

#1365 White Supremacy, Authoritarians, Trump and the Coming Election

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left podcast, in which we shall learn about the dynamics of the white nationalist movement, authoritarian psychology, the legacy of Richard Nixon, and the uncertainty of a peaceful election in November. Clips today are from The Truth Report with Chauncey deVega, Cape Up with Jonathan Capehart, The Muckrake Podcast, the Thom Hartmann Program, Democracy Now!, and Strange Days with Fernand Amandi.

White Rage, Trump and Americas Race War with Tim Wise - The Truth Report with Chauncey DeVega - Air Date 8-1-19

CHAUNCEY DEVEGA - HOST, THE CHAUNCEY DEVEGA SHOW: So, here's another error in analysis. Mainstream media types, chattering class types who try to be so centrist and fair and balanced as they go out to Trumplandia, you have to accept the fears and world view of these White Trumpists, these White conservatives. You have to take it seriously. They really believe, which they do, that this is an existential struggle for White Christian America.

If they really believe that, they'll do anything to survive. They think White people are oppressed. They think Obama was the president for Black people. They think immigrants are coming here to rape, murder and kill them. They think the country is being overrun. They think to be Americans is to be White. They are capable of anything. And you have too few people who are willing to state that plain truth. And that's why they love Donald Trump.

TIM WISE: Let's be very clear. All those folks who think that that threat is going to go away if Donald Trump loses in 2020 or at the end of his reign in 2024, God forbid, when things "get back to normal," if that's even possible, are missing the point.

Let's say Donald Trump loses in 2020, certainly what we would prefer, you and I, to happen -- and I think all decent folks would prefer for that to happen -- do we actually think that these people who do believe as you said that there is this existential threat to White western society and Christianity and heteronormativity and all of these things, do we think they're just going to go, all right, well, you got us this time, but gee whiz, we'll be back in four years and we'll give it another try. That's not how these people think. Now, as of now, they've been able to win at the ballot box, at least in 2016. What if they don't win in 2020. And what if the Democrats do hold the House, and what if they narrow the Senate or even take back the Senate and all of this work that Trump's been trying to put in on behalf of these folks seems to be reversed or at least halted? Do we really think they're going to just slink away or do we think they're going to remember that they have boxes and boxes of ammunition in the basement? And we're seeing them out there willing to mail pipe bombs to people even when they're on top.

The hate crime numbers are going up, and they're winning. They are running stuff right now, and they're still out there doing this stuff. Imagine what happens when they feel that their

backs are to the wall. Now, that is not a reason, God knows, to let him continue to run things. It's a backlash that maybe we just have to face, but we need to understand what it is that we are facing. This is no joke. These are not people who play nice with others.

CHAUNCEY DEVEGA - HOST, THE CHAUNCEY DEVEGA SHOW: The thing I kept going back to watching his hate festival and the people there, I was thinking of it intergenerationally. In that one space, you likely had White men who are now in their sixties or seventies or maybe a little older who were at lynchings, I have no doubt. I would bet money. Greenville, North Carolina? That they were either at lynchings or certainly participated in harassing Black and White protesters against Jim Crow. I have no doubt of that. And in the same space, I'm thinking, you had kids who were being taught this hate at these Trump rallies, being radicalized in their homes. The generational story is so important about how hatred is learned.

TIM WISE: You know, we can take some positivity away from at least some of the research that suggest there's also an upsurge of young people who are more directly willing to confront racism than perhaps in the last generation or so. We cannot ignore that radicalization of a certain contingent of young people. We don't want to overstate or understate sort of where young people are. I think sometimes liberals in the left are too quick to say, Oh, you know, it's okay. The new generation has their together.

Well, there certainly is some evidence that there is a good core of young people who are more willing to step into a space of solidarity, perhaps, than their parents' generation, but there's also this other group. And these are the folks that are coming of age under Trump and being radicalized on 4tran and Reddit. And just as you had folks who came up under Obama, who was the only president they knew, and as a result, they tend to be a little bit more liberal, now you've got people who were let's say teenagers or young adults coming up under this guy. And we know that there's a chance that they could end up being like the young people who came up under Reagan, and we know what they were like when they became adults.

CHAUNCEY DEVEGA - HOST, THE CHAUNCEY DEVEGA SHOW: This is backstage racism made public through Trump giving permission and Republicans endorsing it.

TIM WISE: The old 1981 recording of Lee Atwater, Republican and conservative political strategist at that time. You know, here he was in 1981, admitting that the strategy really, at least since the late sixties, had been dog-whistle politics.

So, he talks about how in the Fifties you could use racial slurs, but by '68 you couldn't; you had to use all these terms like forced busing and states' rights, and all that. And he's submitting that the reason they did that was to give really plausible deniability to their own racism and make it seem like it was about these abstract economic principles or about freedom and those kinds of things.

So, that was the operative mentality for a long time, and it's so interesting how antiquated now that sounds. Because at the time, Lee Atwater was saying we had to do this. If we had continued to be blatant, we would never have won. And he was probably right there for a while. What's frightening is that you look back at that now, and you just say, well, how quaint. Because we have a president who has clearly come to realize either: we never really needed to be that obtuse after all, we just wasted all that time, we could have just been

blatant the whole time; or maybe we did need it, but now we don't because some stuff has changed. Either way, it's a very frightening conclusion when you begin to realize that it comes to were they here all along. Well, they clearly were. Atwater was saying, look, we knew that these folks were out there. These voters were out there. We just had to sort of play a game because it was really important to them not to think of themselves as racist.

And I suppose, for some people, they still like to think of themselves as not racist, but there has come a point where it's become comedy now because you have this guy in New Hampshire yesterday that said, well, slavery wasn't racist, owning Black people wasn't racist. It was just about economics, and that wasn't racist. And every time that somebody uses a racial slur it's Oh, that wasn't racist. And every time one of these viral videos goes out where White folks are calling the cops on some bull that Black folks haven't even done, then it's Oh, that wasn't racist.

Nothing's ever racist anymore. So I don't know whether it's that people are ashamed to be thought of as racist or they just don't understand what racism is or they just don't care. But whatever the answer to that question is, it's very clear that since 1981, when Atwater made that statement, we have retrogressed to a place where people are no longer feeling the need to play the game. And I would suspect that part of that is because, since the 1980s, because of the cultural changes which have been quite real at the level of popular culture, the level of entertainment, the level of just all the stuff we consider to be cultural indicators, have become more thoroughly multicultural. And because of demographic shift, that ability of White people to feel threatened is more salient today.

Obviously, White folks have been saying that bull since the end of the Civil War. They were saying it during the period of Reconstruction. But it always was a pretty weak argument when White folks were still 90% of the population, you know, 85% of the population. But now, as the White population is I think 61.5% now, according to the Census Bureau, you have all these White folks who are freaked out, and all of these potential threats that Carol Anderson talks about in her book *White Rage* which have always led to White backlash, is now much more ramped up than it has been at any point in history. And that's what makes this such an incredibly dangerous moment.

