



## Biden Targets White Extremists: An Old Left-Wing Ploy

In his address to a Joint Session of Congress in April, President Biden warned that white supremacists pose “the most lethal terrorist threat” to the U.S. “Make no mistake—the terrorist threat has evolved beyond Afghanistan since 2001 and we will remain vigilant against threats to the United States, wherever they come from,” he said. “And we won’t ignore what our own intelligence agencies have determined—the most lethal terrorist threat to the homeland today is from white supremacist terrorism.” Off script, he added, “White supremacy is terrorism.”<sup>1</sup>

Biden doubled down on August 3 in a written statement commemorating the second anniversary of a mass shooting by a lone 21-year-old white man in a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, saying that “America’s intelligence community has confirmed what the people of El Paso know all too well: the most lethal terrorist threat to our homeland in recent years has been domestic terrorism rooted in white supremacy.”<sup>2</sup> The El Paso suspect had reportedly posted online a hard-to-categorize manifesto ranting about Mexican migrants, environmental degradation and the effects of automation on employment.

Biden’s remarks went even further than those of FBI Director Christopher Wray, who testified before Congress in March, “The problem of domestic terrorism has been metastasizing across the country for a long time now. . . . [I]n June we elevated racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism to our highest threat priority, on the same level as ISIS and homegrown violent extremists.”<sup>3</sup>

### A Glaring Double Standard

These remarks came many months after 120 days of large-scale rioting across the country in the summer of 2020, not by “white supremacists” or white racists, but by left-wing activists led by Black Lives Matter and antifa and joined by neighborhood thugs. Biden and Wray apparently don’t lose any sleep about that form of domestic terrorism, which caused dozens of deaths, innumerable injuries and vast amounts of looting and property damage, with few consequences to the perpetrators. Mass rioting also occurred in January 2017 in Washington, DC to protest the inauguration of President Trump.

A few hours after the January 6, 2021 Capitol Hill riot, which was quickly and misleadingly labeled an “insurrection,” 20,000

troops were called out to protect the Capitol, which was sealed by an enormous barbed-wire fence. (Though indefensible, the Capitol riot involved no firearms and no deaths from other than natural causes, except for an unarmed female veteran who was shot dead by a Capitol police officer.) Suddenly white supremacy became an existential threat, and Biden asserted that white racism is systemic throughout American institutions and culture. More than 600 Capitol Hill protesters have been charged with crimes. Some have been held in extremely harsh solitary confinement and denied the opportunity to post bail.

In June, Biden’s National Security Council (NSC) issued a “National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism,” which can be found on the White House website.<sup>4</sup> The statement explains that the administration’s approach “was rooted in an expert assessment of the domestic terrorism threat provided by the intelligence and law enforcement communities,” which “found that the two most lethal elements of today’s domestic terrorism threat are (1) racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists who advocate for the superiority of the white race and (2) anti-government or anti-authority violent extremists, such as militia violent extremists.” Seriously?

The NSC document calls for civics education to enhance “media literacy and critical thinking skills” so citizens are “resilient” [sic] to “disinformation and misinformation online.”<sup>5</sup> In addition, the statement points out that for the first time the Department of Homeland Security has “designated ‘Domestic Violent Extremism’ as a National Priority Area.” Homeland Security plans to allocate \$77 million to state, local, tribal and territorial partners to fight domestic violent extremism. Meanwhile, the Department of Defense is allocating funds to train military service members to prevent them from becoming violent extremist actors.

The NSC strategy notes that Biden’s proposed 2022 budget calls for \$100 million to increase intelligence sharing and training about “terrorism and associated threats.” These activities will include efforts to “ensure domestic terrorists are not employed within our military or law enforcement ranks.” The NSC, as the document states, is focused on “finding ways to counter the [political] polarization often fueled by disinformation, misinformation and dangerous conspiracy theories.”<sup>6</sup>

Some conservatives rightly fear that that Biden's campaign against "white supremacy" is targeting them. Their concerns have been heightened by the introduction of critical race theory training in the American military, the military academies and federal employment.<sup>7</sup>

### 'Extremism' as a Political Ploy

**T**he lumping of conservative Republicans with political extremists, white supremacists, fascists and neo-Nazis has been a regular tool of the American left since the 1930s. While American Nazi sympathizers were few and far between in the 1930s (there were some), the left continued to warn of a potential fascist threat coming from the anti-New Deal right.

In 1934, former Marine Major General Smedley Butler charged that he had been approached by anti-New Deal military officers and businessmen, including Prescott Bush (the father of George H.W. Bush), to undertake a military coup against the Roosevelt administration. Details of this alleged plot remained vague at the time, but are still repeated on the left today. The *Washington Post* in reexamining the alleged 1934 plot this year opined breathlessly, "How close this fascist cabal got, and who exactly was in on it, are still subjects of historical debate. But as the dust settles after the pro-Trump attack on the U.S. Capitol, and as it becomes clearer how close lawmakers came to catastrophe, the similarities to the [1934] Business Plot are hard to ignore."<sup>8</sup>

In the postwar period Democrats continued to link opponents to fascism. President Harry S. Truman in seeking reelection in 1948 accused Republican presidential candidate Thomas Dewey of being a tool of fascists within American big business. Few took Truman to task for his overheated and false rhetoric.<sup>9</sup> In the 1950s, anticommunist conservatives were often portrayed as authoritarian extremists.

