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# [Neoliberal Fascism, Cruel Violence, and the Politics of Disposability](#)

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### **The Politics and Culture of Cruelty**

Cruelty has always had a special place in fascist politics. Not only did it embody a discourse of hate, bigotry, and censorship, it also initiated a practice of cruel power in order to eradicate those ideas, dissidents, and human beings considered unworthy. Legacies of fascism in Hitler's Germany, Pinochet's Chile, Franco's Spain, and Mussolini's Italy, among others, mixed a language of dread, fear, and contempt with wide-spread practices of suppression and the repressive power of the state in order to eliminate any just concept of politics and the structural conditions and ideological possibilities for developing civic and democratic communities.

Under fascist regimes, however diverse, cruelty and its transformation into extreme violence occupied the very core of everyday life.[1] Cruelty as a form of extreme violence was structured in relations of domination and traded in fear, insecurity, corruption, forced precarity, and the production of what Etienne Balibar calls “death zones.”[2] Under such circumstances, politics and violence permeated each other, and in doing so transformed all vestiges of the social state into a punishing state. Fascist politics represented a war waged not only against democracy, but against the social contract, public goods, and all social bonds rooted in “movements of emancipation aimed at transforming the structures of domination.”[3] The social does not disappear in this context but is simply removed from democratic values and ruthlessly subjected to the workings of capital.[4]

Fascist regimes not only emptied politics of any substantive meaning, they pushed it towards its own destruction, reducing it to a form of barbarity.[5] In retrospect, fascist regimes made the culture of hardness and cruelty central to their politics—a politics that menaced all aspects of society, functioning as a disimagination machine that destroyed civic culture, any viable sense of inclusive citizenship, and critical thought. Delight in the misery and suffering of others was normalized as part of a wider war on social responsibility and critical institutions, creating the conditions necessary for the triumph of ignorance, irrationality, and the legitimation of what I call the politics of disposability.[6] The merging of violence and politics did more than test the limits of democracy and social justice, it also pushed at the limits of the unthinkable and unimaginable. As the bar for civic tolerance and social justice disappeared, a form of totalitarian terror emerged in which groups were marked out for terminal exclusion, social abandonment, and in the worse case scenario, extermination. One consequence of the embrace of a culture cruelty by fascist regimes was what the French Philosopher Etienne Balibar calls “production for elimination.” He is worth quoting at length:

In the face of the cumulative effects of different forms of extreme violence or cruelty that are displayed in what I called the “death zones” of humanity, we are led to admit that the current mode of production and reproduction has become a mode of production for elimination, a reproduction of populations that are not likely to be productively used or exploited but are always already superfluous, and therefore can be only eliminated either through “political” or “natural” means—what some Latin American sociologists provocatively call *poblacion*

chatarra, “garbage humans,” to be “thrown” away, out of the global city. If this is the case, the question arises once again: what is the rationality of that? Or do we face an absolute triumph of irrationality?[7]

The culture of cruelty has a long history in the United States. Adam Serwer, writing in *The Atlantic*, reminds us of the catalogues of cruelty on display in the Museum of African American History and Culture. He points to artifacts of inhumanity that include slave shackles worn by children, the mutilated bodies of lynched Black men, and photos of grinning whites who took enormous pleasure in the torturing of those bodies considered worthless, of no value, and objects of racial contempt. In the more contemporary moment, we have examples of bodies kidnapped, tortured, and imprisoned in black holes by the Bush administration.[8] Of course, it is well known that the Trump presidency made cruelty a central policy in its dealings with migrants, people of color, and the separating of children at the border from their parents. The latest exercise in unqualified cruelty, worn like a badge of honor, comes from a number of GOP governors, especially Florida’s Ron DeSantis, who are waging an attack on trans children, using migrants as political pawns, and reviving a culture of overt white supremacy.[9]

