had these last words to say to the "liberals": "The party system is a notorious example of the declining power of institutions to control the state. The Republicans have emerged as a unique phenomenon in American history of a fervently doctrinal party, zealous, ruthless, antidemocratic and boasting a near majority. As Republicans have become more ideologically intolerant, the Democrats have shrugged off the liberal label and their critical reform-minded constituencies to embrace centrism and footnote the end of ideology. In ceasing to be a genuine opposition party the Democrats have smoothed the road to power of a party more than eager to use it to promote empire abroad and corporate power at home. Bear in mind that a ruthless, ideologically driven party with a mass base was a crucial element in all of the twentieth-century regimes seeking total power.

"I want to go further and name the emergent political system "Inverted Totalitarianism." By Inverted I mean that while the current system and its operatives share with Nazism the aspiration toward unlimited power and aggressive expansionism, their methods and

actions seem upside down. For example, in Weimar Germany, before the Nazis took power, the "streets" were dominated by totalitarian-oriented gangs of toughs, and whatever there was of democracy was confined to the government. In the United States, however, it is the streets where democracy is most alive-while the real danger lies with an increasingly unbridled government.

"While the Nazi totalitarianism strove to give the masses a sense of collective power and strength, Kraft durch Freude ("Strength through joy"), Inverted Totalitarianism promotes a sense of weakness, of collective futility. While the Nazis wanted a continuously mobilized society that would not only support the regime without complaint and enthusiastically vote "yes" at the periodic plebiscites, Inverted Totalitarianism wants a politically demobilized society that hardly votes at all.

"Inverted Totalitarianism has its own means of promoting generalized fear; not only by sudden "alerts" and periodic announcements about recently discovered terrorist cells or the arrest of shadowy figures or the publicized heavy-handed treatment of aliens and the Devil's Island that is Guantánamo Bay or the sudden fascination with interrogation methods that employ or border on torture, but by a pervasive atmosphere of fear abetted by a corporate economy of ruthless downsizing, withdrawal or reduction of pension and health benefits; a corporate political system that relentlessly threatens to privatize Social Security and the modest health benefits available, especially to the poor. With such instrumentalities for promoting uncertainty and dependence, it is almost overkill for Inverted Totalitarianism to employ a system of criminal justice that is punitive in the extreme, relishes the death penalty and is consistently biased against the powerless.

"Or another example of the inversion: Under Nazi rule there was never any doubt about "big business" being subordinated to the political regime. In the United States, however, it has been apparent for decades that corporate power has become so predominant in the political establishment, and so dominant in its influence over policy, as to suggest a role inversion the exact opposite of the Nazis'. At the same time, it is corporate power, as the representative of the dynamic of capitalism and of the ever-expanding power made available by the integration of science and technology with the structure of capitalism, that produces the totalizing drive that, under the Nazis, was supplied by ideological notions such as Lebensraum."

To return to the present, *The Nation* is perfecting the practice of Inverted Totalitarianism by dubbing itself the organ of *The Resistance* while in fact functioning as *Collaborators*. Eisenhower famously warned of the Military/Industrial Complex, echoing Mussolini's definition of fascism as "Corporate Militarism. He was however crucially censored in his attempt to extend this to include Congress. Hence, the

Military/Industrial/Political Party Complex is really what old Ike meant to communicate in 1960! Within 3 years this Complex successfully removed the next president to recognize the **Complex** for the Deep State that it was.

Wolin pointed out that a new system of power, concentrated and expansive, had come into existence under the designations "Empire" and "superpower." These terms, said Wolin, "accurately symbolize the projection of American power abroad, but for that reason they obscure the internal consequences. Consider how odd it would sound if we were to refer to "the Constitution of the American Empire" or "superpower democracy." The reason they ring false is that "constitution" signifies limitations on power, while "democracy" commonly refers to the active involvement of citizens with their government and the responsiveness of government to its citizens. For their part, "empire" and "superpower" stand for the surpassing of limits and the dwarfing of the citizenry."

