

Fascism: Neither Horseshoes Nor Fishhooks, But The Three-Way Fight

written by Daphne Lawless | September 5, 2024

I

What's wrong with this picture?

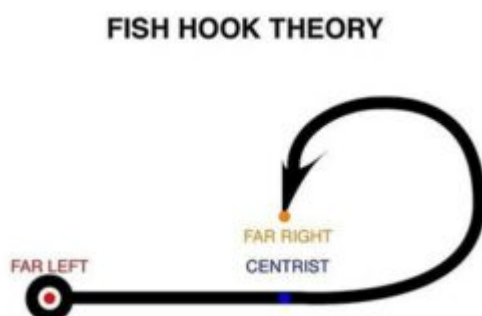


We beg forgiveness for beginning this review with a block quote from a Wikipedia article:

The **horseshoe theory** asserts that advocates of the far-left and the far-right, rather than being at opposite and opposing ends of a linear continuum of the political spectrum, closely resemble each other, analogous to the way that the opposite ends of a horseshoe are close together. The theory is attributed to the French philosopher and writer of fiction and poetry Jean-Pierre Faye in his 1972 book *Théorie du récit: introduction aux langages totalitaires*, in relation to Otto Strasser.

Otto Strasser was a dissident Nazi who objected to Hitler and Goebbels abandoning their anti-capitalist and populist rhetoric as they came closer to power. In many ways, Strasser and his brother Gregor were the original “Red-Browns” or “Third Positionists”, the tradition which seeks to reconcile anti-capitalist and fascist ideas.

But then; what's wrong with *this* picture?



The **Fishhook Theory** is the equal-but-opposite

counterpart to the Horseshoe, which argues that in fact it is the political centre (aka “the Establishment”, or even “the Libs”) who are close to or even identical with fascists. This harks back to the infamous “Third Period” analysis of German Communists in the 1930s, who described the centre-left Social Democrats as “social fascists”, and accordingly downplayed the threat of the actual fascists taking power; much like the edgy online Left today mock those worried by the threat of “Trump 2.0” or military victories for Putin.

What the Horseshoe and Fishhook theories have in common is that *they both deny that fascism is a phenomenon in and of itself*. The Fishhook argues that fascism is just capitalist politics, or at least the politics of one kind of capitalist, with the mask taken off. The Horseshoe argues that it’s simply one “flavour” of illiberal, anti-democratic politics, and not really different from revolutionary socialism.

Analysis of fascism which rejects both these models is a tradition stretching back decades or more. *Three Way Fight: Revolutionary Politics and Antifascism* gives an excellent overview of that long tradition.

II

The introduction to *Three Way Fight: Revolutionary Politics and Antifascism* explains things succinctly:

In 2004, a small group of revolutionary antifascists started the Three Way Fight blog and website^[1] as a project to share information and analysis about political movements and the context in which they operate...

Its supporters rejected the conventional liberal model that portrayed authoritarian extremists threatening a democratic center, but they also challenged the standard leftist binary that saw fascism and liberalism as arrayed together in defense of capitalism against the working-class left...

Leftists need to confront both the established capitalist order and an insurgent or even revolutionary right, while recognizing that these opponents are also in conflict with each other. Hence the term “three way fight”. (Kindle locations 185, 187, 198, 200)

The basis of this approach is that fascism is *neither* just a mask for the worst forms of capitalism, *nor* a possible partner in a fight against capitalism, but something *independent from* and *hostile to* both the state and the working-class movement.

Although the Three-Way Fight model is traditionally associated with anarchists, the introduction to the book traces the early origins of the concept to the Sojourner Truth Organisation (STO), a “post-Maoist” organisation which traced the theory out in the early 1980s.^[2] The STO’s analysis (reproduced in full in the book) made the vital insight that while fascism has “intimate connections with the needs of the capitalist class,” it also

contains an anti-capitalist ‘revolutionary’ side that is not reducible to simple demagoguery... It represents a revolutionary challenge to capitalist power—not revolutionary in any liberatory sense, but in that it aims to seize power and systematically transform society along repressive and often genocidal lines. (222)

This is a crucial point for a generation of socialists who might have been using “revolutionary” as an unproblematic good thing: there are *worse things* than bourgeois “liberal democracy”. Autonomist Marxist and STO veteran Don Hamerquist argues:

I think that fascism has the potential to become a mass movement with a substantial and genuine element of revolutionary anti-capitalism... fascism is not merely a blunt instrument used to prop up industrial capitalism but is, rather, a whole new form of barbarism, one that quite disconcertingly comes with mass support. Fascism has its own independent political life, and as such, while the bourgeoisie can influence it, it is ultimately independent of it. (1124, 1128, 1130).

It is precisely the *sincere* revolutionary vision and bottom-up dynamic of fascism that makes it so acutely dangerous for socialists to consider “Red-Brown” alliances, especially in times of political backwardness and defeat. The Marxist tradition has traditionally described “Caesarism” or “Bonapartism” – an authoritarian populist movement backing a charismatic leader, of which fascism is a variation – as arising in times of political exhaustion and deadlock, where neither “elite” nor “popular” forces are able to achieve a real victory. This looks very familiar from the vantage point of 2024, as Don Hamerquist suggests:

Although these popular upsurges are increasingly frequent, widespread, and disruptive, their capacity to expand working-class power and autonomy is undermined by an atomized hopelessness and cynicism that also reflects the increased precarity of working-class life. (3277)

Thus, fascism offers the contending classes *some way forward* out of stasis, “beyond left and right” in the words of its traditional slogan. As rowan, “a friend of *Three Way Fight*” says in an interview:

It is incredibly attractive to believe that the world is neatly divided with bad guys on one side representing oppression and exploitation, racism, patriarchy, bigotry, empire, and fascism, and good guys on the other representing liberation, feminism, decolonization, and a free society....