The left's linking of conservatism to authoritarianism, fascism and racism reached a hysterical pitch in the early 1960s with the prospect of the decidedly non-authoritarian Barry Goldwater winning the GOP nomination. A flood of magazine articles and books appeared warning of the authoritarian right. After Goldwater received the nomination, CBS reporter Daniel Schorr reported that Goldwater planned to go to Bavaria, "Hitler's old stomping ground," to launch his presidential campaign.<sup>10</sup> Schorr went on to serve as a senior news analyst for National Public Radio for decades.

As presidential candidates or as presidents, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush and Donald Trump were all smeared with comparisons to Hitler and Nazis—the *ne plus ultra* of fascism and white supremacy. The left particularly associated President Trump with white supremacy, without evidence.

The charge that conservatives are disposed to fascism because of a personality disorder originated in Theodor Adorno's book *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). Adorno was a researcher in the Frankfurt School, a group of German Marxist intellectuals who emigrated to America in the 1930s. The Frankfurt School, headed by Marxist Max Horkheimer, became one of the most productive and celebrated intellectual coterie in the postwar period.

Horkheimer developed "critical theory," an examination of bourgeois culture. He maintained that the working and middle classes had been bought off from revolutionary class struggle by consumer popular culture. The task of Marxist intellectuals was to reveal the contradictions of bourgeois culture through critical studies and to dismantle and retake cultural institutions. He was joined by other critical theorists such as the philosopher Herbert Marcuse (author of *One-Dimensional Man*) and the psychologist Erich Fromm (author of *Escape from Freedom*), whose books reached a popular audience.

In the 1930s, while still in Germany, the Frankfurt School undertook studies of authoritarianism and the bourgeois family. In discovering that German workers were not favorably disposed to communism, the Frankfurt School began to focus on the bourgeois family as a source of what the researchers saw as passivity and a tendency toward authoritarianism. Frankfurt researchers relied heavily on the insights of their colleague Erich Fromm to explain this problem.

### Dubious Theories of Authoritarianism

**F**romm, a committed Freudian, sought to develop a psychological portrait of the German working class through extensive interviews. He concluded that German workers were given to psychological escapism through popular bourgeois culture and a marked tendency to defer to state power exerted by strong leaders. The roots of these tendencies, Fromm argued, could be found in the bourgeois family, which embedded sexual inhibition and fear in the child. Fascism was the inevitable outcome of the patriarchal authoritarian family, he and other researchers concluded.

Research into the authoritarian personality continued after the researchers at the Frankfurt School emigrated to America in the 1930s to find a home at Columbia University. Led by Adorno, Fromm and Horkheimer, the researchers concluded that authoritarian tendencies could be detected in certain personality types. Seeking funding to pursue their research, the Frankfurt School linked their study of the authoritarian personality type to anti-Semitism. This focus on anti-Semitism led the American Jewish Committee to award a grant to the group to study prejudice and anti-Semitism.

In 1950 Adorno and three co-authors published *The Authoritarian Personality*. The book argued that certain personality types showed authoritarian tendencies that disposed them to anti-Semitism, racial prejudice, and fascism. The dominant

theme of *The Authoritarian Personality* is that anti-Semitism and racial prejudice were the result of repression of one's aggressive impulses, which were released toward Jews and members of other minority groups. These conclusions were based on a few key questions in their long questionnaire, which focused on views toward fathers, patriotism, religion, God and political authority. Respondents admiring their fathers, proclaiming patriotic and strong religious views, and accepting political authority were labeled authoritarian based on the F (fascist) scale employed by the researchers.

### Recent Challenges to the Frankfurt School

The book launched a tidal wave of studies on the same theme. *Psychological Abstracts* from 1950 through 1980 listed more than 2,341 studies on authoritarianism and dogmatism. Social scientists probing the data of *The Authoritarian Personality* found the study described in the book seriously flawed methodologically, but nevertheless deemed its general conclusions correct: Authoritarianism (later labeled rigidity of thought) was found only on the right side of the political spectrum, generally supporting Adorno's schema.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, most studies in the ensuing years denied that there was such a thing as left-wing authoritarianism. The search for left-wing authoritarianism was analogized to the search for the Loch Ness Monster.

While social scientists entered into a glass bead game of debating the authoritarian personality type, with studies full of data and statistical analysis, the concept of the authoritarian personality entered into the popular culture. Historians such as Richard Hofstadter at Columbia University wrote best-selling books on the paranoid personality and anti-intellectualism found in American culture, especially on the right and in populist movements.

