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In The Ashes of Antifascism
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Antifascism, as a meaningful path for resisting fascism, has been dead in the water for some time now. Perhaps, it was dead on arrival. It is not entirely or even mostly the fault of many enthusiastic anti-fascists, I do not want to dismiss the brave souls that took to the streets, that took up the gun to fight back by any means necessary, but rather those who constructed the scaffolding for what antifascism out to be and failed to illustrate what exactly fascism was and how it was to be defeated. Anti-fascism may have emerged from the most radical sects of society, the anarchists and communists, but it was immediately tainted, defanged, and co-opted by capitalists so thoroughly as to mean nothing. My analysis is not simply a critique, but it's an introduction into how I think we must move forward if we want to survive what is to come.

There are multiple problems here.

First are the people unwilling to engage in history and theory, it is a form of anti-intellectualism where they seek to solve for a problem they aren't capable of diagnosing. They call themselves antifascists, they fail to meaningfully study anything, then other antifascists who are bit more well-read tend to coddle these peo-

ple, a thousand excuses to avoid theory are given, and then theorists are made to simply be bookworms, which is absolutely true if you're a liberal, but radicals have shown that our theorists are often engaging in action as much as they are theory. Their view and understanding of anti-fascism permeate the scene, so you get god awful takes like American soldiers being anti-fascist or you get groups like the American Iron Front, and these people don't eagerly create resistance, they eagerly recreate the conditions for failure.

Second, the people who are willing to engage in history and theory, but they only do so from the lens of recent antifascist authors who themselves completely neglect radical history and theory.

Their work is so egregious that we almost must start a theory of anti-fascism from scratch entirely, if it were not entirely too late, and if there was not another means to address the current political moment.

So, who are these authors?

Robert Paxton, author of the *Anatomy of Fascism*, will be the focus of this episode to illustrate how bad our framework is. I don't even know if he identifies as an anti-fascist. He is seen as the leading expert on fascism, having been well-sourced by many modern antifascists, and I'll break down why he is so bad at being said-expert, to include that he didn't even identify Trump as a fascist until after his first term as president.

Next is Mark Bray, supposedly an anarchist who could not be bothered to even reference one of the first Italian antifascists and one of the best anarchist theorists, Errico Malatesta, in his *Antifascist Handbook*. He also couldn't be bothered to source Daniel Guerin, another anarchist, who like Malatesta, had thorough first-hand experience with fascism, and wrote extensively on the subject in his book, *Fascism and Big Business*.

That brings me to my last author, Alexander Reid Ross, who, despite referencing Daniel Guerin and Errico Malatesta, did not actually expand on either of their work about fascism, and also partic-

problem we are concerned with. But the revolution is not a myth simply to be used as a point of reference. Precisely because it is a concrete event, it must be built daily through more modest attempts which do not have all the liberating characteristics of the social revolution in the true sense. These more modest attempts are insurrections.

In them the uprising of the most exploited and excluded of society and the most politically sensitized minority opens the way to the possible involvement of increasingly wider strata of exploited on a flux of rebellion which could lead to revolution.”

ipated in a whole host of Israeli war crimes denialism in which he later deleted a ton of tweets where he suggested that Israel wasn't in fact bombing hospitals and there was a real chance the Palestinian resistance did it. Open-Source Intelligence has poisoned the well so to speak and requires more intelligence than its adherents are typically capable of. As far as I've scanned through his tweets, he's never made any apologies for doing Israeli Occupation Force's PR for free, but I digress.

The main common thread between these three is that their ability to create and produce analysis relies on the fact they're American college professors. I mean that more as a derogatory statement than an analytical statement, again I digress.

As you may have noticed, I keep referencing Daniel Guérin and Errico Malatesta, mainly because of Alexander and Mark's unfortunate proximity to anarchists, and I don't expect a liberal like Paxton to reference them, but Mark Bray is the only one who does not fail to source Aimé Césaire, who rather brilliantly conceptualized fascism as the terrific boomerang that I'll go over later from his writing, *Discourse on Colonialism*.

Here, we have the Holy Trinity of American antifascists whose conclusions are ultimately that we must stop fascism without destroying American democracy, which is in fact the root cause of American fascism.

It is unfortunate because Bray clearly doesn't believe this, towards the end of his *Antifa* handbook, but he barely touches on the need to do more, the necessity of anarchism, and it is such an absolutely narrow and shallow analysis that it makes you wonder who he was writing to, cause most of the folks I know who've read and recommend his work don't remotely think it's important or share that analysis. In turn, I think that despite it being a handbook for anti-fascism, it simply ensures they won't defeat fascism.

Is the problem, potentially, that they manage to discuss fascism without ever sourcing the most well written antifascists of the time and presenting the shallowest analysis of fascism possible? Espe-

cially when it comes to fascism's relationship with capitalism as a tool of capitalism.

These people are anti-fascists as much as Robin DiAngelo is an anti-racist. Or inversely, anti-fascism is as bankrupt as a concept as anti-racism when it fails to be anti-capitalist. I'm not going to get ahead of myself here though, what I'd like to do is present Robert Paxton's work, break down some of the key components that make it fundamentally flawed, and how these fundamental flaws undermine any approaches to fight fascism.

What cure can you possibly provide if your incredibly confident diagnosis misses the mark entirely?

I would like to start by reading an excerpt of Errico Malatesta's "Why Fascism Won" written in 1923.

