

THE  
FIELDSTON POLITICAL JOURNAL



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## EDITORS NOTE:

Hey guys!

Welcome to the new and improved Fieldston Political Journal! Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to the school's political discourse. We want to give a special thank you to Mr. Montera, our faculty advisor, who has been incredibly helpful throughout this transitional period for the Journal. We hope that this can become a space for political diversity and free and open exchange of ideas. If you did not write for this edition but want to get involved, please email us at [24twsullivan@ecfs.org](mailto:24twsullivan@ecfs.org) and [24tswaxman@ecfs.org](mailto:24tswaxman@ecfs.org).

We hope you enjoy the Autumn Edition of the Fieldston Political Journal!

*- Theo Sullivan and Talia Waxman*



## CENSURE: THE NEW RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION

BY ADIA STOKES

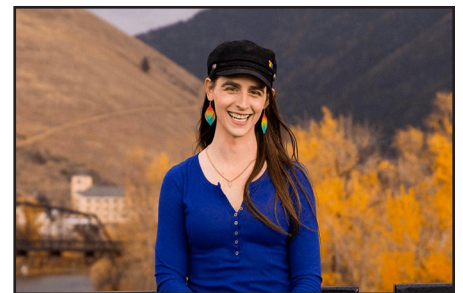
More than 500 bills, laws, and acts have been introduced in recent months targeting the LGBTQ+ community. All 50 states have seen them and debated the rights of a mere 7.1% of the population. More specifically, the vast majority of these bills prey on transgender people, who made up only 0.4% of the US population in 2022. Both the Queer and Trans communities are vastly underrepresented in legislative settings, leading to largely cisgender and heterosexual governing bodies deciding the rights and very existence of people whose experiences they have never had to endure. Twenty out of 50 states have passed bans on gender-affirming care for transgender people under the age of 18 under the guise of protecting children from making life-altering decisions.

Gender-affirming care is rarely as drastic as many think. The general public is fed ideas that these bans are in place to protect children from permanent surgery, which is supposedly the first step of transitioning. In reality, there are many requirements outside of the law for those who want to undergo gender surgeries and it is very often one of the last steps of a physical transition.

For example, doctors have created multiple specifications that patients must meet before getting top surgery that has been put in place to protect people from making irreversible decisions that they might regret. The Association of American Medical Colleges reports that for many, gender-affirming care comes in the form of therapy, haircuts, or makeup lessons. None of these are uncommon for cisgender youths and teenagers, so why are we, as a society, alienating transgender children to the point of criminalizing these basic services?

The ruse of “protecting children” falls through as soon as we acknowledge that surgery is very rarely provided to minors. Puberty blockers and hormone treatments, such as testosterone and estrogen, often touted by the conservative right as permanent sabotage to the body, are not distributed freely. Neither treatment is necessarily permanent. The process requires a diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria, which the American Psychiatric Association describes as “psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one’s sex assigned at birth and one’s gender identity.” No two people’s gender dysphoria will show up the same way.

For example, some trans women who have not undergone bottom surgery may feel extreme distress surrounding their genitals while others may experience large discomfort at the sound of their own voice. The effects of gender dysphoria are often severe and debilitating, especially for trans children and teenagers, who are already going through unrelated social and academic stress. Gender-affirming care for these minors is something that should not be a question. It is generally accepted that mental health is at an all-time low amongst minors, and for many in the trans community, this is exacerbated not only by mental health issues, such as gender dysphoria, but also by the knowledge that no matter where you are in the country, people are fighting against your rights to exist as yourself.



A portrait of Zooley Zephyr, 2022 (Victory Fund)

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Montana is now one of the 20 states that have passed bans on gender-affirming care. It also has a Republican majority in both its House of Representatives and its Senate. Zoey Zephyr was elected to the Montana House of Representatives in November of 2022 and began her first term in January of 2023. Zephyr is the first openly transgender woman to hold elected office in her state. Montana eventually passed Senate Bill 99, which attempts to ban gender-affirming surgery, hormone treatments, and puberty blockers for all transgender people under the age of 18. The bill does little to disguise its transphobia, with Section 4C listing that this ban exists only to “address a female minor’s perception that her gender or sex is not female or a male minor’s perception that his gender or sex is not male.” This language is damaging in its own right, belittling the pain that comes with being transgender and erasing the identities of every trans person in the state by misgendering them. The bill notes that these treatments are perfectly acceptable for minors born or maturing with sexual underdevelopment, or other issues that these processes are used to solve for cisgender children. According to this bill, it is only when a minor is trying to transition that these treatments become harmful.

While her fellow lawmakers were debating the bill, Zephyr responded to its supporters, referring to the majority Christian legislator body: “I hope the next time there’s an invocation, when you bow your heads in prayer, you see the blood on your hands.” Zephyr has been fighting transphobia on the front lines and behind the scenes. When she attempted to fight Bill 99, her colleagues responded by censuring and misgendering her. Zephyr has not been allowed to take the House floor since April 20th and will not be allowed to until 2025 except for a possible reelection next year.

The result of a vast majority of one party in a state’s legislative bodies is huge power for that party. What does it mean for the future of a bipartisan political system in a political climate where censuring, expulsion, and worse are being normalized for simply questioning that status quo? In the news, we hear so much about the negatives of the world. We are fed the big events but rarely shown the lasting consequences or responses. Although Zephyr has been silenced in a governmental setting, she has continued her work outside of the House. Pouring time and effort into a reelection campaign, which would end her censure, Zephyr has spoken in public spaces and has joined countless people as an outspoken advocate for LGBTQ+ rights, and more specifically, trans rights.

Alongside her fiancée, Erin Reed, Zephyr has worked hard not only to change minds but also to spread hope and comfort to those who are affected most by the ban on gender-affirming care. She attends queer-dominated events, such as pride marches and gatherings, sharing the kind of queer joy that no censure can truly stop.

For the right, the growing response to political opposition has been to simply silence those who question their beliefs. There have been multiple examples of this in recent months. Mauree Turner is the first nonbinary legislator in Oklahoma and was censured for fighting against the 15 bills debated during the legislative sessions attacking trans rights, and for protecting the spouse of a protestor who had been arrested earlier that day. Justin Jones and Justin Pearson were expelled from Tennessee’s House floor in response to their protests of Tennessee House Republicans’ unwillingness to pass gun reform following a school shooting in the state that killed six people. All three of these cases involve differently identifying people debating different topics, yet the common denominator is that when issues are brought up that conservative politicians don’t like, the response is to attack democracy and continue a cycle of silencing minorities. Our society becomes more and more polarized, stuck between two extremes, as those who have historically been repressed get ignored.

