Twitter Thread by Dr. William Horne



Dr. William Horne
@wihorne

Ideology matters, folks. I've been publicly calling Republicans a fascist party bc their only consistent ideological position is white power. Their 180° reversals on debt & national security underscore the point & make them especially dangerous. No "compromise" will fix this.

I am deeply worried that white Dems, & white folks more broadly, don't understand this point—that our national religion of whiteness will lead white Americans to embrace a neo-redemptionist politics. Nothing could be more dangerous.

The original politics of "redemption" came after the Civil War when white Americans from #bothsides found common cause in white power—suppressing migrant, white women's, & especially Black rights. This "reunion" of Rebel & U.S. soldiers at Gettysburg is a classic of the genre.

The term itself—"redemption"—comes from the white paramilitary units who sought to "redeem" their states from "Negro rule" by murdering their political opponents, especially Black southerners.

Lots of quibbling on this point, but as a historian of this movement, I think it would be correct to call theirs a proto-fascist movement.

But surely white northerners rode to the rescue, right? NOPE!
White northerners & even white abolitionists like Harriet Beecher Stowe believed in racial hierarchy & embraced the lingo of "redemption" on religious terms. They decided it would be Christian to forgive the fascists.

To forgive them AS they carried out murders of Black southerners & white leftists.

And what did these fascist "redeemers" ask for? Why, "unity," of course.

Unity in the idea that America was "a white man's country." They even plastered all over their campaign banners.

Which brings me back to the issue of ideology. During the Civil War era, the national parties organized overwhelmingly around slavery (& white supremacy).

After slavery was destroyed, the parties became remarkably ideologically similar & by the 1870s were separated primarily by "the Negro question." The "redeemers" realized that, in a white-majority country, organizing solely around white supremacy would likely ensure victory.

It worked, not only bc it played on the national religion of whiteness, but also bc it left no room for compromise. There were no other national issues for white conservatives. The only room they left for maneuver was for white liberals to betray Black equality for "unity."

Today's fascist Republican Party has organized in precisely this way—to appeal to America's national religion of whiteness & paint their opponents as illegitimate for subverting white power.

I'm worried abt further violence, bc law enforcement at the Capitol let the insurrectionists walk free. I'm worried abt escalating violence bc Congressional Republicans went forward with their attacks on the election AFTER the insurrection.

But I'm *especially* worried that white Americans will do what they've always done—re-baptize themselves in the waters of whiteness & subvert any crackdown that would prevent this looming fascist destruction of multiracial democracy. /end