

Trump escalates fascist rhetoric in response to Biden's speech on MAGA Republican threat of dictatorship

Barry Grey
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In a rambling, two-hour rant Saturday night, Donald Trump sought to turn the tables on President Joe Biden and the Democrats, denouncing Biden's September 1 speech on the danger of dictatorship posed by Trump and MAGA Republicans and last month's FBI raid on Mar-a-Lago as an unprecedented attack on democracy "from the radical left."

Trump spoke before several thousand supporters in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, after Biden had kicked off his campaign for Democrats in the November midterm elections with a fundraiser and speech in which he called Trump a "semi-fascist." This was followed by his speech in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia Thursday night—a speech with no precedent in US history—in which he essentially warned that the Republican Party under Trump had been transformed into a mass fascist movement that threatened to overthrow the Constitution and take power.

The entire event on Saturday confirmed the fascistic character of the Republican Party and Trump's ongoing efforts, backed by the party leadership, to, in Biden's words, "give power to decide elections in America to partisans and cronies, empowering election deniers to undermine democracy itself."

At the same time, the rally underscored Trump's ability to exploit mass social anger and disgust with the Democrats, one of the two entrenched parties of American capitalism, which has, no less than the other state-sanctioned party of the ruling class, presided over decades of war, rising social inequality, economic exploitation and suppression of working class struggles.

It was noteworthy, for example, that while Biden was silent on the US proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, knowing it has virtually no popular support, Trump made a point of denouncing the \$80 billion allocated thus far for the war and warning that it could lead to the deaths of hundreds of thousands and even millions of people.

Trump exploited as well Biden's inability to expose the real economic and class interests behind Trump's antiestablishment demagoguery, as well as his own policies. Instead he engaged in moralistic phrases that implicitly blamed the danger of dictatorship on the 74 million people who voted for Trump in

2020, including a large number of working people, most of whom went for Trump by default after the Democratic Party had openly turned its back on the working class.

Trump attacked Biden's speech as an attempt to "demonize half of the population." He repeated his defense of the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol and denounced the prosecution and jailing of those who sought to kidnap or kill Vice President Mike Pence and Democratic lawmakers in order to block the certification of Biden's victory, calling them "political protesters."

He reiterated all of the far-right themes that are the stock-in-trade of his fascist politics: anti-immigrant racism, extreme nationalism, religious bigotry, anti-abortion agitation, law and order, glorification of the police and the military, gun rights—all framed by rabid denunciations of socialism.

Denouncing the August 8 FBI raid on his Florida compound to secure presidential records and classified documents he was illegally holding there, Trump called Biden an "enemy of the state" and branded the FBI "vicious monsters."

The nominal purpose of the rally was to promote the campaigns of Republicans running for statewide office in Pennsylvania in the November elections. The TV personality Dr. Mehmet Oz is running for US Senate against the Democratic candidate and current lieutenant governor, John Fetterman. State Senator Doug Mastriano is running for governor against the current Democratic Attorney General, Josh Shapiro.

Trump attacked Fetterman and Shapiro as socialists and Marxists. "Fetterman is a defund the police Marxist," he declared. Deliberately appealing to adherents of the fascist QAnon conspiracy theory, who believe that George Soros and the Democrats are behind a satanic, cannibalistic child sex-trafficking ring, he called Fetterman and Shapiro "two sicko's who believe in killing and dismembering babies."

Mastriano is an out-and-out fascist. He served in the Army from 1986 to 2017, including a stint as an intelligence officer and a tour of duty in Iraq during the Desert Storm invasion of 1991. He later taught for a number of years at the US Army War College. During that period he wrote a thesis in which he

rejected the principle of civilian control over the military.

He is an election denier. He organized busloads of people from Pennsylvania to attend Trump's January 6 rally at the Ellipse, followed by the assault on Congress. Mastriano denied that he participated in the storming of the Capitol. However, video subsequently emerged showing him pushing past police barricades and rushing the building.

In the state Senate, he cosponsored a resolution after the 2020 election to authorize the Republican-led legislature to ignore the popular vote in Pennsylvania, which went for Biden, and appoint pro-Trump electors.

He is a Christian nationalist who rejects the separation of church and state, advocates massive cuts in the public schools, and a total ban on abortions, without exceptions for rape, incest or a threat to the life of the mother. He also calls for the criminal prosecution of abortion providers.

His platform as governor includes the removal of all undocumented immigrants from Pennsylvania and deportation of DACA recipients, i.e., undocumented people who were brought to the US as children.

He is a QAnon adherent who has denounced George Soros as a Nazi. He paid for consulting services with the anti-Semitic social media platform Gab, where the mass killer in the 2018 Tree of Life Synagogue massacre posted a statement just before carrying out his attack.

Brought by Trump onto the stage to address the crowd Saturday night, Mastriano said, "On eight November we will take our state back by storm. That's right—back by storm."

According to QAnon, the "storm" is the day of violent reckoning when thousands of people will be arrested and be sent to Guantanamo Bay prison or face military tribunals. The military will then take power and supposedly establish a utopia.

While Trump and the Republican leadership have sought to use Biden's Philadelphia speech and the FBI raid on Mar-a-Lago to whip up the fascists within their base, sections of the Democratic Party and the corporate media that are critical of Trump have reacted nervously to Biden's shift in branding Trump a fascist. The entire Democratic Party is fearful of the destabilizing consequences of a Republican takeover of Washington, but it is far more fearful of the emergence of a mass social movement of the working class.

This was summed up in a September 2 editorial by the *Washington Post*, owned by Jeff Bezos, which criticized Biden's speech as "partisan." Titled, "Democracy is in danger. Biden should invoke patriotism, not partisanship, to make that point," the *Post* wrote that Biden "too often" sounded "more like a Democrat than a democrat," and complained that he "was wrong to conflate upholding the rule of law with his own partisan agenda."

In particular, the *Post* balked at Biden's implied attack on the Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, worrying that "many conservatives—not just 'MAGA forces'—agree" with the ruling.

At *Post* the point is to time the the cynicism Democrats' supposed dedication to democracy exposed by the party's massive funding of pro-Trump election deniers in key Republican primary elections over the spring and summer. Calculating that outright fascists prepared to overturn elections would be easier to defeat in the general election than "mainstream" Republicans—whose support Biden continues to court—the newspaper noted that their number included Mastriano.

"In Pennsylvania's race for governor," the *Post* wrote, "Democratic gubernatorial candidate and state Attorney General Josh Shapiro dropped \$840,000 on TV ads highlighting the stances of Republican gubernatorial candidate and state Sen. Doug Mastriano—more than double what Mastriano spent on his own ad buys.

"Shapiro's ads call Mastriano... one of 'Trump's strongest supporters' and highlight his belief that the 2020 presidential election was stolen.

"I'm going to have to send him a thank you card," Mastriano told a local news outlet after seeing Shapiro's ads."

As the *World Socialist Web Site* explained in its September 2 Perspective column, the answer to the danger of dictatorship and fascism is the development of the class struggle, which must be connected to a socialist economic and political program.

Only to the extent that the working class breaks through the constraints placed on it by the trade union bureaucracy and its alliance with the Democratic Party will the real class issues emerge and the forces behind the Trump movement be exposed.

"To the extent that Trump has a mass base," we wrote, "two-thirds of it, if not three-quarters, is sustained by the hot air of his demagoguery. The development of the class struggle will burst his balloon."



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