

A portrait of Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Soviet Union, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark suit and a patterned tie. In the background, the red flag of the Soviet Union with a yellow hammer and sickle and a star is visible.

TECHNOLOGY, COMMUNISM AND THE BROWN SCARE

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It's with mixed emotions that I see the Brown Scare starting to really rise up and [kick ass](#) in my own dear field of hackerdom. "The enemy [at last in view](#), huge and hateful, all disguise cast off..."

Brown Scare? Or dare I say... #BrownScare? But what [else](#) to name America's ginormous, never-ending, profoundly insane witch-hunt for fascists under the bed?

For there's nothing new here. At the height of the lame, doomed "[Red Scare](#)," the Brown Scare was ten times bigger. You may think it was difficult making a living as a communist screenwriter in 1954. It was a lot easier than being a fascist screenwriter. Or even an anticommunist screenwriter. (Same thing, right?) And as any pathetic last shreds of real opposition shrink and die off, the Scare only grows. That's how winners play it. That's just how the permanent revolution rolls.

Not that valiant philosophical efforts haven't been made, such as "[Speech And Consequences](#)" by [Popehat](#), to distinguish between witch hunts and witch hunts. Apparently Popehat,¹ though he claims to be some sort of a legal scholar and definitely has strong and (more unusually) sincere opinions about free speech, has never heard of [Red Channels](#) or [Faulk v. AWARE](#). It's not clear whether he (a) thinks the Hollywood blacklist was a fine idea, (b) believes it was enforced by the FBI, or (c) considers it laudable to purge fascists but horrible to purge communists.

(Update: with eerie, beautiful historical fidelity, Anil Dash [channels Red Channels](#):

There was also a pretty dogged pitch for his film, which will get all kinds of warm huzzahs from the intersection of atheists, pacifists, communists and Jews. I was pretty amazed that he went for it. He flat out said that he wants his film to be funded and wasn't sure if it'd be possible after all of his, and I replied that it realistically wasn't going to happen without the say-so of someone like me, and I wasn't inclined to give some producer the nod on this.

On reflection, I'll be explicit: If you're a producer, and you

¹Although Popehat is a [group blog](#), in this context "Popehat" refers to the blog's principal author, attorney [Ken White](#).

invest in Dalton Trumbo's film without a profound, meaningful and years-long demonstration of responsibility from Dalton beforehand, you're complicit in extending the film industry's awful track record of communism, and it's unacceptable.

It is also wonderful to see the enormous cognitive load which besets the liberal mind when asked to decide whether it's the overdog or the underdog. All the CPUs max out, the fan goes crazy and the case could cook an egg. The whole post is worth reading—in the author's own humble words, it's the very image of “positive, ambitious, thoughtful, inclusive, curious, empathetic and self-aware.”)

Memo to Popehat: most of what we call “McCarthyism” was a matter of “social consequences.” Besides, the social consequences work for one and only one reason: there's an iron fist in the velvet glove. Being sued for disrespecting a privileged class—excuse me, a *protected* class—is not in any way a social consequence, but rather a *political* one. Hey, while we're chatting, could you remind me exactly how Warren Court jurisprudence derived the “protected class” from “equal protection of law?” I know the theory, actually—but it'd be fun to see you explain it.

Of course, ain't nothin' new here. For quite some time in America it's been illegal to employ racists, sexists and fascists, and mandatory to employ a precisely calibrated percentage of women, workers and peasants. Because America is a free country and that's what freedom *means*.

But “technology,” defined broadly as anything new and cool that happens in California, has been in practice exempt from these restrictions. The elite, especially a productive elite, always enjoys a special level of tolerance. I once asked a Googler: which population, from his unscientific experience alone, does Google employ more of? African-Americans, or Serbs? “You must be joking,” he said.

Google, of course, claims the fact that it would rather hire out of East Bosnia than East Palo Alto is a *competitive trade secret*. Well, I suppose. Curiously enough, Apple, Yahoo, and Oracle share *the same secret*. Ha, ha! Is it a secret to you? It's not a *secret* to me!

You know, Goog, once you start lying, there's really no end to it. For one

thing, even if your enemies ignore lying, defensive evasion, and other telltale “beta” behaviors, they still own you. They’ve just decided not to eat you just yet, maybe in the hopes that you’re still getting fatter.