A lot of the time it feels like radical analyses of the far right just start from the assumption that they’re lying. Thus, when folks on the right oppose economic exploitation of the working class, prioritize ecology and defending the earth, or even oppose white supremacy, leftists often dismiss these as lies or attempts to trick people. The three way fight perspective helps us to listen, to be open to the possibility that they speak the truth about their visions, and to recognize that our enemies are complex, which makes them all the more dangerous as we struggle to defeat them.^[3] (926, 939, 943)

In the early years of the millennium, antifascists involved in the antiglobalisation movement

found themselves confronting not only global corporations and intergovernmental bodies but...the wider spread of fascistic ideas such as antisemitic conspiracism—within the movement’s own ranks... The September 11 attacks showed even more dramatically that global capitalism’s enemies could be found not only on the radical left but also on the far

right... Kdog's "Fifth Column Fascism," written shortly after 9/11, declared "All resistance [to US imperialism] ain't liberatory and all fascists ain't aryan," (265, 270, 280)

Many on the radical Left were not politically prepared for a world in which, as Michael Staudenmeier puts it, "the most significant attack on the global power of the United States in at least a generation came from the right, not from the left" (6101); some even decided that maybe the Right weren't such bad fellows. More recently, many of the same forces have been drawn into a Red-Brown form of "anti-imperialism" sponsored by the Russian state, exemplified by the notorious "Multi-Polar World" conference held in Moscow in 2014 (2992). "Multi-Polar World" is of course an expression originating with the esoteric fascist philosopher Aleksander Dugin (3011). Matthew Lyons, co-editor of this collection^[4], notes:

Marxist academician Efe Can Gürcan, for example, recently discussed Eurasianism (specifically including Duginism) as an ideological challenge to NATO and US imperialism but didn't mention that Aleksandr Dugin is a fascist. When I objected, Gürcan replied, "One should not avoid potentially transformative dialogue with such movements [as Dugin's] merely because they are not leftist or because their practices are in some areas objectionable." As a self-deluding rationale for red-brown coalition building, this is hard to beat. (3090)

In explaining fascism's relative independence from capitalist politics, *Three Way Fight* emphasises its *middle-class* base. American Maoist author J Sakai notes that the German Nazi movement was "primarily formed by men of lower middle class and declassed backgrounds 'that are abandoned on the sidelines of history'." (1134) This replicates the insights of Leon Trotsky, whose analysis of fascism a previous *Fightback* article^[5] summarised as "a bottom-up movement, which while it might be funded by some parts of big business, is based on the support and activism of the insecure middle classes and the most impoverished layers of society" – the atomised layers of fearful individuals whom Trotsky referred to as "human dust".^[6] Later in the book, Devin Zane Shaw identifies this as precisely the class composition of the January 6, 2021 rioters in Washington DC (2265) – as the popular stereotype has it, "dentists and used car dealers".

It is this revolutionary, or even insurgent, side to fascism which distinguishes it from other forms of reactionary politics. Matthew Lyons makes the distinction between *anti-systemic* and *system-loyal* variants of Right-wing popular politics. A fascist movement, as a revolutionary movement, wants to smash the system, as opposed to conservative forms of Right-wing politics which seek to defend the existing system against real or imagined threats from "outsiders". So there is a difference between

a genuine fascist movement, which is a movement of insurgents, and the system-loyal right-wing nationalist populism of the Trump presidency. While Trump drove home the slogan "Make America Great Again," it was not fundamentally premised on the idea that the American project has failed. (1316-7)

Devin Zane Shaw also notes the contradiction between "system-loyal vigilantism and system-oppositional armed organization" (2307), in suggesting that it is too simplistic to argue that State security forces are *always* going to be supportive of fascists, or vice versa.

The political movement behind Donald Trump is understandably at the focal point of many modern

debates on the Left about what “fascism” is. It seems doubtful that Trump himself can be described as a fascist in any meaningful way; the US Twitter commentator Sami Gold is probably closest when he describes Trump as a “personalist”, that is, someone whose main principle is that he *personally* should be in charge. But it is indisputable that, as Rowland Keshena Robinson puts it, “a number of explicitly white nationalist organizations, theorists, and influencers have been highly motivated and emboldened by Trump”. (1062)

Thus, this book points out the *slippage* in the Trump movement between “system-loyal” and “anti-system” positions – in a similar way that the Ku Klux Klan historically moved between defending and attacking the US establishment (2347). To be crude: when Trump’s in power, his followers pledge allegiance to the United States; when it’s not, they talk about “burning it all down”. In fact, the line was crossed specifically during the January 6, 2021 attempted putsch, during which “millions of people ... moved—at least temporarily—from system loyalty into system opposition, as symbolized by Proud Boys stomping on a Thin Blue Line flag”. (4572) As Matthew Lyons puts it:

there’s been this larger shift of a large section of the right which had been system loyal into a much more directly oppositional stance of rejecting the legitimacy of the system because they see the election that put Biden on top as illegitimate, and that from their standpoint it robbed Trump of his rightful position as president. (4337)

It seems plausible that this is what led the Republican establishment to briefly desert Trump and even to not fight against his second impeachment very hard; and that their return to him over the last three years was predicated precisely on his retreat to a “system-loyal” position.

Matthew Lyons characterises fascism as “as a disparate array of forces, which can sometimes find themselves in coalition with one another but which do not necessarily share the same constellation of goals. What is essential is the question of supremacy” (1146). This does not necessarily mean *white* supremacy, although that is of course how fascism has generally presented itself in the United States. Robinson’s chapter expands on Aimé Césaire’s observation that fascist politics look a lot like settler-colonial politics, brought back to the metropolis:

Geographically speaking, on its own soil fascism is imperialist repression turned inward... [insurgent fascist forces] all desire for a new frontier, for recolonization, for territories, for a white homeland. (1172, 1313)

Similarly, Shaw quotes J Sakai’s observation that “white settler colonialism and fascism occupy the same ecological niche. Having one, capitalist society didn’t yet need the other” (2352). It was only with the growth of the Civil Rights movement that liberalism began to shift to a position of redressing the wrongs of white supremacy at the margins, and where fascism could then coalesce as its insurgent enemy, seeking “the rebirth of the settler-colonial project” (2368).

However, several commentators have also noted the increase in Black and Latino members of fascist and other far-right movements in the United States, leading to the glib comment on the infamous *4chan* that this movement “honestly doesn’t care what race you are, as long as you’re racist”. This diversification of the fascist base across racial lines goes along with, not only a “nativist” opposition to immigration, but the growing importance of *anti-feminism* to the far Right. Tammy Kovich’s chapter describes the importance of the “Gamergate” and “manosphere” movements to this new development:

Sexism, rather than racism, is the gateway drug that has led many to join the alt-right... These various online communities and the different patriarchal orientations they represent have led many insecure, marginalized, and otherwise struggling men to broader fascistic politics. They function to create a culture united in the belief that white male masculinity is under attack and the status of men must be protected at all costs. (1456, 1520)

Although not all fascists are necessarily homophobic (and several prominent figures are gay men), Kovich describes the basis of fascist gender politics as “(1) gender essentialism; (2) gender difference; and (3) gender hierarchy” (1545). The growing transphobic movement – accurately characterised by *libcom.org* as “the women’s division of the global far right”^[7] – indicates that *any* position of supremacy in contemporary society can, should the beneficiaries of that supremacy feel under threat, evoke a fascist movement to defend it.