## WHAT FINLAND'S ACCESSION TO NATO MEANS FOR THE ALLIANCE

BY FELIX STEELE

Finland is a nation whose history and geography have been defined by the weight of outside influence. Until around twenty-five thousand years ago, Finland was squashed under a vast Eurasian ice cap, a vestige of the last ice age. It is to this glacial system that Finland owes its flat terrain and panoply of scenic lakes. More recently, the nation fell under the ursine foot-pads of the Soviet Union, which in 1939 invaded in what would become known as the Winter War.

Although Stalin annexed the resource-rich Finnish province of Karelia, it is a testament to the Finns' hardiness that Marshal Gustaf Mannerheim held off three-quarters of a million Soviet troops for two months before ceding Finland's largest nickel deposits. The USSR never got the chance to advance on Helsinki and install a puppet government, as Stalin would have wished. Since, however, Finland has nervously eyed its gigantic Eastern neighbor. The Russians in return periodically dispatch military aircraft to keep the Finns on their toes.

Finland's spongy terrain has naturally rebounded over the eons as Fennoscandia has recovered from the glaciation.

And it is in a similar way that this nation of five million is pushing back against the Russians and Putin's CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) allies. On April 1st, Finland acceded to NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), garnering a guaranteed defense against foreign aggression under Article 5 of the treaty. Helsinki has pledged to raise defense spending and is assuming an increasingly robust defensive posture along its borders.

This new integration with allied militaries in Europe and North America has, of course, been spurred by the conflict in Ukraine. Finland has long been wary of Russia, but had never pushed for NATO membership in part because of its fears of retaliation from Moscow. In 2014, Putin warned that if NATO should "press the spring [of its border] too hard, it will snap back. You must always remember this." He seems to have forgotten the lesson himself, and now faces Finnish NATO membership as a consequence of his disastrous Ukraine push. Finland's new membership doubles the Alliance's border with Russia – adding 830 miles to the line of contact between NATO and the CSTO.

Just as in 1939, Finland remains a military power of outsized strength. Mandatory conscription places all Finnish men into the military for at least 165 days, and 83 percent of Finns say that they would take up arms in the event of war. Additionally, Finland boasts the largest military training area in Europe, Rovajärvi. And perhaps most importantly, Finland is a major producer of strategic technologies, including 5G cellular technology and icebreaker boats (with 80% market share in the latter field), and has one of the largest artillery collections in Europe.



Finnish president Sauli Niinistö meeting with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg (Getty Images, 2016)

The more important effect of Finland's new NATO membership, however, is one of symbolic value – a significant milestone in the histories of Finland, NATO, and a powerful message promoting the broader global pursuit of stability and democracy.

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In aligning itself with the world's most prominent and powerful mutual security alliance, Finland affirms its place amongst the principled nations which choose to stand firm against authoritarian antagonists and uphold the shared values of the world's free and open nations. Where Finland was previously submissive towards an aggressive Russia, it now shall hold as a paragon of NATO's increasingly powerful and independent posture on the European continent.

The Finns' NATO membership also highlights to all alliance members – especially reticent ones such as Turkey and Hungary – that the organization remains committed to enhancing its regional security posture and will continue to deliver boons for every nation which subscribes to its treaty. Finland's NATO membership will also resonate with other countries in the region that are contemplating their own security options in the wake of Putin's invasion. While currently pending Turkey's approval, Sweden is expected to join NATO in the coming months, setting an example for continued expansion of NATO, perhaps eventually incorporating Moldova and Georgia.

In breaking with its troubled histories of conflict with Eastern neighbors, Finland has been guaranteed the territorial security that it requires to continue in its pursuit of liberal democratic values – and in so doing, sends a message to tyrants everywhere that reckless and bloodthirsty acts of folly cannot stand.

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## UNMASKING THE ARCHITECT: JOHN M. OLIN'S REVOLUTIONARY IMPACT ON THE AMERICAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE - A LOOK BACK

By HARPER RABATIN

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In a world where the invisible hand of politics guided the nation's destiny, one man dared to reshape the very fabric of American governance. Enter John M. Olin, the enigmatic force behind a seismic shift in the political landscape, whose influence continues to reverberate through the corridors of power. John M. Olin was a founding father of modern American-conservative politics who pioneered think tank advocacy and gave seed money to educate current and future policymakers and lawyers. This is the story of that visionary strategist whose ideas and resources left an indelible mark on American politics, forever altering the course of the country.

John M. Olin was an American businessman and philanthropist born in 1892. John came from a family of industrialists: his grandfather built mills and waterwheels and his father founded the Olin corporation.

Inspired by what he viewed as increasing liberalism within his alma mater, Cornell, John M. Olin used his wealth and strategic philanthropy to play a pivotal role in the rise of the New Right. According to an Olin Foundation memorandum, quoted in *Dark Money*, Olin “saw very clearly that students at Cornell, like those at most major universities, were hostile to businessmen and to business enterprise, and indeed had begun to question the ideals of the nation itself.” To rebut this, Olin created a foundation that would try to put an end to the rise of the left, he would mainly do so with a four pronged approach: creating and funding conservative think tanks and organizations, introducing “law and economics” into prestigious law schools, focusing resources towards local judges throughout the nation, and creating the Federalist Society. With these four things, John M. Olin was able to transform America.

The Olin Foundation wanted to have their say in American politics, but wanted the rise of the right to not be associated with one person or organization, to appear like natural growth. One of the ways they accomplished this was through the funding of conservative think tanks, giving \$500,000 to the Heritage Foundation in the late 1980's, contributing to the Hoover Institute and the American Enterprise Institute.

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Along with think tanks, Olin funded conservative publications such as *Firing Line* and the *American Spectator* just to name a few. According to *The Harvard Crimson*, he heavily supported the *Dartmouth Review*, a conservative newspaper at a traditionally liberal university, even giving them \$100,000 (around \$260,000 in today's money) in 1988 to help finance a lawsuit. The *Dartmouth Review* has produced generations of conservative political figures, including prominent contemporary voices such as Dinesh D'Souza, Laura Ingraham, and Joseph Rago. It was the Olin Foundation's support for these political organizations that allowed them to thrive and have meaningful, lasting impacts on the country.

The John M. Olin Center for Law, Economics, and Business, The John M. Olin Center for Law, Economics, and Public Policy, The John M. Olin Program in Law and Economics, and The John M. Olin Program in Law and Economics. What are they? These are the names of law programs at Harvard, Yale, UVA, and Stanford. Other Olin law programs can be found at Cornell and The University of Chicago.