So in a way I actually like to see the #BrownScare getting big in Silicon Valley, because I think there’s a lot of potential for opposing it here. A lot of wasted potential. Which will probably remain wasted, but why not try, eh? Dear fellow geeks, there’s no need to get purged. Your predator, though powerful, is not complicated, and not that hard to hack if you’re careful. Indeed, properly organized, you may even be able to overcome him.

It’s actually not hard to explain the Brown Scare. Like all witch hunts, it’s built on a *conspiracy theory*. The Red Scare was based on a conspiracy theory too, but at least it was a real conspiracy with real witches—two of whom were my father’s parents. (The nicest people on earth, as people. I like to think of them not as worshipping Stalin, but worshipping what they thought Stalin was.) Moreover, the Red Scare was a largely *demotic* or peasant phenomenon to which America’s governing intellectual classes were, for obvious reasons, immune. Because power works and [culture is downstream from politics](#)—real politics, at least—the Red Scare soon faded into a joke.

As a [mainstream conspiracy theory](#), fully in the institutional saddle, the Brown Scare is far greater and more terrifying. Unfortunately no central statistics are kept, but I wouldn’t be surprised if every day in America, more racists, fascists and sexists are detected, purged and destroyed, than all the screenwriters who had to prosper under pseudonyms in the ’50s. Indeed it’s not an exaggeration to say that hundreds of thousands of Americans, perhaps even a million, are employed in one arm or another of this ideological apparatus. Cleaning it up will require a genuine cultural revolution—or a cultural reaction, anyway. Hey, Americans, I’m ready whenever you are.

The logic of the witch hunter is simple. It has hardly changed since [Matthew Hopkins](#)’ day. The first requirement is to *invert the reality of power*. Power at its most basic level is the power to harm or destroy other human beings. The obvious reality is that witch hunters gang up and destroy witches. Whereas witches are never, ever seen to gang up and destroy witch hunters. By this test alone, we can see that the conspiracy is imaginary (Brown Scare) rather than real (Red Scare).

Think about it. Obviously, if the witches had any power whatsoever, they wouldn't waste their time gallivanting around on broomsticks, fellating Satan and cursing cows with sour milk. They're getting burned right and left, for Christ's sake! Priorities! No, they'd turn the tables and lay some serious voodoo on the witch-hunters. In a country where anyone who speaks out against the witches is soon found dangling by his heels from an oak at midnight with his head *shrunk to the size of a baseball*, we won't see a lot of witch-hunting and we know there's a serious witch problem. In a country where witch-hunting is a stable and lucrative career, and also an amateur pastime enjoyed by millions of hobbyists on the weekend, we know there are no real witches worth a damn.

We do not see [Pax Dickinson](#) and [Paul Graham](#) ganging up to destroy [Gawker](#).² We see them curling up into a fetal position and trying to survive. An America in which hackers could purge journalists for communist deviation, rather than journalists purging hackers for fascist deviation, would be a very different America. Ya think?

Whereas the real America, the America in which a journalist [little more than an intern](#), with no discernible achievements but a sharp tongue, a Columbia degree and [trouble using MySQL](#), can quite effectively bully one of the most accomplished hackers of his era, not to mention a [way better writer](#)—this is the remarkable America that we live in and need to explain.

This phenomenon of spoiled children systematically bullying their elders and betters reminds us, of course, of [Mao](#). But still more, of Plato. Do they still read Plato at Columbia? Ha, that's very funny. Plato! Gawker may not know Plato, but [Plato knows Gawker](#):

Yes, he said; that is the way with him.

Yes, I said, he lives from day to day indulging the appetite of the hour; and sometimes he is lapped in drink and strains of the flute; then he becomes a water-drinker, and tries to get thin; then he takes a turn at gymnastics; sometimes idling and neglecting everything, then once more living the life of a philosopher; often he is busy with politics, and starts to his feet and says and does whatever comes

²It turned out to take a [Hulk Hogan sex tape](#) and the [determination of Peter Thiel](#) to [destroy Gawker](#). But in the end Gawker paid for being reckless, not for being communist.

into his head; and, if he is emulous of any one who is a warrior, off he is in that direction, or of men of business, once more in that. His life has neither law nor order; and this distracted existence he terms joy and bliss and freedom; and so he goes on.

Yes, he replied, he is all liberty and equality.

Yes, I said; his life is motley and manifold and an epitome of the lives of many; he answers to the State which we described as fair and spangled. And many a man and many a woman will take him for their pattern, and many a constitution and many an example of manners is contained in him.