III

The chapters of *Three Way Fight* divide neatly between theoretical approaches to the problem of antifascism, written at various points throughout history, and reports on various aspects of practical antifascism. In places, these confirm that certain features of the modern antifascist struggle have been pretty much the same for the last forty years. A research bulletin from 2001, for example, identifies the Workers’ World Party as building a “de-facto Red-Brown alliance” (740) with supporters of the Serbian National Front in the antiwar movement. The WWP are still at it today – giving anti-imperialist cover for mass murder in Syria and Ukraine – although their splinter party the PSL is now the more prominent culprit.

Tammy Kovich’s article on “Antifascism against Machismo” takes issue with the stereotype of antifascist politics as based on macho street fighting: “an antifascism rooted in machismo is the political equivalent of a bar fight—as haphazard and chaotic as it is incoherent and often sloppy”. (2079)

In contrast, an antifascism oriented toward militancy instead of machismo is concerned with commitment, collectivity, and effectiveness... A vibrant movement would have a place for a two-year-old child up to their eighty-two-year-old grandparent. (2081, 2086)

But she also rejects the alternative of “a pacifying liberal feminism of ‘pussy hats’ and ‘protective policing’”.^[8] (1405) This is also the lesson of Suzy Subways’ reflections on the history of radical defence of abortion clinics in the 1990s US. After the Clinton administration made it a crime to blockade clinics, the direct action movement to physically confront anti-abortion radicals was “dismantled” by liberal feminist NGOs, who were much happier relying on the police and courts. (5206)

The Three Way Fight analysis suggests that state action to “protect” women or queer/trans people under threat from fascism will not end well. Historically in the United States, barbaric racial violence was excused as necessary to keep white women safe from rape: “calls for the safety of women were answered with the expansion of a racialized penal state... More recently, the trope of “the immigrant rapist,” “the barbaric refugee,” and “the Muslim extremist” have been central” (1737, 1754). The family resemblance that this trope bears to TERF memes about trans people as abusers is striking.

Kovich insists on the need for a broad community anti-fascism which goes beyond traditional ideas of what antifascist organising looks like:

Antifascist gyms are great, and antifascist football clubs can be useful. But what about an antifascist neighborhood association? Or antifascist storytelling time for children, or an antifascist food program? Or maybe, antifascist day at the nail salon or an antifascist roller derby league?^[9] (6887)

The need for this to also reach beyond self-described radicals is emphasised by Devin Zane Shaw:

many militants have worked to create a broader social atmosphere of everyday antifascism, which brought those who I would call “liberal antifascists” into the broader struggle against far-right groups. Fostering everyday antifascism makes it possible to organize a broader movement in opposition to far-right groups when they mobilize in our cities. (2163)

As Shaw puts it, “Antifascism seeks to raise the cost of fascist organizing, and that is the most obvious reason why the diversity of tactics plays an important role in organizing.” (2382) That is, while physical confrontation with fascist mobilisations is not the correct tactic in *every* situation, it is something which must *always be an option*. Kieran, an Industrial Workers of the World organiser, agrees in a discussion of the successful deplatforming of Milo Yiannopolous at Berkeley in 2017:

Militant tactics is a part of our strategy, but it’s not the only part. A big part of it is a battle for the hearts and minds that the fascists are trying to recruit for their base...we don’t want to be what Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin called a “vanguard versus vanguard,” where people just see two street gangs fighting with each other and don’t really see their needs or demands met by either one of them. Instead, we want to try to organize ourselves and our coworkers and our neighbors into a popular response to the fascists. (5313, 5396)

In other words, reducing antifascism to a single tactic (be it non-violent community organising, pressuring elected officials, or street confrontation) always works to demobilise and dismantle the mass “united front” necessary for victory. Asked whether media coverage of physical confrontation might alienate parts of a united front, Kieran argues:

most working-class people respect folks who stand up and are willing to defend themselves and are willing to take risks... People who are already suspicious of the way the mainstream media talks about anything are likely to have a more positive response seeing a group of people standing up and fighting back. (5323)

Thus, the “united front” approach requires that militant antifascists know when to “go it alone” without liberal allies. An essential element of Three Way Fight analysis, as Shaw points out, is that “each ‘corner’ of the three way fight struggles against the other two while at the same time this struggle offers lines of adjacency against a common enemy” (2293) Thus, the temporary alliance between militant and liberal antifascism is based on “the line of adjacency between militant

antifascism and the egalitarian aspirations of bourgeois democracy” (2298). But, once the immediate fascist threat is withdrawn, liberal anti-fascists will tend to return to a Horseshoe Theory analysis and see their former militant allies as the new threat:

under normal conditions, liberal ideology writ large—and liberal antifascists as a whole are typically no exception—condemns insurgent organizing, whether it is the militant left or the far right, as political “extremism”...

liberal antifascists set aside the framework of “extremism” in order to enter the struggle between militant antifascism and the far right.... However, when the threat of fascism seems to have passed... we should expect, and must prepare for, liberal antifascism to revert to its normal institutional habits.

The extension of law enforcement powers that followed in the wake of far-right actions related to the Capitol riot will rebound against left-wing militants, because the repressive state apparatus specifically frames its work in this domain as a fight against extremism. (2212, 2223, 2230)

“Diversity of tactics” refers not only to how militant antifascists react to other parts of a united front, but to how they relate to the communities which they defend and which they want to mobilise. Kieran gives an example of the IWW General Defence Committee working with a Black community in Minneapolis, who reacted badly to antifascists masking up (5446). A similar reflection comes from IWW GDC members who confronted a mobilisation by alt-Right agitator Richard Spencer in Auburn, Alabama, one of the “deep Red” parts of the American South. In this case, antifascists coming from metropolitan Atlanta made the mistake of wearing “Black Bloc” and using chants that only confused the crowd and alienated popular support:

Auburn’s “White Students Union” had been agitating against “Atlanta Antifa” ahead of time. They put up posters around campus warning people against “Atlanta Antifa” as scary outsiders who might attack bystanders. The spectacle that the black bloc provided played right into this.... The spectacle of specialized antifascism undermined the concrete possibility of mass antifascism. (5590, 5619)

...to many of the students, the antifascists looked much more like the fascists (especially the “Traditionalist Worker Party,” who were dressed in all black, with helmets, and keeping a bloc formation) than they looked like Auburn students. There were some times where even we couldn’t easily tell which side people were on.^[10] (7809)

As it turned out, the university students at Auburn – characterised by some of the visiting activists as “stupid liberals” (5600) – were the ones who successfully shut down the Spencer speech:

Most of us would probably say that we think mass antifascism is an ideal, preferable to a “squad-versus-squad” style of antifascism. However, in practice we tended to write off the possibility that large numbers of Alabamians might actually agree with our program for fighting fascism if we actually presented it to them.... If even Southern, white football “bros” are open to running fascists out of town, then our approach and program could inspire and unite a lot more people than we expect. (5580, 5732)

It is extremely refreshing to read militant antifascists who understand that adopting an activist

“uniform” and writing off whole communities as “normies” or “spectators” is part of the problem. It is precisely “the normies” who must be persuaded to become antifascists: “to prevent fascism from normalizing, we have to normalize antifascism... to keep fascism from developing a mass base, we need to build a mass base for antifascism.” (5725, 5728)

Among other helpful contributions, Matthew Lyons deals with the importance of antisemitism to fascist narratives (and its infiltration of Left-wing circles by disguising itself as anti-Zionism) by presenting a structural analysis by Jews for Racial & Economic Justice, “in which Jews (a) become concentrated in highly visible positions of relative privilege, (b) are used as scapegoats to divert popular anger away from the real centers of power and oppression, and (c) experience alternating periods of relative acceptance and intense, violent persecution” (2660). The categorisation of Jews as “abstract power” (2728), an alien presence distorting the system, is a potent source of Red-Brown crossover, even as the more conventional reactionary Right characterise Leftism and liberalism as a Jewish plot.