John M. Olin knew that his money only went so far and he would not be around forever to support organizations that aligned with his beliefs, so he ingrained himself and his ideology into top law schools throughout the country. He ensured that long after him, people that decide, fight, and uphold the law would be instilled with his values.



John M. Olin in East Hampton, 1978 (Showman Shooter, 1982)

Olin didn't just fund regular law programs, he created the field of Law and Economics. The idea of Law and Economics ensures that people remember to uphold the law with economic values in mind, it, to quote Brian Butler, professor at The University of North Carolina, Asheville, "asserts that the tools of economic reasoning offer the best possibility for justified and consistent legal practice." For example, if an oil company violates a regulation or a damaging oil accident occurs (such as an oil spill), a student of Law and Economics might see less cause for punishment than a proponent of different study of law. This is because the theory of Law and Economics upholds the idea that if companies have to pay a large sum of money, it might result in layoffs or higher gas prices – damaging society at large.

John M. Olin's contribution to law programs and his introduction of Law and Economics programs to major universities taught future policy makers of America to prioritize the needs of economic powers rather than the public.

Not only did Olin finance law programs with the goal of inspiring future lawmakers, he implemented his ideas directly in courthouses across the nation. He would fund weekend resort trips for federal judges where they could hear speeches given by Nobel-winning economists in the morning, and enjoy the Florida beaches in the afternoon. Because these retreats were presented as mere economics instruction, even liberal judges were enthusiastic.

Perhaps the most crucial thing that the Olin Foundation did to enforce its ideology was fund the Federalist Society. The Federalist Society is now one of, if not, the most important legal organization in the American right, but when Olin began funding it, the group was a mere student-led organization at a couple national universities. To highlight just how important the Federalist Society is today, five of the nine Supreme Court judges are current or former members. The Society even directly provided former President Donald Trump a shortlist of judges for his three nominations.

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John M. Olin's seismic impact on the American political landscape continues to resonate today, prompting crucial questions about the role of wealth and its influence in a democratic society. His strategic philanthropy, which fostered a robust conservative infrastructure, has shaped policy debates, legal practice, and the ideological makeup of the judiciary for decades. As we grapple with ongoing polarization and ideological divisions, we must confront the implications of deep-pocketed donors shaping political outcomes. Are we comfortable with the disproportionate influence of a few? How can we ensure a fair and equitable democratic process? Moreover, as we navigate a rapidly changing world, we must critically examine the enduring relevance of Olin's impact and envision a political landscape that embraces diversity and inclusive dialogue. The legacy of John M. Olin serves as a reminder of the power of individuals to shape a nation's destiny, compelling us to engage in a broader conversation about power dynamics, influence, and the future of democracy in America.

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## THE RAMIFICATIONS OF XI JINPING'S THIRD TERM

By Ty Loo

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On Friday, March 10, 2023 China's rubber-stamp parliament awarded Chinese President Xi Jinping his third five-year term in office. The leader of the Chinese Communist Party unanimously won the vote 2952 to 0, cementing his grip on an office to which he ascended in March of 2013. This third term ends the decades-long Chinese tradition of two-term presidencies and effectively indicates that Xi plans to serve as President for life. Foreseen by Xi's removal of term limits from the Chinese Constitution in 2018, these additional years are no surprise. Although unprecedented, this move is just another step in his long plan for the centralization of power in the Chinese Government. Unsurprisingly, only Xi's name was on the ballot.



Xi Jinping on a recent diplomatic trip to Nepal, September 23rd 2023 (NPR)

Centralization of power isn't a foreign idea to Chinese politics. Rather, it is a familiar phenomenon in a nation that has been a Communist autocracy for 74 years. Following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Mao Zedong was the leader of China until he died in 1976.

In those 27 years, he was elevated to a God-like status. The steps of centralization currently being taken by Xi are starkly similar to those taken by Mao nearly 75 years ago. Could Xi's continued term be indicative of a repeated chapter of Chinese history?

In addition to his presidency, the National People's Congress voted Xi as the head of the Central Military Commission, an appointment which makes him leader of the People's Liberation Army. Prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, many assumed a possible invasion of Taiwan (a prosperous island state of twenty million which China claims as its own) could come sooner rather than later. Yet as China watched Russia's unexpectedly feeble military from the sidelines, their plan of attack became slightly more reserved. This buffer period has started an arms race between Xi and the Pentagon. Xi is waiting for his army to have the capability to easily take the island, while the United States is rapidly modernizing its technology in hopes to prevent an invasion. Last year, Admiral Michael Gilday, chief of US naval operations, said to not rule out a "2022 window or potentially a 2023 window" for a Chinese invasion. While in March 2023, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said that Xi hopes to be ready to invade by 2027. Xi has vowed to 'reclaim' Taiwan before 2049, a year that he says will mark a century of "national rejuvenation."



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China's population, economy, and military might have grown exponentially, in the last half-century. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, China's plan to be a "bystander" is actually quite beneficial. China and Russia have seen deteriorating relationships with the West in the last decade. In turn, the countries have grown into close trading partners; from January to May 2023, their trade was valued at 93.8 billion, a 40.7% increase from the same time last year. This was China's way of financing Russia's invasion of Ukraine. They haven't directly funneled money to the Kremlin, but have instead increased trade. This way, they can dodge the blame of supporting the invasion while still maintaining a close friendship with Russia. Not only have their economies grown closer, but Xi and Putin have become close allies themselves. Although Xi hasn't publicly sided against Ukraine, he has continued to emphasize the "no limits" friendship between Russia and China. This relationship with the Kremlin is incredibly beneficial for China. If Russia comes out a winner of the war, then China will be affirmed in its belief that Taiwan can be successfully invaded. If Russia loses the war, then China will have near complete economic control over the Kremlin.

And if the conflict continues, then the West will be distracted in Ukraine, allowing Xi to "bide his time and hide his strengths," as Deng Xiaoping, China's second leader, told military leaders in the 1980s.

Xi Jinping's China shares stark similarities to the dictatorships of the past, but has also managed to patch some of the holes. Unlike in Mao's China, Xi has successfully expanded the Chinese economy while also maintaining strong trade relations with other global superpowers. Yet similarly to Mao's China, Xi's rapid consolidation of power makes China a brutal dictatorship. Additionally, with his ever-increasing hostility towards Western intervention in the South China Sea, as well as with Taiwan, he could be costing himself valuable relationships with European and American allies. All these dangerous acts have come just in Xi's first two terms, but now we are in uncharted waters. No one knows how far he will be willing to go now that he will likely serve for life.