Derek Black was groomed to be the new face of white nationalism. Now he's working against it. - Cape Up with Jonathan Capehart - Air Date 7-28-20

JONATHAN CAPEHEART - HOST, CAPE UP: One of the key paragraphs in that Times op-ed, you wrote "the wave of violence and vial language that has risen since the election is only one immediate piece of evidence that this campaign's reckless assertion of White identity comes at a huge cost. more, and more people are being forced to recognize now what I learned early. Our country is susceptible to some of our worst instincts when the message is packaged correctly," that was November 26th, 2016. Here we are almost four years later, and that is even more true today than it was when you wrote it, right?

DEREK BLACK: Yeah, I believe so. I think throughout this presidency, there has been a consistent drum beat of speaking like a White nationalist. And that's not to say, I do not think

that Donald Trump is a White nationalist, I want to be clear about that. What I have seen happening is definitely people within the campaign, fully aware of White nationalism. We've seen that in emails that were exposed from Stephen Miller, who is linking to explicit White nationalist websites in dropping stories to Breitbart before the presidential election of 2016, surrounded by people who understand the White nationalist movement, and Donald Trump and his campaign constantly pushing messages that come directly out of the White nationalist movement in order to elicit that same response that David Duke got elected on in 1989, decades ago.

JONATHAN CAPEHEART - HOST, CAPE UP: Something interesting you just said, Donald Trump is not a White nationalist. Given everything that we've seen in all the policies and things that he's pushed, why shouldn't I view him as a White nationalist? I mean, I'm pretty much say so on television and in my columns every day.

DEREK BLACK: Right. Maybe I should be more clear about my definitions. It's partly because of my background and partly because I talk about this, that I reserve White nationalism to talk about this social movement. It's not incredibly large, it's hard to know exact numbers. We're talking about 30-40,000 people probably who are dues paying members or donors who get literature, who sign on to explicitly White nationalists forums and who have this whole history. There are heroes within this movement, people who've become murderers and sit in prison and are talked about like they're prisoners of war. There are protests that people remember from the 1970s, there's a whole history and a language that goes within this subgroup, this social movement of people who are really self-consciously advocating White nationalism and trying to push an agenda. And I try to keep that separate from, I think what you could probably term broader White supremacy, racist ideas about White people being endangered or threatened, these sort of more broad things that can definitely get votes and can definitely get a lot of broad support, but are separate from meeting up and trying to figure out how you're going to push the White nationalist agenda. That level of being explicit and that level of being committed in your life, that's what I usually mean when I say White nationalists, and by that, that's not Donald Trump. Donald Trump is feeding off of it, he's using it, he's building on the messages that that movement has created over years.

JONATHAN CAPEHEART - HOST, CAPE UP: Even still, even though he's feeding off it, White nationalists around the country and maybe even around the world, view this as a good moment in the movement because he's President of the United States.

DEREK BLACK: I think it's probably complicated. There are definitely lots of White nationalists online who are very disappointed, who think that he's sucked the oxygen from the room, who think that he doesn't push things hard enough, right? Which seems wild to hear, but I think you definitely would find that a lot within people who've been working on this for decades, and what they would say is that he is riding a wave, is riding the same wave that they identify, that there's a fundamental belief in my family and among all the people who think that they can gain, if not broad support, then at least a significant amount of support from average people in America. There's this belief that their ideas are not so radical, that when they say that they think being proud to be White is something that should drive your politics, that they think they can get a lot more support. That people are usually willing to explicitly say that when they say that they don't want immigration from non-White countries, that they think that they can get a lot more support than people typically are

willing to say out loud. And most respectability White nationalists, I think, would say that Donald Trump is not necessarily the savior that he is proving their point.

He's saying what they have been saying for years and doing it in a better, more well-packaged way that's gaining more support from the political mainstream. And so the danger there is that he's going to use all their messages, but he's not going to actually enact this insane totalitarian White ethno state that is their real goal.

JONATHAN CAPEHEART - HOST, CAPE UP: And so given what you just said, I don't know, to my mind with, masked and unidentified federal agents in Portland, going to Chicago, Albuquerque being fanned out around the country that we are getting to this, or if not already in an authoritarian, sort of, sotto voce White nationalist state, or am I being hyperbolic?

DEREK BLACK: I don't know. I don't know. I've got the same concerns. I would direct attention to when I say that he has used the same rhetoric as White nationalists, one major piece of that rhetoric is the way he talks about cities. I remember I ran this election for a local county seat in the Republican party in 2008 and I was not identified as a White nationalist yet. I was just going around door to door the same year that Barack Obama was running for the first time. And one of my major talking points in Palm Beach County in South Florida was "look at Chicago". I went door to door because White nationalists referenced Chicago as an example of the hell on earth that multiculturalism creates, that places with lots of Black people create. And it's this way to signal to people with racist ideas, a way that they can more subtly say that. And that has always been a central part of Donald Trump's rhetoric. It is that sort of signaling that Chicago has this high gun violence, like Baltimore has this high gun violence, look around at St. Louis, look at cities across the country, and then say, "oh, that's wrong, that's what's wrong with our country". And White nationalists are very clear about what they're trying to do. They're trying to get you to say, maybe it's about race, maybe it's about the kinds of people who live there, and get you to be more explicit about it, and Donald Trump doesn't usually go that far.

There was a quote in Michael Cohen's testimony where he remembered driving through Chicago with Trump, and Trump commented that only Black people could live like this. So there's a lot of evidence that he does have the exact same racial opinions that a White nationalist is trying to get you to agree with. And what he is doing here is exactly the sort of press move that a White nationalist would do. It is saying that big multicultural cities with liberal anti-racist White people are anti-American, that they're essentially treasonous and that they're betraying some sense of real America. And that is something I just never thought I would actually see coming from the federal government. It's something I always heard from White nationalist speakers at political conferences, where they were trying to set up some kind of social war and get people to be more explicitly racist, but seeing it coming out of the presidency is, I don't know what happens next.

JONATHAN CAPEHEART - HOST, CAPE UP: So here we are in the final months, we're less than a hundred days to election day, and what we've seen out of the Trump campaign is what we've just been talking about. Federal troops in American cities, his, no pun intended, white hot rhetoric that's pushing the buttons of xenophobia and racism. Talk about your, how are you viewing the 2020 election. What are your concerns and if any, what are the sort of rays of hope that you could possibly see as we go closer to election day?