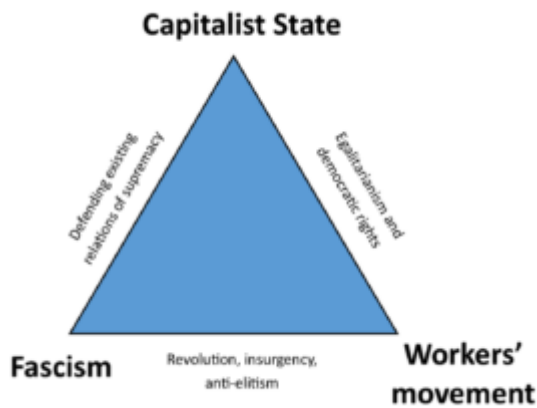
Finally, M., Roberto Santiago de Roock, and Joel D. Lovos give a very thoughtful and timely exposition of the need for antifascist organising in and around video games – extremely important given the role of Gamergate in giving birth to the modern radical-Right movement, and very timely considering current efforts to spark “Gamergate 2.0”.^[11] While the present author is not a gamer, you don’t need to read much social media to know how much of the aesthetics of contemporary “meme politics” (on both Left and Right) come from games such as *Hearts of Iron IV* or *Disco Elysium*. The authors make the excellent point that anti-disinformation and anti-fascist tactics focus so much on Twitter, while young people spend far more time in games or in game-related spaces like Discord servers – and that fascists are actively organising in such spaces: “One survey found that among those who play online multiplayer games, 23 percent were exposed to extremist white supremacist ideology while playing.” (5804)

The authors replicate the observation in the gaming/online world that “official” or “liberal” anti-fascism often takes on the guise of State-sponsored “anti-extremism” – that is, extending the net of policing and surveillance to shut down not only fascist but Left-wing anti-system organising.^[12] Again, the Three Way Fight is the model:

We think that abolitionists should organize to oppose both fascist recruitment in games and capitalist policing of games... The left is the only part of the three way fight that’s (mostly) not taking games seriously; fascists and the state have both been using games to organize, surveil, etc., as they fight each other and as they fight us. Antifascists should take gaming seriously as a space for learning, organizing, building friendships, imagining liberated futures, practicing skills needed in these futures, and mobilizing both online and in the real world. If we don’t do it, the fascists and cops will use games against us. (5762, 5776)

One very interesting observation the authors make in passing is a defence of LARPing:

We should not make fun of people for LARPing (live action role playing) as revolutionaries, as long as they know when a situation is a game and when it is a real-life conflict with life-or-death consequences (e.g., an actual riot or an actual street brawl with fascists). LARPing in low-stakes settings can be a way for people to practice and to learn from their mistakes so they’ll be more prepared to handle situations that are not games, where the consequences for failure are much higher. (5947)



A diagram of the Three Way fight, with Devin Zane Shaw's "lines of adjacency" added

IV

What I would see as a lurking danger of the Three Way Fight analysis is a temptation to *abstentionism* – to simply sitting out political confrontations which are analysed as being “the State vs the fascists”. Being against both fascism and the bourgeois State offers clearer lines of action when the Left is an *independent* force with real political power which can manoeuvre on its own terms. This was classically the position in previous decades when “anti-fascism” meant not much more than physically keeping the fascists off the streets; or, a century ago, when a mass workers’ movement and mass workers’ parties were forces to be reckoned with.

When it comes to mass politics in the present day, however, is there any place that antifascist forces (in the core capitalist countries) are capable of simultaneously challenging both an emboldened fascist movement and State forces on the other? What, then, are the *contemporary* alternatives to abstention, to letting the State and the fascists fight?

Let’s examine this in terms of the Russian invasion and occupation of Ukraine. In 2022, according to the book’s introduction,

Three Way Fight proponents were in fact divided between some who advocated support for Ukraine’s popular resistance forces against Russian imperialism, others who rejected such support as implicit endorsement for Ukraine’s capitalist state, and still others who were conflicted or unsure about how to respond. This division pointed to an underlying lack of theoretical clarity: beyond rejecting simplistic claims that any opposition to US or Western imperialism is progressive, supporters of three way fight politics have not developed a general framework for navigating geopolitics, particularly for situations where forces supported by the United States face imperialist aggression by rival powers. (451)

This seems strange given a couple of pages earlier, where Matthew Lyons is quoted as having come to an eminently defensible position on the Israel-Hezbollah conflict of 2006: “Lyons criticized Hezbollah as right wing while urging that leftists should nonetheless support it against the Israeli military.” (426)

Lyons seems to have reproduced the distinction, made by Hal Draper and others in the Trotskyist tradition,

between *military support* of a given armed struggle and *political support* to a given political organization including a government) which may be officially “in charge” of that armed struggle...

For most people, including liberals, social democrats and opportunists of every stripe, “support” means support, period. For Marxists, it never has. This is one reason why, not infrequently, political leaders of a national struggle have been almost as unhappy about being supported by revolutionists as by being opposed.^[13]

The most trivial example of this approach would be that working for Allied victory in the Second World War did not require socialists to defend Winston Churchill or Joseph Stalin; only the working peoples who would have had it much worse under an Axis victory. Or, to be more contemporary –support for the military defence of Gaza against IDF genocide should require no political support for Hamas theocracy and atrocities against civilians.

In those terms, Lyons’ support for the Israeli military machine getting pushed back from southern Lebanon in 2006, even by a right-wing militia acting in cahoots with the Iranian theocracy, makes perfect sense. The only difference in the Ukrainian situation is that *the United States and its NATO allies are backing the Ukrainian resistance* (however half-heartedly and cynically). Even though Lyons rightly rejects “simplistic claims that any opposition to US or Western imperialism is progressive”, in the hothouse atmosphere of Western radical politics, there is strong social pressure against any analysis which might suggest taking the same side as United States foreign policy.

