

The Delray Democrat

The Threat Isn't Socialism. It's Fascism¹

Michael K. Cantwell

Rick Scott is right that America is facing a grave threat, but it's not from what he ludicrously calls "socialism," and it's not coming from the Democrats. The real threat is fascism and it's coming from the Republican Party.

What Is Socialism?

Socialism is defined as an economic system that involves governmental ownership of the means of production and distribution of goods. Nothing Joe Biden (or even Bernie Sanders) has advocated even remotely approaches such a dramatic reorganization of society. Yet Republicans have been trotting out the socialist bogeyman ever since Franklin Delano Roosevelt saved America from *actual* socialism.

Communism and socialism grew in appeal during the worldwide depression of the 1930s. In the United States, unemployment rose to 24.9%, those who kept their jobs saw their wages drop by 42.5%, and millions were homeless. Facing a violent revolution, FDR oversaw a political revolution by introducing the safety net programs that protect us to this day.

What Republicans call "socialism" is legislation that benefits ordinary Americans rather than the bank balances of the top 0.01%. By "ordinary," I mean anyone who might have been given jail time instead of a golden parachute (as was Scott) if they led a company that pled guilty to 14 felonies and agreed to pay the government \$1.7 billion in fines and damages for bilking Medicare.

Social Security, unemployment insurance, Medicare and Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act were all attacked as "socialist," but are as American as apple pie. They spring directly from the preamble to our Constitution, which includes among the enumerated duties of the new government to "promote the General Welfare." A list of legislation for which you can Thank a Democrat appears at the bottom of p. 7.

What Is Fascism?

Fascism involves an autocratic, racist, and repressive government headed by a dictator. Donald Trump is a would-be dictator who regurgitates Nazi rhetoric. He refers to opponents as "vermin" and the media as "the enemy of the people," he accuses immigrants of "poisoning the blood of our country," and recently he posted a [video](#) titled "What's Next for America?" that promised "the creation of a unified Reich."

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), May 2024, page 6.

It's not just the Nazi rhetoric. It's the Nazi tactic of the Big Lie. It worked in Germany and it's working here. A March 2024 [poll](#) found 36% of Americans and 70% of Republicans (up from 67% in 2021) now believe the 2020 election was stolen.

Socialism	Fascism
<p>1. any of various egalitarian economic and political theories or movements advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods.</p> <p>2a: system of society or group living in which there is no private property. 2b. a system or condition of society in which the means of production are owned and controlled by the state.</p>	<p>1. a political philosophy, movement, or regime (such as that of the Fascisti) that exalts nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition.</p> <p>2. a tendency toward or actual exercise of strong autocratic or dictatorial control.</p>

Trump's Big Lie did not emerge fully formed like Athena from Zeus's brow. The Republican Party has been undermining democracy for decades by purging voter rolls and enacting voter suppression bills. The claim that these measures are needed to prevent "voter fraud" *is itself the fraud*. It spawned and supports Trump's Big Lie of a stolen election.

Not only is there no evidence that organized voter fraud affects elections, but the attempt by The Heritage Foundation to prove the existence of voter fraud actually proves the reverse. Their online database [trumpets](#) "1,513 proven instances of voter fraud," but it covers more than four decades, so that all it "proves" is the existence of *less than one instance of voter fraud per state per year*.

It's understandable that the Republican Party needs to divert attention from its ruthless attacks on democracy. That's given birth to its most pernicious Big Lie, namely, that the country's greatest threat is "socialism." This one goes back to Hitler, but when he denounced the socialists and communists, *they actually existed*. They were rival political parties, not phantasms conjured up to delude credulous fools.