The Trump regime also produced a range of policies that rejoiced at the anguish of others evident in the cutting of the safety net and programs that included support for Habitat for Humanity, the homeless, the meals on wheels program, energy assistance to the poor, legal aid, and a number of anti-poverty programs. By injecting violence into politics, moving it from the margins to the center of power, Trump and his followers advanced the descent of the US into barbarism. Violence is now so deeply rooted in American culture that it appears to have been normalized.[10] According to data from the Gun Violence Archive, there have been over 600 mass shootings per year in the U.S. since 2020.[11] Mass shootings now take place daily and are barely acknowledged, and if they are noted, it is almost in purely personal terms, reduced to examining the personal lives of the perpetrators and victims. Larger systemic causes of violence are no longer part of the analysis. Violence has become so arbitrary and thoughtless that it no longer warrants sober reflection regarding its causes or consequences. This is especially true regarding violence, both symbolic and real, waged in the name of white supremacy by a Republican Party that is deeply racist and authoritarian. Violence, as Jonathan Schell once noted, has “steadily gained ground along with

a growing faith in force as the solution to almost any problem, whether at home or abroad. Enthusiasm for killing is an unmistakable symptom of cruelty.”[12] Rarely is this current descent into the culture of cruelty connected to the legacy of fascism and its updated version of authoritarian capitalism or what I have called neoliberal fascism. What is new in the current historical moment is the visibility and normalizing of extreme violence and cruelty—a visibility produced in social media, media coverage, and in all aspects of the entertainment industry. Violence has become part of a staged performance and mode of political theater that harks back to the fascist integration of aesthetics into the mesmerizing spectacle of violence and intense auras and displays of cruelty.[13] Violence has become apocalyptic and spectacularized. A theater of cruelty and violence now functions to consolidate power, shatter the bonds of solidarity, and create a culture of white supremacy and Christian extremism.

### **The ghosts of fascism are back.**

With the reappearance of fascism, democracy turns phantom-like and dark, and Americans face the plague of a hate-filled politics with its lethal and expanding politics of disposability—a politics in which some individuals and groups are regarded as non-human, treated as excess and human waste, presented as faceless, superfluous, and symbols of fear, disease, morally incorrigible, and unworthy of human rights and dignity.[14] When fascism’s attributes are isolated and removed from history, there is no analysis here of broader systemic power relations, no overlapping, or comprehensive understandings of how an emerging fascist politics is part of a new totalizing formation that permeates every aspect of the social order. Following the work of Adorno and Horkheimer, there is no holistic mode of inquiry; that is, there is no broad-based analysis that moves beyond focusing on specialized issues, isolated problems, and individual events—such as removing the violent attack on Nancy Pelosi’s husband from a wider culture of violence that provides the conditions for such events to occur. Or comprehensive analyses that relate such violence to an indictment of gangster capitalism in general. What remains are isolated and disconnected expressions of oppression, unrelated social movements, and narrow modes of analysis caught in a paralyzing and limiting modes of inquiry. Such disconnected and fractured approaches avoid and often refuse to examine how the present historical moment bears the weight of history, requires a broader systemic politics, and necessitates developing the theoretical and political tools essential to resist and demolish the threat of a fascist future. The catastrophes of our time are increasing normalized

by the refusal on the part of intellectuals, academics, pundits, and various media platforms to provide any comprehensive account for developing a critical vocabulary and analytics for understanding how major social problems are interrelated, how they are manifested in relations to other forms of oppression, and how they overlap and reinforce each other, and what this totalizing form of terror means for the present and future.

### **Neoliberalism as a Phase of Gangster Capitalism**

In recent times the United States has entered into an apocalyptically dystopian historical period. It is a period marked by a new phase of economic savagery—one that since the 1970s has embraced the ideology that all social life should be shaped by market forces, and that any political, social, or economic institution that puts a curb on corporate and private interests, unregulated markets, the amassing of personal wealth, and unchecked individual and property rights, among other issues, is the enemy of freedom. Under this regime of economic tyranny, social needs and social responsibility have been held in contempt along with the welfare state, the common good, and society itself. This was echoed in former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's infamous claim that "There is no such thing as society. There is only the individual and his [sic] family." It is precisely this regressive individual conception of self-hood with its unchecked notion of self-interest, agency, and freedom that defines neoliberalism.<sup>[15]</sup> Social problems, precarity, alienation, despair, suffering, and misery are now "individualized, and experienced as normal and inevitable."<sup>[16]</sup> Moreover, the collapse of ethics is complete in a fundamental neoliberal notion that any concern about social costs is the enemy of the market. Language has been hollowed out, transformed into a consumer advertising pitch, wedded to the spectacle of game shows, made dumb by celebrity culture, weaponized as part of a war on social responsibility, and censored in schools by right-wing propagandists who are wedded to using violence as a way to achieve political goals. The language of politics is written in the language of capital, not ethics, justice, and compassion, making it easier to connect violence with the most lethal workings of power. Violence is now facilitated by a glut of manufactured ignorance, accelerated through the degradation of language. In the age of dwindling attention spans, language succumbs to a mediated culture of immediacy, tweets, and a degrading commercial culture that limits the imagination, politics, civic life, and democracy itself. In the age of rebranded fascism, political culture is no longer a critical culture, and now functions to

