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**After the Insurrection:  
The Challenge to Liberal  
Democracy**

**Editor's Introduction to the Special Issue**

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*Volume 5 · Number 2 · 2022 · Pages 1 - 52*

**O**n January 5, 2021, Steve Bannon, Trump adviser and populist provocateur, told his podcast listeners, “All hell is going to break loose tomorrow. Just understand this: All hell is going to break loose tomorrow...It’s all converging, and now we’re on the point of attack tomorrow. Strap in...tomorrow it’s game day.”<sup>1</sup> That evening, and the following morning, thousands of supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump came together in Washington, D.C. to declare that the 2020 election had been “stolen” and to demand that Vice President Mike Pence and Congress refuse to certify the election of Joe Biden as president.

At noon on January 6, while Bannon and other Trump associates manned the ‘war room’ at the Willard Hotel, Trump addressed the “Stop the Steal rally, telling his supporters to go to the capital and “fight like hell.”<sup>2</sup> He was

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<sup>1</sup> Act TV 2021. “Steve Bannon Is Also Responsible For The Capitol Riot - “All Hell Is Going To Break Loose Tomorrow”” Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7rSZl0u2n4>

<sup>2</sup> Travis Anderson (2021). “Before mob stormed US Capitol, Trump told them to ‘fight like hell.” *The Boston Globe*. January 6.

joined on stage by his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, who cried “Let’s have trial by combat,”<sup>3</sup> and Congressman Mo Brooks (R-Alabama) who shouted “Today is the day American patriots start taking down names and kicking ass.”<sup>4</sup> Hundreds of supporters marched to the capital and breached police perimeters as the electoral vote count commenced. They occupied the Capital building, assaulted police officers, vandalized the building and threatened the lives of Congress members. A noose was prepared to hang Vice President Mike Pence if he failed to follow Trump’s injunction to “stop the steal” by preventing the certification

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<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/01/06/metro/heres-what-trump-told-his-supporters-before-many-them-stormed-capitol-wednesday/>

<sup>3</sup> Ryan Grenoble (2021). “Rudy Giuliani Called For 'Trial By Combat' Before Wednesday's Violence” *Huff Post*. January 7. [https://www.huffpost.com/archive/au/entry/rudy-giuliani-called-for-trial-by-combat-before-wednesdays-violence\\_au\\_5ff781f7c5b6214c5518cae7](https://www.huffpost.com/archive/au/entry/rudy-giuliani-called-for-trial-by-combat-before-wednesdays-violence_au_5ff781f7c5b6214c5518cae7)

<sup>4</sup> Catie Edmondson and Luke Broadwater (2021). “Before Capitol Riot, Republican Lawmakers Fanned the Flames.” *The New York Times*. Jan. 11. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/us/politics/republicans-capitol-riot.html>

of the election.<sup>5</sup> Five people died in the course of the siege and many more were injured, including 138 police officers. Only after order had been restored was the election result certified.<sup>6</sup> President elect Joe Biden declared that “democracy was under unprecedented assault.”<sup>7</sup>

### ***Dewey Studies* and the Insurrection: The Special Issue**

This event is now known as the January 6 Insurrection. Its immediate target was that most fundamental right of liberal democracy, respect for free and fair elections and the peaceful transfer of power. That Insurrection - and its intent to destroy liberal democracy - is the theme of the current issue of *Dewey Studies*. *Dewey Studies* is a journal of The John

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<sup>5</sup> Milan Sime Martinic (2021). The US rioters had targeted Mike Pence specifically when they swarmed the Capitol. *This Week*. (January 11).

<https://www.theweek.in/news/world/2021/01/11/hang-mike-pence-trump-failed-day-of-the-long-knives.html>

<sup>6</sup> A general account of the buildup to the insurrection and its main events can be found in Dan Barry, Mike McIntire and Matthew Rosenberg (2021). ‘Our President Wants Us Here’: The Mob That Stormed the Capitol. *The New York Times*. January 9.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/09/us/capitol-rioters.html>

<sup>7</sup> Sean Morrison (2021). “Joe Biden condemns ‘siege’ on US Capitol as assault on democracy as Donald Trump tells mob ‘we love you’ but ‘go home’.” *The Evening Standard*.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/author/sean-morrison>

Dewey Society, founded in 1935 to identify and combat far-right incursions into democratic institutions of education and culture. The founders stated that while the Society's efforts would not be bound by Dewey's philosophy, it would be guided by traditions of social democracy and democratic education he had advanced. The founder's concerns were displayed in the theme of the first annual Dewey Society meeting in 1936: "Teachers' Loyalty Oaths — Fascism?" Subsequent meetings and publications of the Society focused on emerging threats to democracy and effective pro-democracy responses.

As a journal, *Dewey Studies* is devoted to Dewey's philosophy in its historical, cultural and intellectual contexts. With the historic mission of the Dewey Society as our inspiration, however, the editors of *Dewey Studies* concern ourselves as appropriate with contemporary attacks against democracy. We have set out in this special issue to address the January 6th insurrection. As editor-in-chief, I invited Prof. Sophie Ward (Durham University, UK) and Prof. Liz Jackson (Education University of Hong Kong) to join me as co-editors of this special issue. Both had been

doing recent work on related topics and as a team we were able to reach out to a global community of scholars. We sent a call around the world for short essays addressing the insurrection and the challenge to democracy and proposing effective responses.

The co-editors identified the immediate threat posed by the insurrection and its anti-democratic context as a “challenge to liberal democracy.” Liberal institutions - free elections, rights of protest, protection from government violence - were at that moment under direct assault. Thus the title of our special issue: “After the Insurrection: the Challenge to Liberal Democracy.” We did not mean, however, that liberal institutions were either the “essence” of democracy or the only feature of democratic society under siege. Our authors have been quick to note recent challenges to liberalism and to indicate the diversity of forms of democracy pointing the way beyond the current crisis. All three co-editors, working as co-equals, read and commented upon all submissions, selected after discussion those acceptable for publication, and sent our suggestions to authors. Before turning to our authors, however, I will, in

my editor's introduction, the January 6th insurrection in its historical, political and cultural contexts.

### **The New World Order**

While the January 6th insurrection was an event taking place at a definite time, an explanation requires a backstory. A pragmatist account would be selective and forward looking, emphasizing events pointing towards ameliorative pro-democratic responses. In what follows I make no claim to be providing a comprehensive or definite account of the events leading up to January 6. I do hope, however, to provide pegs upon which discussion of the insurrection, its aftermath, and ameliorative pro-democracy countermeasures - by our authors and others - may hang.

