

Tea Party Buffs and the Far Left are Buddies.
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Recently, I heard an interview with ultra-conservative former congressman Dick Arme. He apparently thinks that Social Security, Medicare, and other social services should be voluntary, which would, of course, gut them. But the real surprise came when he was asked if there is anybody on the left that he admires and he named Ron Dellums, a former congressman and current mayor of Oakland. Dellums is about as far on the political left (and ineffectual) as one can get. Why should Arme say this?

David Brooks, columnist for the New York Times, in a column on March 7, looked at the far left movements of 40 years ago and today's far right Tea Party movement. He found:

\225 The Tea Partiers have adopted the tactics of the New Left. They like street theater, mass rallies, marches, and shocking the public with extreme statements.

\225 Both believe in the notion that \223the people\224 are good, innocent, and would be producing a utopia were it not for the evil \223corrupt elites\224 and rotten authority structures. This notion goes back to 18th century Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who did not even believe in a school system: the young were to run free in the forest and learn from Nature. Rousseau was an inspiration for the intellectuals who produced the French Revolution. His theory, however, did not produce the innocent world he expected; it produced violence, decapitations, persecution, and a raft of conspiracy theories. France wound up with a new monarch, Napoleon, instead of a democracy of the people.

\225 Both are big advocates of conspiracy theories. For the old far left, the manipulation was done by shadowy corporatist/imperialist networks (as leftist Noam Chomsky still believes). For the Tea Partiers, the conspiracies are by the Fed, the FBI, the big banks and corporations, and \223black helicopters\224 (belief that the UN is preparing a takeover of the world). It really defies credibility to think that the UN, which is barely functional as it is, would be capable of managing \223black helicopters\224 and taking over the United States. And what would be their governing philosophy? Would it be the values of Western Europe, or would it be the dictatorial structures of the lesser-developed world's dictators plus a medieval religion? Can they agree on anything?

\225 Both believe in destroying the establishment\227but neither has the least notion of how to replace it. They love spontaneous uprisings and deny that there is any leadership in their movements.

David Brooks, being a classical conservative, does not believe that the Tea Partiers are not conservatives; they are radically anticonservative. Conservatism, he says, is based on the belief that humans are fallible and uncertain (and can be violent); for this reason, they believe that we need social structures, permanent institutions, and just authorities. They believe in the idea of civilization.

What Brooks is not saying is that the New (and Old) Left and the Far Right are anarchists. They believe, as have generations of anarchists, that the only road to a \223brave new world\224 is to destroy the old one. Being conspiratorial themselves, they believe that the establishment is conspiratorial too. This is what psychologists call \223projection,\224 attributing to others what is internal to oneself.

Two books address the issue of the political extremes meeting in a 360 degree continuum: \223Liberal Fascism\224 by Johann Goldberg and \223The Hidden Hand: Middle East Fears of Conspiracy\224 by Daniel Pipes. Both works trace these conspiracy theories back to the French Revolution. It is a mistake to think that any totalitarian system on the left is any different than one on the right. Nazism and Communism are both fascist\227and today's newest conspirators and anarchists are the Islamists\227who openly model themselves on both Stalin and Hitler\227using the same conspiracy theories and violent practices. Stalin and Hitler, however, had notions of what the \223brave new world\224 would be. Today's anarchists do not. They only know destruction.

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