

THE
**Final
Straw**
A WEEKLY ANARCHIST SHOW



The Final Straw is a weekly anarchist and anti-authoritarian radio show bringing you voices and ideas from struggle around the world.

You can send us letters at:
The Final Straw Radio
PO Box 6004
Asheville, NC 28816
USA

Email us at:
thefinalstrawradio@riseup.net
or **thefinalstrawradio@protonmail.com**

To hear our past shows for free, visit:
<https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org>

To support transcription and zine-making efforts which are funded by donations, visit:

<https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/donate/>

or via Patreon:

<https://www.patreon.com/tfsr>

or via LiberaPay, which does not take a cut of the payments:

<https://liberapay.com/The-Final-Straw-Radio/>



This week, we're sharing a conversation I had with Matthew Lyons and Xtn Alexander, editors and contributors to the book *Three Way Fight: Revolutionary Politics and Antifascism*, out this year from Kersplebedeb Books and PM Press. We talked about the development of the political tendency which troubles the read of both liberal capitalism and the autonomous far right from a revolutionary left libertarian perspective, some of its progenitors and a bit about the state of the far right today.

Web: **ThreeWayFight.org**

Search for this interview title at **<https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/>** to find links to further resources on this topic, featured music, the audio version, and files for printing copies of this episode.

Then also you can find more information about it, including an excerpt from the introduction the Three Way Fight website. We actually have a brand new revamped website at **ThreeWayFight.org**

Xtn: We also have an Instagram. If people are on Instagram it's Three.Way.Fight. That's one more little social media thing.

TFSR: **Thank you both for having this conversation. I really enjoyed the book, and thanks for continuing to be so engaging with this topic. It's been lovely to have both of you on this chat.**

Matthew: Well, thank you very much for the opportunity. Enjoyed it.

Xtn: Thank you.

ceding that space. I've seen other people and heard other people talk about doing it in the role playing game world or in metal or in other like venues that have not traditionally been scenes where antifascist values have been present. But yeah, that's a good point.

Xtn: Well, I would just add on to that. There's whole generations now, people who are adults who grown up their entire lives in the gaming culture. It wasn't something that was so big with me when I was growing up, but I meet young people all the time and their entire lives have been immersed in this. So that article Matthew's talking about really struck me. This really gets at the widening, the broadening of social, political terrain. It's not just what we see in front of us. There is a virtual terrain that people are actually involved in. The far right is orienting towards it, our side needs to orient it to it. It's really important. Being able to have an offer radical, revolutionary, liberatory points of reference for people involved in gaming or those worlds and those networks is really essential and important. I was really taken with the article. We were immediately like, "This is great. This is a good contribution. We should include this in."

Last thing I will say, and it kind of builds off that, it's about the book. Me and Matthew are speaking about the book. It's really a book from the movements to the movement. We compiled it, we edited it, we tried to make good selections, but we really worked to try to incorporate writings and viewpoints from our the Three Way Fight-adjacent side. It wasn't just one or two people. It's a lot of people and movements contributing to this work. I just wanted to emphasize that. That's what I hope is the strength of this. This is the movement having discourse amongst itself to try to sharpen our analysis and where we go from today to tomorrow. So, yeah, gaming's a part of that and it's got to be taken seriously. It's part of our world. These are the themes that we're trying to address in our book, the entirety, the comprehensive nature of politics and struggle.

TFSR: Well, that conversation is ongoing. This book comes out on Kersplebedeb Books and PM Press around the same time as another book that's carries at least one of the essays from this by Shaw. Can you all name the title of that and also where they can find the *Three Way Fight* book?

Matthew: So D.Z Shaw's book is titled *Genealogies of Antifascism: Militancy, Critique, and the Three Way Fight* and he's one of the contributors to our collection, which is titled *Three Way Fight: Revolutionary Politics and Antifascism*. So the *Three Way Fight* book is, as you said, it's, it's jointly published by PM press and Kersplebedeb Books publishing. You can find it on their respective platforms. So PMpress.org and then Kersplebedeb platform is actually LeftWingBooks.net

TFSR: We're joined by Matthew Lyons, who are happy to welcome back to the show, alongside Xtn Alexander, who are the editors of the recent PM Press and Kersplebedeb Book's *Three Way Fight: Revolutionary Politics and Antifascism*. Welcome Xtn and Matthew. Would you please introduce yourselves with your gender pronouns, locations if you want that, or affiliations that would help the audience know a little bit better who you are for this conversation?

Xtn: Go ahead, Matthew.

Matthew: Okay, hi. Thank you very much for having us on. I'm Matthew Lyons, I use he and him pronouns, and I'm based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and I am an archivist by profession. So, I'm concerned with preserving the historical record, which is in the broad sense, related to *Three Way Fight* concerns.

Xtn: I'm Xtn Alexander. I'm a healthcare worker, mostly based in the emergency room dealing with critical care and trauma. It's my gig and pays my bills, but also it's something that I like to do sometimes. We could have a whole conversation on the medical world and the crisis it faces and what us, as healthcare workers, are up against. But maybe another time. But anyway, I live in Detroit and I have off and on my whole life. But truth be told, I am originally from more northerly places.

TFSR: The mysterious North. [Laughs]

Xtn: Canadian. I came to the US when I was six years old. So I established both family, friends, and lots of alliances with folks up there. Good people and long time working relationships.

TFSR: That's awesome. Thank you. I'd love for both of you to tell a little bit more about how you personally got into antifascist organizing and research.

Matthew: Do you want to go first on this one, Xtn?