Perhaps such an account might conveniently begin with Mikhail Gorbachev's December 07, 1988 address at the UN General Assembly Session. Gorbachev noted that along with the "process of wars, hostility, and alienation of peoples and countries," a parallel force was taking shape: "the emergence of a mutually connected and integral world." He called for the search for a consensus of all mankind "toward

a new world order ... to preserve civilization, to make it safe for all and more pleasant for normal life.”<sup>8</sup>

In the United States the administration of George Herbert Walker Bush was slow to respond to Gorbachev's call to end the bi-polar Cold War order and leery of his proposed multipolar world. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Bush formulated his own vision: a unipolar world dominated by the United States. At first he re-appropriated Gorbachev's phrase “new world order” to designate American unipolar leadership.<sup>9</sup> The Persian Gulf War of 1991 provided a test case for his strategy. Absent restraints from other international powers, Bush called upon a coalition of nations to come together under U.S.

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<sup>8</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive (1988). Address by Mikhail Gorbachev at the UN General Assembly Session December 07, 1988 (Excerpts)  
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/%20116224%200.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> George H. W. Bush(1990). Address Before a Joint Session of Congress (September 11, 1990).<http://millercenter.org/president/bush/speeches/speech-3425>

leadership to counter Saddam Hussain's move into Kuwait.<sup>10</sup> The new world order would be Pax Americana.

### **From the New World Order to Globalism and Neoliberalism**

The U. S. recession of 1991 put an end to Bush's talk of a "new world order," and the term itself came under attack. Samuel Huntington soon denounced the idea as an "illusion of harmony" in a conflict-ridden world. In the popular media, the new world order was soon replaced by a new buzz word - "globalization." The new global order now emphasized economic opening of trade and investment, free movement of goods and - in principle - of workers (as soon established in the EU by the Maastricht treaty of 1992), the privatization of state enterprises, expansion of market forces within all domestic markets, and rejection of social-

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<sup>10</sup> Rick Atkinson and Ann Devroy (1991). "Bush gives Iraq Until Noon Today to Begin Withdrawal From Kuwait." *The Washington Post* (February 23).  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1991/02/23/bush-gives-iraq-until-noon-today-to-begin-withdrawal-from-kuwait/fa875663-e454-4031-89f9-7e8ed1c7b727/>

democratic reforms. This new regime was labeled market fundamentalism or neoliberalism.<sup>11</sup> Many of the events to follow stem from the imposition of this regime.

Noam Chomsky was later to declare the “new world order” a cover for an international neoliberal regime of unrelenting pressure and intimidation.<sup>12</sup> Despite the root term “liberal,” and despite the central role of democratic governance frequently asserted by proponents of neoliberalism to be required for popular legitimacy, liberal democracy and neoliberalism stand in a tense relationship if not in opposition.<sup>13</sup> The first regime labeled “neoliberal” was Pinchet’s Chile, where social democratic reforms were crushed and authoritarian rule imposed in the name of market efficiency, foreshadowing subsequent developments.

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<sup>11</sup> Longview Institute (n.d.). Market Fundamentalism.  
<http://www.longviewinstitute.org/projects/marketfundamentalism/marketfundamentalism/>

<sup>12</sup> “US-NATO bombs fall on Serbia: the “New World Order” takes shape.”  
*World Socialist Web Site*  
<https://www.wsws.org/en/special/pages/icfi/wsws.html>

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Biebricher (2015). “Neoliberalism and Democracy.”  
*Constellations* Volume 22, No 2, 255-266.

### **From the End of History to the Clash of Civilizations**

Nonetheless, globalization was said to have brought an end to ideological conflict. Francis Fukuyama argued in his 1989 article "the End of History" - later repeated in his book *The End of History and the Last Man* - that the end of the Cold War had made Western-style liberal democracy the final, universal form of government.<sup>14</sup> Fukayama's teacher Samuel Huntington responded in his 1993 *Foreign Affairs* article "The Clash of Civilizations?" that future conflicts would arise, but would no longer be fought between governments but among *cultures*.<sup>15</sup> While Fukuyama had imagined liberal democracy and free market capitalism as universal values, Non-Western nations, with their distinct and at times opposed cultural values, had, said Huntington, become new actors to contend with on the world stage. Huntington singled out the East Asian region as capable of

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<sup>14</sup> Fukuyama, Francis (1989). "The End of History?". *The National Interest* (16): 3–18

<sup>15</sup> Samuel P. Huntington (1993). "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* (Summer).  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations>

projecting itself and its cultural values as a result of its rising economic power, and the Islamic nations, where political instability made fundamentalist movements attractive to large fractions of the population.

### **Asian Values and Human Rights**

While Huntington's views about the clash of "civilizations" are questionable, given his political framing of events and bias toward western Christian "civilization,"<sup>16</sup> Huntington nonetheless anticipated how key Asian leaders responded to the new world order by laying claim to historic Asian cultural values - grounded in Confucian communitarian ideals - to counter the global spread of American-style liberal individualism. Western commentators saw this move as an effort to provide legitimacy for their authoritarian style of leadership as communism was collapsing in Europe, and to protect themselves against threats of cultural, political, economic and social change in the wake of globalization. They thus pursued their political

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<sup>16</sup> E. W. Said (2004). *From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map*. New York: Pantheon, 2004.

projects under the banner of distinct cultural values in place of a distinct political ideology.<sup>17</sup>

The idea of distinct Asian values took hold in Malaysia (under Mahathir Mohamad) and Singapore (under Lee Kuan Yew) as well as in China, Taiwan, Korea and elsewhere. Lee was the most fervent advocate of Asian values, arguing that a nation's cultural values would play a larger role in its fate than economics or politics.<sup>18</sup> He explained the economic strides of the Asian Tiger nations on the basis of Confucian communitarian cultural values, though political economists have questioned the relationship.<sup>19</sup> Similar contrasts have been made between

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<sup>17</sup> An account of the Asian Values debate can be found in Ann Kent (2008), "Chinese Values and Human Rights", in Avonius, Leena; Kingsbury, Damien (eds.), *Human Rights in Asia: A Reassessment of the Asian Values Debate*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, pp. 83–97

<sup>18</sup> Zakaria F "A Conversation with Lee Kwan Yu" *Foreign Affairs*, Journal of the Council on Foreign Affairs, a non-partisan organisation, Florida, US. March - April 1994.

