



He Said, She Said:

The Vastly Greater Desirability of Democratic Fairness Over Dictator-like Despotism

Dr. Tiffany B. Twain
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Donald Trump has accused Kamala Harris of being a "fascist" on many occasions. But that is an absurd instance of devious psychological projection of his own scheming propensities. In truth, Trump "a fascist to the core", as Gen. Mark Milley once stated. Milley was Trump's own chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 2019 thru 2023.

Knowledgeable historians and scholars tell us exactly what the main facets of fascism have been throughout recorded history, and they can be revealed by 14 main characteristics. Think about these main common traits of fascist authoritarian regimes like Joseph Stalin's and Benito Mussolini's and Adolph Hitler's, and consider whether or not they accurately describe Trump or Harris.

Fascism, and a Vividly Illuminating Assessment of its 14 Main Characteristics

1) Obsession with Crime and Punishment. Fascist regimes put strict law-and-order policies in place, and police powers are expanded, often leading to abuses by police forces. Secret police organizations or ruthless paramilitary groups are often formed to enforce rigid control and help the oppressive government intimidate citizens. Severe punishments are used to maintain order and control, and coercive and punitive interrogations and torture of prisoners is allowed, and there are long incarcerations of prisoners, and harsh capital punishment is embraced.

2) Identification of Enemies and Scapegoating. Minorities or other groups are blamed for societal problems to rally followers around fear. The people are rallied into a patriotic frenzy over the need to overcome a perceived common threat or foe. Racial, ethnic or religious minorities and liberals, communists, socialists, progressives, terrorists or other groups are blamed. Trump has vowed to deport millions of hard-working immigrants, and to bring back internment camps using the Alien Enemies Act -- the law that was used to lock up more than 120,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans during World War II. This agenda particularly targets Blacks, Muslims and other people in racial or ethnic minorities.

3) Dissent is Not Tolerated. Protesters, dissenters and people in the political opposition are marginalized, treated as criminals, or accused of being threats to social stability and national security -- or of being traitors. Intimidation, retribution and violence are used to silence opposition and stifle efforts to hold abusers of power accountable. Fascist leaders pathologically foster a climate of fear, repression and manipulation, and exert authoritarian control while rejecting democratic fairness and honorable values.

4) The Judiciary is Undermined. Fascist governments typically politicize courts to consolidate power and eliminate checks on executive authority, rather than serving as a guardian of justice or civil liberties. They stack courts with politically partisan judges who will serve the interests of the ruling regime. And

they reject judicial independence. They tend to subordinate the courts to the regime's political will, using them to legitimize authoritarian actions and support the state's ideology in order to maintain rigid control. Political opponents, activists and people in minority groups are often prosecuted under fabricated charges or unjust laws. Fascist regimes introduce laws and legal frameworks that restrict freedoms such as speech, assembly and association, all under the guise of maintaining public order or national security.

5) *Mass Media is Repressively Controlled.* The media is either directly controlled by the government or is indirectly controlled by government regulation or conservative ownership by right-wing media executives and spokespeople. Honest journalists are denounced, with a goal of making the press serve those in power rather than the public. Media outlets are censored or manipulated to align with the ruling regime's propaganda, especially in wartime, and relentless political spin, misinformation and disinformation are used, as well as deceptive attack ads and smear campaign tactics and excessive secrecy. The regime leaders tend to use *Divide-to-Conquer Roguery* to capitalize on stoked fears, alienation, anger and hate.

6) *Extreme Nationalism is Promoted.* Fascist regimes tend to cultivate a sense of extreme national pride, often glorifying the nation as superior to others. They demand loyalty, patriotism and conformity. They make constant use of patriotic mottos, slogans, symbols, songs, and other propaganda and paraphernalia. Flags and flag symbols are seen everywhere on clothing and in public displays. As Sinclair Lewis warned in his 1935 novel, *It Can't Happen Here*, "When fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in the flag, carrying the cross."

Autocratic governments have one "final, most essential command" — to "reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. This directive by the controlling and dictating authoritarian Party in George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* encapsulates the totalitarian nature of the regime, where truth is not based on objective reality but is dictated by the ruling authority and state media.

