

REPUBLICAN RIGHT-WING POPULISM VERSUS LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

A proposed New Year's Resolution: We stop enabling dysfunction in the Republican Party by mislabeling its dominant philosophy "conservatism," "Trumpism," or "fascism." Instead, we call it what it is: "right-wing populism," driven by white grievance. While we're at it, we should also define and elaborate on the concept of "liberal democracy," under attack by Republican right-wing populism. Finally, we should promote the responsibility for voters who defend liberal democracy to vote Democrat until the Republican Party abandons right-wing populism, dedicated to destruction of liberal democracy, and returns to conservatism, dedicated to defense of liberal democracy.

This task is reminiscent of the famous effort by William F. Buckley Jr. to purge the John Birch Society from the conservative movement. The effort to purge the right-wing populists from the conservative movement and the Republican Party, however, will be larger and, because it is a task bigger than the Republican Party alone is capable of, it will require the Democratic Party to defeat the Republican Party in every election from now through years into the future.

TERMINOLOGY

President Biden's "MAGA Republicans" and Former President Obama's "Right-Wing Populists"

As President Biden observed in his address at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 1, 2022¹:

Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans represent an extremism that threatens the very foundations of our republic...They promote authoritarian leaders, and they fan the flames of political violence that are a threat to our personal rights, to the pursuit of justice, to the rule of law, to the very soul of this country...MAGA Republicans look at America and see carnage and darkness and despair. They spread fear and lies—lies told for profit and power.

Elsewhere, President Biden referred to the Republican Party as promoting "semi-fascism."² For reasons that follow, a better term for what he described above is the term former President Obama has used: "right-wing populist."³ And, also as will be seen below, right-wing populism has led the Republican Party to abandon its traditional philosophy of conservatism pursuant to which, in the context of a liberal democracy, like liberal Democrats, conservative Republicans sought power to work for the common good, as they saw it. The term "Trumpism" is also rejected because it implies this philosophy originated with Donald Trump, which it did not.

In comments he made after his speech, President Biden clarified regarding "MAGA Republicans" he was not referring to *all* Republicans. However, because of their dominance of the Republican Party, *MAGA Republicans—right-wing populists—are the Republican Party*, for now.

Liberal Democracy versus Illiberal Democracy

Regarding “democracy” and “liberal democracy”: Although the term “democracy” is often used as shorthand for “liberal democracy,” the two are not synonymous. The word “democracy” comes from two Greek words: “*dēmos*” meaning “people” and “*kratos*” meaning “rule.” “Democracy,” thus, describes a system of universal suffrage accorded to all citizens after reaching a sufficient age, and majority rule. The people in a democracy vote directly on all laws. In contrast, the United States is not a democracy but rather a representative democracy or a republic—a government in which the people vote for representatives who make the laws on their behalf and who are granted by those voters some power to choose their leaders. More precisely, the United States is a constitutional republic.

“Liberal democracy,” the philosophy inspired by the “classical liberalism” of the Enlightenment, synonymous with “Western liberalism” and “Western democracy” provides the institutions and values—the “guardrails”—that guide our constitutional republic. Guided by the values and institutions of liberal democracy, the constitutional republic of the United States operates based on the principles of individual social, economic, and political freedom, subject to checks on the exercise of individual social, economic, and political power. It also envisions a capitalist—market-based—economic system with a strong social safety net.

While there is no definitive list of the values of liberal democracy, a representative list includes checks and balances, as well as respect for the rule of law under the Constitution and the peaceful transfer of authority after electoral defeat; respect for knowledge, science, reason, and truth; tolerance (support for pluralism); equality (under the law and of opportunity); and peace; all in a setting of humility.

“Illiberal democracy” is a term first prominently addressed by Fareed Zakaria in his article “[The Rise of Illiberal Democracy](#),” *Foreign Affairs* (November–December 1997), which he expanded upon in his 2003 book, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. Illiberal democracy is democracy in which elections continue to be held, but, through various measures of voter suppression and corruption a corrupt minority wins and retains power. It rejects liberal values and institutionalizes crony capitalism, championing a winner-take-all, might-makes-right vision promoting violence. Illiberal democracy is the stated vision of Hungary’s dictatorial leader Viktor Orbán, to whom Donald Trump in a statement gave his “[Complete support and Endorsement](#),” as has Fox News’ Tucker Carlson, and the planners of the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), who held their conference in Budapest in May of 2022.⁴

Conservatism

“Conservatism” has long been the guiding philosophy of the Republican Party. Conservatism, in its initial articulation by Anglo-Irish social philosopher Edmund Burke in his pamphlet *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), arose in reaction to classical liberalism but not rejection of it. Burke cautioned regarding classical liberalism’s attack against the power structure of the monarchy, landed aristocracy, and the Church. He observed, regarding change, that it should be

guided by prudence: “Prudence is not only the first in rank of the virtues political and moral, but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all” (a concept often echoed by former President George H. W. Bush).

Among conservatism’s heroes, in addition to Burke, are the classical liberals John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith, Alexis de Tocqueville, and the founders of American liberal democracy—among them Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Paine. The conservative William Kristol, co-founder of *The Weekly Standard*, once observed, “One of the historic tasks of American conservatism has in fact been to preserve and strengthen liberal democracy.”⁵ In contrast to conservatism, dedicated to defending liberal democracy, right-wing populism is dedicated to the destruction of liberal democracy and substituting in its place illiberal democracy.

Liberalism

“Liberalism” shares with conservatism dedication to the defense of liberal democracy and admiration of the heroes of classical liberalism above. It differs from conservatism in that it supports greater individual freedom in social matters than does conservatism and greater government involvement in economic matters, especially supporting a stronger social safety net. In this way, it is closer to the social democracy of the Scandinavian countries.

Right-Wing Populism, the Religious Right, Fascism, and Nazism versus Liberal Democracy

Right-wing populism is, and always has been, a con promoted by elites to divide workers along racial and ethnic lines. It is an intellectual virus that conservatives welcomed into their midst in the 1970s, ignoring that right-wing populism is driven to kill liberal democracy, much as more than a million Americans ignored that the COVID-19 virus could kill them a half century later. Of course, too, the perfect champion of a philosophy that is, and always has been, a con, is a man who is, and always has been, a con man,⁶ with no principles of his own but how to amass more money and power for himself.

The intellectual virus of right-wing populism easily bonds with another intellectual virus similarly dedicated to the destruction of liberal democracy—an intellectual virus the Republican Party also welcomed into its midst in the 1970s: religious extremism of the Religious Right.

Republicans, with the nomination and election of Donald Trump in 2016, loosed this intellectual virus of right-wing populism which promotes, and has always promoted, the politics of resentment and blame-shifting in furtherance of its goal to destroy liberal democracy and is now, as it always has been, a con perpetrated on the working Americans who are seduced by it. The victims of this con are disproportionately working-class Americans who were ignored too long by the Democratic Party, leaving them susceptible to appeals to their resentment by right-wing populism and exploitation by Republican politicians and supportive media personalities who promote the con.

Right-wing populism, as evidenced by the actions of Donald Trump, promotes illiberal democracy—the rejection of the values of liberal democracy. Right-wing populism promotes

power any way that it can be achieved—by impeding the exercise of voting rights by opponents, by urging state legislatures to overturn election results, by promoting a theory that the vice president is empowered to reject presidential election results, all in defiance of the concept of checks and balances. In its drive for power, it disrespects the rule of law under the Constitution and disregards the peaceful transfer of authority after electoral defeat. It disrespects knowledge, science, reason, and truth. It promotes intolerance based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion. It promotes white grievance and rejects equality both under the law and of opportunity. It rejects peace as for losers and, instead, promotes violence for political ends. Finally, it rejects humility and adores leaders who do the same, as did Donald Trump before the 2016 Republican National Convention when he said, “Nobody knows the system better than me, which is why *I alone* can fix it.”