<sup>19</sup> These claims have been evaluated by political economists. See for example: Joseph E. Stiglitz (1996). "Some Lessons from the East Asian Miracle." *The World Bank Research Observer* Vol. 11, No. 2 (August), pp. 151-177; Ming-Yih Liang (2010). "Confucianism and the East Asian Miracle." *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* Vol. 2, No. 3 (July), pp. 206-234. Sen, Amartya (1999). *Development as freedom* (1st ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

distinct African cultural values and Western liberal individualism.<sup>20</sup>

The debate about distinct cultural values has somewhat faded, in part because of what have been perceived as increasingly authoritarian trends in China. It succeeded, however, in placing on the table issues concerning limitations of and diversions from liberal individualism and the potential of competing forms of democracy, as addressed by Roberto Frega and Just Serrano-Zamora, among others, below. These include forms of democracy suitable for the Confucian cultural region - a topic addressed by Sor-hoon Tan, Stephen Chatelier, and Di Wang in this issue. I will say more about alternative conceptions and forms of democracy later, in the segment on 'democracy from below.'

### **From the War on Terror to the Refugee Crisis**

Taking up the second main cultural force emphasized by Huntington, Al-Qaeda terrorists attacked the United States

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<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Makau-wa Mutua (1996). "The Ideology of Human Rights," 36 VA. J.Int'l L 589, 591-93.

on September 11, 2001 focusing their efforts against the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington DC - unique symbols of US economic and military power. So much for Bush's new world order!

American media rapidly framed the attacks in terms of Huntington's clash of civilizations - as Fundamentalist Islam against Liberal Democracy.<sup>21</sup> The George W. Bush administration responded with counter attacks in Al Qaeda's bases in Afghanistan beginning on October 7, 2001, and generated support for its war in Iraq (2003-2011) in large measure by speciously associating Saddam Hussein with Islamic terrorism and Al Qaeda - throwing in ungrounded claims about weapons of mass destruction.<sup>22</sup>

As the Iraq war wound down, two million refugees fled from Iraq while the United States granted asylum to only 84 thousand. In 2011 a civil war erupted in Syria,

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<https://library.fes.de/libalt/journals/swetsfulltext/16987772.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner, (2005). "Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration's Rhetoric." *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (September), pp. 525-537.

associated with the Arab Spring protests. Demands for removing Bashar al-Assad from power met with violent suppression. Meanwhile the war in Afghanistan raged on. By 2015 more than 1.3 million refugees from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere flooded into Europe, creating an unmanageable migrant crisis.<sup>23</sup> The ethno-nationalist backlash the crisis generated prompts questions about the free movement of people, the status of multicultural values, and the ability of nations rapidly to absorb multitudes from different ethnic and cultural groups.

### **The Rise of Far-Right Populism in Europe**

In February 1991, as the Soviet Union neared collapse, Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia - former communist-bloc nations in Central and Eastern Europe - held a summit meeting in the town of Visegrád, Hungary to form a political and cultural alliance. After the breakup of Czechoslovakia in

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<sup>23</sup> Pew Research Center (2016). Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015. August 2. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/>

1993 into Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the four resulting nations have been grouped together as the Visegrad Four or the European Quartet. They initially expressed commitment to liberal democratic values and market-oriented economic reforms, and were welcomed into the European Union in 2004. However, because most lacked traditions of democratic governance and rich civil society institutions, the new governments - especially in Hungary and Poland - faced fewer institutional constraints against authoritarian rule than their counterparts in the West. After the migrant crisis peaked, liberal democratic institutions and values in these societies have severely eroded.

Hungary was faced with floods of migrants from the Islamic region as well as rising inequality between urban professionals and de-industrialized workers and rural farmers in the wake of globalization. President Victor Orban railed against both globalist multinational corporate dominance of the economy and multiculturalism - especially

mass immigration from the Islamic Middle East.<sup>24</sup> Against the neoliberal consensus, his Fidesz party declared for “illiberal democracy” - akin to Pinochet’s plebiscite-based authoritarian rule lacking basic human rights.<sup>25</sup> Trump and many others on the American far right have embraced Orban and Fidesz.<sup>26</sup>

In Poland the Law and Justice party also embraced far-right populism, curbing judicial powers and the basic human rights of immigrants and LGBT citizens. Party leader Jarosław Kaczyński stated that “The affirmation of homosexuality will lead to the downfall of civilization.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The Hungarian situation is reviewed in Lilia Ilikova and Andrey Tushev (2020). Right-Wing Populism in Central Europe: Hungarian Case (Fidesz, Jobbik). *Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana*, vol. 25, no. Esp.12, pp. 325-332.

<sup>25</sup> On Hungary’s Fidesz party and Orban’s Illiberal Democracy, see András Bíró-Nagy (2017). Illiberal Democracy in Hungary: The Social Background and practical Steps of Building an Illiberal State. *CIDOB*. (January 20.)

<sup>26</sup> David Smith (2021). How Tucker Carlson and the far right embraced Hungary’s authoritarian leader. *The Guardian*. (August 8).

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/aug/07/tucker-carlson-hungary-viktor-orban-donald-trump>

<sup>27</sup> New Anti-Gay Regime in Poland Catholic ultra-conservatives bash their way to victory. By Tomek Kitlinski and Pawel Leszkowicz *WARSAW*, NOV. 10, 2005. The Gully. [http://www.thegully.com/essays/gaymundo/051110\\_poland\\_election.html](http://www.thegully.com/essays/gaymundo/051110_poland_election.html)

The party built populist support through virulent anti-migrant, anti-Muslim rhetoric; leader Jarosław Kaczyński drew on the ancient trope of dirty aliens, stating during the crisis of 2015 that Poland would not accept refugees because "they could spread infectious diseases."<sup>28</sup>

### **Brexit and UK Populism**

Meanwhile in the United Kingdom, the Conservative party Prime Minister David Cameron followed through on his election pledge to hold a referendum on UK membership in the European Union. Cameron had favored remaining in the EU under modified terms, but after a campaign marked by exaggerations and falsehoods supporting Leave, the vote on June 23, 2016 resulted in 52% favored Leave. On June 24th Cameron resigned. The reasons given for support of Brexit were similar to those behind moves to the right in Central Europe: nationalist anti-globalism, anti-immigration, loss of status among workers in the declining

