

Opinion — We Have A Radical Democracy Will Trump Voters Destroy It?

Opinion By Robert Kagan *The Washington Post*
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For Some Time, It Was Possible To Believe That Many Voters Could Not See The Threat Donald Trump Poses To America's Liberal Democracy, And Many Still Profess Not To See It. But Now, A Little More Than Six Months From Election Day, It's Hard To Believe They Don't. The Warning Signs Are Clear Enough. Trump Himself Offers A New Reason For Concern Almost Every Day. People May Choose To Ignore The Warnings Or Persuade Themselves Not To Worry, But They Can See What We All See, And That Should Be Enough.

How To Explain Their Willingness To Support Trump Despite The Risk He Poses To Our System Of Government. The Answer Is Not Rapidly Changing Technology, Widening Inequality, Unsuccessful Foreign Policies Or Unrest On University Campuses But Something Much Deeper And More Fundamental. It Is What The Founders Worried About And Abraham Lincoln Warned About: A Decline In What They Called Public Virtue. They Feared It Would Be Hard To

To Sustain Popular Support For The Revolutionary Liberal Principles Of The Declaration Of Independence, And They Worried That The Virtuous Love Of Liberty And Equality Would In Time Give Way To Narrow, Selfish Interest.

Although James Madison And His Colleagues Hoped To Establish A Government On The Solid Foundation Of Self-Interest, Even Madison Acknowledged That No Government By The People Could Be Sustained If The People Themselves Did Not Have Sufficient Dedication To The Liberal Ideals Of The Declaration. The People Had To Love Liberty, Not Just For Themselves But As An Abstract Ideal For All Humans.

Americans Are Going Down This Route Today Because Too Many No Longer Care Enough Whether The System The Founders Created Survives And Are Ceding The Ground To Those, Led By Trump, Who Actively Seek To Overthrow What So Many Of Them Call “The Regime.” This “Regime” They Are Referring To Is The Unique Political System Established By The Founders Based On The Principles Of *Universal Equality* And Natural Rights. That, Plain And Simple, Is What This Election Is About. “A Republic If You Can Keep It,” Benjamin Franklin Allegedly Said Of The Government By The Constitution In 1787. This Is The Year We May Choose Not To Keep It.

A Healthy Republic Would Not Be Debating Whether Trump And His Followers Seek The Overthrow Of The Founders’ System Of Liberal Democracy. What

More Do People Need To See Than His Well-Documented Attempt To Prevent The Peaceful Transfer Of Power With The Storming Of The U.S. Capitol, The Elaborate Scheme To Create False Electoral Slates In Key States, The Clear Evidence That He Bullied Officials In Some States To “Find More Votes,” And To Persuade Vice President Mike Pence Not To Certify The Legitimate Results? What More Do They Need To Know Than That Trump Continues To Insist He Won That Election And Celebrates As Heroes And “Patriots” The People Who Invaded The U.S. Capitol And Smashed Policemen’s Faces With The Stated Aim Of Forcing Congress To Negate The Election Results? As One 56-Year-Old Michigan Woman Present At The Capitol On Jan 6, 2021, Explained: “We Weren’t There To Steal Things. We Weren’t There To Do Damage. *We Were **Just** There To Overthrow The Government.”*

Trump Not Only Acknowledges His Goals, Past And Present; He Promises To Do It Again If He Loses This Year. For The Third Straight Election, He Is Claiming That If He Loses, Then The Vote Will Have Been Fraudulent. He Has Warned Of Uprisings, Of “Bedlam” And “A Bloodbath,” And He Has Made Clear That He Will Again Be The Promoter Of This Violence, Just As He Was On Jan 6. Trump Explicitly Warned In 2020 That He Would Not Accept The Election Results If He Lost, And He Didn’t. This Year He Is Saying It Again. Were There No Other Charges Against Him, No Other Reason To Be Concerned About His Return To The Presidency, This Alone Would Be Sufficient To Oppose Him. He Does Not

Respect And Has Never Pledged To Abide By The Democratic Processes Established By The Constitution. On The Contrary, He Has Explicitly Promised To Violate The Constitution When He Deems It Necessary. That By Itself Makes Him A Unique Candidate In American History And Should Be Disqualifying.