The fight against fascism is part of a struggle over memory and those critical narratives that refuse to be couched in a form of historical and social amnesia. It is also a fight over the public spheres and institutions that make civic literacy, the public imagination, and critical consciousness possible. This suggests both a struggle to reclaim historical consciousness and to expose the forces that are and have been complicit with the long standing attack on democratic institutions, values, and social relations, especially those that now hide their past and ideological convictions in the purifying discourse of outrage, disingenuousness, and resistance.

Any resistance to fascism has to be rooted in its refusal to equate capitalism and democracy. Such a battle has to be waged in diverse struggles that can be aligned through a common thread willing to recognize that we are at war over not just the right of economic equality and social justice but also against the powerful and privileged positions of whiteness, a toxic masculinity, and the elimination of the very notion of the social, solidarity, and compassion. This is a war waged over the possibility of a radical democracy while acknowledging that the rich and powerful will not give up their power without a fight.

Instead of listening to politicians and others deeply embedded in a system of exploitation, disposability, austerity, and a criminogenic culture, we need to listen to the voices of the striking teachers, the Parkland students, the women driving the me too movement, the Black Lives Matter movement, and others willing to make resistance visible, collective, and widespread. But we also need to connect these voices as part of a more comprehensive struggle against fascism and the diverse forms of repression that it produces. Such a challenge will not come from establishment politicians and pundits parading as the new heroes of the resistance to Trump's fascism.

Thanks to Henry Giroux and *Counterpunch*. Henry's website is. henrygiroux.com.



Muir Report asks the question: APRIL FOOL'S DAY- OUR NEXT NATIONAL HOLIDAY?

Has anyone heard a word about arming teachers since they started to surround state capital buildings demanding fair wages?

Is it a coincidence that Easter fell on April Fools Day?

I'm trying to remain positive. Trump has popularized giant breasts once again and he has saved or at least extended the lives of thousands of pigs by having China place a tariff on them and by raiding abattoirs for undocumented workers. The pigs say thank you and call us when you get this mess straightened out.

We also are reminded, with the bombing of Syria that there is a right way and a wrong way to kill innocent people. Take a tip from Obama, you can bomb the shit out of anyone as long as you are a gentleman and have no scandals in your immediate family. The concept of killing people to show that it's wrong to kill people escapes logic. However, in our defense, we kill people humanely. It's a known fact that dropping thousands of pounds of concrete and mortar on the heads of children is far kinder than gassing them, especially when plans to build a pipeline through your country have fallen through.

In Mr. Trumps defense, he has claimed they notified the enemy of the impending attack so they could save their lives, and, oh, coincidentally carry away some of those supposed chemical weapons. Can a scenario similar to the one in *Catch 22* be far

behind, when the Capitalists figure out that it's actually cheaper for each country to bomb their own position rather than waste all that fuel traveling to the enemy?

The first marijuana job fair was held at City Hall this year and the building was flooded with green lights and policemen checking for weapons and directing participants to the various booths. The first LEGAL 420 celebration was held this year, an annual celebration by 30,000 or so anarchists, who smoke so much weed at 4.20 in the afternoon that it resembles the sky over *Beijing* and that also was populated by dozens of obese, blue uniformed, policemen, moving about the park like so many fishing bobbins writhing on a green sea.

Why so many police required at legal events? Aside from the link between violence and happy celebrations, Prop 64, like Humboldt's Measure Z, provided massive funding for the gendarmes as part of their acquiescence to the legalization. The police lost a lot of money in this move, not being able to indiscriminately seize people's property, not being able to pad their felony arrest records, not taking in billions in overtime to fly over fields with binoculars, not stuffing the ranks of private jail houses with relatively benign inmates. Prop 64 was a windfall for the people's army. Even though logic would dictate legalization should require less police than more, one third of the income from weed, after it filters through the Governor's office is earmarked for them. The only question is how to distribute it, and the answer is overtime.

As a friend pointed out, pot is what you sell when you are totally broke and without options, why is the government any different?

-Muir Walker