undermine those civic and critical institutions and spaces in which an anti-capitalist consciousness can be developed.[17]

Under an emerging fascist politics, violence is no longer hidden behind a wall of silence, it is now worn like an honorary badge by far-right extremists in the Republican Party along with their supporters. Learned helplessness in America has morphed into learned cruelty and a retreat from the discourse of compassion, care, and truthfulness. Social bonds disappear in a neoliberal world of dwindling interconnections, atomized subjects, fractured communities, the suppression of historical memory, and civic disintegration. Facing life's problems is now a solitary affair reinforced by both the ongoing right-wing attack on historical memory and its increasing degeneration. Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah, in her lyrical and passionate commentary on "The Mystic of Mar-a-Lago," captures the shattering ideological architecture of this collapse of consciousness, integrity, and meaningful social bonds. She writes:

These days, so many of us speak the language of emergency, but where is the language of integrity, sincerity, and dedication? Gone is the ability to bear down, to think beyond ourselves, even in the most basic ways. Instead, we have been left to navigate a disabling pandemic on our own, with the most vulnerable left to their own resources. We are becoming a country anesthetized to people saying, "I am afraid for my life." The war on one another demands that we not stop to ask, "Why are you afraid?" but rather that we bear our right to be callous and to keep on. Mr. Trump gave people something to coalesce around as a communion of disdain, but it signified nothing at the end of the day.[18]

What has changed since the severe global economic crisis of 2007-2008 is that neoliberalism has fallen victim to a legitimation crisis. But American society has experienced more than a crisis, it has entered into what Stuart Hall calls a new historical conjuncture.[19] That is, a period when different social, political, economic, and ideological forces come together in society and give it a specific and distinctive shape. This new conjuncture is important to name and understand in order to resist it. As a rebranded form of politics, it does more than give free reign globally to finance capital, it also unleashes generic elements of a fascist past with its legacy of racial cleansing, rabid misogyny, mass violence, and a politics of disposability. This new historical moment or conjuncture represents the end of one period and the rise of another, which I label as neoliberal fascism. This new conceptual identity with its brutalizing ideological and economic baggage represents a new and relentless turning away from democracy, and

signals that the old period of the social welfare state, social contract, and emphasis on constitutional rights is no longer the defining politics of American society. In fact, it is currently the object of a white supremacist war to eliminate this older liberal period of American history and politics. The Trumpist slogan *Make American Great Again* [MAGA] rightly captures this new historical moment.

Neoliberalism no longer appeals to the old economics of private wealth creation and trickle-down benefits to either justify economic inequality or the promises of social mobility.[20] It has no solutions for mass poverty, the defunding of essential public goods such as schools, the crisis of social services, the deterioration of the public health sector, runaway drug prices, or staggering levels of inequality in wealth and power. Whatever economic growth took place benefited the financial elite. All the while, economic power translated into political power, further eroding the basic foundations of the democratic state and governance.[21]