"Fascism, which synthesizes all the reaction and calls back to life all the sleeping atavistic ferocity, won because it had the financial support of the rich bourgeoisie and the material help of the various governments that wanted to use it against the pressing proletarian threat; it won because it found against it a tired mass, disillusioned and made helpless by fifty years of parliamentary propaganda;

but above all it won because its violence and its crimes have certainly provoked the hatred and spirit of revenge of the offended but have not aroused that general reproach, that indignation, that moral horror which it seemed to us should arise spontaneously in every gentle soul.

And unfortunately there will be no material reconquest if there is no moral revolt first.

Let's say it frankly, however painful it is to verify.

There are also fascists outside the fascist party, in all classes and in all parties: that is, everywhere there are

nance of democracy as a function of capitalism. They will conjure an endless list of counterinsurgent reasons for you not to that may attempt to sound remotely radical.

The genocide has shown that even though American fascists are overwhelmingly white supremacists or Black and Brown people vying for whiteness, the pro-democracy faction is a rainbow coalition of genociders where your ancestor may not have been a settler, but Black or Brown you certainly have climbed the ladder to being a settler as you cheerlead Israel's genocide by safeguarding democracy and capitalism from revolution.

If you can riot, if you can strike, if you can directly confront fascism, you can and must do that to capitalism and democracy, because only by destroying capitalism and democracy can you finally stop fascism. They're heads of the capitalist hydra, not enemies despite the frictions and violence, and the hydra is merely wondering which one to face you at this political moment. The fight against fascism is the fight against democracy because the fight, if fought correctly, is ultimately the fight against capitalism. As long as anti-fascism safeguards democracy, it will never actually be anti-fascism, and we must move beyond it. Anti-fascism has become an ideological prison that ensures we will fail.

We must conceive of what resistance looks like in the ashes of antifascism, not within its restrictions.

The pursuit of anarchy, the pursuit of communism, these are insurrectionary pursuits and there is no other way we are going to get there. Whenever we pursue permission, through it be the middle managers of capital such as the nonprofits or unions, or more directly, through the state, we have already bent a knee to capital, ensuring we are its defenders and never its destroyers.

I leave you with this piece from the article Some Notes on Insurrectionary Anarchism, featured in Killing King Abacus, Vol 2.

"As anarchists, the revolution is our constant point of reference, no matter what we are doing or what

chists, shame armed resistance, and then center that the only strategy possibly is one that engages in electoralism and anyone who deviates from that is a threat to the movement. They'll give you all the exhausting litany of "well yeah, I don't like this politician, BUT" and recreate the apologia presented within the current antifascist framework.

If we want to meet the current political moment, our only response can be unmitigated hostility in whatever forms that takes, but it cannot die when the heads of state change. The hostility we had towards Trump in the first administration should've immediately transferred to Biden, but clearly, these so-called radicals which are just edgy liberals were a bit too excited about brunch and pondering which ways could they divide up the spoils of American imperialism into a welfare state they'd never get to see. Antifascism is no longer a capable strategy of protecting each other, we either pursue the death of capitalism and the birth of communism, or we continue in this endless cycle of democracy and fascism without ever confronting capital.

On a final note, I have seen liberals use the term "distraction" to refer to ICE abductions. That this is a distraction from.. policy or something that's happening that is somehow infinitely more important than the fact the policy is also centered on promoting this same harm. It's idiotic and an echo of constant liberal counterinsurgency:

Directly confronting the system of oppression is a distraction, the real thing is focusing on electing people to take back Congress. This is most assuredly the opposite.

If you can confront fascism, you are certainly capable of confronting capitalism and colonialism. They want to pacify you, they want to distract you, they want you unable to actually resist, because they want you to resist in a way that is not antithetical to capitalism. They want to turn you into a loyal opposition and render you incapable of anything, where at best, you perpetuate the on-going systems of genocide and violence through the mainte-

people who, despite not being fascists, despite being anti-fascists, nevertheless have a fascist soul, the same desire to abuse that distinguishes fascists."

Again, this was published in August 28th, 1923 yet no one is this article referenced it and I'm curious as to why, aren't you? Ross, Bray, and Paxton don't go into the bourgeois backing of fascism. Paxton even argues that it isn't a thing, and we'll see how bad that analysis is through his own example later. Then you have the last paragraph of Malatesta's.

"Everywhere, there are people who, despite not being fascists, despite being anti-fascists, nevertheless have a fascist soul, and the same desire to abuse that distinguishes fascists."

Why, in 1923, would one of the most famed antifascists and anarchists, specifically call out that there are people who identify as being anti-fascist yet embody the fascist soul?

To deeply paraphrase him, he argues that these people are essentially cops without formally being cops and there are politicians who, despite not being fascists, think fascists have the right to operate the government as they see fit since they're in power. Like Democrats, these politicians believe in crossing the isle, that they have plenty in common to include their patriotism, and that these are differences to simply be reconciled because ultimately, they don't see them as enemies until they are the ones directly threatened. A politician can watch their constituents literally be tortured and killed, but it means nothing until they're facing the danger themselves.

Malatesta believes that if the Italian Republicans all held this opinion and that the fate of fascism were to depend on them, not only would Mussolini be correct that he'd remain power for thirty years, but the Italian Republicans would have him remain for three hundred years. This is also why he argues that parliamentary propaganda also rendered people ineffective in resisting fascism and make no mistake, we don't have a parliament in the US, but Ross,

like Paxton and despite his proximity to anarchists, is in fact a democratic and electoral propagandist, seeing it as vital to resisting fascism, and Malatesta clearly identifies it is why he and his antifascist comrades lost in Italy.

