

Fascism in our Midst

By Kathy Fitzpatrick

Fascism can be defined as "A form of political behavior marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity, energy and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion."

-by [Robert O. Paxton](#),
a professor emeritus at [Columbia University](#),
from his book *The Anatomy of Fascism*

When i first began my foray into the Internet world of the chemically injured i wasn't sure what to expect, or even, what to look for. My first encounters with list owners and groups more than exceeded my expectations. Questions were answered, fears soothed and a wealth of useful information gleaned. There was a feeling of shared camaraderie as new friends were made, it was, in many ways, my life support during the most severe part of my illness. Of course, not all groups are all things to all people, disagreements are bound to happen in any group setting. It would be a boring world if we all agreed. But there are some groups that go far beyond disagreements, breaching all rules of etiquette by abusing members in a manner resembling fascism. Perhaps the word is a bit strong but as i was listening to a talk given by Naomi Wolf, it occurred to me this was happening in the CI community. If you want an idea of what fascism in terms of chemical injury might look like, imagine if we couldn't use terminology that some people might find offensive and those words were [redacted](#) from our books and articles.

You may never know what results will come out of your action, but if you do nothing there will be no result."

Mahatma Gandhi

It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare, it is because we do not dare that things are difficult.

Seneca

Most people don't have a clear understanding of fascism, which is why, as a community, it is essential to examine. At it's very core fascism is innately anti-democratic. We would be remiss, if, as a community, we excused or condoned poor behavior by rewarding it with a rationalization it couldn't happen in our community. This is cloudy thinking, because indeed it has happened in our

community and is in fact happening as i write these words. And while not genuine fascism some chemical injury groups bear many of the basic characteristics of a fascist movement. If you belong to a group employing any or most of these characteristics you might ask yourself, is it's right? Then who does it benefit? Certainly not members who become collateral damage, while others in the group suffer from the residual damage of humiliation and other forms of abuse levied on group members. While i agree list owner/groups have the right to run their list or organization as they see fit, i would like to pose a couple of questions. What is the purpose of censorship? How can we exchange information if someone is acting like Big Brother and making decisions for us How are to express ourselves if open and direct communication and dialog are suppressed? Censorship, suppression and heavy handed tactics create a community based on fear. This is not healing.

As a community we speak out against the suppression of information regarding everyday chemicals. This type of suppression is called "doublespeak", a tactic used by the EPA, the government and many other factions. We are outraged when it happens, why are we not outraged when it happens in the very groups and organizations designed to bring us together to work for the common good of all? Are we, as a community, so wounded, so mired in [learned helplessness](#) we refuse to speak out against the tyranny being waged upon us by our own community?

We need to find the courage to say 'NO' to the things and people that are not serving us if we want to rediscover ourselves and live our lives with authenticity.

Dr. Barbara DeAngelis

To show how fascists work i've taken the ten steps from Naomi Wolfs' "Fascist America, in 10 easy steps", and applied them to the chemically injured community. If you belong to a group, online or otherwise, displaying these tactics you may wish to consider finding a more nurturing space to spend your time.

1. Invoke a terrifying internal and external enemy

Identify the enemy through means of surveillance and the composition of persuasive dialog.

2. Create a gulag

According to Naomi Wolf "Gulags in history tend to metastasize, becoming ever larger and more secretive, ever more deadly and formalized" In the CI community this means answer no questions and censor information.

3. Develop a thug caste

Intimidate, threaten, harass, have a temper tantrum, feign illness, or otherwise terrorize or cyber-stalk any and all persons who disagree with the ideology of a particular list or group leader. Moderate list members without their knowledge. Make monetary or other demands. Humiliate members online or backchannel. Thus effectively silencing the rest of the chemically injured population.

4. Set up an internal surveillance system

Use fake names to join groups, refuse to reveal your identity and/or other pertinent facts and information relating to your organization.

5. Harass citizens' groups

Once you've used a fake name, infiltrate groups and begin harassing members while gathering information. Create a distraction that will lead to partisan and contentious quarreling.

6. Engage in arbitrary detention and release

A little harder to do online but basically once you're targeted and on their blacklist it's hard to get off. And yes, there is a blacklist in our community.

7. Target key individuals

Use any means possible, including identity theft [aka name dropping] to reach the doctors and other professionals in the field who work tirelessly for our community. Use any means available to get them to unwittingly join your campaign. Once they wise up and wish to remove their sponsorship, block their emails.

8. Control the press

Suppress important information regarding decisions for the community, meet behind closed doors, close petitions so names can't be removed, don't allow signatures to be made public. Publish pertinent documents w/out list members being allowed to see what was written. Publish false information so the truth becomes blurred. Advertise each day by saturating group lists with numerous posts so your name is recognized. When members submit information for publication ensure there is heavy handed editing. Only listen to and use information from people who agree with your agenda.

9. Dissent equals treason

All those who support any other leader or ideology is a traitor to the chemically injured community. No free thinking or differing opinions allowed. Support the system or off with your head!

10. Suspend the rule of law

After everyone has been bullied or blacklisted the oppressive faction can now take over. However, if we refuse to submit they will be effectively neutered.

If you are part of a group displaying any of the above characteristics your healing may be impeded and in fact, your health may be jeopardized from the trauma, residual or otherwise. Any organization using shame, humiliation, threats of lawsuits, etc can be rendered powerless when we, as individuals, take back our personal power and speak our truth. Only then, can we, as a community, come together and create powerful change for all.

Kathy Fitzpatrick is a writer, activist, intuitive and naturalist who loves to dig in the dirt, eat weeds and grows her own organic herbs and veggies.