Just so.

Let him then be set over against democracy; he may truly be called the democratic man.

Let that be his place, he said.

Last of all comes the most beautiful of all, man and State alike, tyranny and the tyrant; these we have now to consider.

Quite true, he said.

Say then, my friend, in what manner does tyranny arise? That it has a democratic origin is evident.

Clearly.

And does not tyranny spring from democracy in the same manner as democracy from oligarchy—I mean, after a sort?

How?

The good which oligarchy proposed to itself and the means by which it was maintained was excess of wealth—am I not right?

Yes.

And the insatiable desire of wealth and the neglect of all other things for the sake of money-getting was also the ruin of oligarchy?

True.

And democracy has her own good, of which the insatiable desire brings her to dissolution?

What good?

Freedom, I replied; which, as they tell you in a democracy, is the glory of the State—and that therefore in a democracy alone will the freeman of nature deign to dwell.

Yes; the saying is in everybody's mouth.

I was going to observe, that the insatiable desire of this and the neglect of other things introduces the change in democracy, which occasions a demand for tyranny.

How so?

When a democracy which is thirsting for freedom has evil cupbearers presiding over the feast, and has drunk too deeply of the strong wine of freedom, then, unless her rulers are very amenable and give a plentiful draught, she calls them to account and punishes them, and says that they are cursed oligarchs.

Yes, he replied, a very common occurrence.

Yes, I said; and loyal citizens are insultingly termed by her slaves who hug their chains and men of naught; she would have subjects who are like rulers, and rulers who are like subjects: these are men after her own heart, whom she praises and honours both in private and public. Now, in such a State, can liberty have any limit?

Certainly not.

By degrees the anarchy finds a way into private houses, and ends by getting among the animals and infecting them.

How do you mean?

I mean that the father grows accustomed to descend to the level of his sons and to fear them, and the son is on a level with his father, he having no respect or reverence for either of his parents; and this is his freedom, and the metic is equal with the citizen and the citizen with the metic, and the stranger is quite as good as either.

Yes, he said, that is the way.

And these are not the only evils, I said—there are several lesser ones: In such a state of society the master fears and flatters his

scholars, and the scholars despise their masters and tutors; young and old are all alike; and the young man is on a level with the old, and is ready to compete with him in word or deed; and old men condescend to the young and are full of pleasantry and gaiety; they are loth to be thought morose and authoritative, and therefore they adopt the manners of the young.

Why not, as Aeschylus says, utter the word which rises to our lips? That is what I am doing, I replied; and I must add that no one who does not know would believe, how much greater is the liberty which the animals who are under the dominion of man have in a democracy than in any other State: for truly, the she-dogs, as the proverb says, are as good as their she-mistresses, and the horses and asses have a way of marching along with all the rights and dignities of freemen; and they will run at anybody who comes in their way if he does not leave the road clear for them: and all things are just ready to burst with liberty.

When I take a country walk, he said, I often experience what you describe. You and I have dreamed the same thing.

And above all, I said, and as the result of all, see how sensitive the citizens become; they chafe impatiently at the least touch of authority and at length, as you know, they cease to care even for the laws, written or unwritten; they will have no one over them.

Yes, he said, I know it too well.

Such, my friend, I said, is the fair and glorious beginning out of which springs tyranny.

Glorious indeed, he said. But what is the next step?

The ruin of oligarchy is the ruin of democracy; the same disease magnified and intensified by liberty overmasters democracy—the truth being that the excessive increase of anything often causes a reaction in the opposite direction; and this is the case not only in the seasons and in vegetable and animal life, but above all in forms of government.

Or so we can only hope. I have a bad feeling Plato may be too optimistic here, however.

In any case, from Plato's dialogue we see how the witch-hunter can invert the reality of power and presents himself as the *underdog*, fighting back against the gigantic and all-encompassing conspiracy of witches. This fantasy is expertly constructed and appears quite real to the casual observer.

The primary technique is to present the natural order of human society, which the revolution has in fact totally overthrown—an order in which the young respect the old, the inexperienced follow the accomplished, and dogs obey their owners—as the *existing* order. The professional witch-hunter, who is in fact a petty bureaucrat, a tool of power and a bully for hire, appears to himself as a sort of daring rebel against the great conspiracy. Moreover, because this natural order both used to exist, and is always striving to spring up against [Horace's pitchfork](#), it can be portrayed as the ruling order with great fictional nuance and detail—even after a half-century plus of permanent revolution.