Malatesta is far from wrong, let's move onto Paxton.

I could touch a lot of cornerstones of Paxton's whole body of work in the *Anatomy of Fascism* and why it's a problem, there's plenty of times where it lacks specificity or he ignores primary sources from the time period or he ignores peers who are incredibly more educated on this topic than himself.

Although I don't know if I fully agree with Umberto Eco's *Ur-Fascism* and as a matter of fact Eco is a bit of a piece of shit especially when he talks about American radicals use of fascist pig as the article was written in 1995 and you'd think he'd have been familiar with the violence of police imposed upon revolutionaries within the United States, but he gibbly makes it about a smoking habit. I think his fourteen points of fascism presented give a lot more useful specificity in a shorter written form than Paxton's entire book.

But Eco, like Paxton, like Ross, like Bray, really fail to emphasize capitalism's relationship to fascism. Bray is the only one who even emphasizes its relationship with colonialism, although in a limited matter, and Ross mentions it in a chapter subheadline, but then also doesn't really elaborate on it. Again, keeping the focus on Paxton, it is no wonder he fails to both mention capitalism and colonialism, especially since the topic of Israel comes up, and outside of the US, Israel is another settler colonial that provides an interesting problem in how we conceptualize fascism. I want to apologize in advance because after I'm done quoting this son of a bitch, I am going to start cursing and getting a little loud right after.

Paxton writes,

"If religious fascisms are possible, one must address the potential—supreme irony—for fascism in Israel.

liberal counterinsurgencies before it, it had diminished the people's abilities to fight back against the state, not through a new successful law enforcement strategy, but a mix of successfully utilizing the non-profit complex to weed out the militants from social spaces and traditional policing practices.

We are coming to a point that is beyond the purview of this episode, but when the Palestinian resistance opened up the fronts of conflict once more, there was a global call to resist by any means necessary, and there was a condemnation of the American-Palestinian movement's overemphasis on nonviolence. When Arab organizers called to block the boats, then not only failed to block the boats, but actively prevented militants from blocking the boats, it signaled an escalation of successful non-profit counterinsurgency. Militants from coast to coast heard of this betrayal.

Although not intentional, but as a result of rational and ethical failures, these organizers set up a trap by putting out a false call, even if it hadn't been false in their perception, the call to block a boat, and when actual militants and revolutionaries were interested in answering that call, as they had during the George Floyd uprising, they immediately put them at-risk of the state, condemning them as adventurists, publicly saying legal names before police, the list goes on. When I say they put out a false call, but maybe not false in their perception, is that liberals, even if they identify as Marxist-Leninists, overestimate the action they perform, and that a sign-waving protest at a dock is essentially on part with Houthis boarding ships, until militants actually board ships, and then the Marxist-Leninists quickly re-learn for just a moment that they are liberals, then immediately capitulate to law enforcement.

They offer a plethora of nails for the coffin, that militants could most assuredly never operate within these spaces again because the crowds no longer became safe, but also meant a withdrawal from the greater organizing scenes in general. It is no wonder these same people host training seminars with people that deride anar-

in its intentions, it will collapse. A police force where there are no crimes to solve or criminals to apprehend, will invent both, or cease to exist.”

I think its important to note here, Malatesta had a medical background and was a vital part of mutual aid efforts during a cholera epidemic. An anarchist with a medical background, this metaphor is close for him. One last note, Dauve refers to the Spanish Republican state as reviving its organs, within the same article he references Malatesta to critique anarchist unions, so I think Malatesta may influence Dauve more than folks are aware of.

Back to the topic now, let’s revisit to the past ten years. There was a revolutionary energy within the first Trump administration and it pivoted heavily towards the end during the George Floyd Uprising. Although the energy was coast-to-coast for 2020, it devolved into more regional conflicts in the years following, dwindling. Biden’s election was the capitalist democratic tendency giving it another go at counterinsurgency, especially as Trump had unsuccessfully attempted to maintain power by having made too many compromises with the Old Guard.

Make no mistake, Biden’s election wasn’t a compromise with revolutionary forces to stifle dissent. It was certainly capitalism configuring a way to stifle dissent among the exploited, there was just no compromises associated with it, which is why he did not get a second term, and even if he had made compromises, it did not mean we would avoid the current repression we are facing. Capitalism is shifting towards totalitarianism because its been unable to reconcile the increasing tensions born from climate change, poverty, alienation, and the unhinged violence of the state.

What it saw in the George Floyd Uprising was more terrifying than what it had observed during the Occupy Movement because it saw a movement willing to physically escalate against the state in ways the United States had not seen in decades. Biden’s administration was a successful counterinsurgency, though, and like other

Israeli reactions to the first and second intifada have been mixed. Israeli national identity has been powerfully associated with an affirmation of the human rights that were long denied to Jews in the Diaspora.”

Pause, it is hard to read this without some sense of fucking irony myself. The cognitive dissonance is real. The reason he had a hard time thinking of Trump as a fascist follows the same ethics that leads him to believe this about Israel. End pause.