7) *Corporate Power is Protected.* Business interests are intertwined with political leadership, and the industrial and business elites of a fascist nation are often the ones who put the government leaders into power. This creates a mutually beneficial relationship between business and government, and a power elite that consequentially ignores the common good. Glaringly, billionaires like Elon Musk are allowed excessive influence in order to gain power and promote an extreme anti-democratic agenda. (And maximize and monopolize corporate profits!)

8) *Rampant Cronyism and Corruption Proliferates.* Leadership surrounds itself with loyal supporters, who often engage in cronyism and public corruption, and disfavored businesses or individuals are discriminated against. Fascist regimes are almost always governed by groups of associates and cronies who appoint each other to government positions and use governmental power and authority to protect their friends from accountability. It is common in fascist regimes for fraud to occur, and even for national resources to be appropriated or outright stolen by government leaders. Environmental sanity consequentially takes a big hit.

9) *Labor Power is Suppressed.* Labor unions and collective bargaining are weakened or abolished in order to neutralize worker opposition, because the organizing power of unions and workers is seen as a significant threat to authoritarian governments.

10) *Rampant Sexism.* The governments of fascist nations are almost exclusively male-dominated, and under fascist regimes, traditional gender roles are made more rigid. Traditional gender roles are enforced, with a focus on patriarchal control. Disdain is shown for women's rights and human rights for

LGBTQ individuals, and human rights are dismissed or restricted when they conflict with regime goals. Opposition to abortion is high, as is homophobia and anti-gay legislation and national and state policies.

11) Religion and Government are Intertwined. Governments in fascist nations tend to use the most common religion in the country as a tool to manipulate public opinion. Religion is used to justify the regime's actions by claiming moral authority. Religious rhetoric and terminology is commonly spouted by government leaders, even when their policies or actions are diametrically opposed to the actual major moral tenets of their favored religion. In 2024, the terrifying Project 2025 has been created and promoted by Trump allies and plotting Christian Nationalists.

12) Fraudulent Elections. Sometimes elections are held in fascist nations, but they are generally just a sham. Such elections are often manipulated by emotional appeals and smear campaigns against opposition candidates. Legislation or fraudulent schemes may be used to control voting numbers or political district boundaries, and to manipulate the media. Basic methods of election cheating are indulged to facilitate power grabs, and to ensure the regime continues to remain in power. This is real election fraud. Trump has actually said that he's going to "fix" the government to the point where we won't have another election.

13) Supremacy of the Military and Obsession with National Security. Fears of real, exaggerated and imaginary threats are stoked to maintain control over the people. And the military forces are given an absurdly large fraction of total discretionary government spending. Military brass, soldiers and military service hold powerful roles, with warfare glorified. Military interventions distract the public from widespread domestic problems, and vital domestic agenda items are neglected and underfunded.

14) Disdain for Intellectuals and the Arts. Fascist nations tend to promote and tolerate open hostility to higher education and academia, and liberals, intellectuals, scientific understandings and artists are disdained, treated with hostility, and repressed. Independent thought is discouraged, and intellectuals and artists are viewed with suspicion or outright hostility. Professors and other academics are censored or even arrested. Free expression in the arts is openly attacked, and ruthless governments generally want to slash funding to the arts.

Seeing how fascist regimes abuse power, I urge all voters to vote for Kamala Harris, and Democrats in Congress, and to choose leaders who credibly promise to protect the people from abuses of power. Women in particular need to be protected from having their rights stripped and being deprived of their agency, liberty and dignity by a cabal of religious fanatics, hypocrites and abusive men led by an adjudicated rapist who is bizarrely worshipped as an instrument of God by his fooled followers.

In conclusion, it is a shared moral duty to uphold liberty and true justice for all, and cultivate democratic fairness, and defend civil rights and personal freedoms, while supporting leaders who promote the general welfare, foster social cohesion and domestic tranquility, and honestly try to ensure unity around these values.

Illuminated Aside

See Clearly that mothers are crucially important to the well-being of children and families, and they should not be forced to have unwanted children and bear the heavy economic burdens associated with parenthood against their will. They should also not be disadvantaged, discriminated against, undervalued, underpaid, disrespected, trivialized, sexualized, symbolically annihilated", or otherwise disdained.

Authoritarian male-dominated governance often claims to be "pro-life". But no one is genuinely and honestly "pro-life" if they oppose the Equal Rights Amendment, which is designed to guarantee gender equality and greater fairness under the law across the United States. The ERA simply states, "Equality

of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

The societal costs of having anti-choice reactionaries abuse power are colossal, and make harmful extreme inequality much worse. By significantly increasing the costs of social safety net programs that must help wronged women and poor women, the national debt is undesirably driven up.

