
Forays into the Project of Fascization in the United States

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Anyone grappling with the question of whether the concept of fascism can be meaningfully applied today faces a problem. On the one hand, it is wrong to use the term “fascism” to label reactionary opponents in general. An inflationary usage trivializes the fascist threat. This was already true during the Weimar Republic, when communists labelled the Brüning government (1930–32) as fascist, thereby blurring the distinction between parliamentary and dictatorial forms of bourgeois rule—and, even worse, when they branded the Social Democrats, with whom they should have formed an anti-fascist alliance, as “social fascists.” The Social Democrats did something similar when they denounced the communists as “red-painted Nazis.”

On the other hand, it is problematic to limit the concept to historical fascism. The argument that Trumpism has nothing to do with fascism because society has not yet been brought into line and elections are still being held applies an inappropriate “totalitarian” standard. It is methodically problematic to compare today’s right-wing offensive with the most extreme form of German Nazism in power, which pursued a particularly annihilating “final solution”: to the “Jewish question,” the “social question,” the question of democracy, and the “colonial question.”¹ The perspective changes as soon as we look at the example of Italy: between the “March on Rome” in 1922 and the murder of the socialist politician Giacomo Matteotti in June 1924, Italian fascism had not yet abolished the parliamentary system. Only after that did Mussolini proclaim himself to be the “Duce,” and from then on he had the opposition parties officially banned (the communist leader, Antonio Gramsci, was arrested on November 8, 1926, despite his parliamentary immunity). Ignoring the similarities to historical fascism from the outset would prevent us from recognizing the danger of neo-fascism in the 21st century. This also applies if the design today is no longer characterized by a catch-up Fordism of imperialist latecomers but by the high-tech capitalism of a superpower. Enzo Traverso suggests that we use fascism as a “transhistorical concept” that transcends the era that produced it.²

In the following, I will use the concept of *fascization*, which draws attention to a project and a process whose outcome is still open. Some aspects of fascization in the US became evident in the deportations beginning late January 2025. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has considerably expanded its scope of operation, with arrests and deportations carried out in an ambush-style way and without court orders. This continued with the deployments in Los Angeles (June 2025), Washington (August), and Portland and Chicago (October) and culminated (so far) in the assault on Minnesota and the murders of Renée Good and Alex Pretti in January 2026. The constant and asymmetrical struggle between both the judiciary and the executive branch and between the federal government and the blue state governments amount to a constitutional crisis. Trump intends to spread terror in order to invoke the *Insurrection Act* of 1807 (originally intended to suppress “rebellions against the federal government”), by which he can declare a state of emergency and seize command of the National Guard, which until now has been under the control of the states.

The Analysis of Fascism by the Project Ideology Theory

Whether one speaks of fascization obviously depends on the respective definition of fascism. To gain a yardstick for both similarities and differences, I refer to the approach of the Projekt Ideologietheorie (Ideology Theory Project: PIT), which provided a nuanced Marxist analysis in the 1980s. Hitler’s disparaging and contemptuous comments about the bourgeoisie and bourgeois culture often led to the erroneous conclusion that he was “anti-bourgeois.” However, a careful analysis of his relevant speeches and statements shows that from the outset, he took the position of the bourgeois bloc, albeit one that needed to be comprehensively reorganized in order to eliminate socialism as a whole—and, with it, bourgeois-democratic equality in politics, law, and culture.³ Based on a new rock-solid belief, a new power bloc of “unified attachment” was to be created, capable of moving from class defense to class offense.⁴ The core of the

Nazi project was to extend the hierarchical leadership principle, as it prevails in the capitalist economy and the army, to the whole of society.⁵ This meant dissolving the connection between the bourgeois world and democracy, that is, eliminating the legacy of the French Revolution. Some aspects of this are mentioned in the well-known definition of the General Secretary of the Communist International Georgi Dimitrov from 1935, according to which fascism represents the “open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital.” However, this conceptualization has also been criticized by other Marxists, on the one hand because it neglected the relative autonomy of politics, and on the other because it largely sidelined the components of fascist mass movements, their social composition, populist dynamics, and the social-psychological appeal of their ideologies.⁶