This Kind Of Open Challenge To Our Democracy Was Never Meant To Be Addressed By The Courts. As The Founders Well Understood, You Don't Serve A Subpoena To A Would-Be Tyrant And Tell Him To Lawyer Up. Nor Was It Meant To Be Addressed By The Normal Processes Of Democratic Elections. They Knew, And Feared, That A Demagogue Could Capture The Allegiance Of Enough Voters To Overthrow The System. That Was Why They Gave Congress, And Particularly The Senate, Supposedly More Immune From Popular Pressures, The Power To Impeach And Remove Presidents And To Deny Them The Opportunity To Run Again — And Not Simply Because They Violated Some Law But Because They Posed A Clear And Present Danger To The Republic. After Trump's Attempt To Overthrow The Government In 2020, Congress Had A Chance To Use The Method Prescribed By The Founders In Precisely The Circumstances They Envisioned. But Senate Republicans, Out Of A Combination Of Ambition And Cowardice, Refused To Play The Vital Role The Founders Envisioned For Them. *The Result Is That The Nightmare Feared By The Founders Is One Election Away From Becoming Reality.*

The Problem With Trump Is Not That He Has Some Carefully Thought-Out Plan For Seizing Power, Much Less An Elaborate Ideological Justification For Doing So. (Others Do Have Such Plans And Such Justifications, Including Many Of Those Who Will Populate His Administration — More On That In A Moment.) With Trump, *Everything Is About Him And His Immediate Needs*. He Will Run Roughshod Over The Laws And Constitution Simply To Get What He Wants For Himself, His Family And His Business Interests. Americans Know That If He Is Elected, He Would Abuse The Justice System To Go After His Opponents. They Know This Because He Says So. “I Am Your Retribution!” He Declares, And By “Your” He Means “My.” Americans Know He Would Use His Power As President To Try To Solve His Financial Problems. He Did It As President And Is Doing It Now As A Presidential Candidate. They Know He Would Not Respect The Results Of A Fair Election Election If He Loses, Which Is The Very Definition Of A Tyrant.

So, Why Will So Many Vote For Him Anyway? For A Significant Segment Of The Republican Electorate, The White-Hot Core Of The Trump Movement, It Is Because They *Want* To See The System Overthrown. This Should Not Come As A Shock, For It Is Not A New Phenomenon. On The Contrary, It Is As Old As The Republic. Historians Have Written About The “Liberal Tradition” In America, But There Has From The Beginning Also An Anti-Liberal Tradition: Large Numbers Of Americans Determined To Preserve Preliberal Traditions,

Hierarchies And Beliefs Against The *Secular* Liberal Principles Of The Declaration Of Independence And Bill Of Rights. The Founders Based The Republic On A Radical Set Of Principles And Assertions About “Natural Rights” That Government Was Bound To Respect And To Safeguard. These Rights Did Not Derive From Religious Belief But Were “Self-Evident.” *They Were Not Granted By The Christian God, By The Crown Or Even By The Constitution. They Were Inherent In What It Meant To Be HUMAN.*

This Is The Central Tenet Of Liberalism. Before The American Revolution No Government Had Ever Been Founded On Liberal Principles, And The Vast Majority Of Human Beings Had Never Believed In These Natural Rights — Certainly Not The Christian Church In Either Its Protestant Or Roman Catholic Versions Nor Islam Nor Judaism Nor Hinduism Nor Buddhism. People Might Be Equal In The Eyes Of Their God, But No Government Or Religious Institution Had Ever Been Based On The Principle Of Equal Rights. Not Even The English System Was Based On This Principle But Rather On Monarchy, A Ruling Aristocracy, And A Contract Between Crown And Subjects That Was Modified Over The Centuries But Was Not Based On The Principle Of Universal “Natural” Rights. The Founders Knew These Ideas Were Radical, That They Inaugurating, In Their Own Words, *A Novus Order Seclorum* — A New Order Of The Ages — That Required A New Way Of Thinking And Acting. They New, As Well, That Their Own Practices And Those Of 18th-Century American Society Did Not

Conform To Their New Revolutionary Doctrines. They Knew That Slavery Was Contrary To The Declaration's Principles, Though They Permitted Slavery To Continue, Hoping It Would Die A Natural Death. They Knew That Established Churches Were Contrary To Those Principles Because They Impinged On That Most Important Of Rights, "Freedom Of Conscience," Which Was Vital To The Preservation Of Liberty, Yet A Number Of States In The 18th And 19th Centuries Retained All Kinds Of Religious Tests For Office. In Short, They Knew That A Great Many Americans Did Not In Fact Believe In The Liberal Principles Of The Revolution. As Benjamin Rush, A Signer Of The Declaration Of Independence, Put It, "We Have Changed Our Forms Of Government, But It Remains Yet To Effect A Revolution In Our Principles, Opinions And Manners So As To Accommodate Them To The Forms Of Government We Have Adopted." They Did Not Insist That Citizens Believe In Those Principles. One Could Be An American Citizen Whether One Believed In The Declaration Or Not.

