

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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Source: Independent Media Institute

Credit Line: This article was produced by [Economy for All](#), a project of the Independent Media Institute.

Israel's Current Government Cannot Envisage Peace. An Interview With C.J. Polychroniou



C.J. Polychroniou

A dangerous new phase in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is currently under way. Following Hamas's vicious October 7 attacks inside Israeli territory, the Netanyahu government vowed to destroy the militant group and ordered a "complete siege" of Gaza. More than 9,000 Palestinians have already been killed and the death toll will surely rise much higher as Israeli troops have now encircled Gaza City. How do we explain Hamas's devastating attack on October 7? How should the Left have reacted to the Hamas's attacks? What is Israel's plan for Gaza? Is Israel guilty of war crimes? What is the mission of peace movements and activist groups inside Israel? Political scientist/political economist, author, and journalist C. J. Polychroniou addresses these questions in an interview with French-Greek journalist Alexandra Boutri.

Alexandra Boutri: It's been 27 or so days since Hamas unleashed a massacre in

Israel, killing more than 1400 people and capturing more than 200 hostages. Since then, Israel has been hammering Gaza with airstrikes and artillery as retribution for the surprise attack by Hamas and Israeli ground forces have also moved inside the besieged region, though without a clearly stated objective other than to destroy Hamas. So far more than 9,000 Palestinians have been killed, with the majority of them being women and children, and Gaza's infrastructure has been totally destroyed. But let me start by asking you what you make of certain left-wing defenses of Hamas.

C. J. Polychroniou: First, let me say that, for me, it has become more difficult over time to keep using the term Left in order to describe a certain political worldview. Identity politics has divided the Left, various segments of the so-called radical Left have developed an insufferable tolerance problem, and universalism has become passé. In this sense, I miss the old communist/anarchist left. Having said that, it was wild watching “leftists” appearing to celebrate Hamas’s atrocities, or finding excuses for the killing of innocent civilians, including children, women, and elderly. It’s one thing to say that we need to understand the context of a conflict, and yet another thing to applaud the massacre of innocent civilians. In today’s world, perhaps more than ever before, we need a humanist left and a left that is socialist and universalist. We know that the Israeli regime is brutal towards Palestinians and that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory is unlawful. But what does Hamas represent? Sure, it is not driven by religious fanaticism like ISIS, which wants to establish some sort of a global caliphate, but the organization remains committed to the idea of “the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea” through a jihad. In this context, Israel has the right to self-defense but not too indiscriminate attacks that kill innocent civilians. I just don’t get how support for Palestinians should translate into support for Hamas.

Alexandra Boutri: *Isn't it surprising though that Hamas was able to break through Israel's border defenses on October 7 and storm into Israeli towns? How could Israeli intelligence miss Hamas's preparations for the attack?*

C. J. Polychroniou: I am not in a position to answer the question about Israel’s intelligence disaster. Of course, the attack itself was surprising in terms of its audacity and scale, but perhaps it was also foreseeable, as Israel’s former ambassador to France Elie Barnavi argued in a recent op-ed in [Le Monde](#). Israel helped create Hamas and then believed that it was containing them with

economic incentives, which included allowing Qatar to give cash subsidies to Gaza. As an Israeli general said a few years ago, Netanyahu's strategy was to prevent the two-state solution from moving forward so he turned [Hamas into a covert ally](#). In any case, one can only hope that the day will come when Israelis hold Netanyahu accountable for the border breach that killed 1,400 and that he will be investigated for war crimes by the International Criminal Court. Israel's attacks on the Jabalia refugee camp could amount to war crimes, according to UN human rights officials. And it's quite conceivable that the worst may be yet to come.

Alexandra Boutri: What do you think Israel plans to do once it destroys Hamas and leaves most of Gaza in ruins?

*C. J. Polychroniou:*As many analysts have already indicated, and this is also a concern shared by Washington and officials in major capitals throughout Europe, Netanyahu's government didn't seem to have a plan for what comes next when he declared war on Hamas and started the bombardment of Gaza Strip, but perhaps the hope was that the Israelis could somehow succeed in transferring Gaza's Palestinians to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. It could also be the case, now that Israeli ground forces are inside Gaza, that they want to force all of Gaza's Palestinians to move to the southern part of the besieged region. But I don't think that Israel has any interest in governing Gaza.

The assault on Gaza is driven by rage. But I also believe that Netanyahu is mostly interested in quelling the public anger against him and is hoping that he can do so with a war against Hamas, which he called "[a battle of civilization against barbarians](#)." And in the process of doing so, he doesn't care how many "Palestinian animals" are killed. Apparently, this is what leaders of civilized nations do, according to Benjamin Netanyahu! Nor does he care about the hostages. Unfortunately, however, he may have the majority of Israeli citizens on his side. Netanyahu's government is more than extreme, but "[Jewish Israeli citizens have moved significantly rightward over the years](#)." And hate speech against Palestinians seems to have become today something of a national sport for many Israelis.

