Twitter Thread by Nicholas Grossman



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Was GW Bush more fascist than Trump?
This good @michelleinbklyn column highlighted for me why I'm not the left. Because not only do I disagree with those who say Bush was worse than Trump, I don't think "who was more fascist?" is a useful

Much of left discourse fixates on fascism. Some use "fascism" to mean any right-wing govt, anything bad about govt, or sometimes just "bad thing."
But even those who are more precise fixate on it, which leads them to search for parallels to historical cases and fascist theory
2/x

Instead of asking questions like "closer or farther from a free society?" or "how strong are these institutions?," the fixation on fascism leads to "how much does this resemble 1920s-30s Italy or Germany?" and "how close is this to that scholar's description of fascism?"
3/x

But fixating on the danger of a fascist takeover in America misses the more salient threat of democratic backsliding. Simplifying a bit, fascism features strong institutions to impose its vision on society while democratic backsliding features weakening institutions.
4/x

So some lefties say Bush was worse than Trump because Bush created DHS after 9/11 while Trump tried to duck responsibility with COVID rather than use it to seize power like an American Reichstag fire.
But it was Trump's weakening of institutions that posed the big danger.
5/x

After four years of Trump, checks and balances were gone. Congressional oversight successfully defied. Senate advise and consent ignored. Impeachment a dead letter. DOJ and ODNI politicized. Inspectors general removed.
Trump and associates were effectively above the law.
6/x

The scariest part was Trump trying to corrupt the election.
An elected leader successfully manipulating an election to stay in power is when democratic backsliding gets really bad (eg 21st century Turkey). It shows the leader there's no checks left.
https://t.co/PoYiROw1XM

So Trump's COVID response wasn't fascist, in that he didn't use it as an excuse to seize power. But it was part of democratic backsliding, featuring corruption, attempts at patronage, weakening venerated institutions (eg CDC), and yet more assaults on objective truth.
8/x

Lefties who say Bush was more fascist than Trump work in a kind of symbiosis with anti-anti-Trumpers who say "see, told you Trump isn't fascist." By fixating on hypothetical fascism, both miss the more salient issue of democratic backsliding, for which Trump was much worse.
(END)