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<sup>28</sup> "Polish opposition warns refugees could spread infectious diseases". *Reuters*. 15 October 2015.  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-poland-idUSKCN0S918B20151015>

post-industrial economy, and anti-establishment populist politics.<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that immigration from EU member countries, guaranteed by the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, was especially irksome to UK nationalists, even though the UK, along with Germany and (to a lesser extent) other wealthy Western members, profited from the brain drain from Eastern Europe.<sup>30</sup> Divisions between professional elites and de-industrialized workers were stark. Seven of the 10 areas with the highest Remain share were in London, all of which polled over three to one to Remain. University graduates voted Remain by three to one while four in five without any educational qualifications voted Leave.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> N.A. (2016). "Explaining the Brexit vote". *The Economist*. (July 16). <https://www.economist.com/britain/2016/07/14/explaining-the-brexite-vote>

<sup>30</sup> Simona Cavallini, Rossella Soldi, Lorenzo Di Matte, Mihaela Alina Utma and Beatrice Errico (2108). *Addressing brain drain: SEDEC The local and regional dimension*. European Union Committee of the Regions. p. 1. <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/addressing-brain-drain/addressing-brain-drain.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Curtice, John (26 July 2017). "Why Leave Won the UK's EU Referendum". *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*. **55**: 19–37.

Another important factor in the Brexit note - and the election of Trump later that year - is the rise of fake news online and its dissemination by private groups in order to manipulate voters and produce desired anti-democratic outcomes.<sup>32</sup> After these decisions, information was revealed how the company Cambridge Analytica and related groups helped the campaigns intervene in voter behavior by observing and identifying which internet users were most susceptible to their messages and most likely to change their behavior and help spread “news,” legitimate or illegitimate, using mass personal data collected from social networks such as Facebook.<sup>33</sup> Despite the ethically problematic nature of their use of personal data and their spreading of fake news online, with an “impact that would be the envy of an ambitious dean of teaching and learning, these researchers used psychological, data-based theories, to consider whose views could be flexed, stretched and augmented.... to change

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<sup>32</sup> BBC News (2021). “EU referendum: The result in maps and charts.” (June 8). <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-36616028>

<sup>33</sup> Hersh, E. (2017). *Hacking the electorate: How campaigns perceive voters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

views and behaviors at a significant level.”<sup>34</sup> Unlike traditional educators, these groups and their sponsors did not aspire to educate for democracy. This challenge raises new and important questions about informal education and its uses and abuses in a new age of media production and consumption.

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<sup>34</sup> Liz Jackson (2018). “ ‘The Best Education Ever’: Trumpism, Brexit, and new social learning,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 50 (5), 441-443.

## **American Populism**

### **Globalization and the Decline of Industrial Unions in the United States**

The United States is facing similar right-wing reactions to globalism and multiculturalism. A convenient place to start the backstory is the 1970s competition from Germany and Japan as they recovered from the devastation of World War II. Only the United States among the leading industrial nations survived the war with its industrial capacity unchecked. Through the 1960s its industrial corporations had few serious competitors; they could set world prices and pass on some revenues to their unionized workers as higher wages to avoid labor conflict. Management and labor were lulled into thinking that this blessed arrangement could last indefinitely. When serious competition entered the global market, however, American industrial corporations first moved operations to lower wage, union-free “right to work” states in the South and then offshore to low wage nations - especially in Asia.

Labor union participation and political clout weakened sharply during this period of industrial redeployment. In 1983 20.1% of employed Americans were members of a union. By 2019 the percentage fell by almost half to 10.3%. More recently, union membership among manufacturing workers fell from 14.9 percent in 2000 to 8.6 percent in 2019 and membership among mining and extraction workers declined from 11.3 percent to 4.0 percent. By contrast, the membership rates were 39.4 percent in local government, 29.4 percent in state government, and 25.6 percent in federal government in 2019.<sup>35</sup> Members of the two large teachers' unions make up more than 50% of these public-sector union members - roughly 25% of all union members in the United States.<sup>36</sup> The education newsletter *The 74 Million* noted: "The typical union member these days has never been anywhere near a

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<sup>35</sup> The Economics Daily, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Union membership rate 8.6 percent in manufacturing, 23.4 percent in utilities, in 2019"

FEBRUARY 03, 2020 [https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2020/union-membership-rate-8-point-6-percent-in-manufacturing-23-point-4-percent-in-utilities-in-2019.htm?view\\_full](https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2020/union-membership-rate-8-point-6-percent-in-manufacturing-23-point-4-percent-in-utilities-in-2019.htm?view_full)

<sup>36</sup> "New Numbers: The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers Now Represent 1 in 4 U.S. Union Members." *The 74*.

mine, a pier or a truck. He or she works for the government, and in growing percentages that will soon lead us to a nonunion private economy being regulated by a highly unionized public sector.”<sup>37</sup>

### **The Republican Party and Reagan Democrats**

While investment in globalization opened new opportunities for urban coastal professionals it also hollowed out the former industrial regions in the mid-Western heartlands and the South.<sup>38</sup> Resentment against labor unions and the government soared among the de-industrialized and de-unionized workers over lost status, unemployment and/or stagnant wages. Struggling non-union workers asked why they should be expected to

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<sup>37</sup> “New Numbers: The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers Now Represent 1 in 4 U.S. Union Members.” *The 74*. March 17, 2021. <https://www.the74million.org/article/aft-nea-1-in-4-us-union-members/#:~:text=Pandemic%20Union%20Report-.New%20Numbers%3A%20The%20National%20Education%20Association%20and%20the%20American%20Federation,in%204%20U.S.%20Union%20Members>

<sup>38</sup> Paul Theroux provides a heart-wrenching portrait of the devastation in the American Southeast in *Deep South: Four Seasons on Back Roads*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.

support the wage demands of unionized teachers and government workers when that would raise their own taxes - when neither unions nor government did anything for them. Reagan Democrats - white Rust Belt and Southern working-class voters - continued to vote Republican in national elections;. Donald Trump won all Rust-belt and Southern states in 2016 with the exception of Illinois.

### **The New Democrat Response: Corporate Liberalism**

With the labor unions no longer able to mobilize less educated industrial workers, the Democratic party in the 1990s, under the leadership of Bill Clinton and Al Gore, turned to U. S. corporations for funding and adopted a pro-corporate agenda while relying on a coalition of unionized, educated government employees, minority groups, and LGBT citizens for electoral support. The Clinton-Gore “New Democrat” fraction of the Democratic party adopted a culturally liberal but fiscally moderate or conservative platform - satisfying both its core voters and its corporate

sponsors.<sup>39</sup> Identitarian appeals to members of its coalition, weak and ineffective support for de-industrialized - and especially white - workers, and sponsorship of the globalist North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 infuriated the white working class and widened the national political division.

