

Fear of Russia and the Rise of "Left-Birchers"

by

Caleb Maupin

on

[New Eastern Outlook](#)



In being defined merely by its opponents and fixating on a fear of Russia, a large chunk of the far-left has usurped the role held by the far-right during the Cold War.

In 1963, folk singer Bob Dylan, whose left-leaning lyrics seemed to define the liberal politics of the era, composed a song which was a mockery of the right-wing anti-Communist organization known as the John Birch Society. He wrote:

Well, I was feelin' sad and feelin' blue

I didn't know what in the world I was gonna do

Them Communists they was comin' around

They was in the air

They was on the ground

They wouldn't gimme no peace



The John Birch Society was easy to laugh at. This far-right organization was made up doctors, lawyers, and other middle class elements and operated in a clandestine manner. Its members were reportedly shown a "secret book" claiming to prove that Republican President Dwight Eisenhower was a Communist, receiving orders from the Russians.

Invoking Russia To Attack Dissidents

However, for those involved in peace marches and activism for civil rights, the Birchers were more than just a joke. As McCarthyism ebbed after the death of Stalin and talk of detente dominated mainstream politics, the far-right took up the task of mobilizing to attack and silence left-wing activists.

The John Birch Society, the Ku Klux Klan, the American Legion and other right-wing organizations claimed to be against the entire political establishment. They accused both major parties of being corrupt and tied to Communism. Their rhetoric often called for some kind of revolt in order to "restore the republic".

But at the end of the day, the main activity of far-rightists was simply to silence critics of US foreign policy while accusing them of being Soviet agents. In 1965, as the first large protests and teach-ins against the Vietnam War took place across the country, the far-right mobilized for the purpose of silencing them.

The well-known intellectual, Noam Chomsky described the scene in Boston: "We tried to have our first major public demonstration against the war on the Boston Common, the usual place for meetings. I was supposed to be one of the speakers, but nobody could hear a word. The meeting was totally broken up—by students marching over from universities, by others, and hundreds of state police, which kept people from being [murdered](#)."

The Harvard Crimson described the scene this way: "The speakers were continually interrupted by organized cheers of 'Stay in Vietnam' and 'We want victory' from the hecklers, who also sang the national anthem." In New York City, the anti-war protesters were splattered with a can red paint. In Berkeley, the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club attacked protesters, and broke the leg of police officer who stepped in to try and protect [them](#).

The same year, right-wing activists called in a bomb-threat in order prevent professors at the University of Michigan from holding an anti-war teach-in. As the activists continued to have their anti-war conference outside in the snow, far-rightists heckled them and displayed placards saying ["Nuke Hanoi"](#).

It was easy to tell what the far-right of the early 1960s was opposed to. They were against Communism and anyone who seemed even slightly sympathetic to it. But what exactly did the Birchers believe in? Their answers were vague: "Freedom" "Liberty" "Americanism" and not much more.

Despite whatever rhetoric, the main activity of the Cold War far right was to defend the political establishment. The far right-wing groupings of the period existed simply to shut down and silence those who opposed the Vietnam War, advocated Civil Rights, or otherwise challenged the status quo. Their ideology and critique of overall society was secondary and marginal, as their primary activity was to shut down the forces that constituted an actual threat to the existing order.

Meet The "Left Birchers"

In contemporary America, styles from the John Birch playbook have re-emerged, but this time from sections of the so-called left. Leftism has long been a wide ideological tent including those who advocate a new political and economic order. The political left is made up those who believe in Social-Democracy, Communism, Anarchism or other egalitarian visions for a new world.



Leftists have been known to call the mainstream media "bourgeois propaganda." Leftist students in the past were known for arguing against the ideas their professors and teachers extolled, in some cases were expelled from their Universities for acts of protest. But increasingly the contemporary "left" is made up, not of dissidents and free thinkers, but of those who watch MSNBC and CNN religiously. Many leftists can perfectly recite an "anti-oppression pedagogy" taught to them by their professors chapter and verse. These most conforming and obedient university students are then dispatched to silence those who break the politically correct rules they have carefully studied.

Much like the Birchers couldn't really argue against left-wing ideas, but simply pinned the label of "commie" or "pinko" on those who disagreed with them, the new, campus based liberal "anti-fascists" thinks they have won a debate simply by declaring their opponent's arguments to be reminiscent of some form of oppression. If an opponent can somehow be declared "racist," "sexist," or otherwise oppressive, his arguments are null and void, no matter how much truth they contain.

Many of the leftists who attend "Stop Trump" rallies cannot tell you what they believe in or what policies they advocate. Instead they can simply tell you about the evils of systemic racism, white privilege, homophobia, transphobia, and other injustices that they oppose, and demand the establishment join their efforts against such atrocities. The cold war far-right advocated outlawing the Communist Party and leftist organizations because they were "too dangerous to American democracy." These Left Birchers will go on to argue that those who extoll "harmful" ideas must never be allowed to speak, because what they say is oppressing those who may hear them.