And A Great Many Did Not. Leaders Of The Slaveholding South Called The Declaration "A Most Pernicious Falsehood." South Carolina's John C Calhoun Called The Very Idea Of Equal Rights A "False Doctrine." They Believed In Democracy, *But Only If It Was An Exclusively White Democracy.* When Democracy Turned Against Them In 1860, They Rebelled And Sought An Exit From The System. *That Rebellion Never Ended. It Has Been Weakened, Suppressed — Sometimes By Force — And Driven Underground, But It Has*

Never Gone Away. Although The South Was Militarily Defeated And Deprived Of Its Special Advantages In The Constitution, Its Hostility To The Founders' Liberalism Did Not Abate. As Southern Writer WJ Cash Observed In 1941, If The War Had "Smashed The Southern World," It Had Nevertheless "Left The Essential Southern Mind And Will ... Entirely Unshaken" And Southerners Themselves Determined "To Hold Fast To Their Own, To Maintain Their Divergences, To Remain What They Had Been And Were." In 1956, Almost A Century After The Civil War, A Fifth Of Congress, Almost All Democrats — Signed The "Southern Manifesto" Calling On States To Refuse To Obey The Supreme Court's 1954 Decision To End Segregation In Public Schools. Nothing Had Changed. *Are We So Surprised That For Many Americans, Nothing Has Changed Even Today?*

Nor Has Anti-Liberalism Only Been About Race. For More Than A Century After The Revolution, Many If Not Most White Anglo-Saxon Protestants Insisted That America Was A Protestant Nation. *They Did Not Believe Catholics Possessed Equal Rights Or Should Be Treated As Equals.* The Influential "Second" Ku Klux Klan Of The 1920s Was Anti-Catholic And Anti-Jewish As Well As Anti-Black, Which Was Why, Unlike The Original Klan, It Flourished Outside The South. Many Regard Today's Christian Nationalism As A Fringe Movement, *But It Has Been A Powerful And Often Dominant Force Throughout America's History.*

For Two Centuries, Many White Americans Have Felt Under Siege By The Founders' Liberalism. They Have Been Defeated In War And Suppressed By Threats Of Force, But More Than That, They Have Been Continually Oppressed By A System Designed By The Founders To Preserve And Strengthen Liberalism Against Competing Beliefs And Hierarchies. Since World War II, The Courts And The Political System Have Pursued The Founders' Liberal Goals With Greater And Greater Fidelity, Ending Official Segregation, Driving Religion From Public Schools, Recognizing And Defending The Rights Of Women And Minorities Hitherto Deprived Of Their "Natural Rights" Because Of Religious, Racial And Ethnic Discrimination. The Hegemony Of Liberalism Has Expanded, Just As Lincoln Hoped It Would, "Constantly Spreading And Deepening Its Influence, And Augmenting The Happiness And Value Of Life To All People Of Colors Everywhere." Anti-Liberal Political Scientist Patrick Deneen Calls It "*Liberal Totalitarianism*," And, Apart From The Hyperbole, He Is Right That Liberalism Has Been Steadily Deepening And Expanding Under Presidents Of Both Parties Since The 1940s.

The Fury On The Anti-Liberal Right Against What Is Today Called "Wokeness" Is Nothing New. Anti-Liberal Movements In America, Whether In Defense Of The White Race Or Christianity, And More Often Both Together, Have Always Claimed To Be Suffering Under The Expanding Hegemony Of Liberalism. They Have Always Claimed That A Liberal Government And Society Were Depriving

Them Of Their “Freedom” To Live A Life According To Christian Teachings And Were Favoring Various Minority Groups, Especially Black People, At Their Expense. In The 1970s, Influential Theologian R J Rushdoony Complained That The Christian In America Had “No Right To His Identity” But Was Forced To Recognize “All Others And Their ‘Rights.’” And He Was Correct If A Christian’s “Rights” Included The Right Not Only To Lead A Christian Life Oneself But *To Impose That Life On The Entire Society, Or If A White Person’s “Freedom” Included The Freedom To To Preserve White Primacy In Society.* In The 19th Century, Enslavers Insisted They Deprived Of Their “Freedom” To Hold Human Beings As Property; Southerners In The Post-Reconstruction Era Insisted On Their “Freedom” To Oppress Black Citizens In Their States.