Former Republican adviser Stuart Stevens observes in his 2020 book, *It Was All a Lie: How the Republican Party Became Donald Trump*, that the Republican Party has evolved into “just a white grievance party.” However, when he frames what he calls the conviction that is “about as close as it can be to a definitional core belief that exists in the Republican Party,” he does *not* say it is white supremacy. Rather, it is “a belief in the power of tax cuts.”

In these observations, Stevens reveals right-wing populism is, and always have been, a con, guided by white elites promoting the idea of white grievance and white privilege, using the white voters rallied against non-whites to support tax cuts and other policy measures to upwardly redistribute income and wealth to the wealthy whites atop society. During the Jim Crow era of *de jure* segregation in the South and *de facto* segregation in the North, white elites promoted white grievance to enforce racial segregation with the intent to keep Southern masses divided and promote cheap Southern labor, and thereby upwardly redistribute income and wealth to themselves.

This reality was recognized by the historian W. E. B. DuBois in *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), writing of Jim Crow, “It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage...”⁷ In accord is the account of historian C. Vann Woodward in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955), cited by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his speech at the end of the March from Selma to Montgomery, where he said, “If it may be said of the slavery era that the white man took the world and gave the Negro Jesus, then it may be said of the Reconstruction era that the Southern aristocracy took the world and gave the poor white man Jim Crow.”⁸

Finally, similar sentiments were expressed by President Lyndon Johnson, quoted by Bill Moyers, who served as his press secretary. Moyers recounted his former boss as saying, “I’ll tell you what’s at the bottom of it. If you can convince the lowest white man he’s better than the best colored man, he won’t notice you’re picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he’ll empty his pockets for you.”⁹

Right-wing populism is not, however, fascism. For guidance regarding fascism, “[The Doctrine of Fascism](#)” by Benito Mussolini and Giovanni Gentile, translation by the World Future Fund, has been consulted. Fascism is like right-wing populism in that it is anti-liberal,¹⁰ promotes religion and traditional authority,¹¹ is authoritarian and emanates from the Right,¹² rejects globalism,¹³ and

promotes violence as a political act.¹⁴ Right-wing populism, however, like classical liberalism, conservatism, and liberalism, views the individual as supreme, while fascism views the State as supreme.¹⁵ Also, right-wing populism promotes isolationism, while fascism promotes imperialism—the military conquest of weaker nations.¹⁶

Another important observation: Italian Fascism and Nazism are customarily referred to together as “fascism.” However, although religion, in the form of Catholicism, was honored in Italian Fascism, discrimination based on religion and race were not part of the Doctrine of Fascism and were not codified into law until three years after Nazi Germany had codified the Nuremberg Laws (the anti-Jewish statutes enacted by Germany in 1935; more on these below).

In contrast, Nazi Germany, under the horrific vision of Adolf Hitler, promoted hatred and discrimination under the law based on religion and race. Hitler, in his *magnum opus*, *Mein Kampf* (1925), used religion to create an enemy against whom to focus hatred. He declared, “Hence, today, I believe I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: *by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord*” (emphasis original). Much later he returned to the theme: “The folkish-minded man, in particular, has the sacred duty, each to his own denomination, of making *people stop just talking superficially of God’s will, and actually fulfill God’s will, and not let God’s word be desecrated*” (emphasis original).

Hitler closed *Mein Kampf* with an acknowledgment of the debt owed to “*Dietrich Eckart*” (emphasis original). As recounted by Richard Steigmann-Gall in *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945*, Eckart was devoutly Christian and saw World War I in terms of an apocalyptic dualism in which Germany defended Christianity against evil. Steigmann-Gall also observed that the Nazi Party had, in Point 24 of its Party Program, adopted the philosophy of “positive Christianity” which included the concept of “Germany as God’s chosen nation.”

In Hitler’s first year as Chancellor (1933), he outlawed atheist and Freethinker movements. The belt buckle that German soldiers wore during World War II boldly bore the inscription “*Gott mit Uns*”—“God with Us.” The symbol of the *Wehrmacht* was the *Balkenkreuz*, which was a solid black cross inside of an outline of a cross. The Nazi award for bravery is famous: the Iron Cross. Finally, an important Nazi slogan was “*Kinder, Küche, Kirche*”—“Children, Kitchen, Church.”

Thus, right-wing populism and the Religious Right share with Italian Fascism the ideal of government promotion of Christianity, and the most extreme members of these groups share with Nazism the ideal of government promotion of Christianity combined with hatred of the Jews and other non-Aryans.

Right-wing populism also shares with Nazism the uncomfortable historical fact that Nazi Germany used the Jim Crow laws of the United States as inspiration for its own laws implementing race- and religious-based discrimination. James Q. Whitman is the Ford Foundation Professor of Comparative and Foreign Law at Yale Law School and the author of *Hitler’s American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (2017). He observes that not only did Hitler

offer praise for the Jim Crow era racial practices of the South in *Mein Kampf*, but both our federal government's citizenship laws and the anti-miscegenation laws of thirty states—many outside of the South—were used as models for the two principal Nuremberg Laws: the Citizenship Law and the Blood Law.

Accordingly, it should be no surprise that united by their promotion of white supremacy, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, and white grievance, we saw neo-Nazi flags and Confederate battle flags together [in Charlottesville in 2017](#), and neo-Nazi flags, Confederate battle flags, and signs saying “[Jesus Saves](#)” [at the Capitol on January 6, 2021](#).¹⁷

REPUBLICAN EVOLUTION FROM THE CONSERVATISM OF THE EASTERN ESTABLISHMENT TO THE RIGHT-WING POPULISM OF TODAY

In the 1950s and early 1960s the two major parties were not far apart ideologically. A book of that era by Harvard University sociologist Daniel Bell was titled *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (1960). Right-wing populist Alabama Governor George Wallace, famous for his declaration in his January 1963 inaugural speech, “I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever;” also famously observed, “There’s not a dime’s worth of difference between the Democrat and Republican parties.”

The Republican Party of the Eastern Establishment

The Republican Party, from the end of World War II through the Civil Rights Era was dominated by two wings: The larger was the “Eastern Establishment” wing, socially liberal and fiscally conservative, although favoring increased taxes to cover increased spending, as evidenced by the 91 percent marginal income tax rate applied to the highest incomes in the 1950s. A prominent member of the Eastern Establishment, Prescott Bush, former Republican Senator from Connecticut, father of President George H. W. Bush and grandfather of President George W. Bush, was the treasurer of the first nationwide campaign of Planned Parenthood in 1947 and chairman of the Connecticut branch of the United Negro College Fund in 1951. The minority wing of the Republican Party at this time was the Taft wing, named after William Howard Taft of Ohio. It was more isolationist, opposed to the New Deal, favored small government, and was more socially conservative.

Thomas Dewey, former Governor of New York, was the leader of the Eastern Establishment of the Republican Party. He was famously defeated in 1948 by Harry Truman. Dewey and his fellow members of the Eastern Establishment convinced hero of World War II General Dwight Eisenhower to run for the presidency as a Republican in 1952. The politics of the Eastern Establishment was compatible with that of Eisenhower, who called his philosophy “modern Republicanism.” The two philosophies would later be merged under the term “Rockefeller Republicanism,” named for later New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller.

Dwight Eisenhower was so popular that he won back-to-back victories in 1952 and 1956 with more than 50 percent of the vote (the last time that happened before Barack Obama repeated it

2008 and 2012). Philosophically he and those in his wing of the Republican Party accepted the New Deal, a large Federal government, and a prominent role in international affairs for the United States. He nominated for Supreme Court Chief Justice three-term Republican governor of California, Earl Warren, and the Warren Court became famous for its liberal opinions. Although Eisenhower was not pleased with the Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, he called on the National Guard to integrate Little Rock public schools, establishing that the federal government was serious about integration. He signed the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which was the first civil rights legislation since Reconstruction. It established the Civil Rights Section of the Justice Department and empowered federal prosecutors to obtain court injunctions against interference with the right to vote. He also expanded Social Security and implemented the largest public works program in history, the Interstate Highway system.