Furthermore, if you can present a natural force as a *human* force, it is possible to attribute almost infinite power to the witch conspiracy. Jews, for example, cause droughts. It's easy to see how strong the Jews are—it hasn't rained for a month! Throw the Jews down the well!

In this particular case, it's an observation only slightly more obvious than that the sky is blue—especially for those of us who are grownups not born in the 1990s, with, like, wives and daughters and stuff—that (a) geeks are born not made, and (b) a Y chromosome is a major risk factor for geekiness. In other words, we are not *equalists*. We'd certainly love it if everyone was equal (hopefully leveling up, not leveling down). But we're not *insane* and don't argue with reality.

For example, I'm a geek and I'd love it if my daughter was a geek too. She isn't. Not only is she more girly than me, she's more girly than her mother (who has an EE degree). She's reading [Lemony Snicket](#) in kindergarten, but she's not a geek. A friend of mine has a daughter, about the same age, about as smart, who is a geek. I wish my daughter cared about numbers, planets and dinosaurs. For all I know, my friend wishes his daughter was a walking Disney Princess encyclopedia whose dolls can improvise an hour-long soap opera. We can wish all we want, but that's *just not how it is*. If I tried to impose my ideal daughter

on the real person who reality decided would be my daughter, I would be a bad person and a bad parent. And that's why I'm a realist, not an equalist.

When the witchfinder can attribute the consequences of meteorology, biology, or any other department of reality to a human conspiracy, there is no limit to the proto-divine authority which the witch-cabal then assumes. To rebel against it seems almost as daring and hopeless as a [rebellion against God himself](#). How romantic! How empowering! Smash the great conspiracy of differentness, without which we would all be gloriously the same! Throw the Jews down the well!

A great technique. But like all propaganda methods, it wears off. Most people, most of the time, especially in an old worn-out post-democracy like our own, are extremely tired of politics, political philosophy, conspiracy theories, and the like. It's not exactly that they disagree with the party line. But it no longer excites them. It still excites a ruling minority, of course, and quite vociferously indeed. (The Gawker comment threads, like those of every other party-line board, are full of *amateur* bullies who derive great apparent pleasure, if not profit, from piling on.)

What the bully needs is to provoke *mild* approval, from the vast majority of ordinary, decent people who don't care about politics or power and are really not involved with the game at all. It's this abuse of common decency that offends me most about the witch-hunting process. The ordinary observer does not, really, believe in witches—or disbelieve in them, either. Rhetoric about black cats, third nipples and secret meetings with Satan doesn't make much impression on her at all.

But what she knows is that Goody Hannah is a strange, mean old lady with no husband and a snippy tongue, who smells funny and sleeps way too late in the morning, and once yelled at her when she was a little girl. Left to her own devices, our decent observer would never think of reasoning from this to the proposition that Goody Hannah needs to be drowned. On the other hand, when the crowd (consisting mostly of decent observers) is about to drown Goody Hannah, she's not exactly about to speak up and stick out her neck. For a strange, mean old lady with no husband and a snippy tongue? That no one speaks up, of course, is no more and no less than the witchfinders need.

Clearly, everyone should be nice and no one should have a snippy tongue.

We often hear the word *offensive*. What is an offensive person? In a word, an asshole. Everyone who hears this word (including Popehat—especially Popehat) should stop and think: is it illegal to be an asshole? If so, why should it be illegal to be an asshole? If not, why should it not be illegal to be an asshole?

Curiously, two thousand years before anyone had even heard of a “[microaggression](#),” a bunch of old white guys called “the Romans” considered this issue and [concluded](#): *de minimis non curat lex*. Literally: “the law does not concern itself with trifles.” Or metaphorically: no. No, it is not, and should not be, illegal to be an asshole. Think about the logic of a world in which it’s illegal to be an asshole. Or at least, in which one is liable for being an asshole. Anyone could sue anyone else, at any time, for being an asshole. In this world, “[you dick](#)”³ isn’t an insult. It’s a *tort*. It’s a *factual claim* that, if *proven true* by a *court of law*, *pays damages*.