In fact, the pressure to *always* see State/establishment forces as the main enemies – leading to an abstentionist Fishhook analysis, or to actual Red-Brown alliances – is huge. Take for example Matthew Lyons’ chapter on the Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI), a think-tank supported by not only the liberal billionaire George Soros but the more right-leaning Koch brothers,^[14] which promotes itself as opposing “extremism” of both Left and Right – that is, the classical Horseshoe model. Lyons discusses its recruitment as a senior research fellow of Alexander Reid Ross, geography professor and author of *Against the Fascist Creep*.^[15]

[T]he combination of Soros and Koch support evokes an attempt to foster a broad—but anti-Trump—coalition within the ruling class... [B]y signing on with NCRI [Reid Ross] has *repudiated the left*, yet his background helps burnish the NCRI’s image as an inclusive home for anti-“hate” scholars of every persuasion. (3214, 3229, my emphasis)

While the NCRI’s “anti-extremism” framework is to be rejected,^[16] the question of whether accepting funding from it means a repudiation of the Left may be debated by reasonable people. The common factor here is that, just as the Horseshoe and Fishhook models are both based on binary oppositions, *the insistence that we choose between them*, or that if we reject one we must accept the other, is another such opposition.

V

Another danger arises in a perverse downgrading of reactionary trends in capitalist politics which are *not* strictly speaking fascist. Notwithstanding his excellent analyses elsewhere in the book, Don Hamerquist's 2020 article, "Distinguishing the Possible from the Probable" is a disturbing example of this.

Hamerquist's analysis starts from a cogent rebuttal of arguments from some activists that the *whole* global ruling class is moving towards fascism, or even some kind of "neoliberal fascism" (which seems a contradiction in terms). So far, so plausible. But Hamerquist – writing four years ago – goes on to argue that transnational capital has a more complicated relationship with "populism": that while transnational capital is generally hostile to (right-wing) populism (3383), it

has a variety of incentives and opportunities to provide tactical latitude to either right or left populist movements (and governments), in order to saddle them with the responsibility for dealing with emerging crises in circumstances where even partial success is quite unlikely. ... *The broad campaigns to hamstring Trump or remove him from office*, to reverse Brexit, to limit the successes of anti-EU campaigns, as well as the successful strangulation of the feeble Greek social democracy are all related parts of this hostile response of transnational capitalist elites to potentially disruptive populisms. (3443, 3516, emphasis added)

Hamerquist seems to be arguing that populist successes (never allowed to go too far) act as something of a safety valve for transnational capital. But if transnational capital is decisive in the final analysis, and transnational capital is hostile to all populism, Right-wing forms included, why did the economically damaging "hard Brexit" prevail? Are we supposed to *condemn* globalist capital and the neoliberal establishment seeking to undermine Trump's programme?^[17] And – if Hamerquist is right that Left-populism and Right-populism are equally likely to be cynically propped up then scapegoated – which section of global capital is supporting *Left*-populist forces?

To his credit, Hamerquist allows that

significant parts of the military-industrial complex and some extractive industries face specific competitive and ecological challenges that give them a compelling interest in economic nationalism. ... The supportive attitude of this bloc of capital for Trump's regime has been obvious, as are its defining impacts on Trump's MAGA variant of nationalism. (3398)

So surely it makes more sense to argue that there is in fact a *split* in transnational capital, with one part of it being sincerely in favour of reactionary, nationalist politics. Yet Hamerquist goes on to argue that these factions of capital are "generally motivated by perceptions of their short-term, largely economic interests, not by some larger ideological purpose" (3803). This is definitely *not* the case, however, for a section of capital which Hamerquist does not mention at all: "tech reactionaries" such as Elon Musk or Peter Thiel who sincerely believe in a "woke mind virus" thwarting their plans for interplanetary expansion powered by artificial intelligence, and are heavily backing "National Conservative" politics. In fact, some authors have gone as far as arguing that, yes, Peter Thiel is literally a fascist.^[18]

Hamerquist's thesis that the interests of Right-populism are counterposed to those of transnational capital has led him to what in retrospect is a shockingly incorrect prediction of the future course of the Trump movement:

As his original nativist and protectionist policies are forced to become more concrete, at penalty of losing plausibility, both ruling-class and popular attitudes toward Trump's administration will undergo further changes. The most predictable outcome is the erosion of support from the overtly reactionary and fascist-tending populist components of his initial base...

It can't be repeated too often that when the global socioeconomic situation deteriorates ... a substantial and rapid fragmentation of the current "Trumpism" is inevitable. (3493)

None of this has happened. The Trump coalition has in fact become *stronger and deeper* over the last four years, to the extent that it has eliminated all opposition within the Republican Party itself. Hamerquist is half-right that Trump has built substantial trust and support among the ruling classes since 2016. He is wrong that this has been at the expense of the support of his popular base.^[19] To some extent, this seems to be an instance of a common misconception among radical theorists, that people react mainly to *material* rather than *psychic or status-driven* incentives. Trump's messaging, the "permission" he gives for reactionary mobilisation and even violence, is more decisive for his ability to build a base than whatever material gains might result from him being in office, in other words.

But given this "inevitable" divorce between Trump and his fascist-infused base, Hamerquist seems to have talked himself into a position – not an unprecedented one, as we will see – that *Trump and his movement are not a real danger*:

Despite Trump's evident willingness to compromise on any and all of the significant challenges to the international and domestic capitalist status quo that his 2016 campaign intimated—and despite his slide toward orthodox Ameri-centric conservatism—for *the anti-Trump so-called "resistance"* he remains a dangerous rebel and disrupter.

The strange polarization between a dubious personalized populism and *the bizarrely exaggerated opposition* to it is only one potential interpretation of our current circumstances. (3531, 3538, emphasis added)

There is an old *Muppet Show* sketch where a scientist invents a Gorilla Detector, then allows himself to be attacked by a gorilla because the detector isn't going off. Don Hamerquist's apparent distinction between fascism (a real threat) and Right-wing populism (ostensibly a paper tiger, hyped up by global capital and contemptible "resist libs" to scare us) seems similar, and to lead to a similarly painful conclusion.

Although not an anti-system, insurgent movement like fascism (except on its conspiratorial fringes), Right-populists are perfectly capable of using harassment, abuse, verbal and physical violence to make vulnerable populations' lives miserable, and to "tilt" the field of electoral politics their way. The "stochastic lynch mobs" riled up by social media entrepreneurs against Drag Queen Story Hours and pro-Palestine demonstrators (or, more recently, against migrant and Muslim communities across England and northern Ireland) are clear and present dangers to working people and their communities, regardless of whether these mobs include actual fascists or "only" Right-wing

populists. Hamerquist's analysis would have us *looking the wrong way* in the face of clear and present threats to working class and marginalised communities, having persuaded ourselves that the *real* threat is global elites posing as Leftists.