Neoliberalism turns a blind eye to poverty and inequality and no longer offers a defense of its death-dealing ideology.[22] As Pankaj Mishra has noted, it cannot “improve material conditions and bring about measure of social and economic equality.”[23] Incapable and unwilling to defend the misery it imposes on the American public, it now appeals to overt racism and ultra-nationalism, claiming that liberal democracy is responsible for the ongoing economic and political crises that amount to “an abyss of failed sociality.”[24] Parading as a species of illiberal democracy, neoliberal fascism rejects democracy “as the incommensurable sharing of existence that makes the political possible.”[25] Instead, immersed in the “pornography of power,” mass-produced misery, and the bogus fantasy of unaccountability, neoliberalism updates itself, unabashedly aligning itself with anti-democratic forces across the globe that demonize, censor, and punish racial, gender, religious, and sexual minorities. [26] Dehumanization, racial cleansing, and repression are the new legitimating tools of this updated form of neoliberal fascism. Paul Mason captures this new alignment of neoliberalism and fascism. He writes: Neoliberalism’s collapse has stripped the current model of capitalism of all meaning and justification...the vacuum is being filled by an ideology hostile to human rights, to universalism, to gender and racial equality; an ideology that worships power, sees democracy as a sham, and wishes for a catastrophic reset of the entire global order. Worse, the number one weapon for the US right is that



self-same “eighteenth-century philosophy” that [allegedly] had given Americans immunity from totalitarian rule: their individualism, which has been turned against them during thirty years of free-market rule, and their belief that economic choice constitutes freedom.

Freedom has turned ugly in America.[27] Michael Tomasky rightly observes how freedom in right-wing discourse has become detached from any sense of social responsibility. He illustrates the point arguing that one measure of freedom’s detachment from social responsibility can be in the shameful argument by right-wing conservative at the heart of the pandemic “that freedom included the right to cough on strangers in the grocery store.”[28] Relatedly, Josh Shapiro, the Democratic-elect Governor of Pennsylvania (far from being on the left) provides a trenchant contrast of some of the ugly freedoms espoused by right-wing Republican Party politicians, such as the Christian nationalist, Douglas Mastriano, the far-right extremist he defeated in the race, and his conception of what he terms “real freedoms.” Shapiro writes:

It’s not freedom to tell women what they’re allowed to do with their bodies. That’s not freedom. It’s not freedom to tell our children what books they’re allowed to read. It’s not freedom when [ Mastriano] gets to decide who you’re allowed to marry. I say love is love! It’s not freedom to say you can work a forty-hour work week, but you can’t be a member of a union. That’s not freedom. And it sure as hell isn’t freedom to say you can go vote, but he gets to pick the winner. That’s not freedom. That’s not freedom. But you know what? You know what we’re for? We’re for real freedom. And let me tell you what, let me tell you what real freedom is. Real freedom is when you see that young child in North Philly and you see the potential in her, so you invest in her public school. That’s real freedom. That’s real freedom. Real freedom comes when we invest in that young child’s neighborhood to make sure it’s safe, so she gets to her eighteenth birthday. That’s real freedom.[29]

It is worth noting some earlier ideological conceptions of the neoliberal notion of freedom and how they have been appropriated by the extremist elements of the Republican Party. For example, Friedrich Hayek, highly influential Anglo-Austrian economist and neoliberal-arch theorist, argued in the early 1960s that the freedom of the individual can only be equated with the freedom of the market.[30] Freedom in this discourse reproduces the notion that social justice and ethics are irrelevant, if not dangerous to market freedoms. Freedom is removed from any notion of either social responsibility or solidarity. Collective

freedom either disappears or is considered pathological or dangerous. Reduced to the radical individualism and interests of the financial elite, these earlier neoliberal notions of freedom wage war against any collective notion of political and social agency and the institutions that enable them. Related to this view is the iron-clad neoliberal view that no activity should be concerned with social and economic costs. As the one of the American apostles of neoliberalism, Milton Friedman, once stated, without remorse or irony, the call to social responsibility is tantamount to “preaching pure and unadulterated socialism [and that] the use of the cloak of social responsibility, and the nonsense spoken in its name by influential and prestigious businessmen, does clearly harm the foundations of a free society.”<sup>[31]</sup> In this context, the crisis of social responsibility is connected to both the crisis of agency and the crisis of politics.