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## THE FAR RIGHT ADVANCE IN THE WEST

By CONSTANTINE SVORONOS

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In recent years, many Western nations have seen the emergence of successful far-right political parties, which have in some cases acquired top positions in government.

Although hard-right politicians are hardly new, their emergence in Europe and Israel has no precedent in the last seventy-five years. Despite the diversity of nations across which these parties exist, there are a number of shared characteristics that can be used to identify such parties as "far-right" or on the border of that label. These characteristics include being averse to immigrants, especially on a racial or religious basis, denying uncomfortable historical truths, and being friendly to Russia with their war in Ukraine, just to name a few. These parties are typically populist, and utilize nationalistic rhetoric to a large extent.



Marine Le Pen at the National Assembly, September 23rd 2023 (RFI)

In France, the National Rally party, led by Marine Le Pen, is the second largest party. In 2022, Marine Le Pen garnered more than 13 million votes to take the second-place spot in that year's elections. Le Pen constantly reiterates the claim that immigrants, especially Muslim ones, are changing the country for the worse, even using the word "Islamization" to describe this supposed phenomenon.

## THE FAR RIGHT ADVANCE IN THE WEST

BY CONSTANTINE SVORONOS

On top of that, Marine Le Pen, while not quite so revisionist with regards to history as her father (a politician and holocaust denier), does deny the fact that France had any responsibility for the deportation of Jews during World War II. Distressingly, Emmanuel Macron, the centrist president, has been lagging in polls. The National Rally party is now the most popular, and if the upcoming 2027 presidential election were to happen right now, Le Pen and her far-right party would likely win.

In Hungary, Viktor Orban and his far-right Fidesz party have made it far, having won control of the presidency and parliament. Last year, the European Parliament (the Parliament of the European Union) voted overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution that declared Hungary to be an “electoral autocracy” or a nation where the people do vote for their leader and there are electoral competitors allowed, but typical characteristics of a democracy like free press are ignored. It is because of this that the ruling party is almost guaranteed to win any elections in a system like Hungary’s. Hungary is also now considered to be only partly-free by Freedom House (a think tank), the sole country in the European Union to earn such a label.

In 2011, Orban, with a commanding majority, was able to create a new constitution for Hungary, changing hundreds of laws. This comes alongside his party’s anti-immigrant, highly pro-Russian, and anti-academia platform to make for a real far-right party that has moved away from the nations of the West and into the cold embrace of Vladimir Putin. The story of Hungary shows us what happens when radical ideologies are able to get their hands on the reins of a nation.



Viktor Orban stands following a vote on Finland’s admittance to NATO, April 14th 2023 (The Hill)

Israel is another country where the fringe right has become mainstream. Currently, Benjamin Netanyahu and his Likud party head a coalition of a number of conservative parties, most of which aren’t far right. However, in order for Netanyahu to hold onto his position, he relies upon the far right’s votes, and thus he often has to bow to their radical will. A disturbing example of the radical policies in Israel occurred earlier this year, when the ruling coalition tried to take away much of the power of the Supreme Court,

which would consolidate power in the hands of whatever coalition holds the Knesset (Israeli parliament). A revised but comparably dangerous law was passed this July. On top of this, the new governing coalition has been more aggressive when it comes to the Palestinian issue, with the far right members of the Israeli government taking this to the extreme. The Israeli finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, even went so far as to say that a Palestinian village of 7000 people should be “erased” following a Palestinian terror attack that occurred nearby a few days earlier. This was condemned only indirectly by Netanyahu – showing that the Israeli far-right is no longer only present on the sidelines, but is instead powerful enough to where the Israeli prime minister cannot risk criticizing these horrible remarks.

The far-right is prevalent and on the rise in many countries, and not only in the aforementioned ones. For example, Sweden, Austria, and Germany all have healthy and growing far-right parties, with the latter two certainly being no strangers to this kind of radicalism. As populism grips some European nations, many observers are asking why this is happening and what can we do to make sure that no democracies fall like Hungary did.

## ERIC ADAMS AND THE MYTH OF THE POLICE

BY ZEKE TESLER

Across the United States, policing has become one of the most important issues in politics. Nowhere is this more apparent than in New York with the NYPD, where arguments between those who want to defund cops, reform them, or back the unconditionally are constant. At the center of this discussion is Mayor Eric Adams, a former police captain who falls in the middle. Adams says that he supports reform, but fervently condemns the idea of defunding the police and promises to be tough on crime – a strange combination of the three typical views. However, this is a hard line to straddle, and his campaign promises reflect the dissonance between these ideas.



Mayor Eric Adams following a press conference, January 24th 2023 (Slate.com)

As Adams' campaign website reveals, the mayor "know[s] how entrenched systemic bias is in the department," but in contrast to this, he believes that "The fastest way to true reform is to add as much diversity to the NYPD as fast as we can." He also pushes the idea of "good cops" versus "bad cops,"

citing individual troublemakers to avoid addressing systemic concerns with the police. While diversity is important, systemic problems need systemic solutions, and while Adams purports to recognize systemic issues in the NYPD, the only solutions he puts forth are tired semi-liberal reform options that do little to address institutional issues in police forces and instead ascribe police violence to individual "bad cops."

Adams has always emphasized the necessity of focusing on rising crime in New York. At the beginning of his term in 2022, the city suffered from a spate of high profile crimes that seemed to reflect the growing focus on rising crime rates in the city, including a rise in shootings and hate crimes. Based on this idea of growing violent crime rates and the necessity of stopping them, Adams promised to implement new policing policies and also proposed raising the budget of the NYPD (the largest and best funded police force in the world) by 180 million dollars. Whereas during former Mayor Bill de Blasio's time in office, criminal penalties were intentionally lessened, Adams took an opposite approach, implementing an initiative to toughen up on minor (and non-violent) "quality of life" crimes such as public drinking and urination.

Another controversial action was the reintroduction of "Neighborhood Safety Teams", units that were abandoned in the 1990s reinstated, and then broken up again in 2020 due to their association with a disproportionate number of fatal shootings. While there have been some changes to how they are organized, the teams are still in a position to cause harm within minority communities. For instance, they are still permitted to drive around in unmarked vehicles. Their return epitomizes an obvious change in New York policing policy and while Adams purports to act in the name of reducing violence, these initiatives don't reflect that, as the majority of arrests by the new Neighborhood Safety Teams during their first months of reintroduction were for low-level and non-violent offenses. These policies recall the violent policing approach of Mayor Rudy Giuliani. While Adams fervently denies this charge, Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg also used the idea of "quality of life" to push similar policies that led to increased racial profiling and overpolicing of non-white communities. Not only is Adams' policy implementation unhelpful for stopping violence, it also marks more than a few steps backwards in the fight against police secrecy and brutality.

