

IS TRUMP A FASCIST AND WAS HARRIS A COMMUNIST?

Knowledge empowers, ignorance disempowers and confusion paralyses. The ruling class fears real knowledge, they nurture ignorance and sow confusion. Social media presented the ruling class with severe challenges because it threatened to bring knowledge to those kept ignorant causing the ruling class to respond with confusion. Social media today is drowned by lies, distortions, disinformation and gossip all under the banner of 'freedom of speech'. The smartphone has become an electoral toilet roll.

In pursuit of knowledge the use of categories reigns supreme. Without categories we are not able to encapsulate knowledge nor distinguish one thing from another. And without sorting the world into categories and how things work, the world remains a blur, unintelligible.

Nowhere is the temptation to blur reality more prevalent than in the realm of politics. And nowhere is this more relevant than when categorizing the polar extremities of politics in the modern world - fascism and communism. A category in the scientific sense is a unique phenomenon whose defining characteristics distinguishes it from other phenomena. It is a system of classifying structures and processes.

Of course that does not mean that these characteristics are fixed and immutable. In the simple case, taking a snapshot of a thing would reveal its current characteristics, but a video would show how these characteristics may be modified over time without overflowing the boundaries of that category. The best example of this is colour. Rainbows have seven distinct colours as the normal eye sees them. In the middle is green, the dominant colour of life. But green is not a pure colour as it is made up of blue and yellow. This means that many shades of green are possible, 6 major and many more minor. At some point of course green stops being green if too much yellow or too much blue is added.

The point being that green remains green until it no longer is seen as green. The same with political categories, at some point they mean one thing but if stretched too far they can no longer mean that. It is these shades of understanding that can be confusing, especially when they have a number of interacting components.

Defining fascism.

The best authority on fascism is [Trotsky](#). When he describes fascism he portrays it firstly as a counter-revolutionary movement intended to restore the power of the capitalist class and re-establish its rule. It therefore presupposes a prior revolutionary movement and if not a revolutionary movement then a destabilizing economic crisis of such severity that the capitalist class cannot remedy it on its own, it therefore seeks allies in order to crush working class resistance by all and every means. Secondly, the ruling class must endorse the fascist party and throw its weight behind the fascists by financing them and providing physical support in terms of arms, the police and army. Thirdly, there must be a section of society, normally the small capitalists and [excluded workers embittered through neglect](#), who can be mobilized against the working class in the form of a civil war. Fourthly, there must be an identifiable enemy or enemies. Finally, a distinct and contemporary unifying ideology capable of meshing these disparate classes and which obscures their differing economic interests.

So let us examine whether the above fits the USA. It is true of course that neo-liberalism and globalisation has made many workers feel left behind and marginalized. Globalisation split the country into the

[seaboard metropolitan areas](#) integrated into the world economy, and the hinterland largely excluded from it through de-industrialization. This coincides with the split in the country politically into red and blue though this sharp distinction frayed in this election. This moving apart has been a very protracted process extending back to the early 1980s when in fact average incomes were higher in the hinterland. This thirty plus years period has few equivalents in the past. One statistic sums it all. Median male wages are below their peak in 1973 which explains much of the support of males for Trump and the sexist divide in this election.

However this collapse in wage income has not led to the growth of the trade union movement nor to organised widespread militancy. Nor has it thrown up a militant workers' party of any size. [Trade union membership](#) has halved since 1983 down to 10%, despite 59% of the adult population supporting unions. The union busting activity of the large corporations has also played a role. The exception in support for unions comes from elderly white republican voters: *"A majority of White Republicans (59%) say the decline of union membership has been at least somewhat good for working people."*

Clearly the capitalist class is not afraid of the organised working class with even [Biden claiming he is a union man](#). Allied to this is the second point. Though Trump has captured the commanding heights of the Republican Party by exploiting the pressure from below, he is not universally endorsed by the ruling class. True many who spurned him after the January 6 riots are now embracing him once more because his policies of deregulation and tax cuts will be good for profits, and many fear losing lucrative state tenders by antagonizing him, but many others see the downside, his unnecessary destabilizing of their consensual democracy which still remains the cheapest way to exploit labour.

The capitalist class will always weigh up risks and rewards. They will only risk everything when the failure to do so will mean all could be lost. That time is not ripe for such turbulence. This was confirmed by the severity with which the rioters on the 6th of January were dealt with by the Justice Department. That is why many are wary of Trump making matters worse through his unthought out and capricious policies.