Of course, we know the Romans were a bunch of ignorant heteronormative dicks. The Greeks, too! [Plato](#), [Socrates](#), [Aristotle](#)... [morons](#)! Ah, how far we’ve come. But really, why shouldn’t [Spicoli](#) be able to sue Mr. Hand? Who really was a dick, wasn’t he? Why should anyone be allowed to be a dick? Why should that be okay, in our tolerant society? To be a dick?

A legal system in which insolence is a tort has never, so far as I know, been tried. In general, sages and jurists for all the world and time have agreed that, though it is not nice for people to be not nice to each other, the desirable goal of enforcing universal sweetness and niceness is simply not one within the reach of human jurisprudence.

For one thing, the courtroom process relies on witness testimony, and even with eyewitnesses it is often difficult to establish who hit whom. Imagine a lawsuit between two people, each of whom accuses the other of being a dick, but who were the only people in the room. It’s preposterous. No, clearly—the problem of giving dicks their just reward, which is neither jail time nor monetary damages, but simply social exclusion, is best left to Popehat’s “social consequences.”

Or so a bunch of dead old white dicks believed. I mean, what the fuck, right? Obviously, dead white dicks are going to believe it’s okay to be a dick.

³The linked [video](#) depicts a brief scene from the movie *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* in which a student, Jeff Spicoli, says “You dick!” to his teacher, Mr. Hand.

Duh.

But a legal system in which rudeness *to certain people* attracts the attention of the law... this system is by no means unusual in human history. Nor is it universal. But it's certainly the norm. It's really the Enlightenment system of uniform legal protection that's unusual.

We can see an example of the normal historical approach—from a non-Eurocentric context—in the *Shōgun miniseries* (based on the *novel of the same name* by James Clavell). In one scene, John Blackthorne, an English pilot serving on a Dutch warship, is blown ashore in Japan, where he encounters a Jesuit priest and a local samurai. When a member of the priest's entourage refuses to bow to the samurai, he is summarily *executed by beheading*.

In old Japan, it wasn't illegal to be an asshole. It wasn't even illegal to be an asshole to a samurai. But it was illegal to be an asshole to a samurai—if you weren't a samurai. See how it works? You might say the samurai were a sort of *protected class*. A system not at all unique to old Japan. Always and everywhere, “microaggressing” against the protected class is hazardous to your health.

There was even a word, dating back to those same Roman dicks who gave us this “de minimis” bullshit, for a system of law that assigned certain people special rights. This set of rights varied—but in almost every case, the right not to be offended (by those outside the subset) was the first and most basic. The word, in fact, was *privilege*. Meaning, in Roman dick-speak, *private law*.

Type it into the searchbar. Somehow, you still get:

A privilege is a special entitlement to immunity granted by the state or another authority to a restricted group, either by birth or on a conditional basis.

I don't think I need to mention what the America of 2013 has done to this word.

Hey, America—just to let you know—the language I speak, English, is actually older than you. (Not even counting the Roman bits.) Hopefully it'll outlast you as well. Maybe not. But when you *rape* it, you rape *my brain*. And you know—unlike some people, I guess—I really don't get off on that. Just to let you know, America.

As for the actual reality of a two-tier legal system, I don't mind it that much. Really, it's historically normal. For an example, consider this now classic tweet:



Whom is it illegal to offend? Well, for example, Pax (and his 50 re-tweeters—who should all also, of course, be investigated! Any junior-league Matthew Hopkinses out there? Gosh, Gawker has interns, don't it?) was satirizing [Mel Gibson](#).

Were Mel Gibson King of America (not my ideal outcome—but perhaps still preferable to present conditions), this would constitute actionably offensive speech in the form of *lèse-majesté*. (Which is still a thing in [Thailand](#), doncha know.) Or, if America was a Christian country, this would be actionably offensive speech in the form of [blasphemy](#), because Jesus is the Son of God and wouldn't just let Himself be ambushed from the rear like that. Or...

But naturally our decent observer, pushing down again on the ducking stool as Goody Hannah struggles for air, cackling and shrieking exactly as a witch would, has no more conception of these power dynamics than a cat of tennis. All she knows is that someone has said something *offensive*. Which is true. Since she's not interested in the political patterns of who does and doesn't have the right not to be offended, her decent, good-natured desire that everyone should be nice to everyone else gets captured by the strong and used as a weapon against the weak.

The world we live in is an awfully sick, cruel place, isn't it? Well, we are all basically chimps. You may not be interested in Power—but Power is [interested in you](#).

But we're still missing something...