“This democratic tradition forms a barrier against “giving up free institutions” in the fight against Palestinian nationalism. It has been weakened, however, by two trends—the inevitable hardening of attitudes in the face of Palestinian intransigence, and a shift of weight within the Israeli population away from European Jews, the principal bearers of the democratic tradition, in favor of Jews from North Africa and elsewhere in the Near East who are indifferent to it. The suicide bombings of the second intifada after 2001 radicalized even many Israeli democrats to the right. By 2002, it was possible to hear language within the right wing of the Likud Party and some of the small religious parties that comes close to a functional equivalent to fascism.

The chosen people begins to sound like a Master Race that claims a unique “mission in the world,” demands its “vital space,” demonizes an enemy that obstructs the realization of the people’s destiny, and accepts the necessity of force to obtain these ends.”

Buddy, what the fuck are you talking about? Are you fucking kidding me? If I could place a hand on each side of your head and fucking let out a blood curdling scream, I would. Just even as an

aside, the weird association of fascism happening with Jewish people from North Africa and the Near East and acting like its primarily European Jewish people who are anti-fascist even within Israel, there is so much to fucking unpack there. But to a more cohesive response:

Before I dive in, Mark Bray in the Antifascist handbook barely touches upon Israel except for mentioning German anti-fascists supporting Israel. Ross interestingly touches upon Israeli violence in Gaza and more in Against the Fascist Creep than he has since the latest resurgence of genocidal violence in Gaza but then twists it to be pressingly concerned about Israeli democracy being subjected to fascism potentially as he uncritically cites the Anti-Defamation League.

Here we have two prominent authors of anti-fascism within America and both times they bring up Israel is to be concerned about Israeli democracy against fascists within Israel, but for Israel's entire existence, it has been genociding Palestinians, forcing them into open aired concentration camps, stealing their land from them, and expanding its apartheid state, all under the oversight of capitalist democracy.

Not just that, but the supposed fascists they're concerned with in Israel are indistinguishable from the original Zionists who spear-headed the colonial project who are often celebrated by these enthusiasts of democracy.

Are you seeing a trend here?

If we recognize Israel, like the United States, is a settler colony, at what point does fascism become a meaningful distinction especially if we want to resist it?

Is it just the speed of genocide?

Is our lesser evilism rooted in a slower versus a quicker genocide?

Is that a hill you want to fucking die on?

Especially if people are more content with not resisting the slower genocide or doing so in ways that never work, like sign

It is true that to these basic functions, to these essential organs of government, other functions, other organs have been added in the course of history. Let us even also admit that never or hardly ever has a government existed in any country with a degree of civilisation which did not combine with its oppressive and plundering activities others which were useful or indispensable to social life. But this does not detract from the fact that government is by its nature oppressive and plundering, and that it is in origin and by its attitude, inevitably inclined to defend and strengthen the dominant class; indeed it confirms and aggravates the position."

Malatesta also uses a similar language here to Dauve's. It's easy to go off topic here, but Dauve critiques anarchist unions, which Malatesta was also critical of, and in his critique says they're unions before they are anarchists, because the "function transforms the organ." Despite whatever ideas it may have had. Malatesta follows the similar logic in a critique to authoritarian socialists,

"Such are the objections the authoritarians face us with, even when they are socialists, that is when they want to abolish private property and the class government which it gives rise to.

We can answer that in the first place it is not true that once the social conditions are changed the nature and the role of government would change. Organ and function are inseparable terms. Take away from an organ its function and either the organ dies or the function is re-established. Put an army in a country in which there are neither reasons for, nor fear of, war, civil or external, and it will provoke war or, if it does not succeed

did find someone, that they'd do anything beyond sign holding to stop said-violence.

Malatesta's analysis of state in 1891 in his pamphlet *Anarchy* though, lines up with Dauve's view of democracy and fascism as tendencies of capitalism. In the same sense, it also explains democracies in their relationship to colonialism, for while they have not initiated colonialism, they were certainly its final and largest beneficiaries. As a heads up, for those who aren't familiar with the term because it comes up quite a bit, when Malatesta says *gendarme*, he's talking about cops.

He says,

“Even with universal suffrage — and we could well say even more so with universal suffrage — the government remained the bourgeoisie's servant and *gendarme*. For were it to be otherwise with the government hinting that it might take up a hostile attitude, or that democracy could ever be anything but a pretence to deceive the people, the bourgeoisie, feeling its interests threatened, would be quick to react, and would make use of all the influence and force at its disposal, by reason of its wealth, to recall the government to its proper place as the bourgeoisie's *gendarme*.

The basic function of government everywhere in all times, whatever title it adopts and whatever its origin and organisation may be, is always that of oppressing and exploiting the masses, of defending the oppressors and the exploiters: and its principal, characteristic and indispensable, instruments are the police agent and the tax-collector, the soldier and the gaoler — to whom must be invariably added the trader in lies, be he priest or schoolmaster, remunerated or protected by the government to enslave minds and make them docilely accept the yoke.

waving? The largest protest movement in history failed Iraq and it's the one protest movement we're eagerly recreating. Paxton doesn't even ask, why are Palestinians doing suicide bombings? Why was there an intifada? Paxton used the word intransigence, which means refusal to agree basically, and like, what do fucking mean you mean Palestinians are refusing to agree?

That they refuse to agree to colonial whims?

That they refuse to die?

That they refuse to submit?

Paxton, for the love of god, what do you fucking mean?

What about this Israeli democratic tradition that is spearheading genocide versus the Palestinian nationalism that is trying to prevent it? What about the Israeli paramilitaries who initially tried to collaborate with Nazi Germany in their pursuit of nationhood? If Israeli national identity is a bastion of human rights denied to Jewish people in the diaspora, one must ask, at what fucking cost?