Xtn: Sure. So in the late 1980s I started to get involved in hardcore punk and very quickly more political and anarchist punk countercultures. It put me in contact with this whole other world of youth doing stuff like music and zines and organizations. The whole do it yourself, fundamentally anti-authoritarian self activity kind of thing. It being part of the general political mix of the times. I was becoming tuned into all these dramatic situations in the world. On the big level, I was seeing the end of the Soviet Union and so called existing socialism, and people fighting for

independence from that empire. I saw mass organizing against apartheid in South Africa, indigenous First Nations resistance in the Americas, the US backing of the death squads in Central America, the struggles in Ireland's north. I saw the first Intifada and young people often on the front lines in all of these movements of resistance. It was all very inspiring and motivating.

On a level closer to home. I was at that point living in North Carolina and we had really dramatic stuff there. There were still struggles over school integration, as school systems could be very segregated between city and county. This had klan and nazi groups marching and organizing, all of which was filtering into the schools themselves, resulting in mass brawls of students. Usually provoked by racist white youth against Black youth. The Black youth would mostly be about defending themselves against these attacks. Some of the fascist groups around were like Glenn Miller's paramilitary klan group, the White Patriot Party, and Miller had himself been part of the National Socialist White People's Party during the massacre in Greensboro in '79.

So growing up, there was this intense vibe. And around town there was still graffiti of 'Remember the Greensboro Five.' That was in reference to the five members of the Communist Workers Party who'd been murdered by a combined clan and attack. So it was a very hot time full of conflict that kind of necessitated you draw lines and take sides. And mine would be the anti-racist, anti-klan side. This was all like the age of 14 and 15 years old.

So within a year, by 1990 the first Gulf War was starting, and this led to a whole new wave of radical action and organizing. I was definitely part of the whole anarchist youth thing by now. So all this led me to getting deeper into organizing and action, but it would still be a while till I decided on some specific antifascist approach to organizing.

I eventually did join up with Anti Racist Action in the mid 1990s and that became my main focus for a significant part of my early life. It's within that movement organizing and those collective experiences that would become Three Way Fight. That's kind of where it started to take shape.

Matthew: I guess that's my cue. My version is broadly comparable to what Xtn described. But some of the specifics are different. I was, through the 1980s, involved in a variety of political struggles, including the anti-apartheid struggle at the university I attended in the mid '80s, and some organizing against racist police violence in New York City in the late '80s, and also just really trying to learn about radical politics from a lot of different points of view in terms of understanding white supremacy and patriarchy, as well as capitalism, and some of the more classical Marxist approaches.

In 1990 to '91, Iraq, under Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and the US

tinian solidarity movement has put the entirety of the political class on the defensive. It has to be exposed, the brutality and anti-human nature of the system, but it's also a confusing, complex time in which we can't be afraid to offer honest ideas and assessments that may, even if principled, offer a different approach to action.

So I think revolutionary antifascists have some real experiences and lessons to offer the movements right now, but part of having any kind of say means being part of the struggle, being shoulder to shoulder with others in this fight and where it might go. I don't know if my answer addresses fully your question, but I think it's a tough time for out and out antifascists, but also a moment of opportunity. I think also with Three Way Fight, we've been trying to think some of this over, and we actually have some new articles on the site too, that get at the current moment. So people should check that out.

Matthew: If I could give just an example of an innovation that we explore in the book. One of the latest written, perhaps the most recent piece in the book looks at the politics of video games and video games as an arena of political struggle. Which, to be honest, was kind of an eye-opener for me in some ways. It's something that I had been sort of vaguely aware of for some time, but it really kind of spelled it out in new ways. On the one hand, video gaming communities, which are massively influential in terms of particularly young people in the US and in many countries, that's been an area where far-rightists have been actively organizing recruiting in various ways. In reaction to that, you've had a liberal Antifascist response, which is about surveillance, about control, and about combating far right in very simplistic anti-hate framework, which is at best a caricature, and where something that has dangerous anti-leftist implications. Yet there is, there is also an effort by people on the left to take a different approach within gaming communities and confront far-rightists in ways that you know are not about increasing surveillance, increasing State repression, but are about challenging people in ways that affirm community autonomy and liberatory principles and so on. And then also about using gaming as a way to start to envision radical alternatives. Creating games, or using existing games in ways that you know that express radical politics.

This is just one example of ways that I think people are trying to look creatively at this moment and think about, "How can we engage with the new situation?" Gaming is a very different situation even than 10, 20 years ago. But it's something that the right is paying attention to and we need to engage with it as well. There's danger there, but there's also a lot of potential for good work.

TFSR: I might be misremembering, but I think there was a parallel in the article about antifascist organizing within the music scenes that they were already participating in and that conflict in the cultural landscape and not

actually liberatory. I guess, to use that term, but not just reproducing the systems of pain and suffering that the current system does.

How do we as antifascists also recognize the fact that people are disenfranchised, that the class schism is becoming more and more, that patriarchy puts a lot of pressures onto people that are socialized as men and gives us unfair expectations to have of ourselves, and then when we don't reach those, patriarchal society or the Far-Right, tells us, "Oh, well, that's because of these other groups, these other individuals, these other classes of people that are taking those rights away from you. You're not the breadwinner with a wife who follows your lead and kids that do your bidding? Well, that's because feminism has ruined the natural order of hierarchy and because the Liberal government is imposing George Soros's will in the family and deconstructing gender." Rant over.

Well, I guess the next question is: Where do you see the status of antifascist working class organizing? Are there places you see as strategically useful at this point? Any innovations or tried and true approaches that you'd like to see more of? Also any projects that you find especially exciting?