Fascism spoke in the name of the ideological par excellence, of the subordination to the highest values—e.g., the nation, race, and soldierly honour to the point of heroic death, and in fact succeeded quite early on in winning over the ideological representatives of bourgeois society—earlier than the political parties.⁷ Consider, for example, the enthusiastic approval of philosophers, lawyers, doctors, and not least the leaders of the Protestant and Catholic churches in 1933. It is primarily against the backdrop of the anti-socialist and populist reorganization of the bourgeois bloc that we can understand the efficacious functionalization of anti-Semitism: by articulating the danger of a socialist revolution as a “Jewish world conquest,” the Nazis succeeded in carrying through an ideological shift from class to race. “Nazism is anti-Bolshevism expressed as resistance of the German people threatened by the Jewish people.”⁸ This functional definition does not mean that the Nazis stood outside anti-Semitic ideology to the effect of consciously manipulating it: the relative autonomy of the ideological produces an ideological circle that also encompasses and permeates the anti-Semitic ideologues, who are themselves also discursively constituted.⁹ Jews became the placeholders for the “counter-people” (Gegen-Volk) needed for the ideological construction of the German “Volk,” but the place in this cluster of enemy-images was open to other target groups: socialists, the sick, Sinti and Roma, Eastern European “subhumans,” gays. “Whoever opposes the Nazis falls into this position and ultimately into the sphere of power of the SS.”¹⁰

But within this framework of violence, the Nazis were able to integrate a wide variety of appealing ideological elements. In 1933, Ernst Bloch described this fascist capacity of absorption and co-optation as “thefts from the commune”:¹¹ the fascists stole the “workers,” the “workers’ party,” the unity between workers and intellectuals, the colour red, the sea of flags, the maypole,

and occupied numerous “non-contemporaneous” contradictions (e.g. cities vs. countryside).¹² The Nazi “is not content with torturing and killing workers. He not only wants to smash the red front but also strips the jewellery off the supposed corpse.”¹³ This ability to absorb a wide variety of ideological elements and incorporate them into the fascist project is overlooked by Marxist theories that understand ideology solely as an “instrument” of class rule or as “false consciousness.” At stake is a profound fascization of the subjects. The challenge is to understand how fascism succeeds in “organizing self-alienation as enthusiastic self-activity.”¹⁴

This is a simplified explanation of the findings of the Projekt Ideologietheorie. In the following sections, I try to identify the essential similarities and differences between historical fascism and the current attempts at fascization in the US.

Fossil Fascism Against China

To start with the obvious, the opposition to historical Bolshevism is no longer an issue after the collapse of the Soviet socialist model. Nor is there any serious domestic threat of socialism. The assumption of Marxist theories of “Bonapartism” that there is a “balance” of force between the classes, which forces the ruling class to hand over political power to a fascist government, was already questionable for historical fascism¹⁵ and certainly does not apply to the US, where the labour union movement has experienced a dramatic decline since the early 1980s. Today, the bourgeois bloc is undergoing a realignment in order to unite forces against rival China, whose mixed system of state planning and “guided market economy”¹⁶ is proving more effective in regard to economic growth and technological development. In many respects, the project of ecological modernization has changed sides and moved to China’s model of development—albeit with highly contradictory social and ecological consequences.¹⁷ The Trump administration has decided to no longer wage the battle in the realm of ecological transformation but to focus nearly exclusively on the expansion of fossil fuels and nuclear energy. According to Andreas Malm, we are facing a “fossil fascism”: since fossil capital would lose profits and investments even with a limited ecological modernization, it tends to side with right-wing extremist and neo-fascist parties.¹⁸ Of course, fossil capital is not the only class component of Trumpism.

An Oligarchic Class Project Undergirded by Popular Discontent

Borrowing from Dimitrov’s definition, one could argue that Trumpism strives for an open dictatorship of particularly aggressive factions of big capital. After

all, there are 13 billionaires in the government itself. Bernie Sanders raises the alarm about an oligarchic takeover of power. Of particular significance is the predominant clout of high-tech capital striving for digital dominance. Whereas in 2016, most high-tech corporations were still hesitant regarding the support of the Trump government, this changed dramatically with Trump's second term. The Trump campaign promised a decisively pro-industry agenda that deregulates the development of technology; in fact, the government is facilitating significantly larger investments in AI infrastructure and data centres, and Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill" provides huge tax breaks for Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, etc., whereas millions of Americans experience a doubling of their health care premiums and significant cuts in Medicaid. The Trump administration is actively promoting policies aimed at maintaining and expanding the United States' international predominance in artificial intelligence, such as through export controls that restrict the export of key AI technologies to rivals.

