

Practicing Civility In the Face Of Fascism Is Like Signing One's Own Death Warrant



C.J. Polychroniou

03-12-2025 ~ One confronts fascism head-on and based on solidarity and from a position of strength.

The United States is a country with a long history of violence and oppression against poor people, women and minorities. And by extension, with authoritarianism. The fact that the Trump presidency poses today a fundamental threat to democracy and social progress is not an unprecedented phenomenon in U.S. history. There have been many [other](#) U.S. presidents with anti-democratic approaches while a strong case can be made that minority rule has been the rule rather than the exception in the governing of the nation.

Indeed, for the most part, [oligarchy](#) has always had the upper hand in U.S. politics and the economy. After all, this is a nation that was founded on settler colonialism and the elimination of the native and relied on [slavery](#) as an engine of economic growth while it never managed to get rid of its racist roots. By the same token, resistance by enslaved people and struggles for emancipation and movements fighting for civil and social rights have also shaped the course of [U.S. history](#). But history is not a linear progression. Every time social progress was made, the forces of reaction plotted to turn back the clock. This is the most obvious underlying intent of the Trump phenomenon and of the far-right movements and parties surging all over the world, now with the support of the world's richest person, Trump's Nazi-buddy [Elon Musk](#).

At this point, the key question is this: what can be done to defeat right-wing extremism? In the U.S., defending democratic values and the rights of people from Trump's neo-fascist politics, especially with the return of white supremacy to mainstream politics, a philosophy of resistance and rebellion needs to operate mainly outside the confines of the liberal political establishment. It is crystal clear that the Democratic Party is incapable of fighting Trump. The sight of Congressional Democrats to Trump's joint address to Congress holding pathetic little signs and appearing in pink as signs of protest should speak volumes of the devastating failure of the Democratic Party to stop the rise of Trumpism, let alone of coming up now with a fight back strategy against the Führer.

It is obvious that a new style of political action is needed in the United States today. The balance of de jure power has shifted dramatically toward an elite characterized by the fusion of wealth and power in the political system that plain resistance alone is not enough. What is needed, even beyond anti-fascism strategies and tactics, is the adoption of new ways to democracy and citizenship.

Indeed, anti-fascist organizing is only useful if it carries within it a vision of a post-capitalist alternative order since fascism has always been a reaction to capitalist crises. After all, fascism does not oppose the logic or the principles of capitalism. In fact, fascism has always been a particular way of "managing capitalism," as the late Marxist theoretician [Samir Amin](#) correctly pointed out.

First, in the fight against fascism, the concept of democracy needs to be reimaged beyond elections and identified, in turn, with self-government and bold ideas to restructure the economy. The Democratic Party of the past 30 years has shown that it is simply incapable of undertaking this mission as it is itself a byproduct of a system in which the few set the terms under which the economy and society operate at large. The notion that a few progressive elected officials can tilt the party to the left in a radical way is a democratic fantasy.

We need [economic democracy](#)—institutions, organizations and practices that break away from the destructive and oligarchical tendencies of the current system and are geared in turn towards meeting workers' needs, who are the backbone of the economy. Economic democracy starts with dismantling corporate power and extends to nearly every part of the economy—from the workplace to housing and from health to education. Public ownership is key to the idea of economic democracy as a way of transforming economic practices. Hence, we're

talking about forging a radical economic democracy project that can challenge the economic rationality of capital and private appropriation of labor, land and nature.

Working with the liberal political establishment to accomplish this mission is yet another democratic fantasy. In fact, progressives keen not only on anti-Trump resistance but also willing to embrace a postcapitalist alternative to oligarchy should make their voices heard in every way possible by letting their elected representatives know that while they despise the Republican Party for what it stands for and what it is doing to the country under Trump-Musk, they do not trust the Democrats when it comes to fighting back and making the right choices for a more humane and just socio-economic order. They should let them know that democracy is much more than elections and surely not about serving special interests. It is about giving political power to ordinary citizens.

Likewise, the project of economic democracy mandates the reconceptualization of citizenship. The notion of [confrontational citizenship](#) is of particular import in these dark times as it emphasizes that political change is the result of confrontation, not of compromise. Al Green, a democratic congressman from Texas, practiced confrontational citizenship as an elected official with his outburst during Trump's speech to Congress. For that, he was forcefully removed from the House Chamber while his Democratic colleagues opted to display "civility" toward the Führer. Eventually, Rep. Green was [censured](#) by his colleagues for his lack of "civility," with 10 Democrats joining all Republicans.

One does not fight fascism with props as a form of protest. Or unjust wars and invasions by releasing doves. Practicing civility towards fascism is like signing one's own death. One confronts fascism head-on and based on solidarity and from a position of strength. Yes, confronting fascism requires also courage and not concerns with whether someone's name is going to end up on a list of "radical leftists" by some reactionary watchdog.

In sum, a transformative vision for a world beyond capitalism should be an integral component of the fight against Trump's policies. The left needs to make a clean break with the mindset of political compromise that characterizes the Democratic Party. The rise of Trumpism was based not simply on lies and propaganda but on the strategic use of the politics of confrontation and by capturing what was actually happening on the ground. In this context, reimaging

democracy and reinventing citizenship could be powerful tools in the fight against Trump's assault on civil society and his vision of a dog-eat-dog world.

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C.J. Polychroniou is a political economist/political scientist who has taught and worked in numerous universities and research centers in Europe and the United States. His latest books are *The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic and the Urgent Need for Social Change* (A collection of interviews with Noam Chomsky; Haymarket Books, 2021), and *Economics and the Left: Interviews with Progressive Economists* (Verso, 2021).