The “modern Republicanism” vision of this Republican Party inspired a young William F. Buckley Jr. to oppose it with the founding of his *National Review* magazine in 1955, promoting an alternative brand of conservatism: “fusionism,” combining libertarianism, traditionalism, and staunch anti-communism. This came to be called “movement conservatism,” evident in the failed presidential campaign of Barry Goldwater and successful campaigns of Ronald Reagan.

Several books have been written recently that address the dysfunction of the current Republican Party, among them Stuart Stevens’ book holding that racism has underlain the Republican Party since the 1960s, David Corn’s *American Psychosis*, tracing the dysfunction to the 1950s with the conflict between Dwight Eisenhower versus Joe McCarthy and his defender Buckley, and Dana Milbank’s *The Deconstructionists*, holding that the dysfunction started in the 1990s with the arrival of Newt Gingrich.

The dysfunction of the Republican Party addressed herein is its capture by the right-wing populists. While that capture did not occur until Donald Trump’s victory in 2016, right-wing populism had existed as a philosophy dominating the Democratic Party in the South during the Jim Crow era and had survived due in great part to the refusal of Southern whites to vote Republican because the Republican Party freed the slaves and promoted Reconstruction. The result was “the Solid South”—solidly Democratic.

Admirably, however, after World War II, liberal Democrats outside of the South and moderate Republicans of the Eastern Establishment-modern Republicanism-Rockefeller Republican wing moved to undo Jim Crow, in the effort culminating in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, Fair Housing Act, and so on, with the major opposition to this effort coming from the Southern Democrats. The most prominent opponent of the undoing of Jim Crow was Alabama Governor George Wallace, promoting “states’ rights” to discriminate.

Before leaving this era of the Republican Party, given its recent overturning by a Supreme Court dominated by the Religious Right, *Roe v. Wade* was a 7-2 decision of the successor to the Warren Court, the Burger Court, in which five Justices in the majority were nominated by Republican presidents. The opinion was written by Justice Harry Blackmun, nominated by Richard Nixon. He was joined by Chief Justice Warren Burger (Nixon), William J. Brennan, Jr. (Eisenhower),

Lewis F. Powell, Jr. (Nixon), and Potter Stewart (Eisenhower). Nominated by a Democratic president, voting with the majority: William O. Douglas (Roosevelt) and Thurgood Marshall (Johnson). Dissenters were William Rehnquist (Nixon; later nominated by Reagan for Chief Justice) and Byron White (Kennedy).

The Wallace-Inspired Right-Wing Populists of the Original “New Right” and the Religious Right

Alan Crawford, then a young conservative, in *Thunder on the Right: The “New Right” and the Politics of Resentment* (1980) captured the threat that right-wing populism posed to conservatism in the Republican Party, how it fed on the politics of resentment—on white grievance—and how it drove the “New Right.” The “thunder” of which he wrote was the warning of a storm approaching conservative Republicans on the far right of their party—the “New Right” of the right-wing populists (what is called herein the “original” New Right, to distinguish it from the current New Right) and their politics of white resentment.

This original New Right was a union of wealthy business families with illiberal right-wing populists, exemplified by the joining of the Coors family with Paul Weyrich in the founding in 1973 of the Heritage Foundation (one of several pro-Republican foundations founded in the 1970s). Crawford also recounts at this same time the Religious Right was being built by, among others, Jerry Falwell founding the Moral Majority and Liberty University and Pat Robertson of “700 Club” fame on the Christian Broadcasting Network.

The affinity between the right-wing populists of the New Right and the Religious Right was immediately obvious. At a Religious Roundtable meeting in Dallas in August 1980 Weyrich demonstrated the contempt which right-wing populists hold for liberal democracy, as he criticized what he called the “goo-goo syndrome” of Christians who want “good government” and “everybody to vote.” He stated, “Our leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down.”

(As an aside, Weyrich was echoed by President Trump on “Fox and Friends” March 30, 2020, when Trump said of Democrats’ proposals in a COVID relief bill to make it easier for people to vote: “The things they had in there were crazy. They had things, levels of voting, that if you ever agreed to it, you’d never have a Republican elected in this country again.”)

Crawford also recounts how President Nixon’s advisers Pat Buchanan and Kevin Phillips took note of the relative success of Alabama Governor George Wallace in the 1968 presidential election¹⁸ and urged President Nixon to pursue the Wallace constituents in the 1972 election. This became known as Nixon’s “Southern Strategy,” and Crawford addresses the combining of the appeal to right-wing populists and the Religious Right. As he observed (again, writing in 1980), “Today’s New Right is also a primitive kind of right-wing populism that has all but exterminated the few remnants of the Burkean tradition...”¹⁹

Stuart Stevens, in *It Was All a Lie*, gives an in-depth account of recurrent “dog whistle” appeals to racism by Republican presidents from Nixon through George H. W. Bush, however, after the Southern Strategy of pursuing Wallace voters, the most momentous event influencing the growth of right-wing populism in the Republican Party was the relative success of former Neo-Nazi and Klansman David Duke. In 1988 Duke, not long after he renounced his ties to the Klan and neo-Nazism, ran as a Republican and won a seat in the Louisiana House of Representatives, representing the 81st House District, which he served from February 1989 through January 1992. *Critical to understanding what follows* is to realize how relatively mainstream among Republicans Duke’s views are, and that even Republicans who are not overtly racist have a high level of tolerance of intolerance—tolerance of overt racism—on the part of their fellow Republicans.

As evidence of this tolerance of intolerance, Duke was followed in the 81st House district by David Vitter, a Republican who went on to serve as US Senator from Louisiana for two terms (January 2005-January 2017). Serving the bordering 82nd District from 1996-2008 was Steve Scalise, current Republican Majority Whip in the US House of Representatives. Scalise got into controversies when he was quoted by a reporter as saying, as a young legislator, that he was David Duke without the baggage²⁰ and later, when he spoke at a white supremacist function.²¹ The 81st and 82nd Districts at the time that Duke, Vitter, and Scalise served were both in Jefferson Parish (county) bordering New Orleans, referred to by Republican then-Governor of Louisiana, Republican Mike Foster, in a 1995 gubernatorial campaign debate as “the jungle.”

As the Republican Party nominee for US Senate from Louisiana in the 1990 election, David Duke won 60 percent of the white vote and, again as the Republican Party nominee for Governor of Louisiana in the 1991 election, 55 percent of the white vote (ultimately losing both due to overwhelming African American opposition).

Three days after that Louisiana gubernatorial election in November 1991, a 45-year-old Donald Trump, on [Larry King Live](#), expressed concern that if Duke—who channeled the same resentment as had George Wallace—ran for president in 1992, he could attract enough voters away from President George H. W. Bush that it could cost him his re-election. Trump exhibited a keen understanding of the political appeal of David Duke and the tolerance of racism among whites in the Republican Party. In the same interview, Trump observed that Pat Buchanan running for the Republican presidential nomination in 1992 would promote much of Duke’s same philosophy but present it in a more palatable package and would similarly siphon votes from President Bush.

Twenty-five years after that interview, Donald Trump won the presidency. As observed by Mike Lawrence, David Duke’s campaign manager for Duke’s unsuccessful 2016 run for the Republican nomination for the US Senate, Trump won promoting the views that were Duke’s years before.²²

The crucial distinction between conservatives and right-wing populists—that conservatives support the values of liberal democracy, while right-wing populists are dedicated to the destruction of liberal democracy—was further illustrated in the November 2018 Munk Debate in Toronto, pitting former Trump adviser Steve Bannon against David Frum, conservative former speechwriter

for President George W. Bush and a staff writer at *The Atlantic*.²³ The motion before them: “Be it resolved: the future of Western politics is populist not liberal.” Arguing in favor of liberal democracy was the conservative Frum. Bannon, in contrast, rejected liberal democracy as a failure and proclaimed, “The future obviously belongs to populism. It’s only going to be defined by asking if it’s left-wing populism or conservative and right-wing populism....”