If, as the cynical saying goes, "programme generates theory" (that is, analysis tends to confirm the wisdom of what you wanted to do anyway) what is the "programme" behind this analysis? There seem to be two answers.

The first is that, bizarrely and surely unconsciously, Hamerquist is reproducing the "Third Period" analysis of capitalism which sent the Comintern down the suicidal path of abstention from the fight against fascism. This was essentially a miscomprehension that capitalism was on its last legs; that the only serious obstacle to world Communist revolution was a social-democratic and labour movement with a stake in propping up the unreformable and doomed system. This made it an equally deadly opponent as the fascists; hence they were decried as "social fascists", or in Stalin's own words, "the moderate wing of fascism".^[20]

Similarly, Hamerquist seems to be arguing that the global capitalist system is so imminently threatened by rebellions from below, that not only will transnational capital cynically promote both Right and Left populisms in an attempt to stave this off, but for this reason social democracy and "official anti-fascism" are the strategy they are more likely to use to do so. Perhaps the authors would not be happy about me quoting Trotsky again, but the following quotation is right on the nose about the problems with mistaking an upward for a downward trajectory:

On ascending the stairs a different type of movement is required from that which is needed to descend. Most dangerous is such a situation as finds a man, with the lights out, raising his foot to ascend when the steps before him lead downward.^[21]

It might be unfair to take Hamerquist to task for, four years ago, advising us to step up when the stairs were leading down. In the context of mid-2020, when burning down police stations was broadly approved of and city councils in the US were voting to abolish their police departments, it was probably a good call that the immediate danger *was* the liberal establishment co-opting the movement and draining it of its life - and that this is what actually happened. But the world is simply different in 2024, and this analysis should not have been republished in this year without a serious look as to whether its predictions had been borne out or falsified.

This brings us to a second potential motivation for Hamerquist's incorrect strategic outlook, one that might not be obvious to those who haven't been ploughing this furrow for years. One passing comment in this article would send alarm bells ringing for such people:

Matt Taibbi notes "the danger posed by Facebook, Google, and Twitter—under pressure from the Senate—organizing with groups like the Atlantic Council to fight 'fake news' in the name of preventing the 'foment of discord.'" (3819)

Matt Taibbi is a name very familiar to those who have studied the Red-Brown phenomenon. He is a former radical journalist and documenter of Occupy Wall Street who, in recent years, has pivoted to an "anti-woke" position; for example, acting as an outlet for Elon Musk's campaign to convince the world that Twitter (before Musk bought it and turned it into X) was "censoring" Right-wing views at the behest of various "Deep State" agencies.^[22] This quote uncritically reproduces the framework that anti-disinformation campaigns sponsored by Western states or liberal factions of capital are in

fact a reprehensible campaign of censorship –that reactionary or authoritarian disinformation is not a real threat, but a bogey meant to excuse establishment surveillance. Just like Trump, or Putin’s Russia.

It gets worse. In a footnote meant to downplay the extent to which Bolsonaro’s government in Brazil or Meloni’s government in Italy are expressions of a fascist creep, Hamerquist cites – on Brazil – Glenn Greenwald; and on Italy, the *Spiked* website. (7334-5) What do Taibbi, Greenwald, and *Spiked* have in common? They all promote a narrative to the Left that Right-wing populist movements are not only not dangerous to the radical movements, but are in fact positive phenomena expressing disgust with “woke” global capital. They also tend to say admiring things about Vladimir Putin’s Russia. They are, in fact, prime movers in the Red-Brown ecosystem.^[23]

Although (to paraphrase Orwell) some things are true even if Glenn Greenwald says them, you’d better have a better source than Glenn Greenwald if you want to convince people. In previous articles I have argued that socialists whose ideas were formed before the neoliberal era tend to unconsciously assent to and promote Red-Brown narratives because opposition to neoliberalism and opposition to Western imperialism are “good enough” to be convincing. What I am arguing, then, is certainly *not* that Hamerquist is a Red-Brown or “soft on fascism”. It is that his impulse to argue that Trump and his movement are not fascist and therefore not a real danger (born perhaps out of a commendable instinct not to line up with liberal capital) has propelled him, perhaps unconsciously, to line up with people who want to give alibis and apologies for Right-wing populism, in a direction which actively contradicts the Three Way Fight approach. And, accordingly, that the editors of this collection should have been more alert to that.

VI

This book is *simply a must-read* for anyone involved in antifascist activism, but also more broadly in organising communities against both Right-wing threats and State violence, online and in meatspace. A better introduction to the basic issues could not be imagined (unless, perhaps, it took a few more sources from the Trotskyist tradition to give an alternative viewpoint to the anarchist voices).

But the real point of a political review has to be – *what are the lessons to be drawn for political activity in the here and now?*

1. Independence from the state is a must

The Three Way Fight model is difficult to operate in that it poses a difficult question of strategy: how can the organised working class fight two different (and conflicting) enemies at the same time, while *itself remaining independent from both of them?* This requires building not only *practical* independence – that is, working-class and community organisations for debate and action which can take action regardless of what the cops or the NGOs think – but *political* independence, in the sense of building analysis and strategy which comes out of the practical experiences of those movements, rather than waiting for a lead from the State or any bourgeois political party.

Although *Three Way Fight* is clear-sighted that we have to provide a “better insurgent option” for the victims of the State and of capital than that offered by fascism, it also rejects point blank any “Red-Brown” suggestion that there can be “unity [with fascists] over seemingly shared militancy”. (4484) The problem is, then, how to *compete with* fascism in its appeal to those who want militant action.

The collection's co-editor Xtn Alexander makes this excellent point, in the context of Right-wing mobilisations against COVID lockdowns:

We should really be asking if there is a growing sense on all sides that the state is becoming more—or being seen as more—illegitimate in all its branches and attached institutions....

We have to be developing, maintaining, and helping to expand class and social movements that are independent of the state. And not just independent of the state, but movements that are defined by liberatory visions, that are directed popularly and democratically, that have an intransigence to the system, and that are militant...