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While it may be obvious that these types of policies have the potential for causing harm, the larger idea about needing more police to stop crime requires a more thorough analysis of crime and the police, both historically and recently. In his book *The End of Policing*, Alex S. Vitale argues that the problem with policing is policing itself, methodically discussing its failings through topics such as the school-to-prison pipeline, prostitution, the War on Drugs, and violent crime. Police departments have many responsibilities that correspond to the long list of criminalized activities in the United States. Unfortunately, they fundamentally fail with every one of them, and Vitale dissects both police failings and why reform doesn't work. In schools, positioned as under-trained School Resource Officers, police presence has caused an exorbitant increase in arrests of students (disproportionately students of color) and the criminalization of minor acts of disobedience. When dealing with sex work, policing has historically had little impact on its suppression, frequently been embroiled in corruption, and stripped sex workers of legal recourse for abuse.

The prohibition-based War on Drugs waged by politicians using the arm of the police never significantly curtailed drug use, and has instead made drug use more dangerous, led to mass and overly cruel incarceration, criminalized young people of color, and gutted privacy protections. Most specifically relevant to Adams' call for more policing, the police also fail at managing violent crime: already only making up a small fraction of police activities, the police don't solve most investigated crimes, and the number of police has no correlation with crime rates.



Police and security forces block access to Lafayette Square, June 3rd 2020 (Vox News)

These represent the problems in just some of the responsibilities of the police, but the truth Vitale presents is ubiquitous; these issues are foundational to police work (which has always prioritized control and management of those deemed dangerous and ignored all evidence of largely negative impacts) which cannot be "reformed" away. The various attempts to do so have not worked because the problem is with every aspect of policing rather than with small fixable issues.

The police presence and scope of activity that we know today is a relatively recent development, having expanded in previous decades in order to pander to white voters with the idea of promoting "law and order" (which, along with related phrases like "soft on crime", still heavily persists in politics today), as well as to control poor Black communities. There is extensive research showing that the crimes of the rich are often ignored or under-penalized (the lack of arrests resulting from the 2008 financial crisis being a prime example), while the marginalized and poor are overpoliced and over-targeted for nonviolent crimes (e.g. the War on Drugs, which had little impact on drug availability or use but destabilized many non-white communities). Increased and inevitably targeted policing leads to mass incarceration, which in turn leads to cycles of poverty. Even in the rare cases where policing works for the safety of a community, it is at the expense of all the harm that the police commit and have committed in the past.

The uncomfortable reality is that the public is constantly misled about crime and the need for policing. It's easy to repeatedly hear about the crime problem from government officials and the media and believe that the solution is more police. However, both the problem of a rising crime rate and the idea of the police as a solution don't hold up under scrutiny.

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## ERIC ADAMS AND THE MYTH OF THE POLICE

By ZEKE TESLER

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While crime did rise during the pandemic, and especially coming into Adams' term in 2022, crime rates are significantly lower than they were in the '90s. Coming into this year, the violent crime rate took a downward trend as the pandemic died down in severity. Contrary to what Adams says and what his policies suggest, New York has not regressed into a violent and lawless city. Looking at crime beyond the scope of Adams and the pandemic, it's interesting to see the decline in crime between 2015-2019 (a period where in most other places crime remained stable or went up), during which policing policy was much less extreme. These trends show that in New York City, crime rates have little to do with strict policing, and much more to do with the state of the world and the economy. By choosing more police as a solution against the exaggerated violent crime in New York, just as when he tells us that one of his major solutions to issues in the NYPD is more diversity, Adams ignores actual problems of systemic racism, violence, overblown budgets, and ineffectiveness in favor of an easy fix that actually doesn't fix much of anything and leads to more brutality against the marginalized. These types of policies are not new, they have never worked, and it's far past time to try something else.

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If Adams' approach to stopping crime is harmful, what alternative solutions exist? In order to reduce crime and produce actual net good in people's lives, our politicians and the media need to stop lionizing and overfunding the police and instead turn to expanding social services that actually help people. In this, Eric Adams has a huge responsibility. He says that he recognizes the importance of expanding mental health services, and that he does want to increase funding and has pushed to send more mental health workers onto subways, but he also pushes expanded police presence along with them. He has increased funding for the city's summer youth employment program, but has also decreased education and social services budgets. In the past, he promised to expand the Crisis Management System, an underfunded network of city-funded anti-violence organizations, but has instead cut its budget. While he may say otherwise, Adams clearly believes that it is more important to throw money to the police than it is to better the lives of the people of New York City. Rather than listen to reason and move towards a better future, Adams implements the tired and ineffectual. In so doing, he only perpetuates myths of police efficacy and utility.

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## THE HISTORY OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

By ISHAAN AKILESWAR

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What can be done to make The United States of America a more equal and equitable society? In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established, through the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, "affirmative action" as a tool of government during an early phase of the Civil Rights revolution. Affirmative action, which became controversial almost immediately, is the practice and legal ability to favor individuals that belong to disadvantaged and underrepresented groups when admitting people into either places of employment or education.

An explosive series of conversations about affirmative action have erupted over the last 50 years, particularly when discussing college admissions. America wanted to become a greater society, a more inclusive society, but there were powerful backlashes against this practice. Some people thought the practice was going to be "short term" in application and were surprised that it has lasted for over seven decades. Others wanted it more vigorously applied. In a 2022 Pew Research poll, 74% of respondents said that race and ethnicity should not be factors in admissions. This raises the question: when a majority of the country opposes affirmative action, why are the calls to keep it in place so significant?

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By ISHAAN AKILESWAR

It can be argued that while affirmative action gives a foothold for minorities who more often than not don't have the financial and educational resources as other students, it also creates a higher threshold that majorities – like White and Asian students – need to cross, who usually hold the majority population at top universities.



JFK signs Executive Order 10925 on March 6th, 1961 (U.S. Department of Labor)

It can be further argued that this discrimination is solely a repercussion of seeking diversity in colleges, and giving minorities opportunities at top universities, which is a good thing, right? It ensured that universities and colleges were benefiting people who have been historically kept out of competitive schools, due to their race, ethnicity, income, or identity. Classrooms and communities embraced this due to the diversity it creates, due to it bringing in a wide array of experiences to a shared environment.