Xtn: Well, that's a good question. My answer might not be so upbeat, but I'm trying to be realistic. I think in large part, the Biden/Harris period has seen the decline of out and out antifascist groupings and movements. Our movements haven't disappeared altogether, but they've receded, at least to the extent that they existed during scumbag 45's administration. The chaos of that period, that was a long, intense and traumatizing time. So a lot of people became exhausted, burned out. But also, there were arrests and beatings and murders. People got hurt. So the risks were real. People took bad hits on a lot of levels. Then the arrests after January 6 redefine and reshaped the Far-Right. So in some ways, that was the last insurgent act by those forces, at least for a while.

So in terms of antifascist working class organizing, I think people are experimenting on a number of places in a range of ways, but it is looking different than it did even four to seven years ago. What I would say, has been a bright spot in some ways, even though it's coming about from a very painful and terrible situation, but what we're seeing right now is because of the genocide in Gaza and the broader war against Palestinians. What we're seeing is a renewed movement that's bringing in new layers of youth as well as older generations. It's widespread. It's direct action based. It's confrontational politically, and it utilizes organizing forms that look to build coalitions in the united fronts.

It's also coming under all sorts of attack and repression. I think antifascists have to be in this mix and active. October 7 and the subsequent war on Gaza has upended global politics in ways that were unforeseeable. Here in the US, the Pales-

started massing troops in response, and then launched the counter invasion. So that was the first US Iraq War. I was part of the anti-war mobilization in the small upstate New York County I was living in. We were alarmed and confused to discover that one of the founders of our little anti war group was a Lyndon LaRouche supporter. Then even more surprised and confused to discover that this wasn't just a isolated incident, but was actually part of a coordinated effort by Lyndon LaRouche supporters around the country to get involved in the anti-war movement.

Many people, but not necessarily everybody knows, Lyndon LaRouche was the founder and long time leader of a very quirky fascist cult network that took a lot of different forms that didn't necessarily correspond to what you usually think of as fascist politics. This was an example of that. You had LaRouche publications denouncing George Bush, President Bush as a war criminal, as a mass murderer, and so on.

So I was just trying to figure out, "What does this mean? Where does this come from? What does it tell us about right-wing politics? That you could have a group on the farthest, far reaches of the Far-Right using terminology and taking positions that sounded leftist?" That led me into trying to understand conspiracy theories, and that the ways that some conspiracy thinking had taken root in sections of the left as well as being very much rooted in the Far-Right.

That led me into connection with Chip Berlet of Political Research Associates, somebody who was kind of a pioneer in exposing these kind of complexities of Far-Right politics. He and I ended up collaborating on a book. The book Right-wing Populism in America, which came out in 2000. That explores a number of different threads that relate to Three Way Fight politics in terms of the historical roots of fascist and other kinds of right-wing politics in US history. Not just anti-leftist reaction, but as mass based initiatives that were both attacking oppressed communities but also attacking elites in certain ways. And so that, for me, was kind of an entree to looking at some of the same kind of issues that Xtn and others were concerned with in Anti Racist Action. So that kind of brought us together, in a sense.

TFSR: I think probably a couple of decades ago, I came across some of Chip Berlet's writing from Political Research Associates on the California Homemakers Association, which was like a weird little political cult that was present in Sonoma County where I was living. It definitely burned some of my friends who had tried to get involved in this.

It's been years that I've been familiar with Mr. Berlet's writing, and I really appreciate that direction of research. For any listeners who haven't heard it yet, Matthew and I spoke last year about Lyndon LaRouche a bit

for an episode, which I would definitely suggest. It was a fun chat. That's a weird way to put it. [laughs]

Xtn: It was a good chat, though I liked it. I always learned stuff from Matthew and listening to that interview, I plug it too. People should listen to that.

TFSR: Thank you so much.

So would you all give an introduction to what the Three Way Fight approach is, and who the three contending sides in this match are?

Matthew: I guess I'll take the lead on this one just. We're gonna tag team here on everything. So this is how I think about the Three Way Fight... There's a couple standard pitfalls that that people tend to fall into when they're thinking about fascists and far-right politics. In mainstream discourse, or liberal media and those kind of perspectives, there's this notion that you make a distinction between Democratic Forces and then the extremists. You have extremists on the left and the right, both of which are kind of beyond the pale in terms of commitment to democratic values and democratic principles. For those of us who identify with the radical left it's obviously problematic, because we see ourselves as working for fundamentally different goals and according to fundamentally different principles than the far right.

Then at the same time, there's a different kind of dualism that is common in much of the left, which is, you have the forces of the oppressor institutions, and then you have the oppressed and all of those who are struggling against the the oppressors. It divides very neatly between everybody who's on our side, and then everybody who is not on our side, who is seen as all kind of in league. So, in that model, people have talked about sort of this grand coalition stretching from the Democratic Party through the Republican Party, and then across to the Far-Right. As if all these forces are more or less working together.

So, *Three Way Fight* is an approach that says both of these simple dualistic models are missing a key part of the picture. In our view, we live in a fundamentally hierarchical and oppressive society that is defined in large part by systems of power and exploitation and oppression. Then there are various kind of political forces that grow out of that, including forces on the far right fascist and other kinds of far right forces. So there's definitely a relationship there between the Far-Right and the oppressive order. But the ways that the far right has developed politically, have often put it in conflict with some of the groups and institutions that are in power. That's not just about rhetoric. It's not just about trying to use words in order to win support, but there are genuine disagreements and conflicts between what far-rightists often advocate and what is prevailing in terms of how society is organized.