Because in any of these absurd hypotheticals, Pax is insulting the *governing class*—the king, clergy, etc. It is always a crime to insult Power, and we can take it for granted that Power has been insulted here. And yet—we know who, specifically, has been actionably disrespected. It ain't Jesus and it ain't Mel Gibson. It's African-Americans and prostitutes. Or worse, women who dress like prostitutes—sadly a much larger set. Fine—African-Americans and women.

But it's really not possible to contend that African-Americans and/or women are American's governing class. This simply does not compute.

Which leaves us, for all our historical wisdom, at a sort of dead end. What we're seeing here has never been seen before. The privilege of not being offended, the most basic and customary privilege of nobility, after centuries of desuetude has been reinvented and regranted. But the grantees have no resemblance to any traditional noble class. Not only are they not a ruling class, they don't even seem... especially... [noble](#).

Fine. We have to go deeper into the rabbit hole. You know that hit of acid? The one you've been saving? For special emergencies? Yo. It's time. Come back in an hour when your tongue gets big. (Not that there's anything really new here, of course, for the hardened [UR](#) addict.)

While I really have no brief for the [Wachowski siblings](#), and the sequels prove there really is such a thing as accidental genius, genius remains genius and [The Matrix](#) is its work. You can't watch [this scene](#) too many times, especially if you're on acid.

Out here on the right edge of the sane world, not quite yet in the ocean of madness but close enough to hear its cold black surf, there's a lot of talk about this standard [Red Pill](#). We of course live in the Matrix, or rather the [Cathedral](#)⁴—I'm glad to see this label catching on, though “Matrix” would do just as well.

But is there actually a Red Pill? That will cure all this nonsense and explain everything, once and for all? Acid is great, of course, but alas it *does* wear off.

I'd like to believe the Red Pill is [Unqualified Reservations](#) itself. (There are

⁴The term “Cathedral” is not meant to disparage real cathedrals; the main rhetorical point is that members of the Cathedral are, despite their avowed secularism and faux egalitarianism, in effect a theocratic priestly class.

a lot of blogs that get 500,000 views; there are a lot of blogs that get updated. There are not a lot of blogs that get 500,000 views while not getting updated.) But one would have to admit that it's a pretty big pill. [Keanu](#) is going to be here all day and he'll need more than one glass of water.

No. I think I've chosen my candidate for the Pill itself. And I'm going to stick with it. My Pill is:

America is a communist country.

What I like about this statement is that it's [ambiguous](#). Specifically, it's an [Empsonian ambiguity](#) of the second or perhaps third type (I've never quite understood the difference). Embedded as it is in the mad tapestry of 20th-century history, *AIACC* can be interpreted in countless ways.

All of these interpretations—unless concocted as an intentional, obviously idiotic strawman—are absolutely true. Sometimes they are obviously true, sometimes surprisingly true. They are always true. Because America is a communist country. As we'll see...

Obviously, as a normal American, or at least a normal American intellectual, this Red Pill strikes you as hilariously and obviously ridiculous and wrong. You cannot even begin to process it as a serious hypothesis. It is simply too stupid. Right? Right? [Bueller?](#)

I know two ways to answer this laugh: the fast way and the slow way. The fast way: [agree and amplify](#). "That's right. America is a communist country. For workers and peasants, read: blacks and Hispanics."⁵

It may change to rage, fear, denial, whatever—but that laugh will suck itself right back down into the lungs. That's what happens when you get punched.

You can follow this punch (only punch if you need to, of course) by explaining to your erstwhile mugger *why* he laughed. More or less the rhetorical equivalent of kicking him when he's down. As with the punch, only deliver the full treatment if it's really necessary. Always be willing to accept surrender. Ideally, you'll give your man a hand and he'll stand up and switch sides. But of course, when it's time for the rhetorical ground-and-pound, it's time for the rhetorical ground-and-pound.

⁵Or, more generally, so-called "marginalized groups." See the note on [Biological Leninism](#) below.

The laugh got emitted because one of the simplest ingredients in your Blue Pill is a trio of parallel antibodies that convert the Red Pill, in three different ways, into harmless idiotic strawmen. Obviously, growing up in the Cathedral, we've all received an enormous lifetime dose of Blue Pill. Before we capture and study these antibodies, we can go no further.

The first and most important antibody converts the Red Pill into the perfect strawman:

America is a Communist country.