Because the suggestion, which there is truth to it, is that liberal democracies as “bastions of human rights” have always been born on the genocide of settler colonialism and not only do they do nothing to amend this history, but they also actively sanitize it as part of their national mythologies. If Paxton's analysis was honest about democracies and about capitalism, along with other antifascist theorists, we would come to the conclusion that the best way to fight fascism is to destroy the democracy that births it, sustains it, and keeps it in the wings, ready to implement at a moment's notice against anything that resists it.

This man's politic, at this point, is incomprehensible except that we know it's a fundamentally Zionist politic and we think that someone like this can give us an actual strategic assessment in confronting fascism?

Now, I want you to keep democracy in mind at this point. Both Ross and Paxton are positioning themselves as defenders of democracy, even when said democracy is Israel, whose been actively one

of the longest surviving modern apartheid states whose committing a genocide.

That is apparently a democracy worth saving, a bastion of human rights.

Democracy, to these people, is just a neutral, unequivocal good with no additional notes, no reflection on its relationship to capitalism or the bloodletting imperialist adventures on its behalf or its colonial origins, nothing. A democratic government called the United States didn't enslave and genocide millions on purpose, it was just imperfect and trying to work itself out. Which, yes, that is how a member of SEIU leadership phrased that in a training recently among people wanting to "resist Trump", that before his fascist totalitarian regime, we had an imperfect democracy making progress.

It is telling how democracies are weirdly infantilized, that we are simply waiting for them to grow up, that we shouldn't hold them to account for what they're currently doing or have done, and look, we all make mistakes on our way to adulthood, we're just getting there, however slow.

It is weird. It is so weird. It is like democracies haven't been led, throughout its entire existence, by a group of landowners who wouldn't hesitate to have others commit violence on their behalf, if not themselves.

It is easy to be a patient voting bloc when the gun isn't turned on you, well, until the fascists show up, and suddenly you experience the need to be decisive. It is easy to preach patience when you aren't directly in the warpath. Yet you finally experience the fear your democracy has been instilling in other people, the violence.

The problem of fascism and with antifascism by association is it does everything to sanitize democracies. Even the rhetoric of, "the United States has always been fascist" doesn't work because there is an implication of a good democracy that is obtainable, and not that the problem is both democracy and fascism, that democracy throughout its entire existence as we know it has been an oppres-

colony? In his *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aimé Césaire says, and I quote,

"And then one fine day the bourgeoisie is awakened by a terrific boomerang effect: the gestapos are busy, the prisons fill up, the torturers standing around the racks invent, refine, discuss. People are surprised, they become indignant. They say: 'How strange! But never mind—it's Nazism, it will pass!' And they wait, and they hope; and they hide the truth from themselves, that it is barbarism, the supreme barbarism, the crowning barbarism that sums up all the daily barbarisms; that it is Nazism, yes, but that before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples; that they have cultivated that Nazism, that they are responsible for it, and that before engulfing the whole edifice of Western, Christian civilization in its reddened waters, it oozes, seeps, and trickles from every crack."

Is this conception of the United States' current violent as fascistic, a distraction that this is the settler colony's return to form? Is it a distraction because if we recognize, this violence isn't unique, and it is never that the United States has committed less violence in its history, but it became a question of where did the United States commit violence and that most of the American population or at least a sizeable amount was absolutely fine with it, as long as it wasn't in their backyard? You could toss a stone in a crowd and find any number of people who were against the Iraq war. You couldn't toss a stone and reliably land on someone who thought it was worth laying down their life to stop said-violence or that, if it

from crippling totalitarianism, such a fight increases totalitarianism's stranglehold on society."

The past ten years have resoundingly proven this to be true. The end of Trump's first term was seen as an antifascist victory, to many of the lukewarm antifascists without an actual analysis as the rest of us knew either a second term or another fascist was inevitable. The line that stands out to me in particular is "fascism is the adulation of the statist monster, while anti-fascism is its more subtle apology." We see this in both Ross and Paxton's views on Israel, whereas what's scary in Israel is the right of the Israeli fascist wing, and this doubles as a subtle apologia for the horrors Israel has been committing its entire existence.

The same thing happens within the US context, but people make excuses for time. Sure, the US had camps, slaves, mass extinction, and endless list of on-going horrors within its own border not even counting what it did abroad, but, this happened over the course of years. Genocide is only bad when the ratio of violence to years of violence is higher. Millions of dead indigenous people over a few hundred years is less bad by this metric than six million Jewish people, not counting the Nazis other victims, in less than a decade. So within the context of Israel, yes hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have suffered over the decade, but would you rather have a fascist Israel that immediately murders all of them?

That is the choice we're presented with. Fascism, even when it doesn't exist, serves as a boogeyman to give a pass to the real, everyday violence of democracies. I had a member in the org I'm in have the audacity to tell me, if we lose to fascism, we certainly aren't saving Palestine. You mean the Palestine whose entire suffering has been spearheaded by democracies, you fool. We certainly aren't saving Palestine as long as democracy exists. As Dauve's section title state, "Not Fascism or Democracy, Fascism And Democracy." I mentioned Aime Cesar earlier. I've expressed a few times that there are challenges in asking, what is fascism in a settler

sive instrument rather than a liberatory one. Essentially, we see people conjuring whatever reason for them not being in open conflict against capital, probably because they are its beneficiaries, but I digress.