So we argue that there's a need to address both of these opponents and rec-

help to move forward their efforts. Within a year of him taking office, most of the Alt-Rightists felt abandoned or betrayed by Trump and to a greater or lesser extent, repudiated what he stood for. But they didn't end the debate there. It's been sort of this ongoing discussion, and you still see it today within the different fascist circles of, "How do we engage with or, how critical do we want to be toward these forces?"

There are some fascists who have taken a very conscious strategy of trying to work within the Republican Party and try to win over more sort of mainstream conservatives and others who've taken different approaches. I think for right now, the point is not necessarily to say one is more important than the other, but just to recognize that that dynamic is part of the terrain that we have to understand, and again, get away from this notion that all of our enemies are all kind of working together in some sort of grand coalition. It's not that simple and that presents both challenges and opportunities for us. There are ways that it would be a lot easier if we could just say, "Oh, well, they're all calling for the same thing. So we can just use this one strategy." It doesn't really work that way.

On the other hand, the fact that they're not all pulling together, means that there are points of tension and conflict within the forces of our opponents that are points of weakness. That, in some ways, are things that we can take advantage of. I don't mean take advantage of by borrowing anti immigrant politics, or anti trans politics, or some abomination like that. But rather appealing to the underlying sense of anger and the underlying sense of grievance and disenfranchisement that leads some people to support the Far-Right and offer radical alternatives, offer genuine analysis that actually looks at the actual systems of power and disenfranchisement that are affecting people's lives. Not just play defensive politics. Not just say, "Well, we all have to rally around Joe Biden and defend democracy." That's never going to work. If we want to have any hope of combating the upsurge of right-wing authoritarianism, we have to counter it with a radical alternative.

TFSR: A parallel to that that I think about a lot in terms of abolitionist politics is that it's bad enough that the system is operating, the police and the prisons are operating in the way that they do inside of the United States, where I'm speaking from, and not having that would be better for a lot of people than how it is. But there are real conditions. Harm really happens in communities in between people. There are reasons why intercessions to stop harm are important, but the resolution that the system offers is not the solution. Besides just stopping the harm that the system is doing to people and to our communities, it would be lovely if we could develop more autonomous community-based solutions for if someone is in harm, if someone's in danger, if someone is having a mental health crisis, how can we perform what the State says that it's doing right now? But do it in a manner that's

movement. But instead, they welcome this new popular far-rightism that's present in society, in the political arena. They're welcoming that. So maybe they're opting from a gradualist step by step reform approach to 'fascism' or some new horrible authoritarianism.

But a lot of what you outlined in your question just now is part of what a significant block of the rightists do see as a strategy. It's this mass thing. I think we're going to have to keep evaluating that. We're going to have to see what are the small more ideological fascists doing. Their role, their importance, their influence, versus these more diffuse far right, but potentially much more of a threat than smaller nazis. We need the ability to respond those, but having a narrow approach of centering the outright fascist, ideological fascist, I think that our movements need to question that. Not step away from doing the monitoring of the research, but maybe move away from just this narrow anti-nazi antifascism. These are the tough questions our movements have to ask ourselves, and that antifascists have to ask themselves.

You stated clearly what the ideological fascists and the nazis are capable of, but what I think is the reality is that far-rightism has broken out from its fringe status. It's existing as this mass thing, incoherent ideologically, but mass. So more than ever, we need a comprehensive and mass strategy of our own. In the book we put articles that that grapple with those questions. People who are have been involved in Three Way Fight, or adjacent to Three Way Fight, people grappling with those questions of what would a militant but mass strategy maybe even look like?

So I don't want to discount the ideological fascists, but I think that we have to recognize that something else exists, and it is really on this mass and popular form and terrain, and that's new. That that's new for us, all of us.

Matthew: I could pick up on some of the threads there. I think that one of the things that Three Way Fight politics or approach is about, is trying to understand the dynamics of how our various enemies relate to each other in complex ways. Sometimes, that's about them working together, and sometimes it's about conflict. It's a dynamic process. So there's going to be changes over time and that may be a matter of decades or it may be a matter of weeks, in some cases.

Within the left, people are maybe familiar with the debates around reform versus revolution. That's something that's been going on for generations. That's also true within the right to a certain extent. Some of what defines questions of strategy for fascists in the US currently is how to relate to institutions like the Republican Party, how to relate to Donald Trump.

In 2016 the most dynamic section of the fascist movement was the Alt-Right, and most Alt-Rightists supported Donald Trump. They didn't see him as one of their own, but they saw him as somebody who was useful and would

recognize that they're related to each other, but also not treat them as if they're just on the same side. And so there's a need for different analyzes and different strategies. On the one hand, working for systemic change and antifascist politics.

Xtn: Yeah, I would agree with Matthew, nfsot surprisingly. I would say a couple more things. The question of, "What is Three Way Fight?" There's different ways to look at the Three Way Fight concept. I think it's changed a bit over the years. It really went from a really minority tendency to something that has been picked up and explored and engaged with a lot more over the last 15 years or so. But at its core, it's really shorthand for seeing that there's a struggle between various competing forces.

In the case of the state and the system, it's goal is to maintain or establish hegemonic rule over people. It's to establish its own legitimacy. Then we got forces from below, which may be outside of the power structures who are themselves and struggle to win over and gain popular support. This is where we might see authoritarian, far right or fascist forces in their own corners against radical liberatory forces, which is where we place ourselves. The layers, the constellations of people, organizations, movements, who could form a liberatory anti-system bloc. But, we say Three Way Fight, but within these different corners, there's an array of ideas and movements. It's like a 3000-way fight. But saying 3000 way fight isn't as catchy as Three Way Fight.