As I have pointed out repeatedly, the US economy is going sideways and slipping. Since the economic war with China official US data has become Ukrainian, that is to say it no longer approximates the real state of the economy and its movements and developments. Had the economy been as strong as portrayed by the official data, Kamala Harris would have been the next president. In the US the top 10% of income earners have been gaining, the next 20% have been holding their own, while the bottom 70% have been sinking, and increasingly so the further down the income scale. This was the decisive factor in this election. The majority of voters saw their living standards stressed and under threat by wages which had not kept up with the 30% rise in prices since the onset of the Pandemic. The same applies to the majority of small businesses who are doing badly and who resent the lack of government support given to the large corporations with their army of lobbyists.

Clearly Trump stands at the head of a distinct political movement, the MAGA movement. The MAGA movement has a cohering ideology that ties many workers to the capitalist class. It stands on three legs. Economic rebirth, cultural rebirth, and it identifies those who stand in the way of achieving this. Its economic rebirth or renaissance is based on the following doctrine: at the expense of others. It seeks to punish those who stole American jobs and it seeks to sanction those who refuse to use the Dollar. Thus it seeks to steal back external jobs through a regime of tariffs, and to steal back internal jobs through deporting many millions of migrants. What it does not do is propose large scale state funded or supported

investment. Instead it relies on the assumption that making imports expensive will encourage corporations to invest in factories within the USA.

In terms of cultural rebirth it stands for white supremacy, traditional family values/roles, a mythological American history and Christian obedience. To achieve this it seeks to purge all Marxist, leftist, feminist, and anti-racist influences from political life, from education, from the media and the civil service. And all of this will be done under the banner of freedom of speech. This is the individual liberty espoused by the conservative right, their right to suppress dissent and their right to impose their views. Of course besides this being a distortion of liberty its hidden agenda is to wipe out class distinctions by embracing the all-American patriot.

And importantly the ultra right is armed. Kamala Harris may own a Glock pistol but most of the right own an [AR-15 assault rifle](#). A pistol is accurate up to 50 yards while a rifle is accurate beyond 500 yards. Really no contest. In fact this is the first time in history, thanks to the Second Amendment in the Constitution, that a proto-fascist movement does not require being armed by the Bourgeoisie.

So who are the enemies. The FMs, no silly, not the Financial Markets, but Foreigners and Migrants. The two targeted foreigners are the Chinese and Muslims. Here Islamophobia plays the role which anti-Semitism once did although it is not absent in some corners of the far-right. In replacing anti-Semitism with Islamophobia, far right ideology shows that is nothing more than the lapdog of US Imperialism and its 70 year brutal and ruinous policies towards the Middle East. And conversely anti-Semitism is suppressed because it conflicts with US support for its agent in the Middle East, namely Israel.

And finally the unifying great leader Trump. Not only is he an elected politician but he has been appointed by God and when Trump *leans into this role*, we are talking about an embryonic fascist leader, a Fuehrer. *"We're not talking about political opponents anymore, those who disagree on policy. We're talking about those who've been elected by God, like Trump, to destroy those who are in the service of Satan, like Joe Biden or anyone else on the other side. So when Trump leans into this role, he's leaning into the idea that he's divinely ordained and that American politics is a matter of good and evil, God and Satan, rather than simply the best person for the job. And that's quite a change from where we were just a decade ago."* Evidently God wants to make America Great through Trump the Great Leader so that America will once again be "charitable" to its neighbours, not "murder" nor "steal" from them, all the things the USA has been doing over the last two hundred years and which economically made *America Great*, but which violates the commandments found in the Judeo-Christian tradition these political hypocrites claim to champion. Perhaps they should put a gold plated altar in the Oval Office.

What can we expect.

With the quadfecta in place, that is a Republican dominated upper and lower houses of Congress as well as the Supreme Court there will be few checks on the Presidency although the election of John Thune as Leader of the Senate suggests moderate Republicans are concerned about Trump over-reaching. Trump will seek to reinstate Schedule F probably on his first day, and push Unitary Executive Authority through Congress which gives Schedule F more teeth." *In American law, the unitary executive theory is a Constitutional law theory according to which the President of the United States has sole authority over the executive branch.*" In other words, Trump could hire and fire the heads of independent agencies as well as the heads of Federal Agencies. He would then have carte blanche powers to shape the government and its supporting agencies in his own image. Or to put it more bluntly he will own the Federal Government. Such

a move will no doubt be contested by moderate Republicans, local state officials and in the courts all the way up to the Supreme Court where it is likely to fail.