DEREK BLACK: I spend a lot of my time now trying to figure out how I can be helpful to the anti-racist movement. And so this in a lot of ways is an extremely encouraging time to be involved in watching at this in a lot of ways, the fruition of years and years of anti-racist activism. The reason why we have mass protests around the country and around the world, around police violence against Black people, is because of sustained work by Black Lives Matter activists over years to make that something that people know is happening, that they can't deny, that they understand they have to do something about. And it's amazing, to have watched that happen. Most of this movement has happened in the year since I wrote this letter, condemning White nationalism and it's been a sea change of opinion. 2013, I had condemned White nationalism and I looked up and realized that most White progressives were not talking about anti-racism. They were not concerned about police violence, they were not concerned about discrimination. This is a way overgeneralization, but it was not the movement that you see now, and seeing that change has to encourage everyone.

I protested in front of Lafayette Park for days right after the murder of George Floyd, and that was an extremely integrated crowd. There were, plenty of people of color and Black people out protesting. There were also tons of White Washingtonians who really saw this as their cause, and that's extremely encouraging. At the same time, I don't want to go too far and say that everything is changed here because while progressive White people are much more aware of racial inequity and they recognize how much Donald Trump is coding and pushing White supremacist, explicitly White supremacist messages. There is also a large segment of the White population that is completely responsive to his anti-immigrant, to his racist rhetoric. And, I can't give any sort of predictions about the election, that's not my role, but as we go further into the future, there is a very real possibility that some aspects of the White nationalist worldview, that lots of White people are fearful, that lots of White people are concerned, that lots of White people are reactive to becoming, technically, a minority in America, that that will continue to have a huge political reaction.

So even if this election defeats Donald Trump, there is no future in America where we do not have to wrestle with the fact that White supremacy is something that exists in the opinions of millions of people, and that plays a huge role in our politics. If this is a one term presidency, we can't walk away from that and say, that's done. That should be the moment where we realize that this is a make or break moment for the future of America, and this is the number one issue that we have to reconcile.

Trump Caravans and the Threat of Sectarian Violence

Part 1 - The Muckrake Podcast - Air Date 9-1-20

JARED YATES SEXTON - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST: Donald Trump is running as a wartime president. He's not running on his record with COVID because it's not just embarrassing; it's been a national tragedy. He's not running on an economic record because he's completely cratered the economy. He's not running on any achievement because he really doesn't have any achievements. It's all been fake chest puffery. There's nothing actually that Trump has done that he can hang his hat on.

What he is telling his supporters is that they are engaged in a cold and sometimes hot civil war and that they need a president who will be there and be on their side. That is the argument that Trump is making, by the way, part of it is ludicrous. This whole thing where it's

like, Scenes from America in 2020: this could be Joe Biden's America. Well, no, it's Trump's America because this was the only environment where he can succeed.

And, if you want to take a look at who he is, other presidents would not do this; they simply wouldn't. Right? Because, and we've talked about this before, so much of politics is like business. It's willing to see how much risk you can take, and who's willing to push the envelope further than the next person. Trump doesn't care. Trump has never suffered consequences in an entire his entire life. He will push the envelope until it's completely off the table, while others are like, Oh my God, I don't want to do this. People would be mortified if they thought that their supporters were carrying out this type of violence or were capable of sectarian violence.

Trump doesn't care. He has said over and over that people should be carried out of his rallies, that he would take care of the legal fees for anyone who beat up a protester or, in the past we used to be a lot tougher; we need to be a lot tougher or whatever, knock the hell out of 'em, those types of things. He doesn't have a conscience with this. He's going to push this envelope, and I have to tell you, we still have months until this thing happens.

Every single day is a new opportunity for a massive tragedy. And you know and I know that one tragedy is going to beget another tragedy, which will beget another, and it will just multiply. If the floodgates open, and there is a very real chance that they will open, we're looking at massive sectarian violence. We're looking at a massive, massive tragedy, and Donald Trump would not blink about that.

And I think what we saw in Kenosha shows us the Republican party is more than willing to embrace it. They're not going to shy away. They are in on this thing. They've got their chips in; there's no pulling it back at this point. They are in on whatever happens from this point on.

NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST: Right. And you make a good point -- I just want to hammer that home -- that he keeps describing what this country would be like under Joe Biden, meanwhile, it's what's happening right now because of Donald Trump. Which is part of the reason why they were talking about Joe Biden visiting Kenosha. And I think what Joe Biden needs to do from now until the election is act like the president. I think he should be going to all of these places, touring them, just like the president would normally do, and act and look just like the president would be already. I think that would really help him because it would fill that void that we're missing right now.

JARED YATES SEXTON - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST: You know, you saying that has just suddenly made me think about some really screwed up possibilities. So, I'm working on another project and I'm looking at the history of the modern world. There are these weird moments where there are schisms in the Catholic Church where there were like multiple popes, where one group believes this guy is the pope, and the other one believes that this guy is the pope, and you'll actually have two or three popes at any given time.

And then all of a sudden you start thinking about, Oh, I don't know, you think about Lincoln and Jefferson [Davis] being presidents at the same time with the Confederate States and the Union, or whatever you want to call it. The schism that you are describing between Trump and Biden feels so sickeningly familiar and so disturbingly familiar.

This idea that in these nations that start to reach their conclusion, or these states that start to reach their conclusion, there are two people with a claim to the throne, so to speak. And basically, I mean, that is the root cause of every coup and every major sectarian or civil war that we've ever seen. Yeah, people need to understand that we're tiptoeing up on onto the precipice of something really bad here.

NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST: This is supposed to be a government governed by the people; the will of the people should be what controls what the government does. And it simply doesn't do that anymore. We've lost the ability to have a consensus of Americans in [which] the majority of Americans have the pull or the sway with where this country goes. And it gets more and more frustrating when you realize it's not how it is. Maybe it was never that way, but we need to fix that.

JARED YATES SEXTON - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST: I'll say this first of all -- and we were talking about this before we started taping -- presidential elections, it's like watching a rerun. It always is. There are new things that occur that maybe you didn't notice the first time, or maybe you have a Donald Trump who tries to start up a sectarian civil war. Things happen.

But the media and these polling companies live off the exact same narrative constantly, which is just a fluctuating horse race. It goes back and forth, back and forth. I can tell you, and I'll break some news on the Muckrake Podcast. I wasn't going to do it, but you know, I'm feeling salty. The people that I talked to in the Biden campaign, their internal polling shows that they are ahead, that they have a comfortable lead on Donald Trump. They are not afraid of the electoral college at the moment. They actually feel like that they have a pretty comfortable lead in the electoral college, but they are very concerned about whether or not he will accept the loss.

And by the way, I want to point this out: Joe Biden has gone through an incredible evolution in just a few months, and I want people to be aware of this. When Joe Biden began his presidential campaign, he told everyone Donald Trump is an aberration. We'll get past this and we'll be fine, and I'm going to talk to Republicans again, and America will just figure it out, and this'll just be like a little blip on the radar. He's gone from that to talking in private with people about how to deal with a president who will not concede a loss. That's a problem. You know what I mean? That is one of the conversations; that is part of the strategy.

