

## White supremacists have a party

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South Carolina launched the Civil War by firing on Fort Sumter. When its former governor Nikki Haley was asked what caused the Civil War, she said it was a dispute over “how government was going to run,” the “role of government,” and “government getting in the way.” The questioner replied, “In 2023, it’s astonishing to me that you answer that question without mentioning the word slavery.” Haley asked, “What do you want me to say about slavery?”

She could have said South Carolina’s Declaration of Secession named “increasing hostility on the part of the non-slaveholding States to the institution of slavery” as the cause.

She could have said Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens explained that “the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution.” Or that Stephens observed that the Confederacy “rests upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition.”

She could have quoted the Gettysburg Address, where Lincoln called the Civil War a test of “the proposition that all men are created equal” and called for a “new birth of freedom.”

Haley’s no “birdbrain,” as Donald Trump calls her. She knows better. She didn’t mention slavery because she was pandering to the GOP’s white supremacist base.

When Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, racist Southern Democrats (“Dixiecrats”) switched parties. Republicans welcomed them with open arms. Today, white supremacists vote Republican and support Trump despite (or perhaps because of) 91 felony indictments because he defends them, calls them “my people” and inspires them to let their freak flag fly.

Republicans like Haley have been pandering to white supremacists since Nixon’s Southern Strategy brought racist Dixiecrats into the fold. Six decades later, the party of Lincoln has become — zombie-like — the party of white supremacists.

Arthur Hill  
Southport