

The GOP's 'Red Caesar' New Political Order Plan Marches Forward



*Thom Hartmann - Photo:
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“Thirty years ago,” Damon Linker [told](#) *The Guardian*, “if I told you that a bunch of billionaires and intellectuals on the right are waiting in the wings to impose a dictatorship on the United States, you would have said that I was insane.”

Now, however, the senior lecturer at Penn State University’s Department of Political Science and author of the [Notes from the Middleground](#) Substack newsletter has reconsidered.

“But it’s no longer insane,” Linker writes. “It’s now real. There are those people out there.” And, Linker notes, “The question is: will they get their chance.”

The simple reality is that they already have had their chance in multiple Red states, and when we watch what they’re doing with it we see that step-by-step, day-by-day the GOP is inching towards full-blown fascism. Now they’re calling to end democracy and replace our president with a “Red Caesar.”

They no longer believe in elections, because the American people are rejecting their vision of more tax cuts for billionaires, hating on racial and gender minorities, and more fossil fuel pollution to destroy our planet.

So instead of trying to get elected by presenting honest differences in policy from Democrats, Republicans have resorted to massive gerrymandering, purging voting rolls of millions of Americans who live in Blue cities within Red states, and [dark-money TV carpet-bombing campaigns](#) often filled with lies and half-truths.

But that's just the beginning.

Wisconsinites elected a Democratic Chief Justice for their Supreme Court, Janet Protasiewicz, and Republicans are trying to impeach her before she's heard a single case because they believe (probably correctly) that she will vote to declare their gerrymander map—which overwhelmingly favors Republicans all out of proportion to their strength in the state—unconstitutional.

North Carolina is so gerrymandered that the majority of the state's residents vote for Democrats (which is why the governor is a Democrat) but, just like Wisconsin, Republicans hold a solid majority in the House, Senate, and their federal Congressional delegation. So, I guess it shouldn't surprise us that a committee co-chaired by Republican Senate Leader Phil Berger and Republican House Speaker Tim Moore just gave itself gestapo-like powers.

The Republican-controlled *Joint Legislative Committee on Government Operations*—or, as Judd Legum [notes](#) at *Popular.info*, Gov Ops for short—now has the power to break into the home or office of anybody in the state who has worked for or with state government and go through their files and even personal phones and computers.

As Legum [writes at his brilliant Popular.info](#) Substack newsletter:

“The rule applies to contractors, subcontractors, and any other non-state entity ‘receiving, directly and indirectly, public funds,’ including charities and state universities.

“Moreover, Gov Ops staff will be authorized to enter ‘any building or facility’ owned or leased by a state or non-state entity without a judicial warrant. This includes the private residences of subcontractors and contractors who run businesses out of their homes, lawmakers say.

“Alarming, public employees under investigation will be required to keep all communication and requests ‘confidential.’ They cannot alert their supervisor of

the investigation nor consult with legal counsel. Violating this rule 'shall be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal,' the law reads.

"Those who refuse to cooperate face jail time and fines of up to \$1,000. In the event that Gov Ops searches a person's home, these rules mean that the person 1) must keep the entry a secret, 2) cannot seek outside help (unless necessary for fulfilling the request, the law says), and 3) could face criminal charges if Gov Ops deems them uncooperative."

Meanwhile, down in Florida, Ron DeSantis has created two new armed organizations answerable to himself: a new "[state guard](#)" militia and a [police agency](#) that is supposed to provide for "election integrity" (GOP code for preventing Black people in Blue cities from voting).

As former Republican Governor (now a Democrat) Charlie Christ said of DeSantis' new armed officers:

"No governor should have his own handpicked secret police."

Across the country, Republicans are threatening and intimidating teachers and librarians into stripping from their collections any books that positively portray Black or queer people.

Armed fascist militias supportive of those efforts show up at school board and other meetings with assault rifles strapped across their backs to heckle and threaten elected officials.

Dozens of white supremacist militia groups nationwide—modern versions of the old Ku Klux Klan—openly embrace Republican politicians while parading with Nazi and Confederate flags.

Donald Trump, the American fascist movement's current standard-bearer, has said that if he again gains the White House he will immediately lock up and then prosecute high-profile Democrats and the judges and prosecutors who have tried to hold him to account for his decades of criminal activity.

When last in office he tried to stop and then to overturn an election; should he get re-elected it will almost certainly be the last free and fair election in the nation.

Trump uses racial slurs—calling the Black prosecutors who have gone after him

“[Riggers](#)” and “racists”—to crank his white supremacist base into stochastic terror violence.

He has also said that—like Vladimir Putin and Viktor Orbán—he will investigate for “treason” and then presumably [shut down](#) network television news outlets that don’t echo his talking points and unquestioningly broadcast his lies.

Not a single Republican of national stature has stood up to condemn any of this rhetoric. The entire party is terrified of this 77-year-old who, last week, told his audience that he’d beaten Barack Obama in the 2016 election and he was worried that Democrats [might](#) “start World War II.”

Our corporate media, of course, buried those stories while obsessing on concerns that President Biden is too old for his job. It’s almost as if the network executives are already looking forward to another tax cut when Trump gets back in.

Increasingly, Republican politicians and elite thinkers are calling for a “Red Caesar”—a strongman dictator who can take control of America and whip us into shape—to replace our elected office of president.