And I have to tell you, it's keeping people up because they truly believe that that is who he is. And what do you do? What do you do if you win the electoral college, plus you win the popular vote and you have a president who will not allow or will not concede and will not allow his followers to believe that the election was real. And even if you do somehow or another manage to get through that without major sectarian violence and blood in the streets and civil war. Even if you do get to January and you take the oath of office, what do you do when like 30% of the country believes that you are not really the president and that you've engaged in a coup? What do you do when there are tons of people to make money off of building off that type of hysteria? How do you rule a country or how do you serve as president of a country where 30% of the people are lost in an alternate reality where you are somehow or another a usurper of power? How does that happen?

Can We Stop Trump From Playing Dictator? - Thom Hartmann Program - Air Date 8-11-20

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THE THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: By asking the simple question, "will enough Americans show up this fall?", that we can push through all the various forms of voter suppression, including messing with the mails, and disinformation that Donald Trump has promoting, will enough Americans show up to stop Trump from using the dictators playbook? This is really an important point, and it's a point that Rachel Maddow made on her show last night, and it was the first time I'd heard it in the national press. I just finished writing this book about oligarchy and tyranny and it's front and center there, but I have not seen, I've kind of been waiting for, but I had not seen anybody in the corporate press talk about this, and now one show has, we'll see if others do. But here it is, the single most consistent defining characteristic of an emerging dictatorship in a country that started as a democracy, is that the dictator actually holds elections and typically wins them. In fact always wins them, that's why he's the dictator and the way that the dictator, and I'm using the word he because I don't know of any female dictators who have done this, and the way that he does this is by seizing control of the instruments of government that can help him win the election.

Not because people love him but because basically they end up having no choice. I mean, Donald Trump has done this now with the Justice Department, the post office, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Federal Reserve and our intelligence agencies. None of this has ever happened before.

This is arguably a massive violation of the Hatch Act, which says you can't use federal resources for election purposes, and they've been violating the Hatch Act forever. From Kellyanne Conway, pitching Ivanka's stuff in front of the White House logo to Donald Trump putting Goya products all over his desk, his daughter Ivanka, doing a photo shoot with Goya products and tweeting. I mean, all this kind of stuff, this is all deeply, profoundly illegal, but Trump is pushing it in our face like, screw you people, we don't care about the law, we don't care about democracy, we only care about power.

Over the Justice Department, Attorney General Bill Barr has said that he intends to investigate Joe Biden, in fact, he's doing it right now. The John Durham investigation, and Joe Biden and his son's activities and Ukraine, and that, eh, you know, yeah, maybe just before the election we'll release all this information.

Trump has seized control of the post office. He's just over the weekend on Friday decapitated at senior management and has already begun slowing down the mail. People all over the country are complaining that their packages are arriving late. Hell. I sent a couple of books to a friend of mine in Los Angeles two weeks ago via priority mail and they have not arrived yet. He is slowing down the mail. He's more than doubling the cost for States to send out mail-in ballots. He's telling the States you can no longer mail these things bulk rate, third-class mail, you have to mail them first-class mail. So the price goes from roughly 20 cents to a little over 50 cents.

He's gotten the Department of Homeland Security and various factions within their immigration police to challenge protestors for a test run here in Portland, and plans to bring

that crew to other cities just in time for a massive display of police power during the elections.

Trump has directed all reporting on coronavirus statistics away from the Center for Disease Control and into HHS, an agency run by his toady, Alex Azar. Now hospitals and public health officials, as well as news agencies can no longer get accurate data on the severity of the pandemic in the United States

Over at the Fed, Trump has installed Jerome Powell, a multimillionaire banker who is not an economist and was on the board of the Carlyle Group. Powell has created about \$7 trillion out of thin air and is using it to buy corporate stocks and bonds to maintain the stock markets. I mean, we've talked about on this program a lot, making it appear that the economy is nowhere near as bad as it is.

And when our intelligence agencies first reported that Russia, the source of much of Trump's wealth according to his own children, was already actively interfering in the 2020 elections, Trump got them to change their assessment to downplay Russia and highlight that China and Iran had a "preference for Biden." He got the intelligence agency to admit the fact that China and Iran are not engaged in active measures, creating the false impression that there was some sort of balance among foreign actors messing with our elections.

On top of this, this is where it explodes from the realm of obscene to the realm of God, I'm lacking adjectives. In a further tip of the hat to his White racist supporters, Donald Trump wants to declare his candidacy for president, for reelection while simultaneously symbolically declaring that the Confederacy won at Gettysburg. Gettysburg, you will recall, was referred to by, actually the federal government's website for Gettysburg says it was "often referred to as the high watermark of the rebellion." Gettysburg was the Civil War's single bloodiest battle. Now the South lost at Gettysburg, but Trump wants to go there and proclaim his candidacy, I think to essentially say to White racists in America, which day by day I'm discovering in my horror is a larger fraction of White people than I ever imagined, that basically he's reversing the Confederacy's loss of Gettysburg.

One of the points that I make in my new book on oligarchy is that the South lost the Civil War but won the peace. And that's essentially what Donald Trump is ratifying, is certifying.

And all of these actions, if you add these all up, no president has ever done these things, right? No president has ever used the Department of Homeland Security or any of our federal police agencies to help his reelection. No president has ever used the Department of Health and Human Services to help him win reelection. No president has ever used the post office or messed with the post office to help him win election. No president has ever manipulated the Federal Reserve to help win an election. No president has ever manipulated our intelligence agencies to win an election. I mean, the closest you can get to that was Nixon back during the '72 election. And this I'm doing this from memory, I can't find documentation on it, but my recollection is that he was making it harder for reporters in Vietnam to do their job. And that was around the time that Walter Cronkite was pulling his hair out. But that pales in comparison to what Trump is doing. So you add all this stuff up and it becomes fairly clear that Donald Trump doesn't think that he's President of the United States, he believes that he's a tin-pot dictator of a Third World country. He's been governing that way for three and a half years, and now he's campaigning that way. And the question that we're confronting over the next six months between now and January 20th, when the

new president should be taking place, or when Trump's presidency officially ends, is whether Trump has taken America so far down this road of oligarchy and tyranny, and despotism and fascism, essentially, that we can't recover.

I mean, it's going to take tens of millions of us showing up, speaking out and making sure our votes are counted to stop this train wreck before it utterly destroys the American experiment. And there's still months to go. There's still a month or so to go before early voting starts, and we've got all this stuff in place. What more is Donald Trump going to do? What more are the fascists in the Republican party willing to do?

