Twitter Thread by Will Stancil



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One thing you see a lot on here is people pointing out the contradictions in the putative views of Trump's GOP. COVID is a Chinese plot but also a hoax. The insurrection was antifa but also a tour of patriots.

What people need to understand is that these contradictions aren't a SYMPTOM of Trumpism.

They point to its very core - its emotional, psychological appeal to millions of America. The ability to sustain these contradictions is why Trump was elected, how his movement exists.

Ultimately what Trump offers - what fascism offers - is a philosophy of total emotional and psychological indulgence. Believe whatever makes you feel best. Live your politics examined.

Don't want to take credit for the insurrection, but want to claim its dead as your martyrs? Go ahead! Say it! The Capitol was attacked by antifa but Ashlii Babbit was a hero patriot.

Hate China, but annoyed by the scolding liberals and their masks? Call the coronavirus a Democratic hoax - and at the same time, a deadly foreign bioweapon.

Voters aren't drawn to Trump's politics because of a specific policy view or really even an ideology. They're drawn to them because those politics say:

"Please, think whatever is easiest. Indulge in your laziest ideas and basest prejudices. There are no rules.

Save one."

"You must support the leader. You cannot abandon the leader. Support for the leader absolves you of the burden of rationality and the sin of inconsistency. Indeed, faith in the leader can be proven by embracing irrationality and rejecting consistency. Prove your faith."

That's why Trumpism and fascism reliably attract the worst and the weakest, the dumb, the selfish, and the cowardly. It's an endlessly flexible vessel for their worst vices, willing to forgive anything and let them do anything in exchange for loyalty to the strongman.

The mistake American political thinkers keep making is to try to link Trump to preexisting ideology. There are ideas associated with Trumpism, of course, but THEY are the symptom: what happens when you let people indulge in whatever fleeting hate takes their fancy.

You can't understand Trump's rise without looking at this deeper psychological appeal. This is his promise to his voters, it's why nothing his movement says or believes makes sense, and no one seems to care.

It's also why we can't triangulate or maneuver his supporters away from him. They don't really want any of what we're offering, anyway - they want the freedom to do and think whatever they feel at any moment, something no liberal of any description could ever promise.