Today, Anti-Liberals In American Society Are Indeed *Deprived* Of Their “Freedom” To Impose Their Religious And Racial Views On Society, On Public Schools And On The Laws Of The Nation. *What Christian Nationalists Call “Liberal Totalitarianism,” The Founders Called “Freedom Of Conscience.”*

Six Decades Ago, People Like Rushdoony Were Responding Not To “Woke” Corporations Or To Black Lives Matter But To Civil Rights Legislation. Today, Anti-Liberal Conservatives Complain About School Curriculums That Acknowledge The Racism That Has Shaped American History, But Even Five Decades Ago, Before The *Invention* Of “Critical Race Theory,” Anti-Liberal White

People Such As Rushdoony Insisted That The “White Man” Was Being “Systematically Indoctrinated Into Believing He Is Guilty Of Enslaving And Abusing The Negro.” Nor Is It New That Many White People Feel That The Demands Of Minority Groups For Both Rights And Respect Have “Gone Too Far” And It Is They, The White People Of America, Who Are Suffering The Worst Discrimination. In The 1960s, Surveys Taken By *The New York Times* Showed That Majorities Of White People Believed Even Then That The Civil Rights Movement Had “Gone Too Far,” That Blacks Were Receiving “Everything On A Silver Platter” And That The Government Was Always Practicing “Reverse Discrimination” Against White People. Liberalism Is Always Going Too Far For Many Americans — And Certainly For Anti-Liberals. Anti-Liberals These Days Complain About “Wokeness,” Therefore, But It Is The Liberal System Of Government Bequeathed By The Founders, And The Accompanying Egalitarian Spirit That They Are Really Objecting To, Just As Anti-Liberals Have Since The Founding Of The Nation. Many Of Trump’s Core Supporters Insist They Are Patriots, But Whether They Realize It Or Not, *Their Allegiance Is Not To The Founders’ America But To An Ethnoreligious Definition Of The Nation That The Founders Explicitly Rejected.*

Some Do Realize It. The Smartest And Most Honest Of Them Know That If People Truly Want A “Christian America,” It

Can Only Come Through “Regime Change,” By Which They Mean The “Regime” Created By The Founders. The Founders’ Legacy Is A “Dead End,” Writes Glenn Ellmers, A Scholar At The Claremont Institute. The Constitution Is A “Potemkin Village.” According To Deneen And Harvard Law School’s Adrian Vermeule, The System Established To Protect Individual Rights Needs To Be Replaced With An Alternative Form Of Government. What They Have In Mind Is A Christian Commonwealth: A “Culture That Preserves And Encourages Order And Continuity, And Support For Religious Belief And Institutions, With Legislation To “Promote Public Morality, And Forbid Its Intentional Corruption,” A “Forthright Acknowledgement And Renewal Of The Christian Roots Of Our Civilization,” “Public Opportunities For Prayers,” And A Revitalization Of Our Public Spaces To Reflect A Deeper Belief That We Are Called To Erect Imitations

Of The Beauty That Awaits Us In Another Kingdom.”

[Ed. Note: And Here We Are, Peeple. *The Vision* For A Kinder Gentler Faux-Christian Theocracy, Autocracy And The Like. As For The Above Passage: “With Legislation To Promote Public Morality, ... One Can’t Help But Wonder If Such *Legislation* Would Be Modeled On Iran’s Infamous “Morality Police.”

Herein Lies The Absolute Core Of The 2024 Election. Trump Is Merely Their Carnival-Barking Buffoonish Stage Monkey i.e., Their Useful Idiot (Very) To Initiate This Agenda.