Voting is Not Enough - Get Involved In The Ground Game NOW - Best of the Left

AMANDA HOFFMAN - ACTIVISM, BEST OF THE LEFT: You've reached the activism portion of today's show. Now that you're informed and angry, here's what you can do about it. Today's activism: Voting is not enough--get involved in the ground game NOW.

As of the publishing of this episode, there are exactly 56 days until election day. That's eight weeks, just two months. To make sure every one of those days counts, we've launched our 2020 election action guide, which we're calling *Voting Is Not Enough*. Because it's just not. From now until election day, we'll be highlighting different ways you can be spending time and/or money to support a free and fair election, as well as Democrats down the ballot and all the way up to the Biden/Harris ticket.

All of this information can be accessed from the Voting Is Not Enough tab at bestoftheleft.com or directly at bestoftheleft.com/2020action. As a reminder, in our last Voting Is Not Enough segment, we encouraged you to become a poll worker. The record shortage of poll workers the country is facing right now will directly impact the number of available polling places during the election. So be a poll hero and head to workelections.com today to find out how to apply in your state.

Today, we're talking about the ground game--getting out the vote definitely looks different this year, with in-person canvassing nearly entirely off the table, due to the pandemic; with the exception of the Trump campaign, of course, which claims they've knocked on 1 million doors in Florida, with their sticky little virus hands. Ew. That may make you nervous, if you've heard about the many studies that show that canvassing and actually talking to people in person has the biggest impact on voter turnout. After all, excellent field work is how Obama won, but that was years ago. Political scientists say things have changed.

Data now shows that calling voters and relational voter turnout, or having volunteers reach out to the people in their own networks, seems to be actually as effective, if not more effective, than door-to-door canvassing. Some even think that the pandemic is pushing campaigns to steer away from tactics where the cost per vote is too high and is forcing them to focus on more efficient uses of campaign funds. And this is all good news, because thanks to Trump COVID-19 is going to be with us for a while.

The other key point the data shows is that persuading voters in a general election, in a country as divided as ours, is nearly impossible. However, inspiring voter turnout in the people who prefer your candidate, making sure people are registered, and have a voting

plan, that's where campaigns can make a huge difference. And that is exactly what political action organizations and down-ballot campaigns on the left are focusing on this fall.

They have adapted quickly to our new environment, building their entire 2020 strategies on calling, texting, and sending letters and making sure volunteers feel connected via Zoom.

So what can you do? Whether it's calling, texting, or sending a postcard, there is a way you can get involved and help inspire voter registration and turnout.

With so much at stake and voter suppression tactics in full swing, there is no time to lose. Swing Left, Indivisible, Vote Forward, Field Team 6, Super Majority, MoveOn, Progressive TurnOut Project, the Biden/Harris campaign, and many more have already kicked off their get-out-the-vote efforts and they need you.

So get some friends and family to join you and start signing up for trainings and volunteer slots.

The 2020 ground game may look different, but it's still the most important game in town. The segment notes include all the links to this information as well as additional resources. And once again, this segment is available under the Voting Is Not Enough tab at bestoftheleft.com.

So of ensuring we inspire historic voter turnout for the most important election of our lifetime is important to you, be sure to spread the word about getting involved in the ground game now via social media so that others in your network can spread the word too.

“Authoritarian Nightmare” John Dean Helped Bring Down Nixon over Watergate. He Says Trump Is Worse - Democracy Now! - Air Date 8-27-20

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: I want to turn to a phone interview President Trump did with Fox & Friends in May, after the Department of Justice dropped charges against Trump's former national security advisor Michael Flynn, even though Flynn twice pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his communications with the Russian ambassador. Trump said he learned a lot from Richard Nixon during the federal investigation of his 2016 campaign ties to Russia.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: From Richard Nixon, don't fire people. I learned a lot. I study history and the firing of everybody, I should have in one way, but I'm glad I didn't because look at the way it turned out. They're all a bunch of crooks and they got caught, but I learned a lot by watching Richard Nixon. Of course there was one difference, one big difference. Number one, he may have been guilty, and number two, he had tapes all over the place. I wasn't guilty. I did nothing wrong and there are no tapes.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: So John Dean, you were the man who's Watergate testimony helped to lead to the downfall fall of Richard Nixon. You talk about what it's like to work for a vindictive president, but even Nixon, you say, doesn't have the raw

lust for power that Donald Trump does. Talk about what he just said and what he's done, and the comparisons you see between Richard Nixon then, and President Trump today.

JOHN DEAN: Amy, I worked for the last authoritarian president we had, that was Nixon. I learned a lot observing, watching what I was doing right then and there. We've had very few authoritarian presidents, depending on exactly how you define them, but as generally social science looks at these people: Andrew Jackson, Woodrow Wilson. Richard Nixon and now Donald Trump. There's a very unique, governing style on these people, and then that is, they don't really, we want to hear anything from their aides other than obedience. And we're seeing that at this time. That's the lesson that he learned learn from Nixon is "don't get caught", because Nixon was caught. And so he said, well, of course he was guilty so that's different than me. Well, Nixon did not think he was guilty, but Nixon, when cornered was willing to follow the rule of law. What concerns me about Trump, I don't think Trump will do what Nixon did. He certainly wouldn't concede during the impeachment proceeding that he had done anything. Richard Nixon didn't take the country through an impeachment proceeding. So Trump is of a different cut than Nixon. I think he, in fact Amy, he's gonna make Nixon look like a choir boy before it's all over.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: You said Trump should have been impeached on the first day. Why?

JOHN DEAN: Well, because he, first of all, his behavior during the campaign, where he reached out and obviously colluded with Russia. We now have it by the Senate Intelligence Committee, where nine Republicans joined in, in the report and show very, very clear collusion. This has just unprecedented. So this president needs to go, and the only way to force him to go is for people in a tsunami style election to remove him.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: We just talked about LeBron James coming up to Washington, leaving the bubble of the basketball court to protest President Trump. Can you talk about how Nixon dealt with protests, how he cared about protests, and Donald Trump, what he does. And then talk about the Republicans who have come out one by one, supporting Joe Biden.

JOHN DEAN: Nixon pretended not to be phased by demonstrations, yet, exactly the opposite was true. One of my jobs was to monitor demonstrations and during the height of demonstrations, he wanted hourly reports as to what was happening that we would get from law enforcement. So they did make a big impact. The demonstrations today are not focused on the white house, and so Trump is using them a law and order issue to try to say that he has federal authority to go into places like Portland or Kenosha and bring peace. Well, that really isn't his responsibility, or his obligation, or should he really be doing that.

