

Antisemitism and the fascist drift of the MAGA right

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Parts of Beth Israel synagogue in Jackson, Mississippi, were burned to the ground in an arson attack.

A 19-year-old man has allegedly confessed to setting fire to a synagogue in Jackson,

Mississippi. Stephen Spencer Pittman, of Madison, Mississippi, carried out the arson before dawn on Jan. 10, destroying the Beth Israel Congregation's library and administrative offices. Notably, the Ku Klux Klan firebombed this same synagogue in 1967 because the congregation supported the Civil Rights movement.

Spencer has been quoted as calling Beth Israel the "synagogue of Satan" when talking to the cops. He appeared before a judge on Monday. When the judge asked him if he understood his right to an attorney, he answered, "Yes sir, Jesus Christ is Lord."

Whatever else comes out about his personal motivations, the Jan. 10 attack should not be surprising. That is because there has been a rise in antisemitism coming from the right-wing - that is, from Donald Trump's MAGA movement and its international counterparts. While Zionists falsely accuse the Palestinian liberation struggle of antisemitism, real antisemitic forces have gained ground.

Those forces had nothing to do with the incredible pro-Palestine encampments on campuses, or the millions who have marched in the streets of the U.S. and around the world. The real antisemites are just the usual suspects: the racist, sexist, anti-immigrant homophobes and transphobes currently applauding as the people are stripped of their rights.

That politics is very well funded by the most reactionary sections of the ruling class. And why is antisemitism so useful for the ruling class? Antisemitism serves capitalism by deflecting working-class anger away from the system itself and toward a mythical scapegoat: "Jewish bankers," "cosmopolitan elites," "globalists." In reality, finance capital isn't controlled by Jewish people - it's controlled by capitalists of all backgrounds. This is all a diversion that divides the working class, thereby decreasing our power.

With the normalization of open antisemitism in some quarters of MAGA, formerly

fringe figures from that world have gained mainstream exposure. For example, there is 27-year-old Nick Fuentes, who dined with Trump in 2022. Fuentes is a white supremacist, misogynistic, Holocaust-denying internet troll. He has over a million followers on Elon Musk's X (Musk reinstated his account in May 2024). His livestreams routinely get over a million views and Tucker Carlson interviewed him, exposing him to even more people.

Or take the Young Republican Telegram chats that were leaked back in October. This Republican Party "youth" organization includes members from 18 to 40, so they are not all that young, even if JD Vance dismissed the outrage as "pearl clutching" over "a bunch of kids." At any rate, these Young Republicans talked about raping their enemies and driving them to suicide. They mocked trans people and people of color while praising slavery.

They typed up infantile, sociopathic fantasies about putting their enemies in gas chambers. In a long string of Holocaust jokes, Joe Maligno - who had already identified himself as the general counsel for the New York State Young Republicans - quipped, "Can we fix the showers? Gas chambers don't fit the Hitler aesthetic?" Another wrote, "I love Hitler."

Fuentes' rise and these leaked chats show just how far toward fascism and neo-Nazism sections of the right-wing have gone. But this drift is not accidental or dependent on any specific "influencers," grifters, politicians or billionaires. It is happening because the capitalist-imperialist system is in decay. The U.S. leads this declining system and is rapidly declining itself. So, the possibility appears for the capitalist state to be transformed from a formally "liberal" one to a fascist one. This is the capitalists' most extreme "solution" to the system's inevitable crises.

Historically, fascism was a way for the capitalist class to try to maintain its grip on power when the system experienced deep shocks, as in the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Great Depression enabled movements like Hitler's and Mussolini's to

grow and take power.

Trump has made the government much more authoritarian while imposing austerity on the people. The fascistic tendencies are on display in the administration and in the MAGA base, whose internal divisions may be intensifying. But for now, MAGA has been unable to develop something essential for a fascist regime: an organized mass movement that can sustain street violence to effectively crush any resistance.

Although Trump has unleashed Gestapo-like ICE and a federalized National Guard in communities across the country, these forces are not backed up in a large capacity by, say, armed Proud Boys, explicit neo-Nazi organizations, or any of the many right-wing militias in the U.S. There is certainly a great deal of crossover between such organizations and law enforcement. But in a full-fledged fascist scenario, we would expect a real deployment of these groups to go around and violently shut down progressive protests and simply seize or even kill immigrants. Think of the Nazi Brownshirts, or contemporary Israeli settlers terrorizing Palestinian people alongside the official armed forces.

For now, a real weakness of MAGA is that they are vastly outnumbered by progressive people in the streets, leaving the cops and troops isolated. That does not mean that these state occupation forces are not dangerous: The world watched ICE agent Jonathan Ross shoot Renee Good right in the face. But the people in the street are against them.

While we can expect more “lone wolves” like synagogue arsonist Stephen Spencer Pittman, for now, we do not have masses of such people flanking ICE. The continued resistance of working-class and oppressed people has objectively made it harder for ICE to operate, and it is the workers who can keep a full-blown fascist regime from coalescing.

As already argued, fascism has become a possibility because the imperialist system

is in decay. But the crisis that produces fascism also creates conditions for a revolutionary working-class movement. Fascism is not inevitable - it can be defeated. The potentially revolutionary people outnumber them by a vast margin. If we stay in the streets - if we fight for everyone who is under attack - we can win.