### **Super-Capitalism and the Dark Money State**

In liberal democracies market capitalism is supposed to operate within rules made by democratically elected officials; the people, through their representatives, set the ground rules. In actual fact, corporate elites have long sought to influence the election of legislators and the selection of judges through campaign contributions and lobbying. This pattern of government capture, where the powerful and wealthy essentially control the rules under which they operate, has been labeled “super-capitalism” by

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<sup>39</sup> Michael Hirsh (2010). *Capital Offense: How Washington's Wise Men Turned America's Future Over to Wall Street*. Wiley.

former Labor Secretary Robert Reich.<sup>40</sup> Liberal lawmakers have sought to constrain supercapitalism through campaign finance legislation and other means.

In *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010), however, the Supreme Court ruled that the free speech clause of the First Amendment prohibits the government from restricting independent expenditures for political campaigns by corporations including non-profits. The decision opened a floodgate of “dark money” from the 501(c)(4) corporations that sprang up like mushrooms after *Citizens United* - that is, contributions from undisclosed sources. Dark money prevents voters from determining the source, credibility or motives of wealthy and powerful funders seeking to influence them.<sup>41</sup> In a cancerous positive feedback loop, these donors place legislators and judges in place to benefit them with tax breaks and deregulation, thus increasing their wealth and their power to install additional

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<sup>40</sup> Robert B, Reich (2007). *Supercapitalism: The Transformation of Business, Democracy and Everyday Life*. Vintage.

<sup>41</sup> Anna Massoglia (2020). “ ‘Dark money’ in politics skyrocketed in the wake of *Citizens United*.” *Open Secrets*. (January 27). <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2020/01/dark-money-10years-citizens-united/>

lawmakers to serve them - in a self-augmenting cycle. After Citizens United, “democracy” and “the rule of law” appear as covers for the legitimation of organized corporate kleptocracy.

### **The Rise of American Populism**

From the 1990s until recently, the two major parties were frequently viewed as the right and left hand of corporate elites. As a letter to the *San Jose Mercury News* expressed this complaint, “the U.S. is a one-party system, the Corporate Party, with two wings.”<sup>42</sup> Policies supported by large majorities have languished in committees while public approval of Congress, historically hovering around 40%, has declined to around 20% - with occasional dips below 10% - since 2013.<sup>43</sup> Lower income and even middle-class citizens have become increasingly powerless. Princeton professor Martin Gilens wrote in 2005 that

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<sup>42</sup> San Jose Mercury News, Letters to the Editor: “GOP, centrist Dems in one party: the Corporate Party”  
<https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/09/24/letter-the-u-s-is-really-a-one-party-system-the-corporate-party/>

<sup>43</sup>showed Gallup (2021). “Congress and the Public.” October..  
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/1600/congress-public.aspx>

When Americans with different income levels differ in their policy preferences, actual policy outcomes strongly reflect the preferences of the most affluent but bear virtually no relationship to the preferences of poor or middle-income Americans. The vast discrepancy in government responsiveness to citizens with different incomes stands in stark contrast to the ideal of political equality that Americans hold dear...representational biases of this magnitude call into question the very democratic character of our society.<sup>44</sup>

Dismissing elections as rituals of legitimation for a system they could not influence, many citizens condemned political elites and withdrew from politics. The most disaffected citizens - especially white-nationalist fringe groups - sought an "outsider" - a straight talking strongman

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<sup>44</sup> Martin Gilens (2005). "Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 5,, p 778.

- to step beyond “political correctness,” recognize them as morally and politically considerable, give voice to their resentments, and restore the world they have lost. These citizens were long seen as potential recruits for an ultra-right Republican party that could drive out its more moderate, liberal members and stand in sharp contrast to the Democrats.

It is convenient to begin the story about populism with the 1992 presidential campaign of Patrick Buchanan, a proud descendent of Confederate soldiers and himself a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Buchanan presented himself as the alternative to George H. W. Bush and his new world order. He was fiercely anti-globalist and anti-immigrant, and he surrounded himself with advisors with ties to such fringe groups as the Klu Klux Klan and the Aryan Nation. His advisor Samuel Francis, a racist, nativist *Washington Times* columnist, was among the first to grasp that fringe groups that had been attracted to George Wallace and David Duke could be recruited as “new social

forces” playing an important role in the GOP and mainstream politics.<sup>45</sup>

Republican party leaders welcomed these voters but shied from openly embracing their fringe beliefs and symbols. Candidates made coded appeals to racial fears - as when George H. W. Bush used a mug shot of Willie Horton - a black man with an Afro and a beard who had committed robbery, rape, and assault while on prison furlough - to paint the Democrats as soft on crime. Their strategy was to eat their cake and have it too - to draw on the voting power of soft racists and white nationalists while retaining their globalist, pro-corporation agenda<sup>46</sup> Pat Buchanan, however, was having none of this bait and switch game.

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<sup>45</sup>Joseph Lowndes (2021). “Far-right extremism dominates the GOP. It didn’t start — and won’t end — with Trump.” *The Washington Post* (November 8).  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/11/08/far-right-extremism-dominates-gop-it-didnt-start-wont-end-with-trump/>

<sup>46</sup> Erin Blakemore (2018). “How the Willie Horton Ad Played on Racism and Fear,” *History*. (November 2).  
<https://www.history.com/news/george-bush-willie-horton-racist-ad>

Challenging George H. W. Bush in 1992, he explained that both parties were essentially the same - liberal globalists.

If the country wants to go in a liberal direction, if the country wants to go in the direction of [Democrats] George Mitchell and Tom Foley, it doesn't bother me as long as I've made the best case I can. What I can't stand are the back-room deals. They're all in on it, the insider game, the establishment game—this is what we're running against.<sup>47</sup>

Buchanan never succeeded in gaining the Republican presidential nomination, but his brand of ultra-right conservatism remained a force in the party, ready to rise when the opportunity came.