We haven't federalized law enforcement; it's a State function. So I think that what Trump is doing is he's really pushing this because it's a campaign issue. His followers are the people we deal with, and we think it's essential that Americans understand, in our book. They want to be felt, they want to feel comfortable, they want to feel a strong leader. So that's what he's playing to. It's not that he knows this body of science we report on. It's just intuitively he knows what to do. And that is to give them the impression that daddy's taken care of everything.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: You wrote this book with Bob Altmeyer a psychology professor who's a specialist authoritarianism. To see why Trump's base is so faithful to him no matter what he does, you asked the question, why do Evangelical Christians support him? For example, despite his well-documented sexual predations, and now of course, Jerry Falwell Jr. has just had to step down as head of Liberty University because of a sexual scandal as well. He was an early supporter of President Trump, when he was running for president extremely significant in Trump's success. You talk about why do many working class Americans support him despite the way he works against their interests. Talk more about your psychological approach to Trump and what you think has to be done right now.

JOHN DEAN: Well, I have actually been on this subject for some years. Over a decade ago, I did a book called *Conservatives Without Conscience* and, Bob Altmeyer was very helpful when I was trying to understand the religious right, and how they have become fairly dominant in the Republican ranks. And I discovered that's where the authoritarian personalities, both leaders and followers, had taken over the conservative movement.

Bob Altmeyer was as stunned as I was that no one was reporting on what was happening during the primary race and the 2016 campaign when Trump was running. Who his supporters were and how much science was available studying these very kinds of people and why they do what they do. It's more than soundbites, but to understand them is to realize they're frightened people and there are ways to deal with it.

But the way they are proceeding now is he's just baiting them, and the demonstrations in the street are playing into his campaign. Give me some concern that indeed this could help him to victory if enough people think he's going to solve the problem of demonstrations.

So I've been on this issue a long time. Altmeyer has spent his lifetime. It's a career of science and what was most exciting about this project is, as we started it, we didn't know how it would play out fully in the United States. Most of the experiments have done Canada and small university towns with students and parents. Well, we had the Monmouth Polling Institute run a national survey. From a base of about 230,000 people, we got a good sampling of about just under a thousand people.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: That con-man scale?

JOHN DEAN: That con-man scale, we gave people all the key tests, personality tests, and we found that authoritarianism is ripe, and ready, and certainly in play, and it explains Trump's base.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: Let me go to President Trump speaking to delegates at the RNC on Monday.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: And the only way they can take this election away from us is if this is a rigged election. We're going to win this election. What they're doing is using COVID to steal an election. They're using COVID to defraud the American people, all of our people, of a fair and free election.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: John Dean, your final comment.

JOHN DEAN: We found in the poll that about 24 to 29% of his followers will tolerate him ignoring the constitution if he loses the election. That's troubling.

Trump Caravans and the Threat of Sectarian Violence

Part 2 - The Muckrake Podcast - Air Date 9-1-20

NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST: I was talking to my dad. My dad's lived through all of this as a lawyer, and I was surprised he felt the same way when I mentioned it to him because he realized how important it is at some point you have to prosecute these people and tell them that it's wrong. That's what you said, Trump has never been prosecuted. He's never really had to account for himself. And that's why none of these people ever change their behavior. It seems so important for the healing. For the healing. Ford said, Oh, we need to heal the country. We're not going to -- we're going to pardon him and move on. Well, for that very same reason, we need to prosecute him so we can heal. I feel like that now.

JARED YATES SEXTON - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST: I know, I wish people would think about what a different country it would have been if Richard Nixon would have spent the last years of his life in prison. As opposed, by the way, to writing books that tried to redeem his legacy, which he made money off of. He would go on TV and argue his case. He was a semi-celebrity. He would go to all of the presidential functions. He would go around with all the other presidents, and they would all take pictures together. He got treated like he was just another guy, and he was a criminal.

He was not just a criminal. He was a dangerous criminal who tried to subvert the United States Constitution in multiple ways, harassed American citizens and carried out his own invisible war. The country would have been completely different had he suffered consequences, and the US presidency would have been reigned in at a time where it was the weakest it was for a very long time. And we would have been a lot better off and we wouldn't be in the situation we're in now, if somebody like that would have been prosecuted.

NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST: I agree. And Dick Cheney is the guy that -- you mentioned Bush in that same sentence, but it's really Dick Cheney who was part of that, who recognized, at that time, there's going to need to be a way to regain the power of the presidency. And he has worked tirelessly to get there. And it got there with George W. Bush, to the point where we're here. Now, Trump is able to misuse all the norms and safeguards that were in place or were assumed to be in place but aren't really. So that's really the key here. That's the guy that never got prosecuted. That's the guy who threw Scooter Libby under the bus for outing Valerie Plame and every other egregious violation of law he committed. So, in fact, even the movie kind of, I thought, glossed over some of that stuff.

So, that's really where we're at. And I think that's why I think we need to do something, but I guess first things first. This election has to go off, and it has to turn the right way before we can do anything else.

JARED YATES SEXTON - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST: Well, I want everyone to stay safe. I just want to point that out because the situation, both with the caravan and the vigilante shootings, this is obviously a ploy. It's obviously a reelection strategy. It's a desperate attempt by Trump to maintain and consolidate power.

Be safe out there. Because I have to tell you, there are people who are looking to do violence. They're looking to carry out far right-wing sectarian violence. Be careful. Be ready for this thing; do not hide your head in the sand. Don't pretend like it's not happening. We need to dismiss people who don't take this seriously, and that includes pundits, media, politicians, all of them. People need to be on total guard for this thing and call it what it is, which is a fascistic movement with sectarian violence.

Democracy Is On The Ballot - Strange Days with Fernand Amandi - Air Date 8-21-20

FERNAND AMANDI - HOST, STRANGE DAYS: One other thing that you write very eloquently about in the book is this dichotomy or the hypocrisy of a fascist state calling for this notion of law and order, when at the same time, in the same breath, the fascist state shows that they themselves are not punitive practitioners of law and order, basically the law does not quite apply to them. How do supporters of those fascist leaders reconcile that inherent contradiction of calling for a law and order society that does not apply to the fascist leadership?

JASON STANLEY: Brilliant question. And the short answer is with fascism is racism. Racism is used to make you think that law and order means that the hated minority, be it Hispanics, immigrants the undocumented Black people, that they in and of themselves, usually the men, are violations of law and order. So the Nazis did this with Jews. They said the Jews were by their nature criminal, always stealing from you. Lazy. And this is what you see all around the world. Every time you see one of these ultra-nationalist regimes, they say they're going to impose law and order where that means they're going to go after political opponents, hated religious and ethnic minorities, and they changed the meaning of law on order. And to suggest that it's actually just being a member of that group. A political opponent, a leftist, a Black person, an immigrant, that is a violation of law and order, and by their very nature, their own supporters are lawful. So when you see people storming, the Michigan legislature with guns, well, they're supposed to be, by their very nature, lawful because they're supporters of the president.

And so that's, what's meant in this lot. You change the meaning of law and order so there's nothing whatsoever to do with guilt or innocence. It has to do with whether you're on the leader's side or not.