In order to do this they would first have to “[terminate](#)” our Constitution and create a “post-constitutional” new political order, as Trump proposed doing toward the end of his single presidential term.

One of the leading Republican thinkers on the topic, Professor Kevin Slack (of Hillsdale College), [put it](#) simply:

“[The] New Right now often discusses a Red Caesar, by which it means a leader whose post-Constitutional rule will restore the strength of his people.”

Reporter Jason Wilson, at *The Guardian*, [quotes](#) wealthy industrialist GOP supporter Charles Haywood as saying:

“I like, if not love, the idea of Red Caesar” since “Caesarism, and its time-legitimated successor, monarchy, is a natural, realism-based system, under which a civilization can flourish.”

Monarchy, in fact, seems to be exactly what the GOP wants to move America into. Republican politicians in Red states including [Arkansas](#), [Florida](#), and [North Carolina](#) are successfully shutting down citizen and press access to information

about Republican efforts to restrict citizens' rights.

And nationwide, a group of powerful American oligarchs have, for years, been funding an effort to re-write our Constitution from scratch.

They call it the "[Convention of States](#)" and have held an annual dress rehearsal in Washington, DC for over a decade. They're just six states away from pulling it off, [Common Cause](#) points out.

As former Labor Secretary Robert Reich [notes](#), Trump's GOP has gone way beyond authoritarianism and fully embraced a modern form of Mussolini's fascism.

It's elements include a rejection of the rule of law and elections; rage against the college educated and artists; white and Christian supremacy; embracing violence to achieve political goals; and hate and control directed against women and queer people.

Reich [lays it out](#) explicitly:

"They are *not* the elements of *authoritarianism*. They are the essential elements of *fascism*."

Meanwhile, Trump and his acolytes like Marjorie Taylor Greene are calling Democrats "fascists" in an apparent attempt to dilute or render meaningless the term.

Just last month, for example, [Trump posted](#) on his actual-Nazi-infested social media site that the "Biden Crime Family" was "reminiscent of Nazi Germany in the 1930s."

For most of the 20 years I've been doing a talk radio show, my rightwing colleagues have been working hard to convince their listeners that Hitler's Nazis were lefties. "Just look at the word 'Socialism' in the name of the National Socialists" they say.

Apparently, as Propaganda Minister Goebbels famously said, if you repeat a lie often enough it will become, to the people listening, a truth. Today, as University of Oklahoma Sociology Professor Samuel L. Perry [wrote](#) for TIME Magazine:

“In our survey, 76% of Republicans place fascists on the left side of the spectrum, and 44% rate them at 1, as far left as possible. And we see similar numbers for Nazis. Over 68% of Republicans think Nazis are left-of-center and about 43% say Nazis are the pinnacle of leftism.”

Democrats, of course, know that Nazis are as far to the right as one can possibly go. But they haven't been paying attention to decades of rightwing propaganda via outlets like Fox “News” and rightwing hate radio on 1,500 stations nationwide.

The Biden White House gets it. When President Biden said Republicans were “semi-fascist,” his press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre bluntly [told](#) reporters:

“I was very clear when laying out and defining what MAGA Republicans have done and you look at the definition of fascism and you think about what they're doing in attacking our democracy. ... That is what that is. It is very clear.”

And political violence—like we've seen on January 6th and in dozens of politically-motivated murders over the past few years—is at the heart of every fascist movement in history.

From Trump [gloating](#) about 83-year-old Paul Pelosi being beaten in the head with a hammer by a MAGA follower, to his calling for violence against the FBI and our judiciary, to January 6th, today's GOP is now steeped in—and reveling in—political violence.

From calls to bomb Mexico to defunding the FBI to open appeals to racism, homophobia, and misogyny, today's Republican Party would be a shock to Dwight Eisenhower and probably even Richard Nixon.

Will the GOP ever repudiate the fascist element that's been buried deep within it since it embraced Confederate values following Democrats signing the Civil Rights Act in 1964?

It's going to be hard for them, so long as so many of the billionaires funding the party—a form of bribery legalized by five corrupt Republicans on the Supreme Court—are openly fascist themselves.

The Republican Party was set on this path when Richard Nixon embraced his “Southern Strategy” of using race against Democrats back in 1968.

They doubled down when Reagan gutted America's unions and savagely stripped working-class families of \$50 trillion, moving that cash into the money bins of the top 1 percent.

They lost their souls when George W. Bush lied us into two unnecessary wars to seal his 2004 re-election and then started illegal black-site torture chambers, a crime for which he has yet to apologize, much less make atonement.

And the path was completed when Donald Trump, a man whose wife said he slept with a collection of Hitler's speeches on his bedside table for years, was put in the White House because of naked interventions in our 2016 election by his role model and owner, Vladimir Putin.

Either the GOP will be crushed to near irrelevance in the 2024 elections, or they will win enough power to end the American experiment. In either case, we must do everything we can to hold this country together and fight for the values we've proclaimed since our nation's founding.

Over 1.2 million Americans have died fighting in wars to preserve our democracy. Although Donald Trump [calls them](#) "losers" and "suckers," we know most were heroes and we can't let them—and our children and grandchildren—down now.

Double-check your voter registration (particularly if you live in a Red state: so far in the past decade they've purged over 40 million people from the rolls; [17 million were removed](#) in just the two years after Trump became president) and share progressive media as far and wide as you can.

The future of American democracy—and freedom around the world—is at stake.

By Thom Hartmann

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