To some people [fascist vigilantism] looks attractive, like, "Oh, there's people who are fighting the police. They're fighting the state. They're taking on the rule of the government." That's dangerous if we think through any kind of shared militancy there can be a connection. (4303-4310)

Matthew Lyons agrees:

neoliberalism, as a strategy of the ruling class and as a system of control, is in profound crisis. It's failing most people in this country, not to mention other parts of the world, and it's getting harder and harder for its proponents to patch that over. And the far right knows that, and that's where a lot of their energy and dynamism comes from... To me, that speaks to the need for a radical alternative that refuses to cede the oppositional role to the far right. (4526-4530)

This probably goes even more in recent years in the United States, given the unelected and unaccountable Supreme Court majority's increasing appetite to strip the remaining democratic rights (and limits on executive power) out of the system. Lyons again:

This is a situation where, just as it would be dangerous to side with anti-state rightists against the state, it would also be dangerous to side with the forces of liberal repression, even if the initial target of that repression is far rightists... Because something that we've seen repeatedly in this country is that state repression, even in the guise of antifascism, is dangerous to our movements. (4360-2)

There is a regrettable but understandable temptation, when our forces are weak, to act as "the left wing of liberal democracy". The "left wing" of the State closing down schools, business and playgrounds for people's own good; or the "left wing" of organisations like NGOs funded by the state and capital which want increased surveillance of all "extremists". But that is not going to cut any ice in a situation where increasing numbers of people no longer see existing State institutions as legitimate.

2. The United Front, and diversity of tactics

However, it is also vital to remember that the Three Way Fight is against the fascists and the State. It is *not* against the fascists and "the liberals". It is difficult to remember this in an era where, on both sides of the political divide, "liberal" (or the pejorative "shitlib") is pretty much the worst anyone can accuse each other of. But liberals (of whatever class) are *allies* in the Three Way Fight

insofar as they actively oppose fascism; and our *opponents* insofar as they want to rely on cops, courts, and Big Capital to do so.

Part of the sectarianism towards “liberals”, especially in the United States, is hostility to the idea that there is anything in the current neoliberal-globalist order which is worth defending (even if you don’t believe it’s all going to fall apart someday soon). When Matthew Lyons, in his critique of the NCRI’s “Horseshoe” model anti-extremism, talks of “reproducing the myth that the United States is a democracy” (3240), it is exactly this collapse of context which is at risk. There exists *some* level of “bourgeois democratic rights” in the United States – very limited and very unequally divided, of course – which fascism (not to mention the reactionary sectors of capital) wants to eliminate entirely, and are therefore *worth defending*. The belief that there is *nothing* of value to the working class in the existing order – that “things couldn’t be worse” – is a form of inverted “American exceptionalism” which not only reflects the narcissism of small subcultures, but is extremely dangerous in its *lack of imagination*, and therefore its perception of the real stakes in the Three Way Fight.

Defence of “bourgeois democratic” rights and institutions – no matter how impotent or hypocritical they might be – is the basis for practical alliances with liberals. “Practical and political independence for working-class anti-fascism” does not mean sectarian opposition to liberal antifascists; nor does it mean subsuming our forces in a Popular Front whose limits of action are whatever won’t scare the most conservative opponents of fascism. As Xloi and B. Sandor put it in the aftermath of January 6, 2021:

We think we should be developing a political pole that opposes both insurgent and government-backed far-right forces... We need an antifascism that doesn’t ultimately back up the state or ignore the right altogether in the hopes that the state will simply smash it. (4663)

As we explored above, when antifascists such as Devin Zane Shaw refer to “the diversity of tactics”, this usually means making sure that the options of physical confrontation (*in extremis*, armed community self-defence) remain on the table. But it can also refer to the great benefit of a United Front formation – a non-sectarian alliance between independent forces means that each component of the alliance can “do what it does best”. For example, when Zhandarka Kurti says:

One of the lessons of previous moments of heightened struggles, whether in the 1930s or 1960s, has been the need of radical movements to maintain their independence from the official institutions of liberal bourgeois society and to rely on mass direct action as a means of forcing reforms instead of pursuing the usual dead-end channels of electoral politics. (5091)

But, as the meme puts it, *why not both*? In a broad and successful antifascist coalition there will be more moderate forces who *will* want to put their energies towards participation in elections, lobbying elected officials, even working with NGOs founded by liberal capital or State agencies.

3. It’s a hard idea to hold on to

The Three Way Fight model, once again, is *complicated*. Even in this book embodying 40 years of its development, and arising out of debates in the movement stemming back forty years or more, the model itself seems to slip out of the grasp of some of the contributors, collapsing into a binary. Even

though, earlier in the book, Matthew Lyons dismisses the Marxist-Leninist idea that fascism is a weapon to be cynically used by capitalism *in extremis*, Don Hamerquist's article discussed in Part V of this review ends up arguing that Right-wing populism is precisely that; the line of distinction between that and fascism proper seems somewhat arbitrary. Thus, the contesting parties boil down to "us" and the global capitalist order – something uncomfortably close to the Fishhook theory.

The flipside of this is a kind of perverse "millennialism" – a "faith-based" politics which tells us: *of course* neoliberal capitalism cannot survive much longer, against the fascist threat, the imminent collapse of the biosphere, and so on. A recent posting to *Three Way Fight* by Jarrod Shanahan – not reprinted in this book – puts it this way:

Built on slavery and genocide, sustained by ruthless imperialism, and riven by intrinsic antagonism that constantly erupts into seemingly senseless violence, American society was always going to come apart; the wondrous thing is how long it has lasted. The liberal democracy that Sharlet mourns is inseparable from the white supremacy and settler colonialism he rightfully decries. The end of America is nothing to be sad about; the indefinite perpetuation of the American state as it has existed for two and a half centuries would simply be a continuing humanitarian and ecological disaster.^[24]

The appeal of a perspective of an imminent "end of America" is obvious to radicals – but it *negates the need for a Three Way Fight analysis*, just as much as the Horseshoe and Fishhook Theories do. It assumes that one "corner" of the triangle – the bourgeois democratic state – will, someday soon, collapse under its internal contradictions. This will then leave a refreshingly uncomplicated two-way fight, good guys versus bad guys, as rowan puts it (926), and we won't have to pretend to respect "stupid liberals" anymore.

Problem is, anti-capitalists have been expecting the final crisis of capitalism "someday soon" for almost 200 years now. Trotsky was predicting it in 1938. And yet, somehow, in the absence of working-class revolution, global capitalism keeps reforming itself; sometimes increasing or decreasing the level of liberal-democratic rights, sometimes favouring one social layer while expropriating another. It would be *easier* if Right-wing populism wasn't a real threat (i.e. if global capital had it "all sewn up" behind the scenes); *or* if global capital was going to dissolve on its own someday soon. But reality is not easy, which is why we need to hold on to the Three Way Fight analysis.

