



TDS STRATEGY MEMO:

**HERE'S HOW DEMOCRATS CAN EXPOSE
THE GOP'S DISHONESTY ABOUT FASCISM.**

BY

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Joe Biden's accusation that the MAGA wing of the GOP avows an ideology of "semi fascism" predictably unleashed a histrionic and indeed flamboyantly operatic chorus of GOP whimpering, garment rending and gnashing of teeth that was worthy of the biggest arias in *La Boheme* or the most florid narratives in the Old Testament.

The accusation that Biden called ALL Republicans "semi-fascists" when in fact he did not is, of course, the kind of routine, garden variety Republican dishonesty that can be simply determined by observing whether or not Mitch McConnell's lips are moving.

A somewhat more complex question to disentangle is "*in what sense*" or "*to what degree*" Trump and the MAGA Republican ideology can accurately be described as "semi-fascist."

Answering this question is complicated by the fact that since the 1960's there was a rigidly enforced journalistic taboo on using the word Fascist that was defined by the "*mustache rule*" i.e., *You cannot call an American politician a fascist unless he has grown a mustache and murdered millions of people in a campaign of mass genocide.*

This rule shielded Donald Trump for much of his administration. Every political journalist desperately searched his or her online thesaurus for alternatives: "authoritarian," "autocratic," "dictatorial" and so on. The rule made even usually intelligent conservatives like Henry Olsen and George Will humiliate themselves. Olsen's explanation in one column – "*Trump's not a fascist, he's a bully*" illustrates the intellectual degradation to which commentators were driven by the iron constraint of the mustache rule.

After the events of January 6th, however, the prohibition finally fell and the topic could be openly discussed. Since then a flood of historians and other scholars have taken to the op-ed pages to opine on the degree to which the word fascism is appropriate.

The result has been undeniably erudite but also extremely convoluted. There were three major pre-WW II European forms of Fascism – German, Italian and Spanish, each of which had somewhat distinct ideologies and different relations with the Church, the Army, Big Business and the work-

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ing class. A larger number of neo-fascist parties then emerged in the post-WW II era, each with its own unique features. The resulting complexity is unavoidable but makes it extremely difficult to pin down to what degree Trump and his avid supporters' ideology deserves the fascist label.

Since most Americans have absolutely no knowledge about Italian, Spanish and post-war Neo-Fascism only extremely vague images of German Nazi fascism in the 1930's (images based largely on movies) Republicans easily dismiss any discussion of the issue by arguing that all comparisons of Trump and MAGA with fascism represent absurd accusations that they are engaging in mass arrests, torture and genocide.

But anyone with even a limited knowledge of the period is aware that that there are more subtle comparisons that are not so easily discounted. As the leading historian of the period Deborah Lipstadt has noted:

I do think certain comparisons are fitting ... it's certainly not 1938," when Nazis led the Kristallnacht pogroms throughout Germany. "It's not even September 1935, and the Nuremberg Laws" institutionalizing racist policies.

"What it well might be, however, is [the earlier period around] December 1932, Hitler comes to power on Jan. 30, 1933 – it might be Jan. 15, 1933."¹

Focusing on Germany in the early 1930's, there is a way to put Republicans on the spot about comparisons between Trump/MAGA and fascism and force them to clearly state their position.

Doctors and nurses long ago realized that simply asking patients "how bad is your pain?" produced a incoherent word salad that rarely clarified the basic question. They therefore settled upon the use of a 10 point scale to help patients quantify their sensations – i.e., "On a scale of 1 to 10 how bad is your pain?" The resulting answer was invariably much more useful than the patient's spontaneous reaction.

Republicans can very effectively be put on the spot using a variation of this technique. They can be asked: *"In the following specific areas on a scale of one to ten how closely do you think Trump's America resembles Germany in the early 1930's?"*

¹<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/09/19/ken-burns-holocaust-nazi-analogies-trump/>

“In the following specific areas on a scale of one to ten how closely do you think Trump’s America resembles Germany in the early 1930’s?”

Topic	Hitler’s Germany in the early 1930’s	Trump’s America today	0-10
Political police	<p>The Sturmabteilung literally “Storm Detachment” played a significant role in Adolf Hitler’s rise to power in the 1920s and 1930s.</p> <p>The SA were colloquially called Brownshirts because of the colour of their uniform’s shirts, similar to Benito Mussolini’s blackshirts the SA men protected party meetings, marched in Nazi rallies, and physically assaulted political opponents. (Encyclopedia Britannica)</p>	<p>The SPL Intelligence Project identified 488 extreme anti-government groups that were active in 2021, Of these groups, 92 were militias, 75 sovereign citizen, three constitutional sheriff, and 52 conspiracy propagandist groups. Anti-government groups were linked up with other hard-right groups in 2021, as they often targeted the same marginalized communities and engaged in actual or threats of political violence. (Southern Poverty Law Project)</p>	
Government Controlled Disinformation	<p>The Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda also known simply as the Ministry of Propaganda controlled the content of the press, literature, visual arts, film, theater, music and radio. (Wikipedia)</p>	<p>The alternative media environment created by Fox news, talk radio and certain social media channels create a closed “information bubble” where false Trump/MAGA claims cannot be questioned.</p>	