FERNAND AMANDI - HOST, STRANGE DAYS: But is that distinction one that the supporters of the fascist leadership understand inherently and rationalize and justify to themselves, or are they aware that there is dissonance in that law and order message when even the practitioners of the fascist government are caught being and engaging in corrupt lawless activities themselves?

JASON STANLEY: Right. So here we have to think about. So on the one hand, Trump shows a very extreme version of this, but we saw this with the Nazis too. I mean, I don't want to draw tight analogy being the Nazis and Trump, but in this respect there similar. The idea is you need a strong man. You need a corrupt strong man to take on the corrupt elite. And the more corrupt than the more used to being like a mob boss he is, the better he'll be at detecting the corruption on the other side. And he's **your** strong man. So what the goal in fascist politics, you say democracy itself is corrupt. Democracy, the whole business is corrupt, and what you need is you need someone who's more corrupt and cuts all the corners and smashes this corrupt elite democracy on your behalf. And his corruption is at least corruption for you.

FERNAND AMANDI - HOST, STRANGE DAYS: Let me close then by asking, if the best case scenario transpires and Joe Biden is successful and takes the oath as the 46 President of the United States on January 21st, do you think that will marshal in an era where the American body politics says, we escaped with our lives there?

This is the time to reform and strengthen the democracy, or will there be a complacent period where people say, "well, we avoided that, let's go back to the normal of the pre-Trump era and just take that into the future and hopefully not deal with the likes of Trump again"?

JASON STANLEY: We cannot go back to normal, we have to revise it. We can't go back to Democrats and Republicans self dealing with lobbyists, and we cannot go back to the ever increasing radical inequality and the destruction of the job market for high school educated Americans. We cannot go back to that because what the American population has said is that if you do that, we're going to go to fascism.

So it's really not an option. Mr. Trump was right to condemn aspects of the system as corrupt. He was right to call out, self-dealing. Of course, putting him in office is like putting, I mean, he has transformed the government into it entirely. He's put all of the foxes in charge of the hen houses.

So the business people, the massive tax cuts for businesses, the destruction of our environment. So what we've learned is that unless we deal with this problem of the corruption and intermingling of business and politics, what will threaten is fascism. And the next one, the next leader might make us yearn for Donald Trump.

Summary

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: We've just heard clips today, starting with Chauncey deVega and Tim Wise, talking on The Truth Report about the nature of white supremacy. Jonathan Capehart on Cape Up spoke with Derek Black, a former white nationalist, about the dynamics of the movement. The Muckrake Podcast discussed the election through the lens of the far right movement. Thom Hartmann explained the dictator's playbook. Democracy Now! spoke with John Dean, comparing Trump to Nixon. The Muckrake Podcast discussed the legacy of Nixon and the decision not to prosecute him. And finally, we just heard Fernand Amandi on Strange Days, speaking with Jason Stanley about how fascism works and why that's where we're headed if we don't make fundamental changes.

No new voicemails today. I want to continue to encourage you to call in, in response to the call we heard from Aaron in the previous episode, discussing our national myths. Here's a quick refresher.

Voicemail: Rewriting the American myth - Erin from Philly

CALLER: ERIN FROM PHILLY: It feels like we are at a moment where we're having to reckon with the mythology of the United States and where the myth of the U.S. that we've had is just transparently not working anymore. The shining city on the hill myth that Reagan was famous for, that's fallen apart. Things you talked about in the podcast recently, like the Doctrine of Christian Discovery and Manifest Destiny, those myths don't hold up anymore because Native people are finding ways to have their voices heard by White America in ways that were silenced for several centuries. As the U.S. moves towards being a demographically majorityless nation, or a majority minority nation as you sometimes hear it called, those stories, those myths don't work anymore.

Final comments on the debate between voting emotionally or as a tool toward a theory of change

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: So I have a couple of things I want to get to here at the end, but first, just a quick, thanks to Deon Clark and Aaron Clayton for their research work on the show. Thanks to the monosyllabic trio Ben, Dan, and Ken for their volunteer work, helping to put together transcripts for the show. And thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets and activism segments.

Plus of course, thanks to those who called into the voicemail line. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can send us either a voice memo by email or simply record a message at (202) 999-3991.

Now, the first thing to note, I would say the monosyllabic trio, what's that all about?

So I've been delaying for no good reason (other than I haven't felt like I had time) this announcement. So I'm way overdue. We've been doing transcripts for the show now for a couple of months, which in and of itself was way overdue. I mean, if you're familiar with the concept of designing for the disability community, then you will immediately recognize that the benefits of doing so goes far beyond those originally targeted beneficiaries of that design. And transcripts for podcasts fit right into that category. The problem is, there's a bit of a financial barrier to making that happen. So small independent shows like this one, maybe just don't have the extra several hundred dollars a month to fund something like that.

But with the help of some new technology and the volunteer work of our amazing and dedicated team lovingly dubbed the monosyllabic trio because their names are Ben, Dan and Ken, not that I'm throwing stones from this class house, don't get me wrong.

So for the past two months, two and a half months or so, we've been chugging along, creating transcripts for the show and it's been fantastic. So, you may be thinking of course,

well, that must be for people who are deaf or hard of hearing who may want to read what's in a podcast. Okay. Sure. That's the low hanging fruit. But other beneficiaries: think about non-native speakers. I'm sure you've heard stories of people saying that they watched television or listen to podcasts in a foreign language to help them learn that language. Well, think about how beneficial it may be to be able to read a transcript at the same time as you're listening. If you're listening to try to learn that language.

And then I was so glad I learned about this one, doing this research: there are people who suffer from what's called auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder, which means they can hear, but they may have trouble following a fast conversation. The brain just doesn't process it well. And so it makes it hard to listen to something like a podcast. So they may benefit from having a transcript as well.

And of course it doesn't stop there. Anyone who's looking to reference a specific moment in a podcast or pull quotes, or as part of doing research or anything like that. Transcripts are fantastic for anyone who would find themselves looking to search through a podcast, because of course the text makes it a lot easier to search for specific moments rather than listening to the audio.

So transcripts are fantastic. I've been wanting to do it for years, and now I'm really happy that we got a team together that's making it happen and doing it really well and consistently, and all that. So links for that are in the show notes.

And as part of my research for how to do this and how to do it right, I found that there are some best practices. So the transcripts are available not only on our website, which makes it easy to load up on different sized screens and the page morphs its size to fit whatever screen you're using, but also maybe you want to download it and take it with you when you don't have an internet connection. Well, for that reason, we have downloadable PDFs and then the third, which is really rare and I'm excited to be able to offer it just thanks to the software we use, we also have audio synced transcript, and this one's really unique. You can actually play the show in a browser, and the transcript will follow along with the audio. And so all of that is linked up on our transcription page for each episode. And if you think you know someone or a community of people who could benefit from this, please help spread the word and we're gonna keep pumping those out.