In the 1960s, anti-communist fanatics could not really explain the ideology of Marxism, simply seeing it as "dictatorship" "redistribution of wealth" or "taking my money away." Likewise, the new Birchers often cannot tell you what a "fascist" is, or offer a comprehensible definition. However, these folks are happy to draw complex charts and graphs, in attempts to convince you that someone is a fascist, utilizing classic "guilt by association". Furthermore, much like the Birchers of Cold War era, due to some strange leaps in logic, all the "transphobia", "slut shaming", "mansplaining", "white supremacy" and "fascism" they are opposed to is somehow being imported from Russia, directed as part of a Kremlin conspiracy to hurt the US status quo.

Purging Left-wing Circles

While the left birchers rarely hold rallies demanding specific reforms, and hardly ever convene conferences on socialist ideology, they are happy shout down speakers they disagree with, tear down statues or monuments, and call for TV programs and books to be outlawed.

Like the Birchers of the 60s, these leftists may claim they oppose "the system" but in reality, they spend their time mobilizing to defend and protect the liberal order against those who oppose it. Much like the Birchers accused critics of the Vietnam War of being "Commies" who needed to "Go Back To Russia," leftists now declare that those who criticize US and NATO policies are "racists" who "have ties to Moscow". No anti-Trump rally goes by without signs featuring a Hammer and Sickle or the face of Vladimir Putin. Wanting more hostility toward Russia is considered an essential aspect of "opposing oppression" and "fighting for justice." Russians are accused of "undermining faith in the U.S. democratic process" i.e. encouraging Americans to have ideologically incorrect thoughts.

Members of the far-left who don't jump on board with the new trend in left-wing politics are labelled as "Red Browns" and "Nazbols." Across the internet, certain liberal-minded "experts" insist that groups like the Workers Party of Belgium, websites like Black Agenda Report, and even former African-American Congresswoman, Cynthia McKinney are somehow actually "fascists." The logic is that if a leftist dares speak up against the social media censorship of Alex Jones, or questions the "Russiagate" narratives of the Intelligence Agencies, he must be a closet Nazi, no matter how outspoken he or she may be on vital political questions.

The Bernie Sanders wing of the Democratic Party, adherents of which often fall in line with new trend of Left McCarthyism, increasingly face charges of disloyalty and accusations of Kremlin ties. During the 2016 election, the argument from these forces was that favoring Sanders made one a "sexist"

"mansplaining" "Bernie Bro." Since then, liberal voices have endlessly spouted the idea that the Berniecrat movement, advocating policies that rank-and-file democrats actually want, is somehow a Russian plot to get Trump re-elected by making sure Democrats don't obediently march behind the National Committee.

Antifa from the Pentagon

During the Cold War, US foreign policy was justified in the name of opposing Communism. So, Communists and leftists in the United States, who challenged the notion that Marxism was evil, were seen as the primary ideological threat. Those who opposed war were deemed to be "soft on communism." Today, US foreign policy is justified in the name of "spreading freedom" "promoting human rights" and overthrowing "oppressive regimes."

The USA now presents itself to the world as a bastion of sexual freedom, racial equality, and liberation, and when it attacks a country, the regime is accused of being "racist", "sexist" or "homophobic." So, those within the United States who oppose gay marriage, or advocate social conservatism, are seen as extolling the ideology of the enemy. Furthermore, those who oppose attacks on countries like Syria, Russia, or China are deemed as being "soft on fascism".

At the end of the day, the existing white nationalists and fascists of the United States are indeed a big public relations problem for the government. Mainstream media would like the world to believe that Obama's presidency and the actions of Martin Luther King Jr. made the USA a benevolent, tolerant place, free from racial injustice. Klansmen and Neo-Nazis are an ugly reminder of the actual history of the United States, from the slaughter of Native Americans to Jim Crow segregation. Furthermore, racism towards people from Latin America, or bigotry against Muslims, makes it more difficult for the USA to sell itself as a trusted ally to people in certain regions.

Trump's words often present a big problem for those who work overtime to convince the world to trust the United States. The fact that the "post-racial" Presidency of Barack Obama occupied the White House in 2011 was pivotal in the fall out of the Arab Spring. Imagine how differently such upheavals would play out if Trump had been the president at the time. One could hypothetically imagine Gaddafi and Assad emerging stronger, with Wall Street's Saudi puppets taking big losses.

"Anti-Fascism" in an age when Wall Street and the Pentagon accuse all of their geo-political rivals, even the Communists and Bolivarians, of somehow being fascists, is totally different from the often glorified activism of the late 1930s. We are in a new era in which war, monopolism, and economic neoliberalism present themselves as humanitarian and enlightened. Shouting down Ben Shapiro is not the equivalent of fighting with the International Brigades in Spain. Demanding that Donald Trump be impeached for allegedly being friendly with Vladimir Putin cannot be compared to the Battle of Cable Street.

The biggest threat to the "Left-Birchers" who defend the political establishment from the "fascist" menace, is not Trump or his base of supporters. Rather, it is the emerging "democratic socialist" opposition within the Democratic Party. By speaking in favor of social-democratic policies, and not merely accusing people of being "racist" "sexist" and "fascist" the Berniecrat element is pointing leftists away from simply being defenders of the status quo.

The call for "unity" within the Democratic Party, in order to "focus on defeating Trump" should be exposed for what it is. The opposition to Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez from the mouths of figures like Starbucks CEO Howard Shultz is not well intentioned Democratic Party strategism; It is a maneuver to trap leftists in a position of defending the very establishment that many of them strongly oppose.