To understand even more clearly, and find some good proposals for excellent common sense solutions, see my recent essay *A Damning Denunciation of Project 2025's MAGA "Mandate" for Dictatorial Rule*, which can be read from my Home Page at EarthManifesto.com. Its subtitle is explanatory: *Project 2025 and the Most Egregious Wrongs that Right-Wing Extremists Are Planning, Together with Contrasting More Propitious Common Sense 2025 Proposals*.

Women of the World, Unite! And American women, VOTE for honorable politicians who care about YOU more than themselves and their power and control. We voters have the opportunity to choose revolutionarily vast positive change, guided by these Common Sense 2025 Proposals.

Fascism and Its Discontents

The American Heritage Dictionary defines "fascism" as "A philosophy or system of government that that advocates or exercises a dictatorship of the extreme right, typically through the merging of state and business leadership, together with an ideology of belligerent nationalism." Another dictionary definition is "A populist political philosophy, movement ... that exalts nation and often race above the individual, that is associated with a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, and that is characterized by severe economic and social regimentation and by forcible suppression of opposition."

It is clearly Trump, not Harris, who acts in fascist ways. He is a rabble-rousing demagogue and false populist who pretends to care about the "forgotten man" while pushing an agenda dramatically favorable to rich people and giant corporations.

He panders to white male supremacists and Christian nationalists and right-wing extremists. He vows to weaponize the federal government against political opponents and those who have tried to hold him accountable for violating the rule of law and the Constitution, even declaring that he would use military force against them. Calling them "enemies from within", he threatens retribution against Constitution-respecting representatives, critics, protesters, social justice advocates and dissenters. While in office, he made sustained and blatantly illegal attempts to interfere in investigations and obstruct justice.

He calls for internment camps and mass deportations of millions of undocumented immigrants. He has leveraged a cult of personality and refused to distance himself from paramilitary groups like the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers and Three Percenters, and he persistently evokes and even glorifies violence. He curries favor with dictators like Vladimir Putin, and has shown disrespect to our allies.

He pushes the Big Lie that the 2020 election was marred by widespread voter fraud and that he did not lose the election. He outrageously incited his followers to attack the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, in a desperate attempt to prevent the peaceful transfer of power. This injured more than 140 law enforcement officers, and caused mayhem -- and millions of dollars of property damage.

He lies like a sociopath, and has a long and objectionable history of sexual conquest, adultery, sexual harassment, sexual assault and clumsy grabbing of attractive women. He has engaged in financial fraud and tax evasion, and used the office of the presidency to enrich himself, his family and his cronies.

He promotes chaos in governance and poses an existential threat to our democracy and norms of democratic fairness. Trump and his Republican sycophantish political allies want to topple our democracy

and impose a draconian right-wing agenda on the people, onerously diminishing the rights and freedoms of women and people in racial and ethnic minority groups.

Trump is a fighter ... Yes, he fights to avoid things like debates, interviews, facts, accountability and being sent to prison for felonies he has committed. He has fought concertedly to avoid paying for services rendered throughout his career, and he fought being drafted during the Vietnam War.

Trump/Vance are strongly affiliated with Project 2025 and authoritarian ideologies it promotes. This master plan would drastically expand executive power and concentrate authority in the president's hands, undermining democratic checks and balances and providing unlimited opportunities for harmful abuses of power. The "Mandate" not only calls for mass deportations, but also severe restrictions on women's reproductive rights, privacy rights and healthcare, and rollbacks of protections for LGBTQ+ individuals. The plan also advocates for suppressing classroom discussions on systemic racism and gender issues, and banning books, and defunding schools that do not align with conservative agendas. This understandably raises concerns about censorship and attacks on free speech.

The *Mandate* resembles aspects of fascist governance by facilitating the misuse of executive power to promote one political agenda at the expense of minority rights and democratic freedoms. It recommends increased government involvement to enforce conservative social policies, such as banning pornography and punishing educators deemed to promote it. This shift toward using state power to enforce specific ideological values departs from earlier conservative ideals of limiting government intervention. Authoritarian state power has an overriding goal of reshaping society along white male religious nationalist lines. NOT GOOD.