I'd say one more thing, and this is kind of a biggie. In antifascist analysis, there's this long history of seeing fascism as an extension of some form of capitalist rule. This gets boiled down to the idea that the fascists and fascism is only a tool of the State. Our argument, and based on our organizing and action on the antifascist front, is that the far-right and fascists, while at times making alliances with factions of the State, they're motivated by their own ideology and visions. They have their own agency, and in many cases, have and will act as an autonomous force waging war for its own ends.

That point, I think, has put Three Way Fight outside of left antifascist common sense. In the book, we've included some work, such as the thesis by Sojourner Truth Organization (STO), who were very pioneering in their work. They really emphasize the autonomous characteristic of fascism. I think a lot of people on the radical left think of just ourselves as having autonomy. But it's really a relationship. What is the goals, the visions, the philosophies, ideologies, how does it motivate movements? If we're saying that we have the capacity to organize an autonomous force, then we need to consider our opposition as having the ability to organize an autonomous force that can that can build a popular movement.

Matthew: If I could just offer a little bit to make this a little bit more concrete and

historically specific. We would argue that you can see versions of the Three Way Fight, different versions at different historical moments. What we see now is very different, certainly, than what you saw in the 1930s and '40s. For the last half century or so, that's kind of the era that we see as distinct.

The period in the aftermath of the Civil Rights and Black liberation movement upsurge of the 1960s and all the social changes that that brought about. That produced a crisis within the right-wing forces in the United States, where many groups that had traditionally seen themselves as represented by and loyal to the American system, suddenly felt that that system had failed them and had betrayed them. So the ideals that they espoused of white supremacy and male supremacy and a very particular kind of traditional social order were no longer in keeping with what they believed the State and the ruling class was advocating and upholding in the United States.

So in the 1970s and then particularly in the 1980s and later, you started to see fascist forces denouncing the established order and the State and then literally taking up arms against it, and literally declaring war against against the US government. That kind of conflict has... there have been periods of greater or lesser intensity, but that kind of radical break is something that traditional notions of fascism as a tool of the ruling class completely fail to explain. It really calls into question that kind of dualistic analysis.

TFSR: That really calls to mind the terms that I've seen attributed to your writing, Matthew, of 'system loyal' versus 'system oppositional' readings on groups of the Far-Right. Using that distinction to be able to differentiate where a group is ideologically, even just in the moment, for instance. I think that pointing to the 1960s and '70s. It's an inter interesting historical moment to look at that for the modern existence of the Far-Right. But if you were to bring it back to the insurgent white supremacist movements after the Civil War in the US South with the Reconstruction Era and first klan, it was an insurgent movement that was oppositional to a specific wing of capital. The industrial federal government imposed challenge to the slavocracy of the US South and so it sort of in the 1970s returned to some of its insurgent roots in that way, right?

Matthew: Yeah. The klan, it's a very important and kind of emblematic thread to follow through in US history because it's taken all of these different versions. As you say, the original klan right after the Civil War in the Reconstruction Era was a mass based terroristic movement to overthrow the Reconstruction governments, the radical Reconstruction governments. It defined itself in opposition, as you say, to the Northern industrial wing of the capitalist class (which was the dominant

working out through the course of these struggles, working out what it is we're for, and building off of that.

Building something new, a new form of identity and community and movements. There used to be that phrase, 'Another world is possible.' I know it has kind of receded over the last 20 years. But I think that it is possible, and that's what we need to be looking for, the creating of a true alternative, a liberatory anti authoritarian alternative to what we're living in and what people are suffering under.

TFSR: Probably repeating something that's already been said, but being able to recognize, for instance, with gender as an axis, people calling themselves radical feminists who are willing to work alongside of Proud Boys or other male chauvinist or pro-patriarchs in a struggle against trans folks, that sort of has been a difficult thing for people to figure out. People who consider themselves liberal, progressive or leftist, how can people who are calling themselves feminist be showing up to these things telling government officials to stop allowing for people to have access to hormones, or children to be able to have access to counseling or whatever because it's an anti-trans direction.

But the last few years since January 6 (2021), as it's been referenced, there was a lot of repression that's ongoing against people that participated in the January 6 coup attempt. It's been far from peaceful, in general for the right. But also from the right, there have been right-wing invasions of school boards, threats on drag shows and trans folks, trans existence in society, militias kidnapping people on the border, marches by Blood Tribe and Patriot Front, and increased activity from Active Clubs around the country.

I wonder if you all could give an assessment of what are some of the bigger threats coming from outright fascists in the far right, and what are some strategies you see as winning against these efforts?

Xtn: I could start that off. It's a question of like, "What is the nature of the current fascist or fascist movements in the far right?" I would say, the more ideological fascists, like National Socialists, they've been in this period of retreat and disarray. Most of the formations that we've seen since 2015 and they're just no longer existing. What remains are in a process of recruitment, re-strategizing for the benefit of their grouping. But I don't see the ideological fascists as a threat on any kind of mass level. On a smaller local or regional levels, sure, but not as any mass formation right now. Some groups are really good at agitprop, but will they emerge as a popular force? Will they exist as a pole to rally around?

Some who were highly involved in the Alt-Right previously, they saw it as having failed in terms of its ability as Alt-Right to develop itself into a lasting

With the book, we tried to include lots of articles that are grappling with those questions: Militancy; popular struggle; developing working relationships and united fronts with others. We've just seen, with the Black Lives Matter movement and then the George Floyd uprising, even now with the struggles against the genocide in Gaza, we're seeing masses of people in motion coming from all walks of life.