Despite minor party obstacles he will therefore be the most authoritarian President in US history. He will try to close down what is left of the democratic space. He will purge his critics from the public sector and strengthen his hold over the security services. He will intimidate the media and create a climate of fear for any dissenters.

He will need to. His biggest challenge oddly enough will not come from the left but from his own right wing base. He will need to contain them when he betrays them by rolling back his promises, and by doing so revealing he in fact one of the hated ones, a member of the swamp sent by the swamp to deceive them. And if they then make common cause with the left it will beget the night of the long knives in the Republican Party and MAGA movement whereby its workerist base will be purged, but not as violently as in 1934. Once this is done, the MAGA movement will become a purely bourgeois and petty bourgeois organisation, and therefore much more threatening to the US working class.

This scenario is not far fetched. The US is in decline. The geopolitical changes will hinder the economy not boost it. A.I. and its promise of cost cutting will not compensate for this. With the exception of 10 global corporations the economy is doing badly. With fewer foreign investment opportunities abroad Trump will seek to carve more opportunities in the US itself, hence the addition of Musk which will raise prices for workers.

Besides Tech and Big Pharma, its only dynamic industry is energy. Trump boasted “Drill baby Drill” while promising lower gas prices, the equivalent of getting a free Trump gallon in your tank. Except of course he is talking nonsense. Currently WTI prices are between \$68 - \$70 a barrel. How does that compare to profitable production costs at the wellhead? *“[For the entire sample](#), firms need \$64 per barrel on average to profitably drill, higher than the \$62-per-barrel price when this question was asked last year. Across regions, average breakeven prices to profitably drill range from \$59 to \$70 per barrel. Breakeven prices in the Permian Basin average \$65 per barrel, \$4 higher than last year.”* And as for the future market, here prices are tracking down to \$66 for June delivery. And note what the Dallas Fed production price refers to, is the [wellhead price](#), not the delivered price at the Cushing Hub which the WTI is based on. This means we can add up to [\\$5 a barrel](#) for pumping the oil down a pipeline to Cushing. So no mister Trump, short of defrauding shareholders, US oil production cannot be ramped up, and if it is, and foreign oil producers retaliate, then what’s good for the consumer will be disastrous for Trump’s benefactors in the oil industry.

Then there are the tariffs which Trump boasts always hurts exporters to the US. It hurts US consumers as well. Current tariffs on Chinese goods already costs the US consumer \$72.25 billion. The blanket 60% rate proposed by Trump will cost an additional \$276 billion. To put this in perspective it adds up to 4% of all retail sales, a very large inflationary number. And additionally there is the 10-20% tariff band for non-Chinese imports and a much higher band for Mexican imports. Economists have estimated it will cost the average family [upwards of \\$1350 p.a.](#) This is a tax by another name. Stymied on the one hand by the cost of producing US oil and mugged on the other by tariffs, Trump has little chance of taming inflation and reducing prices, his key promise.

Furthermore, nature takes no prisoners. Trump and the fools around him evidently made stupid by the lead in petrol during their youth, may deny climate change but they will be burnt by it. Food and energy inflation are the main concerns for US voters, but food prices are outside Trump’s control. [The FAO Food](#)

[Price Index](#) a global index, rose from its low point of 117.4 at the beginning of the year up to 127.4 in October due to global warming. And food inflation is accelerating. 2024 has been hot, according to the [Copernicus Institute \(EU\)](#), the hottest year on record. Paradoxically Trump's tariff war may drive the price of cereals down in the US because one of its biggest export market, China, is shunning US farm exports other than soybeans while relying more on its BRICS partners for food supplies.

Then there are the tax cuts. To hide the real intent behind these taxes Trump promises to remove taxes on tips and overtime. He would have done better to ban employers from using tips to supplement the minimum wage they pay their staff; in other words tips are for staff and not to be used to subsidise the employer. As for overtime, if Trump had workers interest at heart he would repeal the *Fair Labor Standards Act* or FLSA which forces employees to do overtime under the threat of being sacked and abolish all the exemptions which allows employers to defraud their workers of overtime pay.