One example is Elon Musk's project for a new generation of low-flying satellites, known as low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites, which tries to establish a high-tech hegemony from space.¹⁹ Starlink and other high-tech companies can only become profitable if they cooperate with the military. The satellite program and other high-tech and AI projects depend on an enormous energy consumption. Therefore, we see, on the one hand, a close link with the military-industrial complex and thus with the imperial project of Trumpism (for example, Musk's AI tool Grok is going to be integrated into Pentagon networks) and, on the other hand, with fossil fuel capital and the nuclear power industry. Other capitalist class factions are integrated in a subordinate position.²⁰ With and without Musk, we are dealing with a long-term class project to restore US hegemony, and this may well go hand in hand with a relative independence from immediate profit interests.

The international impact can be observed with the example of the corporate plan for Gaza, the Gaza Reconstitution, Economic Acceleration, and Transformation (GREAT) Trust, developed originally by a group of Israeli business representatives and then taken up by the Trump administration. It plans in the north of Gaza an "Elon Musk Manufacturing Zone," in the South an "American Data Safe Haven" for the development of AI, along the coast the "Gaza Trump Riviera," and in the North about six to eight "free cities." We are therefore not only confronted with the genocidal colonial politics of an extreme right-wing Israeli government but with an imperialistic project dominated by major sections of the high-tech industry.

The establishment of this oligarchic class project was not possible without the successful mobilization

of popular anxieties and anger caused by neoliberal deregulation and "Walmartization" of the economy, generalization of contingent labour, and a long-term stagnation of real wages. Bernie Sanders was right when he argued that "it should come as no great surprise that a Democratic Party which has abandoned working class people would find that the working class has abandoned them"—an assessment that also applies to a larger part of Latino and Black workers. Not dissimilar to the Nazi's "thefts from the commune" diagnosed by Ernst Bloch, Trump was able, in both electoral campaigns, to scoop up widespread popular concerns ranging from rebuilding a national industrial infrastructure with stable jobs to ending the "forever wars" of the US empire. Some criticisms, such as of liberal individualism and atomization, sounded like a leftist critique of bourgeois culture. However, right-wing populism redirects the popular anger from the corporate elites to the ideological construct of "liberal elites" (Volvo driving, latte sipping, etc.) and simultaneously to the most precarious rungs of the subaltern classes, to People of Colour, "illegal immigrants," foreigners, and LGBT communities.

Shock Troops Against the "Normative State"

In 1940–41, Ernst Fraenkel developed the thesis that the Nazi state was a "dual state" consisting of two parallel systems of rule: the "normative state," operating according to formal rules and laws that regulate routine affairs and economic administration, and the "prerogative state," acting in an extrajudicial manner unchecked by any legal limitations.²¹ According to Nicos Poulantzas, fascism organized a "parallelism of power systems," an "institutional duplication" that led to rapid shifts in the exercise of power from one apparatus to another and enabled an effective war of movement against the masses.²² We can observe a similar parallelism in the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), which was launched under the leadership of Elon Musk and, following his falling out with Trump, was then managed by Trump and his Cabinet secretaries. DOGE is a kind of shock troop, elected by no one, that combs through the state apparatus to either dissolve it or bring it into line. The attacks are directed, on the one hand, against the already weak social welfare institutions, such as Social Security and health insurance for the poor (Medicaid); on the other hand, against the so-called DEI programs (i.e., diversity, equity, and inclusion), which were intended to facilitate access to education and employment for women and ethnic and sexual minorities; and, last but not least, against environmental agencies, including the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which was defamed in Project 2025 as one of the main drivers of the "climate change

alarm industry.” Throughout, the aim is to eliminate the institutionalized compromise formations that allowed subaltern classes and social movements to occupy certain positions in the state apparatus. At the same time, the purges target all theories and research projects that address the injustices of US society, from critical race theories and feminist gender studies to studies on ecological destruction and, just around the corner, critical theories in the broad sense, all of which are considered as variants of “Marxism.”

Last but not least, DOGE collected a vast amount of data from various devices and consolidated them in a central master database. This amounts to a digital takeover of the technical and operational levels of the US administrative apparatus.²³ The evaluation of the data and their preparation for security agencies, intelligence services, deportation authorities, the military, etc. is, for example, to be carried out by Peter Thiel’s software company Palantir, which is also linked to Israel’s AI-driven genocide in Gaza.