Back to Paxton, again.

My key issue with Paxton's work, to include his zionism, is his argument that fascism is somehow not a tool of capitalism. Malatesta saw and wrote this in 1923, Guerin wrote his first edition of *Fascism and Big Business* in 1939, I say that again, 19-fucking-39, and the second edition in 1973. To expose the intellectual bankruptcy of Paxton, I'll dig into this paragraph, and I hope you'll see it as the nail in the coffin for what it is.

"Considering fascism simply as a capitalist tool sends us astray in two respects. The narrow and rigid formula that became orthodox in Stalin's Third International denied fascism's autonomous roots and authentic popular appeal. Even worse, it ignored human choice by making fascism the inevitable outcome of the ineluctable crisis of capitalist overproduction. Closer empirical work showed, to the contrary, that real capitalists, even when they rejected democracy, mostly preferred authoritarians to fascists. Whenever fascists reached power, to be sure, capitalists mostly accommodated with them as the best available nonsocialist solution. We had occasion to see that even the giant German chemical combine I. G. Farben, whose ascent to the rank of the biggest company in Europe had been based on global trade, found ways to adapt to rearmament-driven autarky, and prospered mightily again.⁸ The relations of accommodation, foot dragging, and mutual advantage that bound the business community to fascist regimes turn out to be another complicated matter that varied over time.

That there was some mutual advantage is beyond doubt. Capitalism and fascism made practicable bedfellows (though not inevitable ones, nor always comfortable ones).”

He doesn’t show the closer empirical work. I don’t even need to address Stalin, who I don’t give a fuck about, to handle this. His example undermines the entirety of this argument. Now, I have piss poor memory, I have to rely on re-researching things all the time, but fortunately I’m half decent at researching. The moment IG Farben crossed my eyes, I felt a thousand internal alarms go off. I knew that name, I knew it well, and I knew it was horrific, but the specifics of the horrors eluded me. So I quickly rushed to the internet. What was this IG Farben again, that Paxton felt was a good example of a practical bedfellow?

Ah, it was that IG Farben.

The one who invented Sarin gas, the one who supplied and profited off Zyklon B in the gas chambers, the one who used concentration camp labor for its products, and whose scientists would experiment on people in the concentration camps. That IG Farben. The one who destroyed as many records as possible when they lost the war to avoid prosecution, leaving only a little amount of staff to get prosecuted, a handful of whom were active SS members.

That is Paxton’s example of a “practicable bedfellow”.

Interestingly enough, it gets more horrifying. I saw a mention that IG Farben not only did all of that but also had completely paid off the Nazi’s debt when they were not in power. Guerin’s book didn’t have that much information on Farben specifically. I desperately needed more information, but I also didn’t want to buy the books I saw it in, and then I finally came across an article about it. Ciara Torres-Spelliscy wrote for the Brennan Center For Justice an article titled “How Big Business Bailed Out the Nazis” written in May 20 of 2016. Appropriate timing.

I won’t read the whole article, but I’ll read some key excerpts.

they knew in reality only when opposing it. It is all too obvious that anti-fascism renounces revolution. But anti-fascism fails exactly where its realism claims to be effective: in preventing a possible dictatorial mutation of society.

Bourgeois democracy is a phase in capital’s seizure of power, and its extension in the 20th century completes capital’s domination by intensifying the isolation of individuals. Proposed as a remedy for the separation between man and community, between human activity and society, and between classes, democracy will never be able to solve the problem of the most separated society in history. As a form forever incapable of modifying its content, democracy is only a part of the problem to which it claims to be the solution. Each time it claims to strengthen the “social bond”, democracy contributes to its dissolution. Each time it papers over the contradictions of the commodity, it does so by tightening the hold of the net which the state has placed over social relations.

Even in their own desperately resigned terms, the anti-fascists, to be credible, have to explain to us how local democracy is compatible with the colonization of the commodity which empties out public space, and fills up the shopping malls. They have to explain how an omnipresent state to which people turn for protection and help, this veritable machine for producing social “good”, will not commit “evil” when explosive contradictions require it to restore order. Fascism is the adulation of the statist monster, while anti-fascism is its more subtle apology. The fight for a democratic state is inevitably a fight to consolidate the state, and far

“Democracy is not dictatorship, but democracy does prepare dictatorship and prepares itself for dictatorship.

The essence of anti-fascism consists in resisting fascism by defending democracy: one no longer struggles against capitalism but seeks to pressure capitalism into renouncing the totalitarian option. Since socialism is identified with total democracy, and capitalism with an accelerating tendency to fascism, the antagonisms between proletariat and capital, communism and wage-labour, proletariat and state, are rejected for a counter-position of democracy and fascism presented as the quintessential revolutionary perspective. The official left and far left tell us that a real change would be the realisation, at last, of the ideals of 1789, endlessly betrayed by the bourgeoisie. The new world? Why, it is already here, to some extent, in embryos to be preserved, in little buds to be tended: already existing democratic rights must be pushed further and further within an infinitely perfectible society, with ever-greater daily doses of democracy, until the achievement of complete democracy, or socialism.

Thus reduced to anti-fascist resistance, social critique is enlisted in dithyrambs to everything it once denounced, and gives up nothing less than that shop-worn affair, revolution, for gradualism, a variant on the “peaceful transition to socialism” once advocated by the CPs, and derided, thirty years ago, by anyone serious about changing the world. The retrogression is palpable.