It's all sound bites, the equivalent of Trump's boast in 2017 that his tax cuts would hurt the rich. In fact the opposite happened then, the rich saved tens of thousands in taxes while anyone earning below \$114,000 saw nothing. "[New research](#) shows that workers who earned less than about \$114,000 on average in 2016 saw "no change in earnings" from the corporate tax rate cut, while top executive salaries increased sharply." And these tax cuts for the rich enacted by Bush and then Trump caused the federal budget deficit to swell as tax income fell from 19.3% of GDP to 16.9% of GDP a difference of \$470 billion in 2017 which trickled or should we say flooded into the pockets of the capitalists and high income earners. (Today tax receipts are just 16% of GDP and the deficit 6.4%) And of course these tax cuts did not pay for themselves [by boosting growth](#) either in Bush's reign or in [Trump's first reign](#).

So more tax cuts will potentially bankrupt the government, but wait here comes Super Musk to head a new department called DODGY. The world's richest man is going to cut hundreds of billions of Dollars from the Federal Budget. No he is not. He and his mates are going to pillage the budget by privatizing even more services and writing themselves lucrative government contracts. Of course this privatization, as history has shown, will make basic services more expensive to ordinary consumers as well as reduce the quality of delivery. By the time people realise what these hucksters have done they will be on their getaway Starship with their swag. Of course the markets know that privatization is profitable which is why they have marked up Tesla and other Musk shares in anticipation of the riches these companies will earn at the expense of the ordinary taxpayer.

And Musk will be cutting regulations to the bone. Regulations always hinder profit-making because they tend to inhibit how and what can be produced in order to protect workers, consumers and the environment. In the US such protections are already threadbare. It is the only country in the world [where nearly half of all drinking water](#) is contaminated by forever chemicals (note only thirty two chemicals out of many thousands were tested to arrive at this figure). US tourists in Europe marvel at being able to drink tap water. But then Musk can afford to jet kegs of water from pristine glaciers in Norway..

At least Biden understood that without an industrial policy led by government in the form of Acts like the *CHIPS Act* and the *Inflation Reduction Act*, really bribes for Big Business, there was no guarantee US Corporations would step up to the plate and invest. Trump sees these measures as socialist and has pledged to overturn the Inflation Reduction Act. Despite these two Biden Acts, private non-residential fixed investment remains flat and is currently at [13.9% of GDP](#), barely higher than the 13.6% average from 2017 when Trump won office. Given all of this, it is likely more *Starlinks* will be produced than jobs under Trump's reign.

Nor will Trump do anything for housing. He claims that by cutting regulations and opening up federal land he will halve the cost of a home. Some chance. His tax cuts, by raising public debt, will raise interest rates making mortgages more unaffordable. His tariffs will raise the cost of housebuilding. His hostility to trade unions will make it more difficult to remedy the biggest cause of falling home ownership, low wages. Once again workers will discover that lies don't build houses.

Finally by 2028 LLMs will have culled millions of white collar jobs. In doing so the gap between the globally integrated Metropolitan Areas and the Hinterland will be reduced simply because the main job losses will be in the Metropolitan areas where most of the white collar jobs are to be found. These computer algorithms will do the same to white collar workers what the export of capital did to blue collar workers in the 1980s. White collar workers in these areas are more likely to vote Democrat than Republican but even so, the scale of these job losses will be socially destabilising. An authoritarian president like Trump, depending on whether he is still *compos mentis*, will be better able to deal with the political fall out of this instability provided his base has not deserted him by then.

Thus Trump will disappoint on jobs, wages, homes and prices though inflation is really difficult to predict due to geo-political and geo-climate events. He may regret raising expectations so high. Politicians need to beware what they wish for the voters.

Fascistic traits.

Trump promised to deport millions of migrants. The appointment of the deportation czars to his cabinet and agencies, all with proven track records hostile to migrants, shows the seriousness of his intent. The scale of Trump's deportations is the equivalent of migrant cleansing. Hitler tried to rid himself of the Jews once he had expropriated them by trying to deport them first. Thus eliminating a group always begins with deportations and can end with extermination. Trump has incited a poisonous atmosphere towards migrants. Unless he engages in mass deportations, many of his supporters will take matters into their own hands by organising pogroms against migrant communities making their lives unlivable in the USA.

Then there are the homeless. Trump is not only seeking to deport migrants out of the country, but to deport the homeless to [tent cities](#) well beyond the city limits. There is a name for such tent cities - concentration camps - canvas surrounded by razor wire to prevent escape. His approach to the homeless, many of whom he derides as mentally ill, is not that different from what the fascists did in the mid nineteen-thirties. Like Trump they denigrated these people as worthless and like Trump they sought to exclude them from society. The rise of the homeless is a product of the neo-liberal policies which Trump champions, it is a by-product of the rise in inequality, and instead of reparations, Trump malevolently persecutes these victims of the system.