Fascization of Subjects in New Forms

Similar to historical fascism, Trumpism aims to impose the hierarchical leadership principles of the capitalist economy and the repressive state apparatuses throughout society, thereby eliminating social welfare and constitutional mediations and compensations. There are indeed elements of a veritable cult of personality surrounding Trump, who is still able to hold the quarrelling MAGA factions together, not least because everyone in his orbit recognizes him as the source of their own power. But the belief system underlying this is no longer the same as in Italy or Germany after World War I. Hedonistic consumerism and the culture of the internet with its shitstorms, disruptions, and distractions are giving rise to different ideological forms. In contrast to the predominantly ascetic interpellations of Nazism, the focus is now more directly on self-enrichment as a life goal and the masculinist recklessness that goes along with it. At the same time, the attempts of the new “Secretary of War,” Pete Hegseth, to establish a “warrior ethos” in the military and beyond gain more impact as Trumpism escalates its militarism (see the planned increase of military spending to about \$1.5 trillion by 2027, more than 50% over current levels) and its direct imperialist interventionism (epitomized, for example, by the brutal capture of Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores in Caracas, the hunger blockade of Cuba, and the war against Iran).

So far, the Trump administration has not succeeded in winning over what Marx described as “ideological estates”: universities, for example, are wavering between conformity, ducking out, and protest, but there is no sign yet of the enthusiastic approval seen in Italy in 1922 or Germany in 1933. The same ap-

plies to major parts of the legacy media, Hollywood, publishers, etc., which are brought under control by a combination of legal warfare, cuts in federal support, and corporate pressure. This does not mean there are no intellectuals supporting Trumpism,²⁴ in particular when we use the category in a wider Gramscian sense, extending it beyond “academia” and conventional intellectual professions and include, for example, the tech engineers, data scientists, product managers, designers (filling, for example, the ranks of the DOGE employees), or the widespread culture of online bloggers and influencers. A particular case in point is the corporate culture of Silicon Valley, which generated a type of ideologues that fuses libertarian, authoritarian, and technoutopian ideas. They produce, for example, concepts of a CEO monarchy based on government corporations (gov-corps), advocated by people such as Curtis Yarvin and Nick Land, and “transhumanist” projects of overcoming humanity’s boundaries with the help of biogenetics and AI—a superintelligence inspired in part by Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*—that is closely connected to eugenics.²⁵ We are confronted with the dystopia of a class divide translated into genetics: a new apartheid between those who can afford to select the favourable characteristics of their offspring, enhance their intelligence, their capacities, their “personalities,” and those who cannot. Naomi Klein observes a transhumanist accelerationism in power that has essentially abandoned the idea of a livable world here on earth, a kind of “apocalyptic fever” that is both evangelical and secular.²⁶

But if the fascization of subjects is operating through different avenues, the social Darwinist struggle of the strong against the weak is once again at the centre and is asserted against all democratic and egalitarian aspirations. What does it mean, for example, when the new Secretary of Education, Linda McMahon, who is tasked with dismantling the Department of Education, is the owner of the billion-dollar World Wrestling Entertainment company, whose wrestling matches are also “kayfabe,” that is, events that are predominantly staged and faked?²⁷ According to Judith Butler, Trump supporters are usually well aware that Trump lies and manipulates, and they admire the power that enables him to do as he pleases: we must understand the “sense of exhilaration” with which this power to lie and hate is experienced as liberation.²⁸ This, too, is a variation of the fascist dynamic observed by the Projekt Ideologietheorie: to “organize self-alienation as enthusiastic self-activity.”²⁹

Gender Panic and Shifts in Racism

The social Darwinist mobilization against the poor and the “unsuccessful” is of course nothing new but is part of the deep structure of capitalist socialization,

temporarily mollified by the postulates of justice during the “social democratic era” and intensified again in real existing neoliberalism. As Stuart Hall shows, this took place primarily through the creation of a “moral panic” in relation to street crime, in which the various ideological apparatuses of society participated.³⁰ Trumpism radicalizes the components of machismo and racism, which were only superficially concealed by liberal discourses of diversity. Gender and sexuality function as central topoi for achieving “hegemony through gender panic”:³¹ the demonization of feminism, of queerness, and of the “feminization” of culture creates a moral panic that is to be “cured” by mobilizing desires for fixed identities and the promise of restoring hierarchical gender duality.