<p>Subservient political party</p>	<p>The German National Socialist Party</p> <p>At the top of the Nazi Party was the party chairman (“Der Führer”), who held absolute power and full command over the party. All other party offices were subordinate to his position and had to depend on his instructions.</p> <p>After the death of President Hindenburg on 2 August 1934, Hitler merged the offices of party leader, head of state and chief of government in one, taking the title of Führer und Reichskanzler. blurring the distinction between structures of party and state even further. (Encyclopedia Britannica)</p>	<p>Article: <i>Trump’s ‘cult-like control’ of Republican party grows stronger since insurrection</i></p> <p>In the year since the insurrection that reverberated around the world, Trump’s stranglehold on Republicans has seemingly become stronger, not weaker....Trump had burrowed too far down into the party’s foundations to be expunged – and anyone who tried would themselves be purged. Trump just controls way too much money and too much power in the Republican party and it was really only a matter of a week or two before he reasserted his authoritarian, cult-like control over the whole GOP apparatus.” (The Guardian)</p>	
<p>Scapegoats</p>	<p>“Jews, Freemasons, Marxists, and immigrants were prominent among the groups that were demonized” (Encyclopedia Britannica)</p>	<p>Blacks, Latinos, Jews, GLBTQ individuals and liberals are frequent targets of MAGA harassment.</p>	
<p>Destruction of democracy</p>	<p>The Reichstag fire was an arson attack on the Reichstag building, home of the German parliament in Berlin, on Monday 27 February 1933, Hitler induced President Paul von Hindenburg to issue the Reichstag Fire Decree suspending civil liberties, This made the fire pivotal in the establishment of Nazi Germany. (Encyclopedia Britannica)</p>	<p>General Mark Milley described “a stomach-churning” feeling as he listened to Trump’s untrue complaints of election fraud, drawing a comparison to the 1933 attack on Germany’s parliament building that Hitler used as a pretext to establish a Nazi dictatorship. “This is a Reichstag moment,” Milley told aides, (New York Times)</p>	
<p>International alliances</p>	<p>“The Axis” – Italy, Spain, Japan</p>	<p>The new authoritarian Axis: Russia, Hungary, Brazil, the French National Front</p>	

Asking Republicans to complete this exercise will be extremely revealing, especially if some MAGA advocates are present as well as Democrats to observe the responses.

On the one hand, in the presence of MAGA's, non-MAGA Republicans will want to score everything with ones and zeros to avoid being tarred, feathered and deported to "some shithole country" by the MAGA's but will be simultaneously embarrassed to blatantly deny the obvious in front of sensible observers. On the other hand, however, they will also be completely unwilling to offer higher and more realistic numbers in the middle range of 4-6 as this will reveal that they are fully aware of their position as passive collaborators with American semi-fascism – and even potentially expose them to prosecution under the standards set in the 1947 Nuremberg codes.

The frenetic antics and acrobatic contortions that they will employ to avoid answering this simple set of questions will therefore be both amusing and illuminating. Many will flee from Democrats shoving this questionnaire in their faces like a bunch of small time hoods and crooks crawling out of windows and locking themselves in lavatories to avoid being served with a court-issued subpoena.

P.S. Unless the MAGA's who are present are gagged and physically restrained, they will, of course, explode in pyrotechnic, hysterical fury, bellowing that any fool can see that it is Democrats who are the real fascists. After all, the entire American educational system, from kindergarten to college is obviously a vast mind control/re-education camp system promoting woke ideology and the entire American media—from the New York Times to the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue—is obviously analogous to the German Ministry of Propaganda. In their view moreover, the real American Brownshirts are, of course, the vast, nationwide, and sinister antifa organization, a lethal conspiracy so immense that it infiltrated the Jan 6 events and perpetrated all the violence that occurred.

The scapegoats persecuted by the liberal mafia are, obviously, white men and Christians, whose brutal oppression is clearly demonstrated by these groups' dominant presence in both big business and Congress. Finally, as everyone knows, the international links of the liberal conspiracy include literally every multinational organization including NATO, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, AT&T and the Salvation Army – all of which are secretly controlled by a shadowy global cabal whose only publicly known members are George Soros and Hillary Clinton.