Under neoliberalism, the marriage of human capital and unfettered corporate interests is all that matters. As Caleb Crain has noted, relying on the insights of the émigré Hungarian intellectual Karl Polanyi, neoliberalism has morphed into a form of fascism that “strips democratic politics away from human society so that ‘only economic life remains,’ a skeleton without flesh.”<sup>[32]</sup> With the crisis of capitalism and the rise of fascist politics in the U.S, especially among the leaders of the Republican Party, moral, social, and ethical considerations have become objects of intense disdain, elevating a culture of cruelty and violence to unthinkable heights as a political tool and organizing principle of society.

At the heart of the violence sweeping across the United States is a contempt for human rights, equality, and justice. In this logic, compassion for the other disappears, the connections that tie human beings together are scorned, and the institutions that offer the possibility of a just society are eliminated. Identities and desires are now defined through a market logic that favors self-interest, a survival-of-the-fittest ethos and unchecked individualism. Under neoliberalism, life-draining and unending competition is a central concept for defining human relations, if not freedom itself. In a society of winners and losers, the movement from hatred of the other to violence against the other is easily normalized. Not only is this type of neoliberalism deeply rooted in a fascistic form of irrationality, it also embraces totalitarian impulses that legitimate and produce relentless acts of both mass violence and the daily violence and misery waged under the rule of gangster capitalism.

In the age of a coarsening neoliberal fascism, violence appears without limits and intrudes on every imaginable aspect of everyday life, not just in

attention-grabbing, relentless mass shootings. Not only has it produced a massive degree of fear, insecurity, and aggression, it has also, because of its pervasive and often spectacularized presence, diverted attention from the conditions that produce it. Aligned with a permanent war culture, neoliberal fascism now merges entertainment with political theater. In doing so, it widens the traditional sphere of politics in order to further expand the boundaries of its white supremacist and ultra-nationalist ideology and hatred of democracy. Selfishness and greed now merge with a mode of militaristic violence in which the suffering and death of those considered excess and disposable becomes a source of entertainment and pleasure—a rancid source of amusement, which obscures policies of raw contempt. Under neoliberal fascism, the aestheticization of politics has become complete.

This ecology and mass production of an image-based hate-politics provides the conditions for accelerating the turn to militarized violence by right-wing extremists. One distinctive feature of neoliberal fascist violence is its use of the old and new media as a form of theater that manipulates people's feelings and emotions along with their personal fears and anxieties. Right wing media have become echo chambers that serve as a staging ground for normalizing and enabling the increasing political violence, mass shootings, and militarization of American society. As the social sphere is shredded, politics experiences its own destruction, accompanied by the rise of extremist groups and a public drawn to a racist and xenophobic rhetoric and actions. In this instance, violence is increasingly aligned with a politics of cultural and racial purification. As violence is disconnected from critical thought, ethical sensibilities are neutralized making it easier for right wing extremists to appeal to the alleged exhilaration and experience of pleasure and gratification provided by the abyss of moral nihilism, lawlessness, and the operation of power in the service of mass aggression.

### **The Militarization of American Society**

The militarization of American society is almost complete, representing what William J. Astore calls peculiar form of collective madness.”<sup>[33]</sup> Rather than a source of alarm, it is a source of pride as force has replaced not only democratic idealism as the main source of U.S. influence abroad, it has also been normalized as an organizing principle of American society.<sup>[34]</sup> There is no longer any difference from the militarization applied abroad from the militarization now applied at home. A weapons culture has replaced a culture of shared democratic

values. Safety is regressively associated with personal security, surveillance industries, and unconstrained gun rights. The prison and its lockdown rituals now provide the model for public schools, social services, airports, and increasingly malls, churches, supermarkets, and synagogues. Right-wing Republicans view the Social Security administration and its programs with contempt while celebrating nativistic-inspired borders and Homeland Security.