In the process of striving for inclusivity, and equal opportunity, these institutions have tended to give preferential treatment to people of color which, some argue, has resulted in being disadvantageous to White and Asian students that have historically made up the majority population at these colleges. Affirmative action poses the question of whether or not “legal discrimination” and diversity should be given more weight than objective qualifications. Supporters of racial advantages in admissions mask the practice with the phrase “affirmative action,” while the harsh reality of skin color bias deprives more qualified candidates of their spots.

On June 29, 2023, race-based conscious admissions were ended at Harvard and UNC CH (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) by the U.S. Supreme Court, with a 6-3 decision. Justice Sonia Sotomayor issued a dissent, stating that the decision “rolls back decades of precedent and momentous progress,” while Justices John Roberts, who wrote for the majority, had this to write about colorblind admissions: “Many universities have for too long wrongly concluded that the touchstone of an individual’s identity is not challenges bested, skills built, or lessons learned, but the color of their skin. Our constitutional history does not tolerate that choice.”

Roberts’ opinion was shared by fellow Justices Clarence Thomas, Brett Kavanaugh, Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch and Amy Coney Barret; while Justice Elena Kagan and Ketanji Jackson signed onto Sotomayor’s dissent. Critics have pointed out that this is an extremely conservative Supreme Court with an “activist” agenda to undo everything from The New Deal to Civil Rights to any and all forms of liberalism. Others say the change is timely.



Protestors defend affirmative action in Washington Square Park, June 29th 2023 (NY Times)

The issue of race in the United States has always been a tricky topic, and with race-based admissions being a barrier for some, a diversifying tool for admission officers, as well as opportunities for others, affirmative action has entailed that topic. With the Supreme Courts’ ruling, this topic will become even more complicated. There is no doubt that the conversation about race-based admissions and its ethics will continue.

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Jameel Freeman, director of college counseling at Fieldston, had lots to say about the SCOTUS decision and its effects to come. In his letter to the former senior class and their parents, he had this to say: “In my opinion, one of the best aspects of the college search process is the ability to truly examine your identifiers and what you want the next four (or 40) years of your lives to look like. Regardless of the Supreme Court decision, that should not change. We want you to embrace, celebrate, and be inspired by the diversity of your identifiers. We want you all to attend colleges that challenge your intellect and allow you to learn from people who have similar and dissimilar backgrounds—these are a few of the proven educational and psychological benefits of diversity.” With these words in mind, it is important to understand the diversity creating opportunities affirmative action presented, as well as the negative aspects it posed.

For highschoolers, college kids, parents, and communities across the country, conversations on affirmative action are being held, and what consequences or benefits might come from its dismantlement.

Ultimately, the path moving forward should prioritize an inclusive and equitable learning environment, where individuals are left to the contents of their character and abilities for judgment, rather than by the color of their skin. Everyone must uphold this standard.

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## HOW RUSSIA’S HISTORY IS USED FOR ITS WAR IN UKRAINE

By CONSTANTINE SVORONOS

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How do you justify the wholesale slaughter of 100,000 of your own nation’s men? Russia believes that its 1000 years of close history with regard to Ukraine will convince the public of its current war there. The Russian government has engaged in a revisionist remaking of the past millennium of Russo-Ukrainian history — a false narrative which denies Ukraine of its history as a nation and its right to exist independently. The Russian government has also accused Ukraine of Nazism (a refrain that recalls the Soviet losses of over twenty-four million people to Hitler in WWII) by spreading virulent propaganda about a large and threatening fascist presence in Ukraine (never mind that Ukraine’s president is devoutly Jewish).



The territory of the Kievan Rus, 11th century (Britannica)

At Fieldston, this war has been a widely discussed issue. It has been discussed in clubs, classes, and in every other location where healthy debate occurs — as is natural at a school where politics hold great importance. Less often mentioned are Russian and Ukrainian history, even though the war and history are deeply related. To understand why so many people both in and out of Russia support what the West views as an unjustified war of aggression, we need to know how Russian history is being used to propagate false ideas which have led to war.

Much of Russian leadership has repeatedly denied the existence of a unique Ukrainian history or nation separate from Russia. Russia’s argument comes from the deeply linked origins of these two nations. Putin claims that Ukraine is a part of Russia. Both Russia and Ukraine descend from the world’s first Slavic state, the Kyivan Rus’. This state came into existence more than a thousand years ago, and according to those in the Russian camp, Russia and Ukraine have been one and the same since then. In 2014, during the annexation of Crimea by Russia, Russian President Vladimir Putin affirmed that Russians and Ukrainians, “are one people. Kyiv is the mother of Russian cities. Ancient Rus’ is our common source and we cannot live without each other.”

# HOW RUSSIA'S HISTORY IS USED FOR ITS WAR IN UKRAINE

BY CONSTANTINE SVORONOS

Vladimir Putin is wrong here; despite having similar genesis stories, Russia and Ukraine have distinct histories and today the two nations retain numerous differences.

In the beginning of the 14th century, the southwestern regions of the Kyivan Rus', lands which are today part of Ukraine, were conquered by Poland-Lithuania. For around 400 years, these lands would be ruled by Poland-Lithuania, and as a result, would grow culturally unique from the former parts of the Kyivan Rus that fell under Mongol and later Muscovite rule. These two different regions, while both former parts of the Kyivan Rus, were already starting to see these differences emerge around 7 centuries ago. Toward the end of the Kyivan Rus, a unique Ukrainian language had also begun to emerge, and between the 15th and 17th centuries, the Eastern Orthodox Churches of Moscow and Kyiv developed as separate entities from one another.

After hundreds of years of these two peoples growing ever-more distinct, the lands of Ukraine would eventually be absorbed by the Russian Empire - starting in the early 17th century and being fully incorporated by 1793. Ukraine remained under Russian control until 1917, the year in which the Russian Empire fell into disarray.

As civil war engulfed the former empire, Ukraine was able to achieve some degree of independence. However after a few years of war, the lands of Ukraine were eventually divided by Poland and the USSR, where the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was established.



Ukrainian territorial changes from 1922-1954 (Origins, July 2022)

Upon becoming part of the Soviet Union, any sort of Ukrainian national identity was repressed, and the Ukrainian people suffered immensely under Soviet rule. During the years 1932 and 1933, between 3 and 5 million Ukrainians died from starvation due to Soviet policy. However, this tragedy brought about a revival of the Ukrainian national identity - an identity which the Russian leadership at the time, like now, hoped to destroy. While Ukraine and Russia are similar, they simply cannot be equated to one in the same, as Vladimir Putin has done. Ukraine hopes that this time they will be able to hold on to their identity in the face of an attempted Russification.