We won’t invite ridicule by accusing the left and far left of having discarded a communist perspective which

“It’s a largely forgotten piece of history, but in 1932 the German Nazi Party was facing financial ruin. How did the Nazis move from being broke to being in control of the German government just a year later? The Nazi Party was bailed out by German industrialists in early 1933.

The industrialists who led the way were two huge German firms, I.G. Farben and Krupp. Leaders of both companies were among the few civilians who were later charged with war crimes at the Nuremberg Tribunals after World War II. These trials placed the story of their financial and moral support of the Nazis into the historical record. Krupp was a huge arms manufacturer. I.G. Farben was a vast chemical company which made everything from Bayer aspirin to Zyklon B, the poison used in the gas chambers.

According to The Arms of Krupp, the Nazi Party was essentially bankrupt in late 1932. Joseph Goebbels, who would later become the Minister of Propaganda, complained, “[w]e are all very discouraged, particularly in the face of the present danger that the entire party may collapse....The financial situation of the Berlin organization is hopeless. Nothing but debts and obligations.”

Regardless of the party’s financial problems, Hitler was named Chancellor in late January 1933. He called for elections in early March. With less than two weeks left before the vote, Herman Goering sent telegrams to Germany’s 25 leading industrialists, inviting them to a secret meeting in Berlin on February 20, 1933. Attending the gathering were four I.G. Farben directors and Krupp chief Gustav Krupp. Hitler addressed the group, saying “private enterprise cannot be maintained in

a democracy.” He also told the men that he would eliminate trade unions and communists. Hitler asked for their financial support and to back his vision for Germany.

According to Robert Jackson, the former Supreme Court Justice and chief U.S. prosecutor at Nuremberg, “[T]he industrialists...became so enthusiastic that they set about to raise three million Reichsmarks [worth about \$30 million today] to strengthen and confirm the Nazi Party in power.”

IG Farben was responsible for \$4.5 million of that \$30 million, but make no mistake, that \$30 million was the leading industrialists of Germany.

IG Farben was Paxton’s example of a practical bedfellow.

If your example of a practicable bedfellow is one of the key members of a group of industrialists bankrolling your entire political party, isn’t practical bedfellow a bit of a fucking understatement? When does the line from practical bedfellow to ally or full-blown support of the cause happen? Where is the distinction here? Is it the same distinction, perhaps, that distinguishes the genocide of Israeli democracy versus a genocide that would happen under an Israeli fascist regime?

Is the distinction in the room with us?

I’m picking at IG Farben, but Gustav Krupp was a capitalist that secretly aided German rearmament and the lead bankroller of the Nazis. His son, Alfried Krupp was a capitalist who got about a hundred thousand forced laborers in from the concentration camps to include prisoners of war. Krupp would later admit he had no sense of guilt in 1959, eight years after receiving amnesty from Americans where he received his Nazi earnings back with a few conditions.

Interestingly, the capitalists who incredibly benefited from the fascists saw no real punishment from the Allies. They seemingly

a traditional dictatorship, similar to Spain, which was not fascist according to him.

He seems eager to emphasize the important difference between a monarchist, a nationalist authoritarian, and a fascist, but capitalists like Krupp the senior effortlessly flow between all three, where he was once a monarchist, then eagerly joined the Nazis thinking it would be a return to monarchism, and when that failed, was content with simply associating with Nazis, and despite whatever political position he had, the entire time he was still a fucking capitalist. Franco may not have been a fascist, but he made the fascist party the only official party and could not have succeeded without the aid of fascists.

At what point does fascist and authoritarian hold meaningful distinctions from one another if the thread that intertwines them all is their capitalist financiers?

Is it fascism when you’re the victim and totalitarian when you’re the ally?

Where does it end?

And what does this all mean at the end of the day?

What it means is, American antifascists have done everything they can to fully flesh out fascism in a way that is disconnected from the reality: fascism means nothing without capitalism behind the wheel, fascism means nothing without its colonial roots.

Gilles Dauvé takes antifascist up to tasks and I regret having not read him sooner. In *Fascism/Antifascism*, there is a subsection titled “Antifascism – the Worst Product of Fascism” and about a decade ago, I would’ve told you that was a weird conception, how is the opposition to Nazism and its genocidal nature as bad as it?

This must possibly be some “the left and the right are equally bad” bullshit, right?

How wrong I was.

Rather than quoting directly from *Fascism/Antifascism*, I’m going to rely on his revisions in the newer piece titled, *When Insurrections Die*. He writes,

have less diversity than American military units. This isn't to engage in liberal conceptions of diversity, it is the inverse, that the settler class opened its ranks, and those who quickly joined were those who'd been gate-kept for the most part.

This was conceptualized as neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism abroad and has been the reality here, it was just a reality people did not want to come to terms with. Our fight must fundamentally be against both the settler democracy and fascism simultaneously. So when you see me use the term settler, I am using it to identify both the bourgeois and its working class enforcers within a settler colony. Many so-called radicals still fit within the label of settler and this isn't a new reality, even in moments of revolutionary upheaval. When France exiled revolutionaries to New Caledonia and the Kanak rose up, the exiled revolutionaries rather than combat its capitalist oppressors, became settlers by siding against the Kanak whereas actual revolutionaries, like the anarchist Louise Michel, sided against the colonial regime. This would later influence her anarchism as she participated in anti-colonial events towards the latter half of her life within North Africa.