Not saying that once again, that's it's all coherent, but within all of those struggles have been these liberatory underpinnings. Some rather explicit, actually. So, how do we relate to that? How do we identify that? How do we push those radical, if not revolutionary ideas forward and maximize their potentials? So what I think we're also trying to deal with the book is, it's revolutionary politics and antifascism. It addresses the relationship as well as the tension the two have together. But we don't want to focus narrowly on antifascism. We need a revolutionary vision in which antifascism is a part of it. And, getting to your question, there's this mass component that even us as a minority faction, political faction, we need to be having a political and organizing approach to.

TFSR: I think the widening of the approach, with the essays that are in there, whether it be approaching the questions of fascism and antifascism from an indigenous anti-settler colonial perspective, or specifically the axis of gender within fascism, fascism adjacent, and antifascism, it also invites readers and participants in the movements to be able to connect these authoritarian tendencies and therefore like anti authoritarian tendencies on our side, what behaviors, what institutions, what organizing approaches are working along the lines of gender? Is Christian Nationalism or a new patriarchal movement within Christianity? Is that fascism, per se? Does that really matter if we can expand the discussion to be outside of just a class reductionist framework. We should be able to incorporate this and work with other people along these different lines. Sorry, I'm kind of like repeating myself, but I think you're getting at where it changes that, to use the term again, that horizon of antifascism. It expands it into that wider revolutionary praxis.

Xtn: Right? So, our antifascism, what parts of our movement are trying to emphasize is this comprehensive anti-system approach to our antifascism. So that requires us having a much more thorough going critique of settler colonialism, indigenous struggles, patriarchy. We can't just say, "Oh, we're going to fight the Nazis." That's insufficient. That's narrow. We need to be doing that. We need to have the capacity to fight authoritarian fascistic groupings. But we also have to have the capacity, the understandings, the strategies, and the organization to combat the police, the system, the State, and in the process (we keep going back to the liberatory horizon)

branch of capital).

Later versions of the klan... So in the 1920s you had a new upsurge of the klan, which at that point, even though it was espousing a lot of the same ideology in terms of white supremacy, and then adding anti-Catholicism and anti immigrant threads and so on. They weren't trying to overthrow the government. They were trying to win control of the government in many cases. It was very much working within the established order.

That was an era when President Woodrow Wilson gave a White House screening of *The Birth of a Nation*, a movie that he approved, a film that celebrated the original Ku Klux Klan. You had the shift from this system oppositional klan to the system loyal klan.

Then in the more recent decades, there was again the shift back to an oppositional stance after the victories of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. What they call the the 'Fifth Era Klan' with people like Louis Beam and Robert Miles and others who challenged the old guard klan leaders, arguing for a new version of klan politics that was much more aligned with fascism and literally remade many specific klan organizations in a fascist form.

Xtn: They really did undertake the nazification of the klan. There was that whole layer of far-right. The people like the Metzgers, the Millers, the whatnot. They really did go back to adopting a much more insurgent form of politics. But yeah, I agree with you, Matthew.

TFSR: It's already been mentioned that the like a standard leftist approach, or Marxist influence, or class analysis anti capitalist approach towards looking at fascism in the past, the orthodoxy has basically been to accept the idea that "Fascism is capitalism in crisis" and that "the Fascists are weaponized and a byproduct of capitalist society that violently rises up to repress revolutionary subjects and to reimpose a sharpened capitalist order." It was interesting to see in the *Three Way Fight* book, that statement from Sojourner Truth Organization as Marxist saying, "It's not that simple." I wonder if we could talk a little bit about that.

Also as a contemporary movement that was taking the more traditional, orthodox Marxist perspective, as was pointed out by Shaw in the book (I might be wrong on that) that when the Panthers had their their antifascist conferences, they were taking the same line that I just said, about It being capitalism in crisis.

Can you talk a little bit about Dimitrov, (is that right?) and the history of that line of thinking and where it stands in antifascist organizing today?

Xtn: I think that that is an essential question, right there. There's no consensus it. Fascism or aspects of fascism might be exactly what you're asking. Fascism, in reality, is a really broad radical set of ideas and movements. Sometimes with their own competing agendas.

Specifically about the Panthers, whether or not we agree fully with their antifascist program and analysis, they were describing the reality for Black people in the United States at the time. Which was repressive, authoritarian, murderous, and brutal. It looked a lot like fascism. So we could have the bigger discussion about Dimitriov, and it's coming down from the ComIntern and all that stuff, but I would just say, whether we agree fully or not with the Panthers and their view of it, but it described the real reality of life for Black people at that time.

Coming up to today, I think that the idea of the competing agendas within the fascism, I think the defining aspect of this rightism today is the overturning of the modern liberal order. It kind of goes back to what Matthew was saying just a bit ago, on the insurgent nature of the klan and fascism, but modern rightism, fascism, the far right, it's about overturning this modern liberal order. The far right does not see its values upheld and represented in totality by the modern ruling classes and system. So this overturning, they view that the order that we live under is in crisis. Some on the far right, who may be some variant of fascism, may do exactly what you asked in terms of sharpening the system to attack the popular classes and people resisting attacks in the crisis.

I think for us, what's missing is what was raised before, and that is the autonomous character of the far right and fascists enacting its own interests, its own agenda, even if and usually at odds with the dominant order. What has mixed up the whole matter and in this really confused, scary but real way, is that far right politics which do have real connections to variants of fascism, have moved from a marginal position politically, to the center.

Far-rightism is no longer a dissident fringy thing, but it's now this mass and popular phenomenon. It's not coherent. It's not programmatic on a mass, organized scale. But it exists and there's this whole movement that now question the legitimacy of the State, and society, and the order of things, and they want to replace it with some new illiberal order. Just as important, we have to ask against this new reaction, "What will the response of the current order be?" Or, to be specific, "What will the response of the fraction of ruling class that upholds power now? What are they going to do to any attempts to displace it?" So I'll leave it at that. We could spend a lot of time debating what Fascism is or and we do try to do that in the book, but I'll leave it at that for now.