This is a sad state of affairs. Israel had signs of a thriving social democracy during the first decades of the country's founding but has now become something of an "[open racist authoritarian state](#)." To some extent, of course, there is a general

trend towards authoritarianism across the globe. Hard-right policies are growing in Europe, Asia, and Latin America while Trumpism is alive and kicking in the United States. Democracies are indeed on the decline, as revealed in [the Global State of Democracy 2023](#) report by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Alexandra Boutri: Do you think there is any hope for a two-state solution?

C. J. Polychroniou: It's hard to imagine under the current circumstances that a two-state solution is feasible. And don't be fooled by the fact that Biden has just said that he wants to see a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. First, peace needs to be achieved. And the current Israeli government cannot envisage peace. After all, Netanyahu has even told Arabs inside Israel, who are Israeli citizens, that Israel is not a state of all its citizens. Now, Israel and Palestine as two independent states, coexisting side by side, means reaching an agreement about borders, Jerusalem, and on the issue of the return of exiled Palestinians. You have a huge power imbalance between Israel and the Palestinian people, and when such situations exist, the stronger party will always try to impose its will on the weaker party.

If anything, what has been happening on the ground for a long time now is a push towards a "Greater Israel." That is the reality, and it has nothing to do with Hamas or any form of Palestinian resistance. Of course, it might help if organizations like Hamas gave up on the idea of the complete elimination of Israel. It boggles the mind that one has to make the obvious point, which is that Israel is a reality and was accepted as a member of the United Nations a year after its independence. But Palestinians also deserve a state.

Of course, the United States, if it chooses to do so, can use the enormous leverage that it has over Israel to compel any Israeli government to make concessions. Is that likely to happen? I doubt it very much. And not because the United States supports Israel because it is a Jewish state but because it serves a key strategic role for the empire. In any case, any practical plan on the Israeli-Palestinian front must involve the active participation of the Israeli people. In this sense, what happens inside Israel is of paramount importance for the future of Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Alexandra Boutri: Israeli peace activists must be facing extremely difficult

challenges these days. It couldn't be very safe for them to protest against the war. But, in general, what's their mission?

C. J. Polychroniou: There are various peace movements and organizations in Israel and many individuals who refuse to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Israeli peace movements and activist organizations have different missions. You have “Looking Occupation in the Eye” (Mistaclim LaKibush Ba’Aynayim), a group of brave Israeli women and men whose mission is to draw attention to the military domination of Palestinians and the colonization of the occupied territories. Their activism revolves around defending Palestinians in the occupied territories and supporting them. For instance, activists in their movement try to protect Palestinian shepherd communities from harassment and violence by “violent extreme settler-colonists.” Mistaclim was founded in 2021 and its activists do their best to stop the transfer in West Bank, but they are outnumbered by the settler militias. Today, they are also voicing calls for a ceasefire, but the war drums are drowning out all other sounds.

There is of course Gush Shalom, which was founded by the late Uri Avnery and others in 1993. Gush Shalom activists have been sending out warnings for a long time that the perpetuation of the status quo towards Palestinians is inherently unsound and that it would eventually backfire. They have been trying to inform the Israeli public that Palestinians will not accept to live under occupation and oppression forever and that the possibility of another Palestinian uprising is a distinct possibility. They continue to do so today, even in a climate of isolation.

And then there is Standing Together, a grassroots movement of Jewish and Palestinian activists working together to build “a shared home for all those who refuse hatred and choose empathy.” The movement, which became active in 2015, is driven by the vision of creating a society that thrives on peace and justice and where Israelis and Palestinians enjoy real security and a decent standard of living. [Alon-Lee Green](#), one of the two National Co-Directors of Standing Together, said recently that it is too dangerous for his movement to protest the war. That should give us some idea of the prevailing climate inside Israel towards the government’s massive retaliation against Gazans for the October 7 Hamas’s attack. Indeed, there is even “a rise in racism and violence toward Palestinian citizens of Israel,” according to the latest update from the spokespersons of Standing Together. So, the work that a movement like Standing Together does in building resilience through solidarity between Jews and Palestinians is of inestimable value.

The movement has grown significantly over the years, and it now operates in eight different chapters. It is also involved in a wide range of issues, techniques, and strategies. It organizes protests demanding economic equality, climate justice, and an end to the occupation. The movement also has some 300 volunteers who, among other things, assist people experiencing racism or violence. Undoubtedly, embracing their shared humanity is a key step for peaceful coexistence between Jews and Palestinians.

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Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/israel-gaza-vision-for-peace>

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