At The Heart Of Nearly All Religion On This Troubled Planet, The *Essence* Of Organized Religion, Is The Propagation Of FEAR, The Extraction (Transfer) Of Wealth From *The Flock*

And Utter Subservience To Their Religious Elites. The Late Christopher Hitchens aka “The Hitch” Had It Exactly Right When He Wrote “Religion Poisons Everything.”
At Their Core, These People Are]

CONTROL FREAKS

These Anti-Liberal Conservatives Know That Bringing Such A Commonwealth Into Being Means Jettisoning The Founders’ Obsession With Individual Rights. The Influential Advocate Of “Conservative Nationalism,” Yoram Hazony, Wants Americans To Abandon The Declaration In Favor Of A Nationhood Built On Protestantism And The Bible. America Is A “Revolutionary Nation,” Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) Insists, Not Because Of The Principles Of The Declaration And Not Even Because Of The American Revolution Itself, But “*Because We Are The Heirs Of The Revolution Of The Bible*” That Began With “*The Founding Of The Nation Of Israel.*” *There Could Hardly Be A Statement More At Odds With American Founders’ Liberal, Ecumenical Vision.*

Expressing A Belief In God Is No Threat To The Founders' System, *But Reshaping Society In Accord With Christian Teachings Is.* To Build The Nation Hawley And Hazony Imagine Would Require Jettisoning Not Only The Declaration But Also The Constitution, Which Was Designed To Protect The Declaration's Principles. The Christian Commonwealth Would Not And Could Not Be A Democracy Because The *Majority Of People Can't Be Trusted To Choose Correctly.* According To The Claremont Institute's Ellmers, "Most People Living In The United States Today —

Certainly More Than Half — Are Not Americans In Any Meaningful Sense Of The Term." They Are A "Zombie" Or "Human Rodent" Who Lives A "Shadow-Life Of Timid Conformity." ONLY "THE 75 MILLION WHO VOTED IN THE LAST ELECTION" FOR TRUMP ARE TRUE AMERICANS.

[Ed. Note: Please Take An Extended Moment To Process And Absorb Claremont's Mr Ellmers' Utterly [Pfucking] Remarkable Statement In The Previous Paragraph.

Using Grandpa Biden's Characterization Of The Ultra-MAGA Portion Of Trump's Supporters, Mr Ellmers Clearly Embraces Trump's Legion Of Deep Thinking And Otherwise *Discerning* Horde Of TRUMP TARDS (OR TURDS), MAGA MORONS, MILITIA MONKEY PATRIOTTS, QAnon FABULISTS AND FAR-RIGHT EVANGELICAL NUTTERS.] Instead Of Trying To Compete With Democrats In Election's That DON'T REFLECT THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, Ellmers Writes, "Why Not Just Cut To The Chase And *Skip The Empty Meaningless Process?*" The "Only Road Forward" Is *Overturning The Existing Post-American Order.*"

[Ed. Note: This Vision As Laid Out In The Paragraphs Above Brings To Mind An Urban Black Expression Of Which I Have Long Been Very Fond. To Wit, The Notion To "Show Your Ass." Please Search The *Urban Dictionary* Or Elsewhere.]

For These Intellectuals, Trump Is An Imperfect If Essential Vehicle For The Counterrevolution. A “Deeply Flawed Narcissist” Suffering From A “Bombastic Vanity,” As Deneen And Ellmers Note, He Has “Lacked The Discipline To Target His Creative/Destructive Tendencies Effectively.” But This Can Be Remedied. If Trump Failed To Accomplish The Desired Overthrow In His First Term, Deneen Argues, It Was Because He Lacked “A Capable Leadership Class.” Things Will Be Different In His Next Term. What Is Needed, According To Deneen, Is A “Self-Conscious Aristoi,” A Class Of Thinkers Who Understand *“Both The Disease Afflicting The Nation, And The Revolutionary Medicine Required For The Cure,”* Who Know How To Turn Populist *“Resentments Into Sustained Policy.”* Members Of Deneen’s Would-Be New Elite Will, Like Vladimir Lenin, Place Themselves At The Vanguard Of A Populist Revolution, Acting *“On Behalf Of The Broad Working Class”* While Raising The Consciousness Of The *“Untutored” Masses.* Indeed, According To Harvard’s Vermeule, It Will Be *Necessary To Impose The Common Good Even Against The People’s “Own Perceptions Of What Is Best For Them” — A Most Leninist Concept Indeed.*

[Ed. Note: For Those Who Have The Misfortune To Be Identified As “Untutored Masses”, Please Understand That You Will Be Expected To Show All *Appropriate* Gratitude And Deference To Those Who Only Want That Which Is Best For You.]