The other major false idea that the Russian government has been using to justify its war in Ukraine is a supposed widespread presence of Nazis. In Russia, World War II (or the Great Patriotic War as it is known to Russians) and the USSR's destruction of the Nazis is a point of tremendous national pride. During World War II the Nazis committed unspeakable crimes in the USSR, including the murder of over 2 million Soviet Jews, the deaths of between 3 and 5 million Soviet POWs captured by the Nazis, and indiscriminate massacres of civilians. In total, around 24 million Soviet people died in the Second World War - yet the nation was victorious. Even the mention of Nazism recalls memories of those heady days - viewed by many as the finest hour of Russia.

According to a 2017 poll, a plurality of Russian people - 34% - saw World War II as the most important point in the past century of Russian history, and the percentage is even higher among people with confidence in Vladimir Putin. So by claiming that Nazis are largely prevalent in Ukraine and that a genocide against Russians is being conducted, Vladimir Putin has been able to rally many more people in support of the war.



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He has taken the most unifying part of Russian history, and used it to falsely support his Russian war of aggression. Farcically, Putin claims that Ukraine's Jewish leader is at the vanguard of a Nazi revival impinging upon the freedom of the Slavic world. Less often mentioned is the fact that Ukraine, as a former component of the Soviet Union, suffered just as Russia did from World War II.

By utilizing Russian history, a history in which the Russian people have great pride, Vladimir Putin and the Russian government hope to convince the Russian people that their sacrifices in the interest of his war are worthy of the blood of their sons and brothers. Thus far, the propaganda claiming that Ukraine is a Nazi puppet regime has been largely successful in Russia. The Russian government has been able to use this propaganda to convince many Russian people that this war is not only justified, but necessary.



Ukrainian soldiers dismount tank during training exercise, February 2nd 2023 (The Harvard Gazette)

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## "MARXIST" FEMINISM: DISTORTIONS OF MARXIST MATERIALISM FROM THE ANTI-TRANS LEFT

By CLEM SCHONFELD

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Before I begin, it is important that we are on the same page about beliefs and definitions of the different movements and identifiers discussed. I will briefly list and define some recurring terms as I use them in the text.

**Transgender person:** *Someone whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth, and who takes social and/or medical steps to bring their body into alignment with their gender identity. These steps can include changing pronouns, hormone replacement therapy, and surgery.*

**Anti-trans:** *A broad label encompassing opponents of trans identity per se, and those who simply oppose medical transition or legal recognition of gender changes.*

**Marxism:** *Difficult to define as Marx lived a long time ago and no one can seem to fully agree on his works. As it is relevant here, Marxism is a method of both socio-economic and philosophical analysis based on material social relations. Note that Marxists reject reduction of experience either to purely idealistic or purely material details, in favor of a more dialectical approach recognizing the influence material has on ideas, and vice versa.*

**Anti-trans Marxist Feminists:** *Self-described leftists who are against recognition of trans identity on purportedly feminist and Marxist grounds.*

Now that we've got that out of the way: With increasing social awareness of transgender identity, political movements on both the left and the right struggle to construct appropriate and ideologically consistent positions on the topic. One sad result of many modern "leftists" failing to read Marx is that many claim completely anti-Marxist positions are, in fact, the correct Marxist evaluations. This is what is happening amongst a new wave of trans-exclusionary "Marxist" feminists. It is my opinion that Marxism properly conceived can in fact be a resource to promote trans identity – and that the effort to use Marx within feminist discourse to undermine transgender validation can only be based on a gross misunderstanding of Marxist thought.

What set my critique in motion was this this exchange of tweets by some prominent figures on the anti-trans left. I include this because I believe it to illustrate the core concepts and flaws of Marxist Feminist ("MarxFem") ideology. Suzanne Moore is an anti-trans British journalist. You know who JK Rowling is. CPGB-ML (not to be confused with CPGB, CPB-ML, or RCPB-ML) is a small British Marxist-Leninist party.

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**@suzanne\_moore:** “God some of these people are thick. Marx was a materialist. When I left the Guardian I described my view as materialism. Marx said ‘social being determines consciousness’. Engels also says ideas don’t determine reality. This is why gender ideology is inherently right wing.”

**@jk\_rowling:** “‘These gentlemen think that when they have changed the names of things they have changed the things themselves. This is how these profound thinkers mock at the whole world.’ Engels”

**@CPGBML\*:** “A pdf copy of our pamphlet ‘Identity Politics and the Transgender Trend: Where is LGBT Ideology Taking Us?’

It is apparent that not one individual or organization in this thread has ever read a word of Marx or Engels aside from what they found on BrainyQuote. If they had done the work of reading, they would not have made the fatal mistake of conflating Marx’s materialism with this odd, physically deterministic materialism.

\* If you read through the CPGB-ML’s pamphlet you will note that in the old Marxist-Leninist tradition they do not at any point quote Marx or Lenin themselves except for a short passage from Capital to claim that white people experience racism. They do have a bit from Monty Python in there, though. Properly cited and everything.

To assert that “gender ideology is inherently right wing,” that it is antithetical to Marxism, illustrates an obnoxious ignorance of Marx’s actual views.



Russian women march in support of Communism, 1917 (Public domain)

Marx did indeed assert in 1859 in his A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy that “[i]t is not consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.” But this insight in fact works against these MarxFems’ claim. Social being is not at all the same as biological being. Social being is about how one relates to the world and practically engages with it. If one engages the world fully inside a social construction of gender, that establishes social being and helps determine consciousness. In relevant terms: A trans woman who looks, behaves, and relates to the rest of the world fully as a woman should, in the Marxist materialist view, be considered to be a woman. Her social being, indeed, inhabits womanhood; not “manhood,” whatever her original anatomy.

Marx did indeed assert in 1859 in his A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy that “[i]t is not consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.” But this insight in fact works against these MarxFems’ claim. Social being is not at all the same as biological being. Social being is about how one relates to the world and practically engages with it. If one engages the world fully inside a social construction of gender, that establishes social being and helps determine consciousness. In relevant terms: A trans woman who looks, behaves, and relates to the rest of the world fully as a woman should, in the Marxist materialist view, be considered to be a woman. Her social being, indeed, inhabits womanhood; not “manhood,” whatever her original anatomy.