There are no protective spaces left in America. The foreign terrorists that the U.S. has fought abroad have now come home. As the Anti-Defamation League has pointed out, “over the past decade... about 450 U.S. murders [have been] committed by political extremists. Of these 450 killings, right-wing extremists committed about 75 percent. Islamic extremists were responsible for about 20 percent... Nearly half of the murders were specifically tied to white supremacists.”<sup>[35]</sup> Homegrown extremists now pose the greatest threats of violence to Americans. A militarized and violent American now presents itself as a pure distillation of white supremacy, radical Christian nationalism, and bigotry. A permanent war culture has collapsed the line between domestic terrorism and the violence produced in the name of a war on terror abroad. Military weapons are now in the hands of the police. Domestic terrorists rather than foreign terrorists represent the greatest threats of violence in the U.S. The war against the planet and the threat of nuclear war cannot be separated from a permanent war mentality that now shapes both domestic and foreign policies. War fever dominates the public imagination and has become heroic. It is embodied not only in the language of right-wing ultra-nationalism but also in the authoritarian nationalism embraced by far-right neo-Nazis, the leadership of the Republican Party, white supremacists, and white Christian fundamentalists.<sup>[36]</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Neoliberalism expands the war machine along with the mentality that supports it. In its upgraded form of fascist politics, it produces new nuclear stealth bombers, such as the B-21 Raider, that threaten humanity and cost close to \$750 million apiece. The newly passed military budget amounts to \$858 billion and is a symbol of both political insanity and a psychological addiction to apparatuses of death. The latter is one element of a war machine that ignores problems such as staggering levels of poverty, homelessness, a crumbling health care system, a punishing carceral state, and a collapsing ecosystem. But it does more. It also poisons everyday life by banning abortions and books, gutting social security and social services, expanding an overly militarized police force, and increases the

growth of jails while cutting funding for public schools. Also at risk under the banner of neoliberal policies are women's rights, environmental protections, trade-union rights, and civil rights. [37]

Cruelty now parades as theater in the media matched only by policies that steal people's time, dignity, and lives. The time has come to take fascism down, not simply through the ballot box, but through a massive collective struggle and uprising that can bring this deadly politics and the gangster capitalism that supports it to a halt. This call for a full-fledged attack on fascist politics is especially relevant at a time in which socialist ideals are being revised. Calls for a universal income, defunding the police, health care for all, a renewed recognition of the structural nature of racism, state violence, and staggering levels of inequality—all point to a growing socialist consciousness in the U.S. Capitalism is a laboratory for fascism, and any viable mode of resistance must begin by calling for eliminating rather than reforming it. But to do so, as Barbara Epstein has noted, it is crucial for any viable resistance movement to move beyond a “fragmented Left held together by a vague commitment to a more just, egalitarian, and sustainable world...lacking a common focus or basis for coordinated action.”[38] The starting point for fighting neo-fascism lies in rebuilding a critical mass consciousness and a progressive multiracial movement capable of dismantling the oppressive ideological and structural regimes of neoliberal fascism.

As David Harvey has stressed, the fundamental problems of capitalism “are actually so deep right now that there is no way that we are going to go anywhere without a very strong anticapitalist movement.”[39] Now is the time for abolishing neoliberal fascism rather than attempt to soften its policies. The notion of a compassionate capitalism as preached by President Clinton's former Secretary of the Treasury, Robert B. Reich is an oxymoron.[40] The time has come for a strong anti-capitalist movement capable of reimagining and acting on how society should be organized along socialist democratic principles and what it means for ourselves and future generations. America needs a massive, sustained uprising fueled by mass collective resistance and the strategy of direct action for fundamental social transformation. It needs a radical vision along with what C. Wright Mills once called “big ideas” in order to give shape to a unified single revolutionary movement. It needs a new militancy that draws from struggles of the past in order to forge the appropriate weapons needed to fight this neo-fascist scourge in the present.

Fascism is on the rise across the globe along with the atrophy of civic culture and the political imagination. Without a *politically radical* educational and political movement to fight it, the deadly virus of fascism will reach its endpoint and democracy, even in its most tepid forms, will cease to exist. One source of hope comes from the words of James Baldwin written in another time of crisis. He writes: “Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” The urgency of the times demands that we remove the blinders before it is too late and face the impending fascist threat. The urgent question of what kind of world we want to live in is no longer rhetorical, it demands an urgent call to action. Collective resistance is no longer an option waiting to unfold, it is a necessity with no time to spare.

#### **Notes.**

[1] See, for example, Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941* (New York: Modern Library 1999); Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986),

[2] Etienne Balibar, “Outline of a Topography of Cruelty: Citizenship and Civility in the Era of Global Violence,” *We, The People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 127.