The Christian Commonwealth, Then, Would Require A Powerful Executive Freed From The Constitution's Liberal And Democratic Constraints. The New State, Vermeule Wrote, With Its "Robust Executive," Would "Sear The Liberal Faith With Hot Irons," Wielding The *"Authority To Curb The Social And Economic Pretensions Of The Urban-Gentry Liberals."* The Whiff Of Violence And Oppression In Such Statements Is Intentional. The Anti-Liberal Intellectuals Understand That Changing The Liberal System Will Require Far More Than An Election And A Few Legislative Reforms.

Deneen And Vermeule Are Often Dismissed As Mere Intellectual Provocateurs, [Ed. Note: Don't Do It; Please Take These People Seriously.] But Their Writings Stand Out Because They Have The Courage To Acknowledge That What They Seek Is Incompatible With The Founders' Liberal System. While Others Conceal Their Views Under A Phony Fidelity To American Liberal Principles Or Claim That What They Want Accords With The Founders' True Intent, Deneen, Vermeule And Other Anti-Liberals Acknowledge That The Country They Want, A Country Subservient To The Christian God, A Country Whose Laws Are Based On The Bible, Cannot Be Created Cannot Be Created Absent The Overthrow Of The Founders' Liberal And Defiantly Secular System. Even A Justice Of The U.S. Supreme Court, Neil M Gorsuch, Speaks Of The So-Called Separation Of Church

And State.” Anti-Liberalism At The Supreme Court Is Nothing New, Either.

And The Anti-Liberals Know As Well That This Year May Be Their Last Chance To Effect Their Counterrevolution. The Percentage Of The Population Made Up Of White People (Let Alone White Protestants) Is ***Steadily Shrinking***. Just As The Anti-Liberal Conservatives Of The Pre-World War II Years Closed The Immigration Gates Too Late And Were Overwhelmed By A Tide Of Non-Nordic Peoples From Southern And Eastern Europe, So The Immigration Wave Of Largely Non-White People Since 1965 Has Brought The Nation To The Cusp Of A Non-White Majority. *The Anti-Liberals Thus Face The Task Of Engineering The Revolution With Only A Minority Of The Electorate Committed To “Regime Change.”*

Trump’s Takeover Of The Republican Party Makes This Possible. Trump Is Not A Unique Figure In American History. In Each Generation, Anti-Liberal Forces Have Turned To The Same Breed Of Demagogue, The Flouter Of Norms, The Boorish Trampler Of Liberal Nostrums. William Buckley Noted That The Very “Uncouthness” Of George Wallace Seemed To “Account For His General Popularity.” James Burnham Marveled At How Joseph McCarthy’s “Inept Acts

And Ignorant Words” Had A “Charismatic” Quality That Well Expressed The Fears And Angers Of His Devoted Followers.

What Their Critics Saw As Boorishness And Malevolence, However, Their Followers Saw As Strength And Defiance Against A Liberal System Stacked Against Them. They Were Rebellious Opponents Of The System, “Wreckers,” Unabashedly Anti-Liberal In Both Thought And Manner, And That Is Precisely What Made Them Popular Among A Broad Swath Of White Americans Who Felt Themselves Losing Ground In The Culture And Society — To Black People, Catholics, Jews, Immigrants From The Non-Nordic Countries. Today, Exactly A Century After The Most Overtly Racist Immigration Restriction In American History, Trump Once Again Calls For More Immigrants From “Nice” European Countries, Such As Denmark, Switzerland And Norway.

Tump Did Not Just Stumble Into Leadership Of This Movement Of White Rebellion. He Summoned It. He Made His Debut As Presidential Aspirant On An Unabashed White Supremacist Platform, Championing The Birther Conspiracy That America’s First Black President Was Not In Fact An American. Riding That Issue Alone, He Catapulted To The Front Of The Republican Pack,

According To Polls In 2011, Before Bowing Out To Continue His Hit Show, “The Apprentice.” Whether His Debut As A White Supremacist Was Opportunism Or Sprang From Conviction Hardly Matters — It Certainly Has Not Mattered To His Followers. *The Fact Is, White Supremacy Has Been His Calling Card, And Millions Have Responded To It To The Point Where White Nationalists Have Become The Core Of His Movement.* Many Christian Nationalists Already See Him As A Suffering Christ, And In This Bizarre Sense It Is True That The Prosecutions Have “Helped” Him: The More Adversity He Faces, The More Court Battles He Must Wage, The More Allegations That Are Slung At Him, The More Devoted They Are To Him.