The affinity Republican right-wing populism holds for another philosophy dedicated to the destruction of liberal democracy—the fascism of Vladimir Putin—has been shown by Steve Bannon as well as by a third of Republicans (see below), Donald Trump, racist white nationalist and Mar-a-Lago dinner guest Nick Fuentes, Fox News’ Tucker Carlson, and David Duke.

Bannon addressed a conference on poverty hosted by the Human Dignity Institute at the Vatican in 2014.²⁴ There he expressed admiration for Putin’s adviser Aleksandr Dugin, the main promoter of a “Eurasianist” fascist philosophy and author of the textbook *The Foundation of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia* (1997). In it he argued for Russian control of the northern coast of the Black Sea, and argued against the continued independent existence of Ukraine, providing inspiration for Putin’s invasion.²⁵ He also posed Western liberal democracy as the enemy of Russia. Bannon observed that Dugin “harkens back to Julius Evola” and the “Traditionalist School” (more extreme than traditionalist conservatism, the Traditionalist School sees the Enlightenment and modernity as having corrupted mankind.)²⁶ Additionally, [as reported by The New York Times](#), Dugin advocated fascism in his 1997 article “Fascism—Borderless and Red.”²⁷

Toward the end of the Q&A period—although he elsewhere criticized Putin for running a kleptocracy—he expressed admiration for Vladimir Putin’s “standing up for traditional institutions.”

In doing so, Bannon was joining with the 32 percent of Republicans who also expressed a positive opinion of Putin in a [February 2017 Gallup poll](#); according to a [May 2017 Morning-Consult-Politico poll](#), 49 percent of Republicans considered Russia an ally. Note that these opinions were expressed *after* Putin’s invasion of eastern Ukraine and Crimea in 2014 and recall that Putin is a career KGB officer who hates liberal democracy and America and is dedicated to destruction of the West.²⁸

Former President Trump, [in an interview](#), praised Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, as “genius” and “smart,” and praised him for being “very savvy.” As reported by *The Washington Post*, attendees at [the America First Political Action Conference](#) (AFPAC), also held in Orlando, Florida, in February 2022, at the same time as the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), were asked by the leader of the conference, the racist white nationalist and later dinner guest of former President Trump at Mar-a-Lago Nick Fuentes, “Can we get a round of applause for Russia?” He got one, as well as chants of “Putin! Putin! Putin!” from the audience.

Similarly, Tucker Carlson, on his show, in November 2019, said of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, “Why do I care what is going on in the conflict between Ukraine and Russia? And I’m serious.

Why do I care? Why shouldn't I root for Russia? Which I am." Carlson later walked back his statements.

All were echoing David Duke's 2004 [statement](#) that Russia is "key to white survival."

As Right-Wing Populism Percolated in the Republican Party, the Democratic Party Came to Resemble the Rockefeller Republicans

It is popular in some circles to say that the movement leftward of the Democratic Party drove the Republican Party rightward. This is nonsense. The Democratic Party under President Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s joined with the Republican Party in an already ongoing movement leftward and took the lead. Johnson, to get his landmark legislation through Congress, *relied on the votes of Republicans*, necessary to overcome the opposition of right-wing populist Southern Democrats. In the 1970s Republicans recognized the Democratic Party had abandoned its constituency of racist right-wing populists in "the Solid South" and Republicans decided—on their own—they were not driven to do so—to bring these voters into their party.

More about the lie of "leftward" Democratic Party movement: Although LBJ moved the Democratic Party leftward, joining Rockefeller Republicans in the 1960s, later Democratic presidents Carter and Clinton and, to a degree, Obama, moved the Democratic Party *rightward* to join Republicans in the 1970s, the 1990s, 2008, and 2012.

A 1977 article in *The Atlantic*, titled, "[Jimmy Carter Revealed: Rockefeller Republican](#)," heralded a change in direction rightward in the Democratic Party at the very time the Republican Party was abandoning Rockefeller Republicanism and moving further rightward. President Carter legislatively deregulated the energy industry (removing New Deal era price controls on oil and gas and legalizing private electric power generation) and the transportation industry (removing price controls on airlines and interstate railroads and trucking) and initiated litigation to break up the AT&T monopoly, ultimately securing victory under the Reagan administration and thereby laying the groundwork for the modern telecommunications industry. He also, importantly, nominated for Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, a monetarist who was known to intend to address the raging inflation by raising interest rates, almost assured to start a recession, which it did, helping doom Carter's 1980 re-election campaign.

President Bill Clinton followed through on his promise of "ending welfare as we know it," added 100,000 police to the streets, mandated life sentences for criminals convicted of a felony after two or more prior convictions ("three strikes and you're out") and delivered four federal budget surpluses.

Barack Obama received an endorsement in the 2008 election from the esteemed conservative opinion writer Jeffrey Hart, who also endorsed President Obama's re-election in 2012 (Hart observed he saw elements of Eisenhower in Obama). Obama did promote the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), however, even this was modeled after a proposal by Stuart Butler of the

conservative Heritage Foundation and put into law in Massachusetts by Republican Governor Mitt Romney, Obama's opponent in the 2012 election.²⁹

Republicans won the White House in 1980, 1984, and 1988—but commencing with the election of 1992, Republicans would lose the popular vote in the next seven out of eight elections (winning the popular vote only in 2004, early in the Iraq War). Based on the above, a better argument can be made that Democrats moved *rightward*, adopting the Modern Republicanism-Rockefeller Republican-Eastern Establishment philosophy, driving the national Republican Party further rightward, leading Republican elites to welcome into their party racist right-wing populists.

Finally, giving further lie to the Democratic Party's "leftward" movement nonsense, numerous polls show policies supported by Democrats are supported by majorities of Americans. Although it is popular among Republicans to promote the nonsense that most Americans are "conservative"—support for which is provided in polls showing that pluralities of Americans so identify themselves—when asked their opinions regarding specific policies, majorities of Americans choose the liberal options. The policy polls reflect the truth: America is a majority *center-left—moderately liberal*—nation. To hold onto their power, rather than by working in good faith with liberals to craft compromise legislation, Republicans tolerate destruction of liberal democracy, working with the right-wing populists in their midst.

A comprehensive review of polls is provided in "[Most Americans Are Liberal, Even If they Don't Know It](#)," by Peter Dreier in *The American Prospect*, November 10, 2017. That article cited polls that showed Americans prefer liberal policies regarding the economy, inequality, money in politics, taxes, the minimum wage, workers' rights, health care, education, climate change and the environment, gun safety, criminal justice, immigration, abortion and women's health, and regarding same-sex marriage.

A later Quinnipiac University poll in 2021³⁰ found majorities of Americans also support raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour and creating a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children.³¹

The David Duke-Inspired Capture of the Republican Party by Right-Wing Populism

Richard Lowry, editor in chief of *National Review*, provided a comment regarding conservative Matthew Continetti's book *The Right: The Hundred Year War for American Conservatism* in the June 2022 *Commentary* magazine's symposium on Continetti's book. Lowry observed, "I found myself reading the book with an eye to who was most prescient about the potential of the party taking a Trump-like turn." He considered George Wallace, Kevin Phillips, and Pat Buchanan, but he concluded, "For my money, though, the prize has to go to" Murray Rothbard, an economist with a PhD from Columbia University and a prominent libertarian theorist and author, who embodied the libertarian break from classical liberalism.