Matthew: I want to add one thought. I think part of the issue is that a lot of times people use the term fascism as interchangeable with authoritarianism or dictator-

have very active discussion.

I think that one of the issues is, what's the relationship between broad, inclusive mobilizations that bring together people from a lot of different political tendencies, political currents... what's relationship between that and more targeted radical or revolutionary initiatives. Which are not going to have as broad an appeal, at least in this historical moment. To some extent, it's going to depend on the on the particular circumstance.

But one of the things that I think we see as a through line is the importance for maintaining autonomy of radical voices and radical organizing. So not just trying to subsume radical perspective within a mass movement in the name of 'lowest denominator politics,' because that inevitably tends to become system-supportive in ways that you know marginalize and often end up attacking people on the left. So that's one part of it.

I think another part of it is the importance of an inclusive approach to what antifascist work is. For example, one of the essays in the book *Antifascism Against Machismo*, by Tammy Kovich, one of the things that she addresses is a stereotypical notion of what antifascism means and who an antifascist is that tends to privilege a young male, aggressive, kind of frontline combatant... able-bodied. And what she argues for, and there are others and other pieces in the book that address this also, is a much broader notion of antifascist work that celebrates militancy. We need to be militant and we need to fight back in circumstances where that's called for, but we also have to recognize that those moments of direct confrontation are just one part of a much larger struggle, and that there are many, many different kinds of work that are that are necessary. There are many different kinds of people that are contributing and need to be welcomed and supported in this broader effort and respected for the different kinds of work that we do. That particularly includes recognizing different ways that women, queer folks, people with disabilities, whether those take the forms of classically militant activism, or other, maybe less glamorous kinds of activity that are equally necessary for this work.

Xtn: Adding on to that, or maybe putting explanation point on the end of it... What we're talking about is mass politics, in many ways popular politics. Antifascism 20, 25, 30 years ago often did take a more militarized physical force cadre form with what they were going up against. It isn't to say that today and in the coming period that there's going to be no need for us to consider how we organize and how we fight, but at the core of our politics and the core of our approach, it is about having an outward orientation, bringing in more people, connecting with more people, having an array of work that's done for people to plug into. Everyone can have a role to play. It's not an exclusive kind of practice. If it were to have any kind of liberatory movement, that is what we need to be working from, from the jump.

order to so-called ‘keep us safe?’”

I wonder if y’all could talk a little bit about, without being sectarian, the importance of bringing a radical or revolutionary horizon to antifascist organizing, and also the challenge in the current iterations of Antifascist organizing away from small like cadre organizations... How do we not only do the work safely and effectively, but also with the way that surveillance operates currently, how do we keep ourselves effective and able to continue doing the work?

If ARA was oftentimes a mass movement, the story at the beginning of We Go Where They Go, is about people getting the neighborhood to show up at a park and saying it was going to be a baseball game and everyone shows up with baseball bats, but getting the neighborhood out. It wasn’t just the activated dedicated antifascist organizers. Now we live in a slightly different world in some ways. How do we match that balance between mass mobilization, creating a revolutionary movement in an anti-fascist society, while at the same time doing the work?

Xtn: Wow, that’s, that’s the toughest question there, but it’s the essential one. Speaking for myself, I think, and the book gets at this too, is that there’s not a consensus about antifascism. The State has its own variant of antifascism. But antifascism as we conceive it, or as our movements conceive of it, it’s more than just self defense. It has to have that liberatory horizon, it has to have a set of perspectives about freedom and dignity and respect and justice, and those are not embodied by this State, the capitalist order, the system. So in the course of struggle and through it, we have to be developing our own ideas of community, of solidarity, experimenting with the creation of networks and alliances and movements, both in their small forms as well as more popular forms.

The thing of Three Way Fight is that there’s a three way fight. There’s different sides. So what is our side? I think we are still trying to figure out, not ‘we’ as in Matthew and myself, but ‘we as a movement,’ “What is our side? Who do we see as allies? How do we work with people? In the course of working with people, what do we learn? What do we work out? What’s clarified? What are the agreements? What are the disagreements?” This is essential to building a movement. Do you have anything you’d like to add on that?

Matthew: There’s a lot of different directions we could go with this. But coming back to the *Three Way Fight* book, we included a number of different essays and interviews and pieces that grapple with questions of antifascist strategy and anti-fascist organizing. As Xtn says, it’s a major question that we as a movement are grappling with. It’s not like anybody’s got it all figured out, so it’s important to

ship or repression. Obviously there’s a connection there, but we think that it’s very important to recognize complexities there in a couple of ways.

One is that Fascism is not just about repression. It’s also about mobilizing people, and mobilizing people in ways that are often tapping into their sense of rebellion and their sense of outrage and their sense of being beaten down. On the flip side, authoritarianism can take many different forms. You can have an absolute monarchy, you can have a theocracy, you can have a military dictatorship, all of which are very different in important ways, from certainly classical fascism. We are particularly concerned with the ways that antifascism as a concept and as a rallying cry is sometimes used as a rationale for repression and increasing the authoritarian tendencies within the State and within society more broadly. If we simply use fascist and authoritarian as interchangeable, then it makes it very difficult to talk about that in a way that that’s coherent.