Today, anti-Semitism is no longer the primary component of racism. It is well documented that there has been a shift toward “Islamism” and Muslim immigrants as the main enemy throughout the West. As Mario Candeias observes, “an entire arsenal of monsters is being deployed to generate approval.”³² In Trump’s case, the hostile “counter-people” is represented in various guises: by pro-Palestinian activists, Islamic “terrorists,” and illegal immigrants, especially from South America. But even though the Jewish enemy image has receded behind that of Islamic “terrorism,” it still remains operative: “liberal Jews” are repeatedly the target of fierce attacks. Steve Bannon, for example, believes that Israel’s worst enemies are “among us,” namely, American Jews who oppose Trump and Netanyahu and thus “hate” Israel and their own religion. While the fight against alleged “anti-Semitism” is used as a weapon to criminalize the protest movement against the genocide in Gaza, anti-Semitism is kept alive. Benjamin Balthaser looked at the campaign against Zohran Mamdani and observed a fusion between Islamophobic racism and antisemitic conspiracy theory: whereas Mamdani’s image was literally “darkened” by the Cuomo campaign so that it fits with an anxiety-producing Muslim enemy image, he was also accused by Fox News of receiving funding from George Soros, the billionaire investor who is in turn represented as a combination of “Judeo-Bolshevik” and the “Jewish financier.”³³

Spectacles of Cruelty

One hallmark of fascism is the brutalization of racist discourses and practices of dehumanization. During his election campaign, Trump accused immigrants from Haiti of eating the dogs and cats of the local population. He denounced the deported Venezuelans as gang members who had been deliberately smuggled into the country by the Maduro government to poison the American people with drugs. The enemy within, intimately connected with “crime” and drugs,

was thereby linked to a foreign power, which provided the ideological justification for the intervention in Venezuela and kidnapping of its president. The deportations to the high-security prison in El Salvador are staged as a spectacle of cruelty. The prisoners are led away by masked men who look like executioners, dragged across the floor, and forced to kneel in a hall so their hair can be forcibly shaved.

Such abuse and torture have, of course, been commonplace, not only in Guantanamo. The US empire has always had a fascist underbelly along the racial structure of society characterized, for example, by systematic violence against African Americans, the bombing of the Black Panthers, and the systematic murder of Black leaders and activists. In the midst of the official constitutional democracy of the US, there was always a “prerogative state” that coexisted with the liberal “normative state”; here, too, it is important to recognize the complex connection between bourgeois normality and fascization.³⁴ In 1971, Angela Davis spoke of a US fascism that is today “primarily restricted to the use of the law-enforcement-judicial-penal apparatus” against the resistance of nationally oppressed people but that tomorrow “may attack the working class *en masse* and eventually even moderate democrats.”³⁵ In the meantime, the Trump administration is intensely experimenting how to expand its repression to broader sections of the population: for example, by “denaturalizing” naturalized citizens or persecuting left-wing organizations under the pretext of belonging to an ominous “Antifa” network. Another qualitative difference is the return of the spectacle: the excesses of violence and torture are no longer hidden but proudly displayed.

The Deadweight of the Religious Right

Christian nationalism and the religious right have been carrying much weight on the hegemonic constellation of the US for a very long time. As Kristin Kobes du Mez shows, the evangelical support for right-wing politics is not motivated by biblical literalism or specific evangelical doctrines (for example, upholding the Bible as the highest authority, and the centrality of Christ’s atonement) but rather by an “operational theology”³⁶ that is driven by the ideologies of white supremacy and an aggressive, militant masculinity incarnated “in all its swaggering glory” by John Wayne.³⁷ We are dealing with a “cultural evangelicalism” that is deeply anchored in civil society. Disseminated by powerful distribution channels of a Christian consumer culture, it reaches far beyond evangelical churches and pervades mainline Christianity:³⁸ “Denominational boundaries are easily breached by the flow of religious merchandising.”³⁹ When some evangelical leaders raised moral concerns against a presidential candidate who bragged about

the size of his penis and proclaimed his right to grab the women “by their pussy,” they were overwhelmed by an evangelical culture looking for a strong leader that brings Christianity back to power. Already in 2016, “the ‘Moral Majority’ had reasserted itself, electing the least moral candidate in memory to the highest office of the land.”⁴⁰