No Other Group Can Be Counted On For Such Absolute Loyalty. While Some Republicans Wobble When Asked If They Would Support If Convicted Of A Crime, White Christian Evangelicals *Overwhelmingly Say They Will Support Him No Matter What.* Trump Needs That Unshakable Loyalty Because He Is Fighting For His Life. The Thought That He Might End Up In Jail Has Given Him Every Reason To Hew As Closely As Possible To The People Who Will Stick With Him Even If He Is Convicted. These Are Also The People He Will Need To Back Him Unconditionally In Challenging The Results Of The Election Should He Lose. If He Wins, He Will Need Them In What Are Sure To Be Titanic Fights

With Democrats And The Legal System And To Keep The Republican Party In Line.

This Is One Reason Trump Has So Far Shown No Inclination To Reach Out Beyond His Base, To Nikki Haley Voters, To More Moderate Suburban Republicans, To Those Who Are Made Uncomfortable By His Statements And Actions. He May Show Flexibility On The Important Issue Of Abortion To Secure His Own Election, But Since Clinching The Nomination, He Has Only Hardened His Christian Nationalist Message. His “Poisoning The Blood” Campaign, His “Dictator-For-A-Day” Comments, His Release Of The Trump Bible, His Claim That, Upon Taking Office, He Will Create “A New Federal Task Force” To Fight “Anti-Christian Bias To Be Led By A Fully Reformed Department Of Justice,” Are All Aimed Directly At His White Christian Nationalist Base Without Much Concern For How Millions Of Other Republican Voters Feel About It. Christians Are “Under Siege,” He Claims In Hawking His Bible.

*“We Must **Make** America Pray Again.”*

Besides, His Hard Tack Toward White Supremacy And Christian Nationalism Has Cost Him Little Among The Broader Republican Electorate.

Why Not? Why Is There So Little Resistance To Trump Even As he Commits Ever More Deeply To A Christian Nationalist Program For Undoing The Founders' Liberal Project?

For Many, The Answer Is Simply Narrow Self-Interest, Either A Positive Interest In Supporting Him Or A Negative Interest In Not Opposing Him Or Being Seen To Oppose Him. This Seems To Be The Answer For Corporate America. Having First Followed Marketing Data To Appeal To The Broadest Cross-Section Of Americans By Embracing Communities Only Recently Enjoying More Of The Full Panoply Of Rights, Businesses Learned The Hard Way That Trump And His Movement Will Not Tolerate This And Have Mostly Retreated To Silence And Neutrality. But They Have Also Gone Further, Making Clear As Much As Possible That They Will Not Be A Problem For Him — Either Before He Is Elected Or After.

This Was The Message JP Morgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon Sent, From Davos, Switzerland, Of All Places, Early This Year When He Declared *That Trump Was “Kind Of Right About NATO, Kind Of Right About Immigration,”* That He

“Grew The Economy Quite Well.” There Is No Reason To Doubt That He Spoke For Many Of The Richest Americans And For Other Corporate Leaders. There Was No Outcry Among Them That Anyone Could Hear. The Truth Is, *They Have No Financial Reason To Oppose Trump.* They Know That Tump’s White Working-Class Followers Don’t Have To Be Paid Off Economically Because Most Care Chiefly About The Culture Wars. Trump Can Still Cut Taxes And Reduce Federal Regulations And Other Obstacles To Corporate Profit. The Rich And Powerful Will Always Have Some Purchase In A Trump Administration If Only Because He Needs And Respects Money And Will Want To Make Deals For Himself And His Family, As He Did In A First Term. Whatever Moral Or Political Qualms Business Leaders May Have About Trump, But The Bottom Line Dictates That They Get Along With Him, And If That Means Turning A Blind Eye To His Unconstitutional Actions — Dimon’s Favorable Recounting Of Trump’s First Term Notably Ignored His Attempt To Overthrow The Government — Then So Be It.

We Already Know That Little Or No Opposition Will Come From The Republican Party Ecosystem. *Among Elected Officials, The Few Willing To Stand Up To Trump Have Either Been Driven Out Of The Party Or Are Retiring So Fast That They Cannot Even Bear To Finish Out Their Terms.* Those Who

Remain Have Accepted Trump's Iron Rule And Therefore Now Have An Interest
In His Success.