Just to get very concrete, in the aftermath of the January 6 attack on the US Capitol, which was essentially an attempt to overturn the results of the 2020 election by force and keep Donald Trump in power. In the aftermath of that anti democratic upsurge or attack, there was a crackdown. To some extent it’s still going on by the Biden administration and related forces to bring people up on charges, and send people to prison who participated in that attack. In the course of that, the US government has called on various laws and various legal principles that are extremely dangerous, such as using charges of seditious conspiracy and other legal tools which have historically been used predominantly against the left, predominantly against members of oppressed communities, and it’s very dangerous to see those being used now against the right in ways that bolster their legitimacy as legal tools and bolster the state’s capacity to carry out repression more broadly. Because we know that in the long term, its only going to come down hardest against the left and against oppressed communities.

So that’s an example of Antifascist principles and Antifascist fears being used to bolster authoritarianism. Again, if we think of fascism and authoritarianism and interchangeable, then we don’t really have a way to talk about that.

TFSR: Which I think is not to say that people and antifascists have a responsibility to do legal support for the January 6 people. But also, there were examples of people doing independent “antifascist researcher” aiding the state in tracking down and finding people who had participated in the January 6 uprising, or whatever, the putsch, the coup. Which I think is an uncritical and dangerous approach.

Matthew: We’re not calling for defense of the people who attack the capitol in the name of keeping Trump in power. What we’re saying is, “Let’s not look to the

State, and let's not look to the Biden administration, to the FBI, to the forces of the established order in order to protect us." That's a disastrous strategy.

TFSR: Jumping back to the book for a moment, we've named a couple of historical critiques of fascism from an Antifascist perspective. We've talked a little bit about the development of Three Way Fight as a tendency, but I wonder if you could talk a little bit about some of the voices that are expressed in the book and some of the thinkers and organizations that have been influential in the development of that tendency.

Matthew: We kind of give in the introduction a little bit of a walk through of some of the different groups that we see as forerunners. The Sojourner Truth Organization (STO) came up a little bit earlier in this discussion. So this was an organization that was active in the 1970s and '80s as an offshoot of the New Left of the 1960s. It is a small Chicago-based Marxist organization that advocated a very unorthodox version of Marxism that put a big emphasis on white supremacy as an integral and critical element of capitalist power and capitalist hegemony in the United States. It also put a big emphasis on the self activity of the working class as a critical force of revolutionary politics, as opposed to looking to a Vanguard party to lead the workers out of the wilderness.

STO was important, from a Three Way Fight standpoint, in pioneering an analysis of fascism as an autonomous political current that, in some context, was at odds with capitalist order and the capitalist class, rather than simply a tool of it. So that opened important lines of discussion and analysis.

A little bit later, the Antiracist Action Network, which was a much larger and more decentralized political formation, was active across many cities of North America, the US and Canada, in the '80s and '90s and beyond. They focused on combating fascists and other far right forces, to some extent the Christian right, anti abortion rights forces and served as a meeting point of a number of different leftist currents. But always with a very strong anti-authoritarian kind of orientation. Chris, you can speak more directly than I can about that, although I had some connection there.

So those are a couple of the initial influences on three a fight. There are others that have also helped shape our thinking. There's a certain current of a kind of independent Marxism that comes out of Maoism, represented by J. Sakai, Butch Lee, Bromma and some other thinkers that place a big emphasis on white supremacy, but also on male supremacy, or patriarchy as an integral part of how capitalism is operating and ruling over people in this period. The dialog between various of these forces is part of what has shaped our approach in not seeing any one line or one analysis as having all the answers, but rather really valuing multiple currents and the

need for dialog between anarchists and Marxists and for multiple tendencies within each of those and beyond as part of what's needed.

Xtn: Yeah, I'll add a little bit more to as it touches on a couple points, both ARA, but also the development of what would become Three Way Fight as a project. Going back to the questions about State repression and whatnot in Anti Racist Action, it was a mass movement. It was a broad front, lots of participants with lots of different political outlooks and forms of organizing. Some of us who may have constituted the anarchist currents within ARA. Although we worked with a range of anti racist and Antifascist, we often found ourselves very critical of antifascists who either endorsed whatever it took to bring down the fascists, including working with the State. We were always opposed to that.

So we were very strident in our objections and we started this project called Anti Racist Action Research Bulletin. It was a way to look at it from a revolutionary antifascism, largely anarchist, but not exclusively (it was non sectarian, keeping in line with ARA). We started the ARA Research Bulletin to get a deeper analysis view of the work we were doing and that ARA as a whole was doing. This was the late 90s before the internet took off, so it was actually a printed magazine. We took challenging and sometimes confrontational lines of argument that were not the majority within the movement. We reproduce some of that in our book, including the one article, "No Tears for the Fascists, No Support for the State." That was directly about whether or not Antifascist should support the death penalty. Our position was, "We don't care about the lives of Nazis, but in no way could we endorse or give support to the State." We know its history in terms of executions, murder, repression.

So anyway, we started to develop a much more critical estimate of the work we were doing that resulted in the ARA Research Bulletin. A couple years later, we put out this book called *Confronting Fascism*, and in some ways, *Three Way Fight*, the book that we're now doing, in large part comes from those efforts. There's this thing with antifascism, that there's no agreement on strategy or politics. I'm glad to see that contemporary antifascism is much more radical, much more at a distance, if not in direct opposition to the State, but it's an ongoing political struggle within our movement.

TFSR: One thing I really appreciate about the approach that was discussed in the book is that there's a debate among people that are advocates of this tendency, and also a recognition of the need for revolutionary politics, the need of a horizon of, "How do we create a world where fascism can't exist?", "How do we create a world where we don't rely on the organizations that are on a daily killing Black and brown, poor people, and queer people in