As Marx opens his Theses on Feuerbach in 1888: “The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism— that of Feuerbach included—is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively.” Here, Marx criticizes the very vulgar materialism that these MarxFems claim he represents.

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Marx clearly embraces a more evolved materialism that focuses on practical function and its relation to the rest of the world, not on physical or biological objects themselves. The MarxFem fixation on biological features such as sex chromosomes or gonads as “material reality” ignores that Marx’s materialism leaves plenty of room for the subjective experience – in this case, of gender – and its practice to be central.

Most fundamentally, Marx at no point claims that social being is inherent and unchangeable. On the contrary, he states plainly in the Theses that “The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can only be comprehended and rationally understood as revolutionary practice.” Although he’s clearly not talking about switching genders here – he’s Karl Marx, and transgenderism was not his primary focus – he is clearly supportive of the idea that social being can and should be changed.

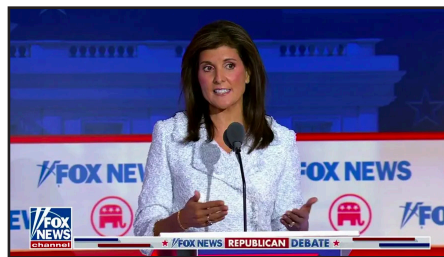
All in all, trans-exclusionary Marxist Feminism is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of Marxism. Marx’s philosophy, in fact, can and should be used to support the trans community.

Ideas don’t determine material reality in the Marxist frame, but the social being of trans people traces to practices and sensuous human activity, which is fully cognizable Marxist materialism.

## NIKKI HALEY... IS SHE A SENSIBLE REPUBLICAN?

By CALEB FELDMAN

Nikki Haley’s soundbite from the debate was: “This is exactly why Margaret Thatcher said: ‘If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman.’” I watched the GOP 2024 presidential debate on August 23rd with my ultra-liberal grandmother and father. They were shocked and pleasantly surprised when former South Carolina Governor and Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, expressed some seemingly moderate views.



Nikki Haley at the GOP presidential debate, August 23rd 2023 (Fox News)

Many Republicans criticize the Biden administration for giving too much aid to Ukraine in their fight against Russia. In fact, Ron DeSantis declared that when elected president, he would suspend aid to Ukraine until other European countries step up.

Haley strongly disagreed with this. She said that the United States gives less than 3.5% of our defense budget to Ukraine and that 11 other European countries give the same or more relative to their GDP. This is an incredibly important point, especially when you have other candidates saying we should suspend aid until European countries step up and match our donations. Well, they have stepped up. We are not going to see them give the same dollar amount because they just don’t have the kind of money we have. However, seeing them give the same percentage of their GDP to Ukraine is sufficient to show that it is an equal effort.

Nikki Haley said the following during the Debate: “Putin has said once Russia takes Ukraine, Poland and The Baltics are next. That’s a world war. We’re trying to prevent a world war. Look at what Putin did today, he killed Pergozan. When I was at the UN, the Russian Ambassador suddenly died. This guy is a murderer, and you [Vivek Ramaswamy] are choosing a murder over a current American country.”

I watched this clip in a Tik Tok video posted by @karaaah. The comment section under the video looked like this:

“Listen i’m not a republican but this lady 🔥”

“Not a republican but wow, I like her”

“Okay you know what, I like her”

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During the debate, Haley also took a less conservative approach to abortion. While most other candidates danced around a number of weeks for a ban on abortion, Nikki Haley said the following: “Can’t we all agree that contraception should be available? And can’t we all agree that we are not going to put a woman in jail or give her the death penalty if she gets an abortion? Let’s treat this like the respectful issue that it is, and humanize a situation and stop demonizing a situation.” Now, she did say that she is firm in her pro-life stance. She, like all the other GOP candidates, did mention the outlandish Republican argument citing late term abortions. The reality is that these account for less than 1% of all abortions in the US. But more importantly, her decision to say that we should not demonize or imprison women who get abortions was a refreshing thing to hear from a GOP candidate, especially from someone who worked in the Trump administration.

Tik Tok user [@131kc](#) responded to a CNN clip of Haley’s statement on abortion in a now viral video, saying: “Is this a republican that I’m not completely appalled by?” Indeed all of the comments were along similar lines.

New York Times columnist David Brooks writes in a piece titled “Nikki Haley is the Best Trump Alternative”, “many of her opponents took the issue as a chance to perform self-righteous bluster – to make the issue about themselves. She was the only one who acknowledged the complexity of the issue, who tried to humanize people caught in horrible situations, who acknowledged that the absolutist position is politically unsustainable.”

And when the conversation turned to the state of our economy, she did not, like most Republicans tend to do, blame the Biden administration. Rather, she said the following: “Donald Trump added 8 trillion to our debt and our kids are never gonna forgive us for this. And so, at the end of the day, you look at the 2024 budget, Republicans asked for 7.4 billion in earmarks, Democrats asked for 2.8 billion. So, you tell me who are the big spenders? I think it’s time for an accountant in the White House.” She continued, “The truth is that Biden didn’t do this to us, our Republicans did this to us too.”

NYT columnist David Brooks writes, “She was the candidate brave enough to state the obvious truth that Trump took decades of G.O.P. fiscal conservative posturing and he blew it to smithereens. The other candidates assumed the usual conservative postures about cutting taxes and spending, but she introduced the reality: Under Trump, the G.O.P. added \$8 trillion to the national debt.”

In writing this, I want to make a few things clear: Yes, Nikki Haley upholds the typical horrific GOP approach to gun control. And yes, she is pro-life, anti-trans, and has said that she would support Trump if he won the nomination. So how anti-Trump can she be? Trump is a horrible egotistical thug and a liar who puts his own power above democracy. How can she support such an individual and still get our vote?

But of the Republican candidates on the debate stage, she made somewhat more moderate points and came off as sensible and at times even critical of the Trump administration. She was able to make some sensible points while simultaneously not isolating the ultra MAGA Republican right. As David Brooks put it, “She seems to be one of the few candidates who understands that to run against Trump you have to run against Trump.”

As I’m writing this article, I just received a text from my grandmother with a link to a tweet about Nikki Haley’s stance on the United Auto Workers strike. The tweet reads, “While @UAW is fighting for workers, @NikkiHaley is bragging about her record of union busting.” Below the link to said tweet, my grandmother wrote, “She’s anti-union! Vile human being.” It’s safe to say that regardless of a few moderate statements on the debate stage, Nikki Haley does not and will not ever have my grandmother’s vote.

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