

Speaker of the House chaos highlights neo-fascist extremists

written by Lev Koufax
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As 2023 began, a political whirlwind ended as the Republican party elected Kevin McCarthy Speaker of the House of Representatives, often considered the second

most powerful position in the federal government. However, the fanfare was limited as McCarthy's journey to the speakership was anything but smooth. The election took 15 ballots and four full days for McCarthy to receive the majority of votes required to win the gavel.

Trouble began to brew before voting started on Jan. 4. After the 2022 midterm elections, a small but influential group of ambitious hardline right-wing ideologues made clear their intentions to resist McCarthy's speakership. Leading this group were Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz and Colorado Rep. Lauren Boebert.

Between these hardline ideologues and a slim Republican majority, McCarthy faced an uphill battle in gaining the votes he needed to seize the speakership. This was the longest and most contentious speaker's race since 1856, when the issue that divided the U.S. Congress was whether states would enter the Union as "slave" or "free."

The issues at the core of this most recent speakership election saga are not nearly as heady nor noble as in 1856. The conflict that kept McCarthy from a victory for 15 ballots was instead between two camps of slightly differing fascist ideologies.

The modern Republican Party is not moderate

As the voting dragged late into multiple weeknights, the mainstream media coverage became focused on a narrative. This was not the product of ideological infighting, or even simply a dysfunctional government. This was simply a [few bad apples](#) holding the noble and moderate Republicans from legislating.

As the saga unfolded, [CNN](#), the [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), and alike carefully and methodically shaped the narrative. Panel after panel of talking heads combined with a flurry of online news articles all drew the same conclusion: This gridlock and dysfunction could be solely attributed to a small group of right-wing pro-Trump extremists hell-bent on chaos. Ultimately, the mainstream press concluded that U.S.

democracy and reason would triumph over a small but loud Trumpian minority.

There is just one problem with that. McCarthy's Republican party is in the image of Donald Trump and, more recently, Ron DeSantis. This is no better demonstrated than by the fact that Donald Trump and notorious anti-Semite Marjorie Taylor Greene endorsed Kevin McCarthy. Greene was rewarded with a high-ranking committee seat.

This Republican party is no longer that of Bush conservatism as if an era of oil wars and slashing of social welfare programs was not bad enough. The contemporary GOP has never been moderate, let alone progressive in nature. Yet, since 2016 the Republican Party has moved closer and closer to a fully neo-fascist platform. The party has recently seemed to rest upon a sort of "respectable" neo-fascism, that of Ron Desantis. The party's focus has seemingly shifted from a Trump cult with its disrespect for civil liberties and equal rights toward "culture war" issues that resonate with a right-wing middle-class base.

The drama on the House floor demonstrated this reality saliently. Before each vote, a Republican representative would make a nominating speech. The content of these speeches is telling. Some of these nominating representatives laid out the more traditional Republican talking points about small government and fiscal restraint. However, far more echoed the fire and brimstone political rhetoric that was the hallmark of the Trump era.

Republican after Republican blamed China for the COVID-19 pandemic, railed against Latinx immigrants, and denounced Black Lives Matter protesters as dangerous anarchists. If this sounds familiar, it is because these principles were at the heart of Donald Trump's administration. They are now out and in front as the Republicans' core tenants.

This was the political camp that won in the 2022 midterms and, ultimately, the camp

that elected Kevin McCarthy as speaker. Neo-fascist extremists are not a congressional minority. In fact, they run the House of Representatives.

So-called 'Freedom Caucus' tools of big capitalists

The mainstream media's narrative was immovable: This political crisis was due to a small group of right-wing extremists led by neo-fascists like Matt Gaetz and Lauren Boebert. While it is true that the "[Freedom Caucus](#)" was at the center of the resistance to McCarthy's speakership, the idea that they operate from the fringes of U.S. society is misplaced.

In fact, the billionaire Koch Brothers and similar ilk keep this powerful neo-fascist Congressional caucus well-fed and well-funded. The Freedom Caucus exists to shape the legislative agenda in accordance with the ruling class' far right.

CNN would love us to believe that racism and dysfunction are a product of just a few misbehaving congresspeople, but that just isn't the truth. The truth is that the Freedom Caucus is the way Congress is run.

To most people, Washington means the president and his cabinet, the House of Representatives, the Senate, the Supreme Court, and the vast array of agencies that support this structure.

That leaves out the various official and unofficial representatives of the large banks, the most powerful multinational corporations, and the military-industrial complex. These forces are there year in and year out while the elected politicians come and go. They set the agenda for the everyday actions of Congress.

At the end of the day, the speakership race and the racist caucus at the center of the crisis are just more examples of how capitalism oppresses.

It's time for worker power and socialism!