Lowry quotes Rothbard's January 18, 1992, address to the John Randolph Club, Herndon, Virginia, titled "A Strategy for the Right" (it appears in the [March 1992 issue](#) of the *Rothbard-*

Rockwell Report and is quoted in Continetti's *The Right*, page 307). Rothbard urged his fellow libertarians to join with "paleoconservatives" (traditionalist conservatives referred to as the "Old Right") and support Pat Buchanan, observing, "The proper strategy for the Right-wing must be what we can call 'Right-wing populism': exciting, dynamic, tough, and confrontational, rousing, and inspiring not only the exploited masses, but the often shellshocked Right-wing intellectual cadre as well." Ominously, he added, again, as observed by Lowry, "we need a dynamic, charismatic leader who has the ability to short-circuit the media elites, and to reach and rouse the masses directly."³²

Lowry has the benefit of experience. *National Review* dedicated its February 15, 2016, issue to essays from prominent conservatives "[Against Trump](#)." By the time the October 24, 2016, issue came out, just weeks before the election, there appeared an article by *National Review* contributor and Hoover Institution fellow Victor Davis Hanson titled "[The Case for Trump](#)." *National Review*'s surrender to Trump was finalized with Lowry's essay "[The Never Trump Delusion](#)," *National Review*, March 30, 2018, which he followed up in 2020 with a book, *The Case for Nationalism*. "Nationalism" is the euphemistic term preferred by Lowry and Republicans as a less threatening term for right-wing populism. A more accurate synonymous term would be "white Christian nationalism," however, that would admit the core idea of right-wing populism—of white Christian nationalism—is to divide the nation along racial and religious lines.

Lowry perhaps, through his capitulation to right-wing populism, saved *National Review*. In contrast, William Kristol, at *The Weekly Standard*, refused to capitulate to Trump and right-wing populism, and his magazine folded in December 2018.

Of course, Lowry did not address *the context* of Rothbard's quote—that, given the relative success of former Klansman and Neo-Nazi David Duke, the Republican Party should emulate him. "*For my money*," then, the inspiration for the "Trump-like turn" in the modern Republican Party is the former Klansman and Neo-Nazi David Duke.

For further insight regarding the right-wing populist bond of Trump and Duke, it is instructive to observe that David Duke continued to support President Trump during his presidency, and President Trump appeared to acknowledge it. On August 12, 2017, at the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, David Duke expressed support for Donald Trump in a speech caught on video:

This represents a turning point for the people of this country. We are determined to take our country back; we're going to fulfill the promises of Donald Trump. That's what we believed in, that's why we voted for Donald Trump, because he said he's going to take our country back and that's what we gotta do.
—David Duke, speaking from the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville August 12, 2017.

That same day, President Trump addressed on Twitter the violence accompanying the torch lit protest of the night before: "We ALL must be united & condemn all that hate stands for. There is no place for this kind of violence in America. Let's come together as one!" (12:19 PM - Aug 12,

2017; before 1:45 pm., when a car driven by a white supremacist plowed into a crowd of counter-protestors and killed a young woman counter-protestor).

David Duke replied on Twitter less than one hour later (from the rally but, again, before the tragedy), “I would recommend you take a good look in the mirror & remember it was White Americans who put you in the presidency, not radical leftists.” (1:03 PM Aug 12, 2017.)

The message appears to have been received by President Trump. Three days later, asked to address the death of the young woman counter-protestor, President Trump had changed his tune, saying, “I think there is blame on both sides. You had some very bad people in that group. But you also had people that were very fine people, on both sides.”

Speaker of the House Paul Ryan was among the Republicans horrified by President Trump’s statement, and he confronted the president about it via Twitter: “We must be clear. White supremacy is repulsive. This bigotry is counter to all this country stands for. There can be no moral ambiguity.” (6:06 p.m., August 15, 2017.). President Trump phoned Ryan in response and screamed at him, “These people love me. These are my people.”³³ Trump would return to this theme again and again. In 2019 he told Breitbart, “I can tell you I have the support of the police, the support of the military, the support of Bikers for Trump—I have the tough people, but they don’t play it tough—until they go to a certain point, and then it would be very bad, very bad.” As revealed by the January 6th Committee, according to Cassidy Hutchinson, Trump demanded at the January 6, 2021, Save America March rally that the metal detectors be removed, and the armed members of the crowd be allowed to come forward because he said they were not there to hurt him; they were “my people.”

At a campaign rally in Houston, October 22, 2018, President Trump declared himself a “nationalist,” saying:

A globalist is a person that wants the globe to do well, frankly not caring about our country so much. And you know what? We can’t have that. You know, they have a word. It sort of became old-fashioned. It’s called a nationalist. And I say, really, we’re not supposed to use that word. You know what I am? I’m a nationalist, OK? I’m a nationalist.

David Duke replied to Trump the next day on Twitter, interpreting Trump’s nationalism as “White Nationalism”:

Trump Embraces Nationalism in a Massive JamPacked 99.9 percent White Venue in Houston! Zio Journalists asked him if this is White Nationalism! Of course fundamentally it is as, there is no ethnic or racial group in America more Nationalist than White Americans... So What’s the Problem?
—David Duke, Twitter, 1:45 p.m., October 23, 2018.

As recently as a few months before the November 2020 election, Duke offered advice to President Trump in his re-election campaign with the recommendation to drop Mike Pence for Fox News' Tucker Carlson:

Trump & Tucker is the only way to stop the commie Bolsheviks! It is the only path to beat them!

—David Duke, Twitter, 10:46 p.m., July 8, 2020.

The Current New Right

Right-wing populism in the Republican Party had evolved from the original New Right of supporters of George Wallace to, with the successful supplanting of conservatism by right-wing populism as the guiding philosophy of the Republican Party, the party of George Wallace, David Duke, Pat Buchanan, and Donald Trump, and his allies Roger Stone and Steve Bannon.³⁴ It is also the party of the late Rush Limbaugh who, like Sarah Palin and self-described “rodeo clown” Glenn Beck, by promoting ignorance that endeared them to the non-college educated white masses, helped right-wing populism displace conservatism as the philosophy of the Republican Party and cede college-educated voters to the Democratic Party. The current New Right takes this right-wing populist extremism even further, as addressed below.

A good place to start for a list of those Republicans and others embracing the right-wing populist war against liberal democracy would be Donald Trump, Steve Bannon, and Roger Stone, as well as the eight Senators who voted on January 6th to reject certification of Electoral College results from either or both Arizona and Pennsylvania: Tommy Tuberville (AL), Rick Scott (FL), Roger Marshall (KS), John Kennedy (LA), Cindy Hyde-Smith (MS), Josh Hawley (MO), Ted Cruz (TX), and Cynthia Lummis (WY). To these we can add the 139 members of the House who joined them—together we might call these Republicans “the insurrectionist caucus”³⁵ and the core of the MAGA caucus.

Among the right-wing populists, “Christian Nationalism” is on the rise, as Donald Trump’s already strong support among white evangelical Protestants in 2016—77 percent—increased to 84 percent in 2020.³⁶ Pennsylvania Republican candidate for governor, Doug Mastriano, who promoted Christian Nationalism as part of his Pennsylvania gubernatorial campaign and calls “separation of church and state” a “myth,” was present at the January 6th insurrection, and pledged during his failed gubernatorial campaign that if he had been governor in 2020, he would have refused to acknowledge that Joe Biden had won Pennsylvania.

Speaking at the Turning Point USA Student Action Summit in Tampa July 24, 2022, Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) declared of the Republican Party, “We need to be the party of Nationalism. I’m a Christian, and I say proudly—we should be Christian Nationalists.” “Christian Nationalism” is actually “white Christian Nationalism” as observed by Philip S. Gorski and Samuel L. Perry in *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to America Democracy* (2022), and it is also an element of “Jim Crow 2.0”.³⁷ They wisely distinguish

“nationalism” from “patriotism,” which white Christian Nationalism promoters claim for themselves. Patriotism is driven by love of country and courage; nationalism is driven by hatred of “the other” and fear. Christian Nationalism—white Christian nationalism—is a hateful exclusionary philosophy, excluding from its membership non-whites and non-Christians—including agnostics, atheists, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and everyone else who is not “Christian.”