Next up, I wanted to reply to an email I got from a listener, Zach. He calls himself Zach the theologian, just for context--that's where he's coming from. And you'll see that come up in his email. And his question's about voting. He premised it by saying that he took one of those sort of political position tests that if you answer a bunch of questions, it'll tell you what candidate or candidates you most closely aligned with.

So he took that test on ISideWith.com and had this to say: "I found that I agree 91% with Howie Hawkins." That's the Green Party candidate for 2020. Continuing: "I didn't even know who that was before this test. The two party bias is real. It feels really good to know that there's actually a candidate running that I can truly support and get behind that really agrees with me on issues. Should I vote for him for real? As a theologian, I understand that fear is the root of sinful action, and so I'm hesitant to allow my fear that Trump will cheat his way to a victory make me vote for Biden. I've heard talk about making sure the gap is large enough that Trump can't cheat his way out of it. I really don't want Trump to win, but I really want to be an idealist and vote for the candidate I want. I know you have lists and lists of things to

cover, but I was wondering if you could talk about this, how our fear of Trump is influencing us. Am I betraying the country if I vote for Hawkins? Am I betraying my vision of a beautiful and inclusive America by voting for the person who sees that future too? Have you conquered your own fear, or do you just love Biden that much?"

And so my response to this is that Zach is, from my perspective and opinion, looking at this all wrong. I think I entirely reject the idea that I am making my decision about who to vote for out of fear or idealism. That's not the spectrum that I'm functioning on, I think at all. I function on a "theory of change" concept; meaning the actions you take must be in line with a concrete theory of how those actions are in line with the change you want to see. So, the way this is described, Howard Hawkins, voting idealistically for the person who you most want to be president if you could choose of all the candidates, and just install that person, since that's not how the system works, obviously. Then it's a question of, does voting for a candidate idealistically fit in line with a concrete theory of change that helps bring you closer to that ideological or idealistic goal? I'm not opposed to having idealistic goals. I just want to have a concrete theory of how to get there.

And so the way Zach describes this voting idealistically, I don't mean to be flippant about it, but it's sort of like confusing voting with espousing an opinion. It's like confusing voting with tweeting. And frankly, I think that tweeting that you wish someone like Howie Hawkins could be the president might be literally more impactful than voting for him.

I mean, first of all, voting is supposed to be secret thing, right? So unless you tell people that you voted for him, no, one's going to know. And if you tell people you voted for him, that's kind of the same as just saying, I wish this person would win. The actual vote for that candidate in our system, which is totally strangled by two parties, means that vote carries no weight.

And what some will argue is that if enough people vote for the Green Party, then the Democratic Party will wake up and realize that they need to court that far-left Green Party voting block and try to bring them in to the Democratic Party fold. And that's a theory of change to help pull the Democratic Party to the left.

I don't think there's any evidence to suggest that that has been working over the past 30 years that the Green Party has been active. I looked up their founding date previously. I can't remember when it was exactly, but if you look at the Democratic Party over the past several decades, they have not been moving to the left. They have not been courting the Green Party voter. And if anything, they write those voters off. They think, hey, if you're going to vote for the Green Party, then we've lost you. And we don't care. I guess we're going to go court either centrist Democrats or centrist Republicans, or even moderate Republicans, and try to pull them over to the left.

That's what the Democratic Party has actually been doing. So if you had a theory of change 30 years ago that voting green would help pull the entire spectrum to the left, maybe it was an okay theory. But I think we've run that experiment and nothing has come of it. So in terms of voting out of fear or idealism, I throw out that premise entirely.

I am not suggesting that people vote for Biden because of fear. I'm suggesting that people vote for Biden out of a concrete, cold, logical understanding of the dynamics of politics and the theory of change for how to make things better. And from where we are right now at an

incredibly low ebb in the future prospects for a progressive America, voting for Joe Biden is clearly the lesser of two evils--which is a terrible situation we've all been forced into, but it is nonetheless the situation we are in. A Biden presidency is clearly a step toward a more progressive America as compared to a Trump presidency. And that's not fear speaking. That is just cold, hard, logical fact and understanding. And if you disagree with that, then you just have to explain your steps. Explain how no, no, no, voting for Biden is not the way to a more progressive America. Having Trump have a second term is the way to a more progressive America because... fill in the blank. Because in a two-party system, that really is the choice.

A vote is not an expression of your innermost feelings and opinions. It is a tool in a toolbox that we use in politics. Voting is one tool. Protesting is one tool. Calling your neighbors and telling them to vote, or just engaging in conversation with people and telling them how you feel about politics, that's a tool. All of these things are tools that we use to try to influence society and community and move politics in the direction that we want it to go. That's how a theory of change works. You use these tools at your disposal. So voting is a tool. You have to use it in a way that is in line with an actual concrete theory of change. And voting green, or just voting for the candidate who you most aligned with, it might feel good, but it's not part of a concrete theory of change that I have had anyone be able to explain to me. And I'm open to being persuaded. I'm open to being told, hey Jay, here's what you're missing; here's how we can get to this vision of a more progressive country and world. I am completely open to that.

I've always been open to having my mind changed, because all I care about is the results. So if there's a better way to reach the results that I want, then I will gravitate toward that gladly.

So we're at the very beginning of the path of this theory of change, and voting for Joe Biden and hoping that he gets elected is the first step. It is not anywhere near the end; is not the goal by any stretch. It is just the first step that is slightly better than the alternative. No, I correct that: it is much, much better than a second term of Donald Trump.

That's in essence my answer. I appreciate the question, Zach, but reject the premise. I get why it seems like there is a debate between voting out of fear versus voting ideologically. But I think that the biggest misconception about voting is that it is about emotion. I mean, those two things are sort of emotional. There's like, do the thing that I know doesn't make a difference, but feels good; or do the thing because I fear the result if I don't. It feels like an emotional thing to vote and I just don't think it should feel that way. I don't think that that is how people should approach voting. I think it should be much colder and more logical than that.

As always. I'd love to hear from you on this or anything else. A quick reminder to reply to Aaron's message about our national cultural myths and the stories we tell ourselves. I think that's a really interesting conversation that we should explore a bit. The number to dial: (202) 999-3991.

That is going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member, or making donations of any size at patreon.com/bestoftheleft. That is absolutely how the program survives. Of course, everyone can support the show just by telling everyone you know about it and leaving us glowing reviews on Apple podcasts and Facebook to help others find the show. For details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode, all that information can

always be found in the show notes on the blog and likely right on the device you're using to listen.

So coming to from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington, D C., my name is Jay, and this has been The Best of the Left podcast, coming to you twice weekly, thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from bestoftheleft.com.