Making America Great Again is an imperial vision. It cannot be divorced from war. Trump boasted of not starting new wars during his term in office. Wrong. He started the biggest war in the history of the USA whose outcome could bring war to the US mainland for the first time in two centuries. He started an economic war with China. Economic wars have only two outcomes. If they succeed in arresting the economic development of their opponents they end mission accomplished, but if they fail to do so, they necessarily turn into a shooting war. The US has failed to arrest China's economic development. Hence the populating of Trump's cabinet with neo-cons and China hawks all intent on crushing China. As for Ukraine, this is now beyond Trump's reach. By January, given the pace of Russian advances and the disintegration of the Ukrainian army, there is very little Trump can threaten Putin with. More than likely he will walk away

dumping the aftermath onto the laps of the European leaders. And what about Western Asia. By January Israel will be a shadow of what it was before October the 7th again limiting Trump's options even though he proposes giving Israel greater support and freedom of action as well as taking a much harder line against Iran. The problem facing a declining empire with industrial shortcomings, is that it can no longer do everything, and given the fixed focus on China, Trump may yet be forced by the Pentagon to disappoint Netanyahu

Conclusion.

The US does not have universal suffrage and the system is run by big business. Rampant Gerrymandering allows politicians, mainly Republicans to choose their voters rather than the voters choosing them, state law obstructs voting and allows abuses of the system such as the rejection of ballots which was rife in swing states and was one of the reasons for the missing voters. And yet this does not prevent the US lecturing the world on democracy, surely a case of get your own corrupt house in order first.

Trump seeks to legitimize his rule by claiming an overwhelming victory. True he is the first Republican who has won the popular mandate since 2004 but he is likely to have only a 1% lead over Harris once all the votes are counted. And Trump's 76 million votes, while giving him a 50% share of those who voted, is well below Biden's 81 million votes in 2020. The real loser was Kamala Harris whose vote fell by 10 million compared to 2020 making this a Democratic Party stay away vote. Turnout was also 2% lower though how much of that was due to rejected ballots know one knows because unlike other democracies the number of spoilt ballots is not made known.

Trump will use his *beautiful* victory to legitimize everything he does. He has populated his cabinet with evangelicals and hawks. The most dangerous leaders are not the ones who are genuinely religious but the ones who use religion cynically for political ends such as Marco Rubio the proposed Secretary of State and Pete Hegseth the new Minister of Defense, both who profess to be evangelicals who proclaim a messianic role for the USA.

Does this make the forthcoming Trump regime a proto fascist regime. The answer is no. Just as Biden's regime was not communistic Trumps term will not be fascistic at least to begin with. It will be more McCarthyite. However we should not be complacent. All the explosive ingredients for a fascist solution to the crisis of US imperialism are present in the MAGA camp. It only needs a detonator, and that detonator is a generalized outbreak of class war.

There are tens of millions of evangelical Christians, many armed, and on their periphery more million angry white men who believe the United States is being overrun by foreigners and un-American beliefs including feminism. They romantically see their destiny as returning the country to greatness once more. It's a toxic and volatile brew of religious mythology and crude nationalism that is the feedstock upon which imperialism feeds and which it can convert into an organised fascist movement.

However, all is not lost for the left. Though Trump represents the degeneration of politics in the US courtesy of Big Business stifling the emergence of a real alternative, aka they would rather have the Harris donkey running than a spirited horse even if it cost them the election, he could in fact turn out to be the orange sergeant-major recruiting for revolution. He has raised expectations so high that the crash back to reality by most of his supporters will see them seeking not only retribution but an alternative. Through debate, propaganda and engagement the left can show that they were not the real enemy - he was all along.

Addendum Trotsky: a link to and a few choice quotes from the 1930s describing the fascist forces of the time.

[Fascism](#), Trotsky argues, is a product of capitalist crisis and capitalist loss of control over society. Fascism, as a system of government, sees the effective removal of the bourgeoisie from political - not economic - power. Instead of well- educated, good-mannered responsible statemen, strutting thugs, psychopathic murderers and rabble-rousers take over the leading offices of state.

Fascism organises, militarises and unleashes a mass plebeian force - the crazed petty bourgeoisie, the lumpenproletariat, embittered former soldiers - against the parties and organisations of the working class.

Brian Green, 15th November 2024.