The past is prologue regarding the appearance of right-wing populism. Outbreaks of the intellectual virus of right-wing populism always occur among conservatives when they fear loss of political power dominance, and always fuel the politics of resentment with blame, stoking racism, fear, hatred, anger, and a yearning for a return to an imaginary better time in the past.

Right-wing populism appears now in the form of the current New Right that has overtaken the Republican Party. It first appeared in the Democratic Party of the Antebellum South. It reappeared in the Jim Crow era running from the end of Reconstruction with the Compromise of 1877 and into the 1960s, dominating the Southern Democrats until the late 1960s. It appeared in the form of the original New Right that emerged in the Republican Party in the 1970s. It captured the Republican Party in 2016 with the election of Donald Trump as President and is now embodied in the current New Right, which led the January 6th insurrection and coup attempt, and led most recently the prolonged battle in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives to select a House Speaker. We turn below to the right-wing populist institutions of this New Right.

“THE CENTER OF GRAVITY OF AMERICAN CONSERVATISM”: RIGHT-WING POPULIST INSTITUTIONS OF THE NEW RIGHT

As Matthew Continetti observes in the Introduction to *The Right*, by 2016 the “center of gravity of American conservatism” had shifted to Capitol Hill, where can be found the Claremont Institute’s Center for the American Way of Life, the Kirby Center of Hillsdale College, and the Heritage Foundation. The Claremont Institute, Hillsdale College, the Heritage Foundation, the Federalist Society, the secretive Council for National Policy, the National Conservatism Conference, America First Political Action Conference, and Turning Point USA all provide what amount to laboratories for the perfection and promotion of the intellectual virus of right-wing populism—the intellectual underpinning of the New Right. The Claremont Institute deserves special attention.

The Claremont Institute, the “Noble Lie,” and the Big Lie that Trump Won

2016 is the Flight 93 election: charge the cockpit or you die. You may die anyway. You—or the leader of your party—may make it into the cockpit and not know how to fly or land the plane. There are no guarantees.

Except one: if you don’t try, death is certain. To compound the metaphor: a Hillary Clinton presidency is Russian Roulette with a semi-auto. With Trump, at least you can spin the cylinder and take your chances.

—Michael Anton, under the pseudonym *Publius Decius Mus*, in “The Flight 93 Election,” *Claremont Review of Books*, September 5, 2016. Anton in January of 2017 left the private sector to serve on the National Security Council in the Trump administration.

Let’s be blunt. The United States has become two nations occupying the same country. When pressed, or in private, many would now agree. Fewer are willing to take the next step and accept that most people living in the United States today—certainly more than half—are not Americans in any meaningful sense of the term.

I don’t just mean the millions of illegal immigrants...I’m really referring to the many native-born people...who may technically be citizens of the United States but are no longer (if they ever were) *Americans*. They do not believe in, live by, or even like the principles, traditions, and ideals that until recently defined America as a nation and as a people. It is not obvious what we should call these citizen-aliens, these non-American Americans; but they are something else.

What about those who *do* consider themselves Americans? By and large, I am referring to the 75 million people who voted in the last election against the senile figurehead of a party that stands for mob violence, ruthless censorship, and racial grievances, not to mention bureaucratic despotism....

Those who wanted to Make America Great Again may refer to themselves as Republicans, though many realize that, apart from Trump, the party does not really care about them. Many may also, in some loose way, consider themselves conservatives....

[G]ive up on the idea that “conservatives” have anything useful to say. Accept the fact that what we need is a counter-revolution.

—Glen Ellmers, in “Conservatism is No Longer Enough,” subtitled “All Hands on Deck As We Enter the Counter-Revolutionary Moment,” *The American Mind*, published March 24, 2021, by the Claremont Institute. Ellmers is a Senior Fellow of the Claremont Institute and a visiting research scholar at Hillsdale College.

Imagine Nixon dirty trickster and convicted felon G. Gordon Liddy. Now, imagine a “think tank” of G. Gordon Liddys, and you have an approximation of the Claremont Institute, the leading think tank of what is now called “the New Right”—distinguished here from the “New Right” that formed in the 1970s.³⁸ John Eastman, a lawyer who is a Senior Fellow at the Claremont Institute and spoke at the January 6th “Save America March” rally, authored a memo proposing how Republicans could overturn the 2020 election. For his efforts, the House January 6th Committee issued criminal referrals to him as well as former President Trump. This New Right is

distinguished by its political apocalypticism, calls for counter-revolution, and embrace of the Big Lie that the 2020 election was stolen and support of re-installment of Donald Trump as president.

“All of a sudden, the conservative project is not a conservative one, so much as a counter-revolutionary one.”

The idea of the “Big Lie” that the 2020 election was stolen is an echo of the concept from Leo Strauss of Plato’s “noble lie”—the lie that the elites must tell the ignorant masses for their own good. The intellectual father of the Claremont Institute is Harry Jaffa, a former student of Leo Strauss who became the leader of the “West Coast Straussians” while Strauss, from the University of Chicago, was the leader of the “East Coast Straussians.”

The Big Lie and the belief in the necessity of a counter-revolution extend beyond Claremont into Hillsdale College and the Federalist Society. Mollie Hemingway, Editor-in-Chief of *The Federalist*, [in her September 13, 2021, speech](#) as she accepted the Bradley Prize (issued by the right-wing Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation), observed, “All of a sudden, the conservative project is not a conservative one, so much as a counter-revolutionary one.” Similarly, John Daniel Davidson, a senior editor at *The Federalist*, in his article [“We Need to Stop Calling Ourselves Conservatives,”](#) *The Federalist*, October 20, 2022, promoted embrace of the term “counterrevolutionaries.” (The “Federalist” is separate from the Federalist Society, although Mollie Hemingway appears at [the Federalist Society website](#) as a contributor.) Other sources on the Right rejecting conservatism are essays in the magazines *American Affairs* and *Compact*.³⁹

Inspired by the success of Donald Trump, who was himself inspired by the relative success of David Duke, the modern New Right is the successor to the original New Right, inspired by the relative success of George Wallace. An early chronicling of the emergence of the current New Right is provided in *The New Right—A Journey to the Fringe of American Politics* (2019), by Michael Malice (the name taken by Ukrainian American author Michael Krechmer). What was in 2019 the fringe of American politics, however, is now dominating the Republican Party. Accordingly, the failure of Continetti in *The Right*, published in 2022, to address it and its threat to liberal democracy more thoroughly is the biggest failure of Continetti’s book.⁴⁰

Yoram Hazony is chairman of the Edmund Burke Foundation, president of the Herzl Institute, a research center in Jerusalem, and the author of the recently published *Conservatism: A Rediscovery*. There he promotes, in lieu of liberal democracy, “conservative democracy”—“God-fearing democracy”—“which regards biblical religion as the only firm foundation for national independence, justice, and public morals in Western nations.” The Edmund Burke Foundation [website](#) is the home for “national conservatism” and provides links to articles on national conservatism as well as information on previous conferences and the recent National Conservatism Conference, September 11-13, 2022, in Miami.⁴¹ The conference is referred to as “NatCon,” and the followers of national conservatism call themselves “NatCons.”