Authoritarianism 101

According to historian Heather Cox Richardson, "Trump's behavior is Authoritarianism 101. In a 1951 book called *The True Believer*, political philosopher Eric Hoffer noted that demagogues appeal to a disaffected population whose members feel they have lost the power they previously held, that they have been displaced either religiously, economically, culturally or politically. Such people are willing to follow a leader who promises to return them to their former positions of prominence and thus to make the nation great again."

"But to cement their loyalty, the leader has to give them someone to hate. Who that is doesn't really matter: the group simply has to be blamed for all the troubles the leader's supporters are suffering. Trump has kept his base firmly behind him by demonizing immigrants, the media, and, increasingly, Democrats, deflecting his own shortcomings by blaming these groups for undermining him. "

"According to Hoffer, there's a psychological trick to the way this rhetoric works that makes loyalty to such a leader get stronger as that leader's behavior deteriorates. People who sign on to the idea that they are standing with their leader against an enemy begin to attack their opponents, and in order to justify their attacks, they have to convince themselves that that enemy is not good-intentioned -- as they are -- but evil. And the worse they behave, the more they have to believe their enemies deserve to be treated badly."

"According to Hoffer, so long as they are unified against an enemy, true believers will support their leader no matter how outrageous his behavior gets. Indeed, their loyalty will only grow stronger as his behavior becomes more and more extreme. Turning against him would force them to own their own part in his attacks on those former enemies they would now have to recognize as ordinary human beings like themselves."

A Conspiratorial Offensive

MAGA politicians are making a brazen power grab. In his new biography of Mitch McConnell, AP's Michael Tackett reports that McConnell privately described Trump as "stupid as well as being ill-tempered," a "despicable human being" and a "narcissist." McConnell's public response to this revelation was to confess against himself and other prominent Republicans: "Whatever I may have said about President Trump pales in comparison to what JD Vance, Lindsey Graham, and others have said about him," McConnell said in a statement last week, "but we are all on the same team now." To be specific, Vance said Trump might be "America's Hitler," and Graham called him a "race-baiting, xenophobic, religious bigot." That's the team they chose to join.

What a grotesque lack of principles! And all because they are intent on grabbing power and control no matter what, even if it means wantonly betraying the common good and imposing onerous chaotic instability and repression on the populace.

In reality, this extremist Republican team is a conspiratorial cabal of politicians intent on getting power by whatever means is required, with the obvious plan of extensively abusing it.

Trump's recent appearances "seem to confirm that the 2024 October surprise is the increasingly obvious mental incapacity of the Republican candidate for president", wrote historian Heather Cox Richardson on October 19th.

"It seems clear that a vote for Trump is really a vote for his running mate, Ohio senator J.D. Vance, who if he becomes president will be the youngest American president in our history. At 40 years old, he is two years younger than Theodore Roosevelt was when he took office in 1901 at 42. Vance would also be one of the least experienced presidents ever.

And J.D. Vance poses an existential threat to American democracy with his strong ties to Project 2025. He has shown himself to be an extraordinarily naked opportunist, for he has allied himself with a deranged old man who he once accurately saw as "America's Hitler".

A Nightmare to Prevent

Former Republican strategist Steve Schmidt wrote in an episode of his *Warning* that there will be "No reprieve if the American people choose a nightmare for their future."

"The United States faces a national emergency because a presidential candidate and former president has attacked the cornerstones of the American way of life, and is trying to topple them for the purposes of taking political power. He is a world-class liar and manipulator who sought to destroy the American government, which he betrayed by rejecting the results of the election he lost and the oath of office he took. He is surrounded by a rogues' gallery of weirdos, criminals, cranks, conspiracy theorists, sexual predators, and moral deviants of all persuasions. MAGA is a safe haven for militia members, neo-Nazis and their propagandists, who are lawless, violent, corrupt and dangerous. The threat to our way of life is immense. There is catastrophe ahead if Trump wins. He is unstable, incoherent and very angry. Trump will be manipulated by our enemies, and will give his allies free rein to abuse the American people for their gain, so long as they stay politically loyal."

I urge all voters to choose Country over Party by voting for Kamala Harris so that she will be able to set our nation on a more same, safe, sustainable, reasonable and future protecting course.

Truly,

Tiffany B. Twain

www.EarthManifesto.com

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