Returning to our analysis on Paxton's argument about fascism not being a tool of capitalists:

Paxton's egregious analysis of capitalism coupled with presenting an even more egregious example of IG Farben for his argument is enough to bring the whole of his research into question because he clearly thought the analysis of the relationship between fascism and capitalism was not worth exploring. He was so quick to simplify it and so quick to dismiss it that it undermines the entirety of the work. It renders his analysis of fascism ahistorical. This doesn't help that he tries to make a distinction between fascism and totalitarianism, for that distinction to be lacking. By Paxton's standard, Chile under Pinochet could not be fascism quote," these cannot be legitimately be called fascist because they neither rested on popular acclaim nor were free to pursue expansionism" and must be

had everything to gain and nothing to lose as they kept their power even after Hitler's downfall with just a little bit of prison time, incredibly small in disproportion to their war crimes.

Yet, according to Paxton, they're just practicable bedfellows and fascists aren't tools of capitalists. I have nothing kind to say about Paxton's intelligence, because we assume a few things from here, both from how he saw IG Farben, of which this information was well out when he published his book, and he's not addressed it since then seemingly.

When I say we can assume a few things, let's bullet point it. Either:

1. Paxton is a capitalist absolutely refusing to portray capitalism in a bad light. We can assume this for his absolute refusal to interrogate, why would capitalists sooner be a practicable bedfellow to a group of people with a politics hellbent on genocide and actively participating in it then people who were known for, at the time, pushing for improvements and worker autonomy. OR
2. Paxton is a capitalist, but he was trying to be earnest in his research and simply did a piss poor job of being a researcher then stumbled into being the foremost American expert on fascism because he was able to present an analysis of fascism that didn't threaten America or western liberal democracies.

Either is an absolute condemnation of his body of work.

Either also explain his inability to explain, why did capitalist democracies seem so interested in absolving the capitalist funders of fascism that it would regularly commute their prison sentences and even let them keep their profits earned during fascism?

Why did these capitalists continue to hire fascists with war crime records, decades following the war crimes?

His view of Israel solidifies how bad his analysis is. The problem here is not just Paxton's body of work, but his framework, his

conceptualization, and his lack of analysis of capitalism as it relates to fascism permeates throughout the entirety of American anti-fascism, and we see this happen in both Bray and Ross' work.

In *Against the Fascist Creep*, Ross also offers no analysis of fascism' relationship to capitalism as his overemphasis is on fascism as it permeates within radical spaces, which is an important element to center on, but unfortunately Ross' online presence performing soft PR for Israel and his lack of connecting fascism to capitalism provides nothing useful for antifascists to work with while quietly suggesting western liberal democracies don't have a problem with a fascist creep, primarily through refusing to acknowledge it. Ross doesn't go into the relationship between liberals and fascism, his online presence has him regularly condemning leftists for not toeing the liberal electoral strategy to fight fascism as he fails to recognize the liberal electoral strategy builds fascism over time. ICE could not have existed without liberal democracy, and neither could of the mercenary company, Blackwater's descendants. Fascists paramilitaries were empowered over the years through democracy. None of that is acknowledged by Ross.

He's essentially writing to people he assumes are already versed in what fascism broadly is and we see, within the American context, especially as he himself relies on Paxton, that the American antifascist scene doesn't have a useful working framework whatsoever. He hopes that, in his conclusion, people are better educated to defend themselves against fascism and gives no image to what that looks like beyond buzz words that liberals co-opted from anarchists.

I think back to Israel: what is the difference between a democracy committing genocide versus a fascist state committing genocide? Because this also applies to the US settler colony.

Let me take a moment to talk about the identity of a settler since I use it here more than the people I tend to source.

Settler, for many theorists, was synonymous with whiteness and their analysis of whiteness was used in conjunction with that. That is a giant thing that would be tough for me to cover here, especially when you have many other theorists who've already rather robustly covered it in detail, such as Theodore W. Allen's *The Invention of the White Race*. I would argue that the modern settler identity, despite whatever white fascists and white nationalists are doing, has been increasingly detached from whiteness or at the very least has subsumed its processes. Being a settler is ultimately defined by participating in the exploitation and violence against indigenous people and their lands, to which anyone in 2025 to include people who come from colonized backgrounds, can make for eager Settlers. I think recent events reveal how eagerly Black and Brown Americans like the Irish and Italians before them are engaging in settler violence in hopes to transcend their class. Capitalism tries to be amorphous and often succeeds, if we treat theory as static rather than dynamic we miss things over and over.

The terrain shifts.

So, my conceptualization would explain the plethora of Latinos within ICE, it would explain the Black liberal counterinsurgency to justify the butchering of Gaza, it would explain the tribal government sellouts, it would explain the Ethiopian Zionists who despite facing racism in Israel still happily participate in its Occupation Forces, and that traditionally colonized people can tear themselves from that history to join the modern settler identity eagerly.

Certainly, there are white nationalists who do not want them to do this, but this has been the American reality for a long time now, and the fight within the United States is between the assimilationist settler democracy versus a fascism that still happily recruits Black and brown people as its foot soldiers against their own.

I said it elsewhere, but there's plenty of places where America's Gestapo is less white than a DSA chapter and you've got more Latinos in ICE than you'll ever have in so-called revolutionary organizations. I've seen anarchist Bookfairs and socialist parties that