Three articles addressing the 2021 National Conservatism Conference provide the insight into the right-wing populism of the New Right in the form of national conservatism. National Conservatism Conference attendees were referred to as “the terrifying future of the American Right” in *The Atlantic*, “radical young intellectuals” in *The New Republic*, and—most appropriately—“neo-reactionaries” in *Vanity Fair*.⁴²

The *Vanity Fair* article by James Pogue provides the most insight by summarizing interviews Pogue has with numerous luminaries of the New Right at the 2021 NatCon. Especially of interest is Curtis Yarvin, an ex-programmer and blogger who wrote under the name “Mencius Moldbug” and was a leader among “neoreactionary”⁴³ (“NRx”) writers—considering himself a reactionary and not a conservative. Yarvin attacks what he calls “the Cathedral”—the combination of liberal media and academia, and he promotes the idea of “RAGE” (“Retire All Government Employees”). In a blog post online in December 2021 Yarvin [calls himself](#) “an absolute monarchist” believing “the best form of government, for America now and also for most places in most times, is a ‘benevolent dictator’—an absolute (yet accountable) monarch or ‘sovereign CEO,’ governing autocratically under the simple, ancient principle of *salus populi suprema lex*” (“the welfare of the people should be the supreme law”).

As an aside, Yarvin’s concept of RAGE is an echo of Steve Bannon’s desire to abolish the “administrative state,” and a variant of it was promoted in the form of Donald Trump’s radical plan to remove civil service protection for as many as 50,000 federal employees “in positions of a confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating character,” rendering them “at will” employees, in his “Executive Order on Creating Schedule F in the Excepted Service,” issued October 21, 2020.⁴⁴

Pogue observes that monetary support for NatCon 2021 came from not only the think tanks created to promote the New Right but also, in great part, from billionaire Peter Thiel, who gave its opening address and was a supporter of J.D. Vance and Blake Masters in their Republican campaigns for the Senate from Ohio and Arizona, respectively. Of J.D. Vance, Pogue observes that Vance told the listeners of Steve Bannon’s podcast War Room—in an interview excerpt he later posted at his site on Twitter: “I gotta be honest with you, I don’t really care what happens to Ukraine...” Pogue notes Vance was somewhat taken aback when Pogue told him of Yarvin’s monarchist leanings and seemed very proud of his speech to NatCon 2021 titled “The Universities Are the Enemy.”

Importantly, Pogue observes that National Conservatism Conference attendees ranged from those still envisioning a conservatism promoting traditional values to the more extreme variations on authoritarianism, including right-wing populism that rejects conservatism, liberal democracy, and even a republican form of government.⁴⁵ Another speaker at the conference, Christopher Rufo, leader of the campaign against teaching of critical race theory, also [echoed](#) the New Right’s more extreme theme of counter-revolution:

The Reagan-era playbook is not enough; reform around the edges is not enough; a corporate tax cut is not enough. We must take the conditions of the cultural

revolution as our baseline, as the current reality, and our response must be framed in terms of a counter-revolution that plays not primarily on the axis of economy, but on the axis of culture.

VOTE DEMOCRAT TO SAVE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Alan Crawford warned in 1980 that right-wing populism had the potential to overtake conservatism as the philosophy of the Republican Party. Murray Rothbard urged the Republican Party to adopt right-wing populism. With the arrival of Donald Trump, right-wing populism has overtaken the Republican Party and, as envisioned by Steve Bannon, will dominate the Republican Party into the future.

As observed above, *Roe v. Wade*—a decision rendered by a Supreme Court composed of a majority of Justices nominated by Republican presidents—stood as the law for 49 years, until the current Republican-majority extremist Supreme Court struck it down. As recently as 2006, conservative Republican President George W. Bush signed legislation to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act—the fourth Republican president to do so. The House vote was 390-33 and Senate vote was 98-0.

The Republican Party of right-wing populists and the Religious Right staked out its priority for 2023 and beyond: In the first press conference after Republicans won the majority in the House, [Representative James Comer \(R-KY\)](#) announced their priority is to investigate Hunter Biden (*again*—recall [a previous investigation](#) by Republicans in the Senate cleared him of wrongdoing).

The Republican Party is simply, as Stuart Stevens observed, “just a white grievance party.” Republicans achieve prominence through grievance promotion and are rudderless without their chief white grievance promoter Donald Trump. To quote Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel in 2018, “[I will say proudly that the Republican Party is the Trump Party.](#)”⁴⁶ How true this is was confirmed two years later in the Republican National Convention’s 2020 platform statement—it was a one-page document *containing only one statement regarding policy*: “[RESOLVED: That the Republican Party has and will continue to enthusiastically support the President’s America-first agenda.](#)” *Whatever that is.* As has been observed by Nicholas Confessore of *The New York Times*, Republicans during the Trump administration accomplished judges, tax cuts, and overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. The last main item—grievance-based anti-immigration reform—requires control of the White House, Senate, and House. Thus, grievance is all Republicans have for the next two years.

To save liberal democracy from its destruction by Republican right-wing populists, the Democratic Party *must* win. To save liberal democracy, vote Democrat.

¹ In “[Remarks by President Biden on the Continued Battle for the Soul of the Nation](#),” an address at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 1, 2022.

² Federico Finchelstein, “[Biden Called Trumpism ‘Semi-Fascism.’ The Term Makes Sense, Historically.](#)” *The Washington Post*, September 1, 2022.

³ See former President Barack Obama’s comments in his interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, “[Why Obama Fears for Our Democracy.](#)” *The Atlantic*, November 16, 2020.

⁴ See Jamelle Bouie, “A Minor Strongman, Some Populists, and Tucker Carlson Went to a Conference,” *The New York Times*, May 25, 2022.

⁵ William Kristol in “[Republican Donald Trump Not the Sort of President US Conservatives Want](#),” *Financial Review*, November 4, 2016. This quote appears in Continetti’s *The Right*.

⁶ As he was called by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) [on the campaign trail in Oklahoma City](#) in 2016.

⁷ W. E. B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), p. 700.

⁸ “[Our God Is Marching On!](#)” speech, King Institute, Stanford University.

⁹ Bill Moyers, “What a Real President Was Like,” *The Washington Post*, November 13, 1988.

¹⁰ “It is opposed to classical liberalism which arose as a reaction to absolutism and exhausted its historical function when the State became the expression of the conscience and will of the people...Thus understood, Fascism is totalitarian....”

¹¹ “The Fascist State is not indifferent to religious phenomena in general nor does it maintain an attitude of indifference to Roman Catholicism, the special, positive religion of Italians. The State has not got a theology, but it has a moral code. The Fascist State sees in religion one of the deepest of spiritual manifestations and for this reason it not only respects religion but defends and protects it.”

¹² “We are free to believe that this is the century of authority, a century tending to the ‘right’, a Fascist century.”

¹³ “Fascism will have nothing to do with universal embraces; as a member of the community of nations it looks other peoples straight in the eyes; it is vigilant and on its guard; it follows others in all their manifestations and notes any changes in their interests; and it does not allow itself to be deceived by mutable and fallacious appearances.”

¹⁴ “A doctrine must therefore be a vital act and not a verbal display. Hence the pragmatic strain in Fascism, its will to power, its will to live, its attitude toward violence, and its value.”

¹⁵ “Anti-individualistic, the Fascist conception of life stresses the importance of the State and accepts the individual only in so far as his interests coincide with those of the State, which stands for the conscience and the universal, will of man as a historic entity.”

¹⁶ “Fascism does not, generally speaking, believe in the possibility or utility of perpetual peace. It therefore discards pacifism as a cloak for cowardly supine renunciation in contradistinction to self-sacrifice. War alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those peoples who have the courage to face it...Fascism sees in the imperialistic spirit—i.e., in the tendency of nations to expand—a manifestation of their vitality. In the opposite tendency, which would limit their interests to the home country, it sees a symptom of decadence.”

¹⁷ According to Robert Pape, University of Chicago, regarding the January 6th insurrectionists, one driver overwhelmingly stood out: fear of the “Great Replacement.” Great Replacement theory has achieved iconic status with white nationalists and holds that minorities are progressively replacing white populations due to mass immigration policies and low birthrates. Replacement theory might help explain why such a high percentage of the rioters hail from counties with fast-rising, non-white populations. See Anthony Conwright, “[What Lies Beneath](#),” *Mother Jones*, January-February 2023.

¹⁸ Wallace won five Southern states—Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia—and performed surprisingly well outside the South.