However, as left-wing authoritarianism reared its ugly head in recent cancel culture, a younger generation of social scientists began to revisit the issue. Lucian Gideon Conway and other university researchers disputed the view that authoritarianism is a uniquely right-wing phenomenon.<sup>12</sup> Conway directly challenges those social scientists who argue, as one did, that "I have yet to find a single 'socialist/Communist type' who scores highly (in absolute terms) on the [left-wing authoritarian] Scale. . . the authoritarian on the left has been as scarce as hen's teeth in my sample."<sup>13</sup>

Contrary to such conclusions, Conway and his fellow researchers found liberal identified respondents (not just radical leftists) who supported such statements as "Our country needs a mighty and liberal leader" who should "destroy the radical traditional ways"; people should "trust the judgment of the proper authorities," and should "strongly punish those who try to uphold what they claim of God's laws"; and "this country would work a lot better if certain groups of Christian trouble makers would shut up and accept their group's proper place in society."<sup>14</sup> Conway's study *concluded that liberal respondents unequivocally support "extremely strong authority to guide*

*them, rule society with an iron hand and viciously punish society offenders."*

Conway's conclusion was confirmed in another major study by Thomas H. Costello and Shauna Bowes et al., "Clarifying the Structure and Nature of Left-Wing Authoritarianism," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (2021). The latter study found that the major difference between left-wing authoritarians and right-wing authoritarians is that left-wingers want strong leaders to implement vague concepts to create an egalitarian society, while right-wing authoritarians believe society is naturally oriented toward hierarchy.

These social science studies showing left-wing authoritarianism will not surprise many witnessing left-wing power grabs today, including Big Tech censorship, Covid-19 lockdowns, mask mandates even for pre-school children, and the growing surveillance state. Sinister attempts by leftists to have conservatives fired, forced out of business or "doxxed" occur frequently. And the violent left-wing protest movement known as "antifa", though nominally anti-fascist, most closely resembles 1930s fascist brownshirts who terrorized European cities.

### Few Crimes by White Supremacists

The obvious question raised by the Biden administration's crusade against white supremacy is *who exactly are these white supremacists?* The left's rhetoric suggests that they are hiding in the Republican Party, especially among Trump supporters. Former Fox television host Bill O'Reilly looked at data coming from the Department of Justice to determine the extent of the white supremacist threat. He found that *in 2019 there were only five federal cases brought against 75 alleged white supremacists. In 2020 there were five more cases brought against 14 white supremacists.*<sup>15</sup> Even for suggesting that the white supremacist threat was minimal, O'Reilly encountered a vicious backlash on social media, with some posting that O'Reilly was a white supremacist himself and most making ad hominem attacks about his firing from Fox News for alleged sexual harassment.<sup>16</sup> His numbers were not disputed, however.

Regardless of how few cases have been brought against white supremacists, federal agencies have been directed to make a priority of extirpating white supremacist terrorism. If we take President Biden at his word, he is more concerned about white supremacy than about Islamist, antifa, or anti-white, anti-Semitic or anti-Asian terrorism and crime.

At the same time, federal agencies, the armed services, the military academies and many large corporations have undertaken educational programs using critical race theory to prevent white supremacism in their ranks. These so-called educational programs are as authoritarian as any Maoist Cultural Revolution struggle session. The programs allow no escape from the charge of racism. Statements such as "I don't see color, I see an individual" or "I believe in equal opportunity, merit, and being rewarded for hard work" confirm racism in the eyes of critical race theorists.

So, who are the real authoritarians? Using the Frankfurt School's own measure—however flawed it was—anti-Semitism was a key measure of the “authoritarian personality.” The so-called “Squad” within the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives—Reps. Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ayanna Pressley and Cori Bush—are notorious for their anti-Semitic comments which are given a pass by the House leadership.<sup>17</sup>

As violence between Palestinians and Israelis escalated in the Levant in May, Black Lives Matter organized pro-Palestinian protests in Upper East Side New York and the Diamond District that turned into attacks on Jews seen on the street. Similar attacks on Jews occurred in Los Angeles where pro-Palestinian protesters went after Jewish diners at a sushi restaurant screaming “death to the Jews.” The Anti-Defamation League receive 193 reports of anti-Semitic incidents in the last week of May, nearly 60 more than the week prior to these demonstrations.

Jews make up a disproportionate share of hate-crime victims. Although they constitute only 2 percent of the population, they account for 60 percent of the victims of all religiously motivated hate crimes.<sup>18</sup> For example, in 2018, Jews were twice as likely as Muslims or black Americans to be victims of hate crimes. National data on the background of the offenders are hard to come by, but based on scattered news coverage the perpetrators of hate crimes against Jews appear to be overwhelmingly black or Middle Eastern, not white supremacists. Similarly, a string of despicable street attacks on elderly and/or female Asians in large American cities this year had no apparent connection to white supremacists.

Instead of condemning these hate crimes and the widespread mayhem of summer 2020, the Biden administration is intent on rooting out “white supremacy” in an alleged “systemically racist” country. The intentions are clearly part of a larger political agenda of identity politics.

This leftist campaign against the bogeymen of racism and white supremacy is facing a backlash among average Americans and those of us who saw this coming a long time ago. Resistance starts with educating our friends, neighbors, children and grandchildren.

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