Christian nationalists and conservative evangelicals were not only Trumpism’s most reliable and durable voting blocs but also consolidated their power positions in the state apparatus (e.g., in the Supreme Court, the White House Faith Office led by Paula White-Cain, the Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias, the Religious Liberty Commission). Just about all the relevant competing MAGA factions feel compelled to couch their issues in theological language. Peter Thiel translates his techno-capitalist accelerationism and Nietzschean transhumanism into a theological discourse that denounces each and every hindrance to an AI-propelled “progress” as the “Antichrist,” defined by the principle of “peace and security” (a misleading reference to 1 Thessalonians 5:3), whose exemplary embodiment is to be found in Greta Thunberg.⁴¹ Steve Bannon, who condemns Thiel’s posthumanism in the name of Christian values, proclaims at the same time the apocalyptic vision of a final battle with China and the world of Islam, at the end of which the liberal global order is replaced by a reborn nationalist JudeoChristian West. There are some indications that the religious right is already strategizing for a post-Trump era of Trumpism and is reassembling around figures like JD Vance and Russell Vaught, a major architect of Project 2025 who advocates an executive-centred authoritarian state as an instrument to restore a Christian moral order.

A few examples may illustrate to what extent Trumpism draws its violent energies from the ideological reservoir of the religious right: as testified by over 200 complaints, military commanders justify the war against Iran frequently as an eschatological Armageddon battle, which will bring about the second coming of Jesus. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth proudly parades his tattoo >Deus vult< (“God wills it”), which served as a rallying cry with which the Crusaders set out for Jerusalem. He quotes Psalm 144 (“Praise be to the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for battle and my fingers for war”) and urges the US military not to take the Iranian enemy prisoner, but to kill them (“no quarter, no mercy”), which, even as a mere announcement, constitutes a war crime. After the left-wing Presbyterian seminarian James Talarico won the Democratic primary for the Senate in Texas, Hegseth’s pastor, Brooks Pottenger, citing biblical “Imprecatory Psalms,” publicly called for his death: “cut [him] to the heart,” “make [him] as dung on the ground,” “we want him crucified with Christ.”

Precarious Alliance Between the Techno-elite and Populist Base

An important criterion for the use of the term “fascism” is, of course, the question of Trumpism’s mass base. Ingar Solty questions the notion of a fascism in the US and argues that there are still stable two-thirds majorities in favour of universal health care and a \$15 minimum wage and that the left-wing candidates of the “Squad” were re-elected.⁴² There is still “the potential for economic left-wing populism, which is coming to a head in terms of class politics.”⁴³ This is certainly true, as demonstrated by the huge crowds at the “No Kings” demonstrations, the popular support for Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, as well as the resounding victory of Democratic Socialist Zohran Mamdani in New York City. But this should not mislead us to underestimate Trumpism’s capabilities of garnering mass support, all the more as the Democratic Party is unable to formulate a convincing alternative. So far, the Trump government is still succeeding in connecting a populist right-wing base with a techno-libertarian elite and its milieus. What is decisive is not so much the paramilitary militias such as the Oath Keepers, Three Percenters, or Proud Boys but rather their intimate collaboration with the repressive state apparatuses: the massive funding of the ICE squads is also designed to absorb the fascist militia, subjugate them directly to the state and coordinate their violence accordingly. “We should be alert ... to the way in which state apparatuses can partly substitute for the street movement.”⁴⁴ If the approval ratings continue to fall, there might still be ample possibilities to manipulate the outcome by scapegoating domestic and foreign “enemies,” provoking a state of emergency, rigging the mid-term elections, and similar manoeuvres.

Whether the fascization project succeeds is still an open question. It depends, on the one hand, on whether Trumpism manages to balance the conflicting interests of the major capital factions and, on the other hand, on whether the subaltern classes turn away from it again when they feel the social consequences of inflation and the destruction of the welfare state. The obvious breach of numerous election promises (such as the lowering of food prices, the publication of the Epstein files, and the ending of US wars) could result in breaking up the alliance between the techno-elite and the populist base. And this, in turn, depends on whether the resistance to Trumpism can develop both a socio-political momentum and a wide popular front that translates people’s discontent into effective anti-fascist politics.

Confronted with today’s process of fascization, the churches and religious communities need to declare a *status confessionis*, a critical moment (*kairos*) that demands abandoning lukewarm “reconciliation” or “both/

and” approaches. Based on the biblical principle of a preferential option for the poor, they are called to fight for the economic human rights of the subaltern and middle classes; following the categorical imperative of universal love and care for the most vulnerable, they must condemn the racist and xenophobic campaigns, open their places of worship to serve as sanctuaries, and actively engage in the resistance against ICE raids; since, “in the image of God,” we are called to responsible stewardship and solidarity, in which the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are inseparable (see Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*), it is our obligation to stand up against the death drive unleashed by high-tech-driven fossil fascism and imperialist wars.

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