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<sup>47</sup> Henry Allen (1992). "The Iron Fist of Pat Buchanan." *The Washington Post*. (February 17)  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1992/02/17/the-iron-fist-of-pat-buchanan/832ad9b5-783d-425c-a792-b5fc5bc8e70a/>

### **Packing the Supreme Court**

After the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February 2016, the Republican-held Senate refused to consider President Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland as his replacement. They proclaimed that the voting citizens should have a voice in his replacement during an election year. After Trump was elected, he nominated Neil Gorsuch and the Republican Senate confirmed him. In 2018, upon the retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy, Trump nominated Brett Kavanaugh, viewed as even more conservative than Gorsuch. And when Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died, Trump nominated Amy Coney Barrett on September 26, 2020, just weeks before the presidential election, despite their prior refusal to consider Garland in an election year. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse has demonstrated how dark money in the wake of Citizens United has empowered far right groups, working through 501(c)(4) corporations, to control the selection and

confirmation of Supreme Court Justices and thus to pack the Supreme Court.<sup>48</sup>

### **Democracy from Below**

Recent political theorists and activists in Europe, the United States, South America, and elsewhere, have noted the gap between the promise of representative democracy and what it delivers for the people. In response, new forms of democracy have arisen beyond institutional democratic mechanisms. John Dewey's claim that "democracy is more than a form of government" is often cited in justifying such forms of citizen action. Perhaps the most important contemporary theorist of 'democracy from below' is Pierre Rosanvallon, who in 2008 noted that "... the inability of electoral/representative politics to keep its promises (has) led to the development of indirect forms of democracy,"

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<sup>48</sup> Oma Seddiq. (2021). "This member of Congress wants everyone to know about the 'dark money scheme' that's 'captured' the Supreme Court." Insider. November 20. <https://www.businessinsider.com/sheldon-whitehouse-fighting-to-end-dark-money-at-supreme-court-2021-11>

many of which are organized informally and make extensive use of the Internet and social media.<sup>49</sup>

Rosanvallon analyses these indirect forms in terms of three functions: oversight, prevention, and judgment. Oversight occurs as citizens monitor and publicize unacceptable behaviors of corporate and government actors. This can take the form of vigilance, denunciation, or expert evaluation, as when scientific and technical experts substantiate citizen claims. Prevention occurs as actors in civil society mobilize in resistance to proposed policies or opposition to enacted ones. Judgment involves the use of the courts - especially through well-publicized jury trials - to bring delinquent actors to justice. Rosanvallon emphasizes the potential 'theatricality' of courtrooms as archetypal public spaces crowded by 'active spectators - a feature well-illustrated by the courtroom appearance of prominent Black pastors in the televised trial of murderers

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<sup>49</sup> (p. 274). Pierre Rosanvallon, *Counter-Democracy. Politics in an Age of Distrust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

of Ahmaud Arbery - a move sharply contested by the defense attorneys.<sup>50</sup>

Among the most visible informal 'democracy from below' forces has been Occupy!, an international movement opposing social and economic inequality and the absence of "real democracy". It opposes the dominance of large corporations and the global financial system which undermine popular democracy, increase the wealth and power of a tiny minority and create instability. Taking its inspiration from the Arab Spring movement of 2009, and the global anti-austerity protests during 2010 and 2011 including the Spanish Indignados Movement, the first Occupy action, Occupy Wall Street, began on September 17, 2011, and was rapidly followed by other Occupy protests throughout the world. Occupy was halted by repressive government crackdowns but played an important role in placing gross inequality and 'democracy from below'

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<sup>50</sup> Peter Wade (2021). 'We Don't Want Any More Black Pastors in Here,' Says Defense Lawyer in Ahmaud Arbery Case. *Rolling Stone*. (November 21). <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/ahmaud-arbery-case-defense-lawyer-black-pastors-1256748/>

squarely in the political discourse. For example, former U.S. Vice President Al Gore declared in March 2012 that citizen activists should "occupy democracy" - "Our democracy has been hacked. It no longer works to serve the best interests of the people."<sup>51</sup>

Discussions of 'democracy from below' also consider 'experiments in democratic living,' such as those of the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico and of the Boggs Center in Detroit Michigan. Both sponsor initiatives in alternative education and lifestyle. The Zapatistas launched an "Escuelita," or Little School program in 2013, where outsiders spend a week living within an autonomous Zapatista community. The Boggs Center's first activity was 'Detroit Summer,' a multigenerational project in Detroit, Michigan, aimed at empowering local youth to improve their communities. Without any doubt, formal and informal citizen action 'from below' and democratic experiments in living will play essential roles in pro-

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<sup>51</sup> Daniel Terdiman (2012). Al Gore with Sean Parker at SXSW: 'Occupy democracy!' CNet.(March 12). <https://www.cnet.com/news/al-gore-with-sean-parker-at-sxsw-occupy-democracy/>

democracy efforts after the insurrection - a point detailed by Henrik Rydernfeld, Just Serrano-Zamora and several others in this issue.

### **State Violence, Black Lives Matter, and the Hostile Racial Divide**

Black Lives Matter (BLM), another informally organized, network-savvy citizens action group, came to life in July 2013, when the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter appeared on Twitter after George Zimmerman was acquitted after the shooting death of Trayvon Martin. It gained steam when two African American men, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Eric Garner in New York City, were killed by police. The movement sponsored subsequent demonstrations against the police killings of other African Americans, and came to broad notice during the 2016 United States presidential election.<sup>52</sup> BLM gained

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<sup>52</sup> "Black Lives Matter: international activist movement."  
*Encyclopaedia Britannica*.  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Black-Lives-Matter>

international attention after the police killing of George Floyd in 2020 in Minneapolis at the hands of officer Derek Chauvin sparked a massive protest - one of the largest in U. S. history. The Pew Research Center reported in 2020 that 67% of adult Americans expressed some support for BLM.<sup>53</sup> In reaction, right-wing groups adopted the phrase “All Lives Matter” to show their rejection of BLM and support for police officers. South African theorist David Theo Goldberg notes that "All Lives Matter" means “racial dismissal, ignoring, and denial.”<sup>54</sup> The phrase “Blue Lives Matter” has also been employed to show support for the police in countering alleged criminals and protesters.

### **Donald Trump and Fake News**

After the Republican party’s more ‘moderate’ presidential candidates in 2008 and 2012 lost soundly to Barack Obama,

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<sup>53</sup> Parker, Kim; Horowitz, Juliana Menasce; Anderson, Monica (2020). "Majorities Across Racial, Ethnic Groups Express Support for the Black Lives Matter Movement". *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project*. (June 12).