But What About The Average Republican Voter, The “Normal” Republicans Who Happily Voted For George W Bush, John McCain And Mitt Romney? Do They Not See The Difference Between Those Republicans And Trump — Or Do They Not Care. They Do They Not Care. They, Too, May Feel Their Narrow Interests Are Served By A Trump Victory, And Although They May Not Be Christian Nationalists Themselves, Their Views As White Americans Make Them Sympathetic To The Complaints Of The Anti-Liberals. They, Too, May Feel They — Or Their Children — Are At A Disadvantage In A System Dedicated To Diversity And Wokeness. Their Annoyance With A Liberalism That Has “Gone Too Far” Makes Them Susceptible To Trump's Appeal, And, More Importantly, Unconcerned About The Threat He Poses. Left To Their Own Devices, They Would Not Be Interested In Overthrowing The Regime. But Neither Are They Inclined To Stand In The Way Of Those Who Are.

Are These Voters And GOP Power Players Right To Believe That They, Like Dimon, Will Be Just Fine In A System No Longer Faithful To The Founders'

Liberal Ideals? Perhaps So. They Will Not Be The First To Suffer From A Shift Back Toward A 1920s America. White Americans Tolerated The Systemic Oppression Of Black People For A Century After The Civil War. They Tolerated Violence In The South, Injustice In The Courtrooms, A Supreme Court That Refused To Recognize The Equal Rights Of Black People, Women And Various Minorities. Will They Rise Up Against A Second Trump Term Infused By Christian And White Nationalism, Or Will They Acquiesce In The Gradual Dismantling Of The Liberal Gains Of The Past Eight Decades?

*The Shame Is That Many White People Today Seem To Have Conveniently Forgotten How Much They And Their Forebears Have **Depended On The Founders' Liberalism** To Gain Their Present Status As Fully Equal Members Of American Society And To Enjoy The Freedoms That They **Take For Granted**.*

[Ed. Note: Right-The-Pfuck-On, Mr Kagan.]

Most White Republicans, After All, Do Not Have The “Legacy European” Lineage That Tucker Carlson Praises. They Do Not Have Ancestors Who Stepped Off The Mayflower Or Fought In The Revolution. The Ancestors Of The Great Majority Of “White” Americans When They First Set Foot On American

Shores. Irish Americans May No Longer Remember That The Thomas Nast Cartoons Of The Late 19th Century Depicted The Irish As Apelike Creatures. Many Italian Americans May Not Recall That A Riot Made Up Of “New Orleans’ Finest” Lynched And Murdered 11 Sicilian Immigrants And Were Never Charged.

Many Catholics Seem To Have They Were Once The *Most Despised Group* In America, Such That One Of The Founders, John Jay, Wanted Them Excluded Them From Citizenship Altogether. *Most White Americans Were At One Time Members Of Despised Immigrant Groups.* They Were The Victims Of The Very Anti-Liberalism They Are Now Voting Back Into Power. They Climbed To Equality Using Liberalism As Their Ladder, And Now That They Have Reached Their Destination They Would Pull Away The Ladder And Abandon Liberalism. Having Obtained Their Equality Using The Laws And Institutions Of Liberalism, Their Passion For Liberalism Has Faded.

The Founders Understood, And Feared, That The Fervor For Rights And Liberalism That Animated The Revolution Might Not Last. Writing In 1781, Two Years Before The End Of The War, Thomas Jefferson Predicted That Once The

War Ended, “We Shall Be Going Downhill.” The People Would Return To Their Quotidian Lives, Forgetting Their Passionate Concern For Rights, Intent Only On “Making Money.” They Might Never Again Come Together “To Effect A Due Respect For Their Rights,” And So Their Government Would Stop Being Solicitous Of Their Rights. Over A Half-Century Later, Lincoln, In His Famous Lyceum Address, Lamented That The Original Spirit Of The Revolution Has Dissipated With Time, Leaving Americans With Only The Normal Selfishness Of Human Beings. The Original “Pillars Of The Temple Of Liberty” Had “Crumbled Away.” A Little Over Two Decades Later, The Nation Fell Into Civil War.

If The American System Of Government Fails This Year, It Will Not Be Because The Institutions Established By The Founders Failed. It Will Not Be Because Of New Technologies Or Flaws In The Constitution. No System Of Government Can Protect Against A Determined Tyrant. Only The People Can.
This Year We Will Learn If They Will.

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