¹⁹ Alan Crawford, *Thunder on the Right: The “New Right” and the Politics of Resentment* (1980), p. 303.

²⁰ Stephanie Grace, “[Scalise’s Pitch to Supporters Seems Plausible](#),” *The Advocate*, December 31, 2014.

²¹ As observed by James Carville, Scalise’s career was saved by Cedric Richmond, former colleague of his in the Louisiana legislature who went on to serve as US Representative from New Orleans and later in the Biden administration, who came to his defense. See especially the story by Ben Kamisar, “[Democrat: ‘Scalise Doesn’t Have a Racist Bone in His Body’](#),” *The Hill*, December 29, 2014.

²² Campbell Robinson, “[David Duke’s Senate Run in Louisiana Draws Attention But Not Support](#),” *The New York Times*, September 10, 2016.

²³ A transcript of the debate and interviews with the participants are provided in the slim purple paperback volume titled *The Rise of Populism: Stephen K. Bannon vs. David Frum* (2018, 2019).

²⁴ A [transcript](#) of the address appears in the November 2016 article by Lester Feder for *BuzzFeed*.

²⁵ See Jane Burbank, “The Grand Theory Driving Putin to War,” *The New York Times*, March 22, 2022. Dr. Burbank is a professor of Russian history, formerly with New York University.

²⁶ Traditionalism is addressed at length by Benjamin Teitelbaum in his 2020 book *War for Eternity: The Return of Traditionalism and the Rise of the Popular Right*; also published under the alternative subtitle *Inside Bannon’s Far-Right Circle of Global Power Brokers*).

²⁷ Christopher Laine, “[Putin’s Rasputin: The Dangerous Mind of Aleksandr Dugin](#),” *Medium.com*, July 5, 2020.

²⁸ For further background, see James Kirchick, “[How the GOP Became the Party of Putin](#),” *Brookings*, July 27, 2017.

²⁹ See David Swerdlick, “[Barack Obama, Conservative](#),” *The Washington Post*, November 22, 2019.

³⁰ [“61% Optimistic About Next Four Years with Biden In Office, Quinnipiac University National Poll Finds; 68% Of Americans Support The \\$1.9 Trillion Stimulus Relief Bill,”](#) Quinnipiac University, February 3, 2021.

³¹ Additionally, as found in other polls, majorities of Americans supported *Roe v. Wade* (1973), providing a federal right to an abortion, favored by a record [65 percent](#) of Americans (including 53 percent of Republicans); and support the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) ensuring affordable healthcare for millions of poor Americans and those suffering from pre-existing conditions, favored by [56 percent](#) of Americans; the recognition of LGBT rights in the form of constitutional protection for same-sex marriage, favored by [61 percent](#) of Americans; and protection of voting rights guaranteed by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, favored at its passage by [76 percent](#) of Americans. The reinstatement of the Voting Rights Act last occurred by an overwhelming majority vote in Congress under Republican President George W. Bush, who heralded its passage.

³² In the [January 1992 issue](#) of the *Rothbard-Rockwell Report*, Rothbard penned an endorsement of Pat Buchanan and, in the same issue, an article titled “Right-wing Populism: A Strategy for the Paleo Movement.” Among its proposals were slashing taxes, slashing welfare, abolishing affirmative action, law and order reform getting tough on criminals and the homeless, abolition of the Federal Reserve, an “America First” strategy in the economy, and—to “defend family values”—abolition of public schools. It endorsed the ideas of David Duke and Joe McCarthy.

³³ Bess Levin, [“Trump Reportedly Called White Supremacists ‘My People,’ In Case It wasn’t Clear He’s an Abject Racist,”](#) *Vanity Fair*, September 16, 2021, quoting from Bob Woodward and Robert Costa’s book, *Peril*.

³⁴ See Charles Blow, [“From the Klan to Trumpism,”](#) *The New York Times*, September 6, 2021.

³⁵ Included on this list would be some of the past and current leaders of the House Republicans. For the full list of these Republicans, see Karen Yourish, Larry Buchanan, and Denise Lu, [“The 147 Republicans Who Voted to Overturn Election Results,”](#) *The New York Times*, January 7, 2021. See also the [July 2022 America First Policy Institute](#).

³⁶ Ruth Igielnik, Scott Keeter, and Hannah Hartig, [“Behind Biden’s 2020 Victory,”](#) *Pew*, June 30, 2021.

³⁷ Gorski is a Professor of Sociology at Yale University; Perry is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Oklahoma. Both are leading scholars of the Religious Right. The reference to “Jim Crow 2.0” appears on p. 121. Others have also linked the current era to Jim Crow, among them *The New York Times* editorial writer Charles Blow ([“Welcome to Jim Crow 2.0,”](#) *The New York Times*, July 14, 2021), Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. ([“The Lost Cause That Built Jim Crow,”](#) *The New York Times*, November 8, 2019), and contributing writer to *The Atlantic*, Adam Serwer ([“Is This the Second Redemption?,”](#) *The Atlantic*, November 10, 2016).

³⁸ For more detail about the Claremont Institute, see Laura K. Field, [“What the Hell Happened to the Claremont Institute?”](#) *The Bulwark*, July 13, 2021, and [“The Decay at the Claremont Institute Continues,”](#) *The Bulwark*, April 21, 2022. Laura K. Field is a senior fellow at the Niskanen Center and a scholar in residence at American University.

³⁹ See, e.g., Gladden Pappin, [“From Conservatism to Postliberalism: The Right after 2020,”](#) *American Affairs*, August 20, 2020; and Jon Askonas, [“Why Conservatism Failed,”](#) *Compact*, October 6, 2022.

⁴⁰ *The Right* does mention the Claremont Institute and its publication *The Claremont Review*, as well as some of its major figures, among them Michael Anton, Angelo Codevilla, and John Marini (page 371) and the “postliberal” trend represented by the Claremont Institute and Peter Thiel, R. R. Reno, Yoram Hazony, Patrick Deneen, Adrian Vermeule, and Sohrab Ahmari (pages 378-388), but ignores the important National Conservatism Conference and appears to feel obligated to engage in “what about-ism,” overstating extremism in the Democratic Party.

⁴¹ See Jonathan Chait, [“How to Make a Semi-Fascist Party,”](#) *New York*, October 10-23, 2022, reporting from the National Conservatism Conference in Miami.

⁴² Sam Adler-Bell, [“The Radical Young Intellectuals Who Want to Take Over the American Right,”](#) *The New Republic*, December 2, 2021; David Brooks, [“The Terrifying Future of the American Right,”](#) *The Atlantic*, November 18, 2021; and James Pogue, [“Inside the New Right, Where Peter Thiel Is Placing His Biggest Bets,”](#) *Vanity Fair*, April 10, 2022.

⁴³ For further background, see George Michael, [“An antidemocratic philosophy called ‘neoreaction’ is creeping into GOP politics,”](#) *The Conversation*, July 27, 2022. Michael is professor of criminal justice at Westfield State University.

⁴⁴ See [“Executive Order on Creating Schedule F in the Excepted Service,”](#) October 21, 2020; Jonathan Swan, [“A Radical Plan for Trump’s Second Term,”](#) *Axios*, July 22, 2022; and [“How Trump Could Reimpose Schedule F in 2025,”](#) *Axios*, July 23, 2022.

⁴⁵ Other conference attendees, Pogue observes, were Michael Anton, quoted above; *Benedict Option* author and ardent defender of Hungary’s Viktor Orbán, Rod Dreher; Sohrab Ahmari; Texas Senator Ted Cruz; and Missouri Senator of fist-pump fame, Josh Hawley. Hawley’s keynote speech addressed the assault on masculinity while Cruz invoked Reagan and conservatism. Missing from mention is conference speaker Marco Rubio of Florida.

⁴⁶ Republic National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel, told to Lou Dobbs on Fox Business Network (June 12, 2018).