<sup>54</sup> David Theo Goldberg, (2015). "Why 'Black Lives Matter' Because All Lives Don't Matter in America". *The Huffington Post*. September 25. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-black-lives-matter\\_b\\_8191424](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-black-lives-matter_b_8191424)

Donald Trump - appealing directly to disaffected white voters - seized control of the Republican party in the 2016 presidential primaries. Trump's decidedly immoderate campaign appealed directly to disaffected white voters; it was marked by attacks on Muslims, Mexicans and other immigrant groups. On November 20, 2015 Trump floated the idea of creating a database of all Muslims in the United States. At a Nov. 21, 2015, campaign stop in Birmingham, Alabama Trump stated that on September 11, 2001 he "watched when the World Trade Center came tumbling down. And I watched in Jersey City, N.J., where thousands and thousands of people were cheering as that building was coming down." Extensive coverage has turned up no such celebrations in New Jersey.<sup>55</sup> He castigated Mexicans at the border as "Drug dealers, criminals, rapists."<sup>56</sup> He attacked protesters at his campaign rallies, stating that his supporters

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<sup>55</sup> Jenna Johnson and Abigail Hauslohner (2017). 'I think Islam hates us': A timeline of Trump's comments about Islam and Muslims. *The Washington Post*. May 20.

<sup>56</sup> BBC News (2016). "'Drug dealers, criminals, rapists': What Trump thinks of Mexicans" August 31.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-37230916>

should actively silence protesters, and promising to pay their legal fees if they become too aggressive.<sup>57</sup> Trump won the presidency in the electoral college despite losing the popular vote.

One of Trump's earliest post-election moves was to declare without evidence that he would have won the popular vote were it not for the "millions of people" who had voted illegally for Hillary Clinton.<sup>58</sup> Despite clear visual evidence to the contrary, Trump claimed that the crowd at his inauguration was the largest in history.<sup>59</sup> He dismissed all negative information about his election and administration as "fake news" and attacked journalists as

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<sup>57</sup> Alan Rappeport (2016). Donald Trump Says He May Pay Legal Fees of Accused Attacker From Rally. The New York Times March 13. <https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/03/13/donald-trump-says-he-may-pay-legal-fees-of-accused-attacker/>

<sup>58</sup> Tom LoBianco (2016). "Trump falsely claims 'millions of people who voted illegally' cost him popular vote" *CNN*. November 28. <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/27/politics/donald-trump-voter-fraud-popular-vote/index.html>

<sup>59</sup> Timothy B. Lee (2017). "Trump claims 1.5 million people came to his inauguration. Here's what the evidence shows." *Vox*, January 23. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/1/21/14347298/trump-inauguration-crowd-size>

“enemies of the people.”<sup>60</sup> Both proved to be effective propaganda techniques.<sup>61</sup> Captive audiences of right wing media like Fox News devoured his disinformation. A Fairleigh Dickinson University poll in 2011 showed that Fox News viewers were least informed about current events among TV news viewers, and were even less informed than those who watched no TV news.<sup>62</sup>

Silvio Waisbord argues that the spread of populist media like Fox News- and its counterparts on the left - undermines democratic communication. “Populism’s binary, conflictive view of politics is anathema to the “communication commons” as a public space for discussion and negotiation... it (populism) is contrary to communicative principles of democratic life—civility,

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<sup>60</sup> BBC News (2018). “Media seen as enemy of people - Donald Trump”. (November 1). Video.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-46057126>

<sup>61</sup> BBC (2018). “How President Trump took 'fake news' into the mainstream.”

<sup>62</sup> Kenneth Rapoza (2011). Fox News Viewers Uninformed, NPR Listeners Not, Poll Suggests. Forbes, November 21.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2011/11/21/fox-news-viewers-uninformed-npr-listeners-not-poll-suggests/?sh=70f4ced74fd8>

diversity, tolerance, reason, and truth.”<sup>63</sup> The bifurcation of media audiences - print and online - into fractions on the right and left, with opposed sources of information and “alternative facts,” confronting one another in anger, now impedes the formation of the epistemic authority necessary for informed public discussion - a point considered by Sarah Stitzlein, Ming Ming Chiu et al, Vincent Colapoetro and others in this issue.

### **The Entrance of the Far Right Fringe into the Political Mainstream**

After the election of the first Black president, Barack Obama, in 2008, the “new social forces” envisioned by Francis and Buchanan sprung to life with a vengeance. Two new informal, media-savvy groups - the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys - demand attention because of their role in the January 6 insurrection.

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<sup>63</sup> Silvio Waisbord (2018). “Why Populism is Troubling for Democratic Communication.” *Communication, Culture and Critique*, Volume 11, Issue 1, March 2018, 21–34, p. 22f.

The Oath Keepers is a far-right anti-government militia, formed in 2009 by Elmer Stewart Rhodes, a former Army paratrooper and staffer for Republican Congressman Ron Paul. Members, many of whom are drawn from the military and law enforcement, claim to be defending the U. S. Constitution. The name derives from Rhodes' assertion that Hitler could have been stopped had German military officers kept their oath to the German constitution. Members are encouraged to disobey what they regard as unconstitutional orders, using violence where necessary.

The group focused on alleged government overreach during the Obama years; for example, sending armed Oath Keepers to the Bundy Ranch standoff in 2014, to support those accused of illegally grazing stock on federal land. It claims to reject racism and white nationalism; Rhodes stated in 2011: "I'm a quarter Mexican. I'm part Apache Indian. I'm hardly a poster child for white supremacy." Armed Oath Keepers were also present at Ferguson Missouri after the protests after the killing of Micheal Brown, and at other Black Lives Matter protests, sowing fear among protesters. The group claims to have been at these protests solely to

prevent rioting and to protect property and in other ways to help the police.<sup>64</sup> The Oath Keepers also deny involvement in the Jan. 6 insurrection. "We were there to protect Trump supporters from Antifa," Rhodes said. "That's why my guys were wearing helmets and body armor and goggles." The January 6 Commission of the House of Representatives is investigating this unlikely claim.<sup>65</sup>

The Proud Boys is an exclusively male American neo-fascist organization advocating political violence.<sup>66</sup> It was founded by right-wing commentator Gavin McInnes and now led by Enrique Tarrio. Although the group also officially rejects white nationalism, and indeed is currently led by Enrique Tarrio, a non-White Latino man, the group shares many views with white nationalist groups: anti-

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<sup>64</sup> Sarah Fowler (2015). "Ferguson unrest: Who are the mysterious 'Oath Keepers'." *BBC News* (August 12).