In the end, fascism is a chameleon and takes on whatever shape it needs to blend into its environment. Perhaps all the spatial metaphors are inadequate, and we should go with this Twitter comment:

I subscribe to the black hole theory of fascism. Fascism sucks people of any other political affiliation into its crushing gravity well.^[25]

Thirty years ago, Stewart Home used the very similar image of a "sucking pit" to describe the attractions of ecofascism.^[26] But this is why it's so easy for those analysing fascism to take shortcuts where "programme determines theory". If you want to hope the bourgeois state will defend us, you will be motivated towards Horseshoe Theory, arguing that anyone to the Left of Kamala Harris is a Red-Brown. If, conversely, you sincerely want to build a Red-Brown alliance, you take up the Fishhook Theory, arguing that fascism is a tool of the State and therefore your new friends in the MAGA hats can't be fascists since they're against the neoliberal order. And if you're impatient for a

straight fight with fascism, winner-takes-all for the future of humanity, you might be attracted by analyses suggesting that the bourgeois state is doomed to imminent collapse, after which life and politics will suddenly become much simpler.

The Three Way Fight model – the model where fascism and the bourgeois state are *separate* and *conflicting* threats – is a hard model to intellectually grasp, and hard to put into practice on the ground. But this book does the invaluable service of showing several examples of *exactly how to do that in practice*. Read it, debate it, act upon it.

This review is an edited version of one which originally appeared in the Fightback newsletter in Aotearoa/New Zealand; see Part 1 and Part 2.



Endnotes

^[1] <https://threewayfight.org>

^[2] <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/index.htm#sto>

^[3] On the subject of “defending the earth” in particular, antifascist theoreticians have long warned against “ecofascist” tendencies (based on a veneration of “the natural” combined with anti-humanism) among green anarchist or primitivist tendencies (756); the “anti-immigration” Deep Ecologist movement was praised by the Red-Brown operative Tom Metzger (2505) and has more recently become an entry point for transphobic ideas into radical spaces. For more on the Deep Green Resistance group, see <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/02/06/nevada-transgender-rights-environmentalists-lithium-00001658>. The provocative author Stewart Home conducted an amusing running battle with ecofascist tendencies in the UK in the mid-1990s; see edited highlights at <https://www.stewarthomesociety.org/ga/index.htm>

^[4] Lyons has been a central figure in the Three Way Fight website throughout its two decades of existence –at one stage, it was his personal project (347).

^[5] <https://fightbackarchive.blog/2018/05/26/what-is-fascism-an-introduction/>

^[6] There is a strange elision of Trotsky’s work in most of *Three Way Fight*; when the “Marxist”

analysis of fascism is referred to, it's Dimitrov's "Fishhook" version as explained above. The exception is in a footnote which argues that Trotsky's analysis is not much different to Dimitrov's, in that Trotsky argued that the "historic function of fascism is to smash the working class...directed and financed by big capitalist powers" (6437). But we might put it another way: the function of a system is what it does. Despite its programme, as Lyons recognizes (2273), no fascist movement has ever *actually* replaced capitalism; it has only ever come to power through an alliance with a nationalist, conservative section of capital who, as the STO put it, "discover, too late, that their ox, too, will be gored" (615), but only in the sense that other factions of capital benefit, not that the system fundamentally changes.

^[7] <https://twitter.com/libcomorg/status/1128654226610098177>

^[8] The repeated use of "pussy hats" in the text as a pejorative for liberal feminism is somewhat jarring, as a meme from 2017 which has gone out of use and whose referent might need explaining to modern audiences.

^[9] Perhaps "antifascist storytelling time" can be combined with militant community defence of Drag Queen Story Hours.

^[10] This observation must be balanced by the later one by Paul O'Banion, who argues that the "politics and tactics of the black bloc" are necessary to mark out militant antifascists as distinct within the united front and to act as a physical line of defence (6014). The question is one of appropriateness to time and place.

^[11] <https://www.theverge.com/2024/3/18/24104799/gamergate-2024-sweet-baby-inc-diversity>

^[12] The limits of this approach, often lazily implemented through AI, are well illustrated by the occasion when the present author caught a ban from Facebook for posting a picture of Mussolini in a satirical context.

^[13] Draper 1969, "The ABC of National Liberation Movements",
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/draper/1969/abc/abc.htm#CHAPTER4>

^[14] As Lyons correctly points out: "Contrary to what some leftists have claimed, the Koch network never supported Trump and rejected his positions on both immigration and trade." (3215)

^[15] DISCLAIMER: this author liked *Against the Fascist Creep*, and is friends on social media with Reid Ross.

^[16] Lyons' critique of the NCRI's rhetoric of "harmful politics as ideological disease" (3117) makes this author wonder whether *The Red-Brown Zombie Plague* was a good title. Oh well, too late now. For a more recent update on the NCRI, see
<https://threewayfight.org/anti-hate-think-tank-scapegoats-china-for-palestine-solidarity-protests/>

^[17] Amazingly, this does seem to be the implication of what Hamerquist says in a dialogue with Matthew Lyons further on, where he describes "the organised ruling-class effort to replace Trump" as "a thinly disguised attempted coup that risks the viability of the party system and parliamentary structure in this country". (4115) The shocking resemblance of this analysis to a FOX News editorial will be taken up further below.

^[18] See the excellent John Ganz at <https://www.unpopularfront.news/p/the-enigma-of-peter-thiel>. As if to confirm our analysis, while this article was being written, Ohio Senator JD Vance - an up-and-

coming politician in whom Thiel has heavily invested – was named Donald Trump’s vice-presidential candidate. For more on the very much ideological appeal of a form of reactionary politics for tech billionaires and their admirers, see Elizabeth Sandifer’s *Neoreaction: A Basilisk* (2017).
<https://www.amazon.com.au/Neoreaction-Basilisk-Essays-Around-Alt-Right-ebook/dp/B0782JDGVQ>

^[19] Matthew Lyon’s 2019 article in this collection, “Trump’s Shaky Capitalist Support”, gives what I feel is a more nuanced and accurate description of the Trump administration as “an unstable coalition” of neoliberals and Right-populists. (3967) It’s good to remember that many Right-authoritarian regimes, such as those of Franco and Pinochet, have featured similar coalitions.

^[20] A summary of this disastrous period from a Trotskyist point of view can be found at
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/hallas/works/1985/comintern/ch6.htm>

^[21] <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1928/3rd/ti05.htm>

^[22] <https://inthesetimes.com/article/former-left-right-fascism-capitalism-horseshoe-theory>

^[23] On Glenn Greenwald, see <https://damonlinker.substack.com/p/how-glenn-greenwald-lost-his-way>. *Spiked* is the descendent of the British Revolutionary Communist Party of the 1980s, which became a Right-libertarian sect whose members worked within not only the outgoing Conservative government in the UK but Nigel Farage’s hard-Right Reform party. See:
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/23/fringe-1980s-communist-faction-no-10-attitude-racism-munira-mirza>

^[24] <https://threewayfight.org/trumps-gospel-a-review-of-jeff-sharlets-the-undertow/>

^[25] <https://twitter.com/MemoriousTulpa/status/1810071028019990717>

^[26] <https://www.stewarthomesociety.org/pit.htm>