[3] Ibid., Etienne Balibar, “Outline of a Topography of Cruelty: Citizenship and Civility in the Era of Global Violence,” pp. 117.

[4] Henry A. Giroux, *Twilight of the Social: Resurgent Publics in the Age of Disposability* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[5] Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Touchstone, 1958).

[6] Bard Evans and Henry A. Giroux, *Disposable Futures: The Seduction of Violence in the Age of the Spectacle* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2015). Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2006).

[7] Ibid., Etienne Balibar, “Outline of a Topography of Cruelty: Citizenship and Civility in the Era of Global Violence,” pp. 128.

[8] See for instance Henry A. Giroux, *Hearts of Darkness: Torturing Children in the War on Terror* (New York: Routledge, 2010). Robert J. Lifton “American Apocalypse,” *The Nation* (December 22, 2003).

Online: <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/american-apocalypse/>

[9] Eric Alterman, “Altercation: Ron DeSantis Is an Honest-to-God Semi-Fascist,” *The American Prospect* (September 2, 2022).

Online:<https://prospect.org/politics/altercation-ron-desantis-is-an-honest-to-god-semi-fascist/>

[10] For an informative series of interviews on violence, see Brad Evans and Adrian Parr, *Conversations on Violence: An Anthology* (London: Pluto Press, 2021). Also, for a brilliant discussion of violence, Brad Evans, *Ecce Humanitas: Beholding the Pain of Humanity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

[11] See GUN VIOLENCE ARCHIVE 2022. Online:

<https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>

[12] Jonathan Schell, "Cruel America," *The Nation*, (September 28, 2011); online: <http://www.thenation.com/article/163690/cruel-america>

[13] Lutz Koepnick, "Aesthetic Politics Today – Walter Benjamin and Post-Fordist Culture," *Critical Theory – Current State and Future Prospects*, Edited by Peter Uwe Hohendahl & Jaimey Fisher, (New York: Berghahn Books: January 2002), pp. 94-116

[14] Brad Evans and Henry A. Giroux, *Disposable Futures: The Seduction of Violence in the Age of the Spectacle* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2015). Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2006).

[15] There are numerous books and articles addressing neoliberalism, a selected few include: Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (New York: The New Press, 1998); Pierre Bourdieu, et al., *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Alain Touraine, *Beyond Neoliberalism*, (London: Polity Press, 2001); David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Henry A. Giroux, *Against the Terror of Neoliberalism: Politics Beyond the Age of Greed* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Thomas Piketty, *Capital and Ideology* (Cambridge, Belknap, 2020); Noam Chomsky, *The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic and the Urgent Need for Radical Change* (New York: Penguin, 2021) and Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, *An Orgy of Thieves: Neoliberalism and Its Discontents* (CounterPunch Books, 2022).

[16] Jeremy Gilbert, "What Kind of Thing Is 'Neoliberalism'?" *New Formations*, (F.80/81, 2013), p. 15.

[17] I have developed this argument in detail in Henry A. Giroux, *Pedagogy of Resistance: Against Manufactured Ignorance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022).

- [18] Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah, "The Mystic of Mar-a-Lago," *New York Times* (November 20, 2022).  
Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/18/opinion/trump-maga-fetish.html>
- [19] Stuart Hall, "The Neo-Liberal Revolution," *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 6, (November 2011), p. 705
- [20] Prabhat Patnaik, "Why Neoliberalism Needs Neofascists," *Boston Review*, [July 13, 2021]. Retrieved from <https://bostonreview.net/class-inequality-politics/prabhat-patnaik-why-neoliberalism-needs-neofascists>
- [21] See, for instance, Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, Belknap, 2017); Thomas Piketty, *Capital and Ideology*(Cambridge, Belknap, 2020); Robert Kuttner, "Free Markets, Besieged Citizens." *The New York Review of Books*, [July 21, 2022].  
Online: <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2022/07/21/free-markets-besieged-citizens-gerstle-kuttner/>
- [22] Pankaj Mishra, "The Incendiary Appeal of Demagoguery in Our Time." *New York Times*, (November 13, 2016)  
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