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33867245>

<sup>65</sup> Ryan Lucas (2021). "Who Are The Oath Keepers?" NPR. (April 10). <https://www.npr.org/2021/04/10/985428402/who-are-the-oath-keepers-militia-group-founder-scrutinized-in-capitol-riot-probe>

<sup>66</sup> Matthew Kriner and Jon Lewis, (2021). In Cruickshank, Paul; Hummel, Kristina (eds.). "Pride & Prejudice: The Violent Evolution of the Proud Boys." *CTC Sentinel*. Combating Terrorism Center. 14 (6): 26–38.

feminism, anti-Islam. anti-Semitism, and anti-immigrant. Mr. Tarrío's denial of racism is called into question by his arrest in Washington on Jan. 4 on charges of destruction, for burning a Black Lives Matter banner torn from a historic Black church during a December 2020 Pro-Trump 'rigged election' protest in Washington. One of its distinguishing core values is the advocacy of violence.<sup>67</sup>

The "Proud Boys" name comes from the Walt Disney song "Proud of Your Boy" from the movie Aladdin, where Aladdin apologizes to his mother for being a bad son and promises to make her proud. McInnes sees this as an apology for being male, and uses the term 'Proud Boys' ironically to refer to unrepentant masculinism. The loyalty oath for new members is: "I'm a proud Western chauvinist. I refuse to apologize for creating the modern world."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> For further detail, see Shannon, Joel (September 30, 2020). "Who are the Proud Boys? Far-right group has concerned experts for years". *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/09/30/who-proud-boys-group-mentioned-debate-has-violent-history/5868406002/>

<sup>68</sup> Nicole Disser (2016). "Gavin McInnes and his Proud Boys want to make white men great again". *Bedford + Bowery*. New York.(July 28). <https://bedfordandbowery.com/2016/07/gavin->

Trump advisor Roger Stone has close ties to the Proud Boys, and the group has rallied to Trump.<sup>69</sup> During Trump's 2016 campaign, however, McInnes said: "I want violence, I want punching in the face. I'm disappointed in Trump supporters for not punching enough."<sup>70</sup> At the September 29 2020 presidential debate, Trump refused to condemn these groups and their violence against protesters, claiming that all the political violence in the country was coming from Antifa and the left. Asked about the Proud Boys in particular, Trump told them to "stand back and stand by," interpreted widely - and correctly - as an invitation to political violence if Trump lost the election.

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[mcinnes-and-his-proud-boys-want-to-make-white-men-great-again/](#)

<sup>69</sup> Katelyn Polantz (2021). "Feds investigated Roger Stone ties to Proud Boys as part of possible threat to judge." *CNN*. (February 17).

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/17/politics/roger-stone-proud-boys-amy-berman-jackson/index.html>

<sup>70</sup> McInnis now says that he regrets saying that violence solves problems. ABC News (2018). "Proud Boys Founder Denies Inciting Violence." <https://abcnews.go.com/US/proud-boys-founder-denies-inciting-violence-responds-feels/story?id=59758209>

Both of these groups no doubt also see themselves as participating in 'democracy from below.' One of our major theoretical challenges ahead is sorting out the different forms of citizen action and establishing criteria for democratic vs. anti - democratic populist forms. Just Serrano-Zamora addresses this need later in this issue.

### **To The Capital**

Throughout late 2020 the Trump campaign dismissed surveys showing him trailing Joe Biden, and in August 2020, just before the Democratic National Convention nominated Biden, Trump told a rally in Wisconsin that "the only way we're going to lose this election is if the election is rigged." After losing, Trump refused to concede, insisting the election had been "stolen." Congress was set to certify the election results on January 6th, 2021. Trump - with the support of a large contingent of his far-right GOP supporters in Congress - invited his followers

to Washington and directed them towards the Capital to “fight like hell” and “stop the steal.”

The Oath Keepers and Proud Boys played prominent roles in the January 6 insurrection as Donald Trump’s foot soldiers.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps more important, ethno-nationalist and neo-fascist sympathizers have become a dominant faction within the Republican congressional caucus. As an insult to the idea of peaceful transfer of power, 147 Republican members of Congress, even after the insurrection, voted against certifying Biden’s election victory.<sup>72</sup>

With a declining percentage of older white male voters to shore up its base, the GOP needs these far-right fringe voters for political survival and

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<sup>71</sup> Tom Dreisbach (2021). Conspiracy Charges Bring Proud Boys' History Of Violence Into Spotlight. NPR. (April 9).

<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/09/985104612/conspiracy-charges-bring-proud-boys-history-of-violence-into-spotlight>;

Tom Dreisbach (2021). Capitol riot suspects had more ties to Oath Keepers than previously known. NPR. (November 1).

<https://www.npr.org/2021/11/10/1054024084/capitol-riot-suspects-had-more-ties-to-oath-keepers-than-previously-known>

<sup>72</sup> Karen Yourish, Larry Buchanan and Denise Lu (2021). The 147 Republicans Who Voted to Overturn Election Results. (January 7). <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/01/07/us/elections/electoral-college-biden-objectors.html>

cannot cross them. Today many GOP office-holders openly embrace their symbols, and few will stand up to them. As a result, one of the two major American political parties is now ultra-right and anti-liberal. After the insurrection, as Samuel Francis and Pat Buchanan foresaw, the violent, illiberal fringe has established itself in the political mainstream. As a recent Pew survey shows, the idea that the two parties are the same has lost its appeal.<sup>73</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This special issue addresses the issues confronting us after the Insurrection. I leave it up to our authors to spell these out in detail, but a few big-picture issues stand out: the anti-democratic potential of neoliberalism, gross income and wealth inequality, protections of worker rights and recognition, cultural limits to multiculturalism and

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<sup>73</sup> Pew Research Center (2019). Partisan Antipathy: More Intense, More Personal. (October 10).  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/10/10/partisan-antipathy-more-intense-more-personal>

absorption of migrants, illiberal forms of plebiscite-based democracy, unbridgeable political polarization, post-truth fake news and loss of epistemic authority, dark money politics and democratic kleptocracy, and the destruction of independent judiciaries, to name just a few. These issues will set the pro- democracy political, social, cultural and educational agenda in the years to come.

The editors of *Dewey Studies* invite our readers to reflect on the articles in this issue and welcome article submissions that continue the conversation about the insurrection and contemporary challenges to democracy.