Note the capital C. Generally, the majuscule proper noun implies not the *general idea* of communism, but the *specific entity* that was the [CPSU](#)—and its various satellite organs, such as the [CPUSA](#). Hence, today, we read:

America is secretly ruled from a secret Faraday cage under the White House by KGB Colonel-General Boris Borisov, who sometimes emerges in blackface to appear as “Barack Obama.”

For example, Nazi Germany was a fascist country. But Nazi Germany wasn't a Fascist country. Nazi Germany was a fascist country because Hitler's political system was generally similar to Mussolini's. But Nazi Germany wasn't a Fascist country—because Hitler wasn't a secret agent secretly working for Mussolini. Get it? Come on, of course you get it.

With the small 'f', our sign signifies a [political system, ideology or movement](#), by its objective characteristics. With the big 'F', it signifies a political party, organization or regime, by its nominal identity. You might find it hard to generalize this distinction to an earlier letter in the alphabet, if you are stupid, or haven't taken any [semiotics](#) classes. Otherwise, it ought to be easy to see that though every Communist is a communist (adherent of the political system, ideology or movement), not every communist is a Communist (card-carrying disciple of MOSCOW!!!). I mean, duh.

This narrative of *international subversion* is the most effective kind of propaganda strawman—a strawman that you can actually get your adversary to adopt. An essentially nationalist, and utterly misguided, interpretation of the Communist Menace was the staple of the American right for the entire 20th century. Indeed it [still sells books](#). Not bad books—but never perfect.

Historically, the subversion narrative of classical anticommunism is ridiculous as applied after 1989; generally wrong as applied after 1945; accurate in a sense between 1933 and 1945, but still generally misleading. (Alger Hiss is not Aldrich Ames; broadly speaking, the Americans involved with the Soviet security apparatus during the FDR period, including most likely FDR himself, saw themselves, correctly, as the senior rather than junior partners in the relationship—and considered their actions, though technically unlawful, unofficially authorized and the highest form of patriotism in spirit.)

The basic problem with the outside agitator Commie subversion narrative is that it's way too optimistic. Were communism some exotic pest, it would be easy to eradicate. Perhaps we could find some kind of microscopic wasp that kept it in check in its strange foreign homeland. Indeed, the usual pattern with an invasive species is that resistance to it is strongest in its [actual homeland](#).

For example, when we look at [John Reed's](#) short dramatic life, we see several epidemiological hypotheses—pick one:

- The Russian and Mexican revolutions have no connection; similarities are coincidental.
- There is one revolution, inherently Russian. It spread, through America, to Mexico.
- There is one revolution, inherently Mexican. It spread, through America, to Russia.
- The Russian and Mexican revolutions are connected via somewhere else—maybe Brazil?
- Communism is as American as apple pie.

Of course, nationalist rhetoric—of a particularly virulent anti-American kind—was an essential ingredient in both the Russian and Mexican revolutions. If the origin of these revolutions is essentially *foreign* to the countries they devastated, it makes perfect sense that the lady would have no alternative but to protest too much.

It's not foreign to ours, however, which explains why communism has only mildly devastated America. No gulags here! The home of the [screwworm](#) is also the home of the [screwworm-eating wasp](#). Unfortunately, one can't really rely on the wasp to eradicate the screwworm. But it keeps the screwworms relatively sane, honest and under control, which is both a good thing and a bad thing. It's a good thing because it's a good thing. It's a bad thing because it makes it a lot easier for us to deny we have a communism problem.

When the story of the 20th century is told in its proper, reactionary light, international communism is anything but a grievance of which Americans may complain. Rather, it's a crime for which we have yet to repent. Since America is a communist country, the original communist country, and the most powerful and important of communist countries, the crimes of communism are *our* crimes. You may not personally have supported these crimes. Did you oppose them in any way?

The national guilt is especially strong, since our nation is anything but contrite. Unlike our gelded pet Germans, we still believe in our national ideology of mass murder. We ourselves are not murdering anyone right now, at least not on a large scale. But we did in the past, and we still believe the same beliefs that made us accessories, before and after the fact, to Soviet atrocities on an epic scale.

If the 20th century taught us anything, it taught us that it's not just the triggerman who's responsible for political murders. The [Schreibtischtäter](#) has also his place in the dock—and behind him stands the howling mob. And [Mission to Moscow](#) was not a flop. Your grandparents watched it (mine did, anyway), and laughed and clapped. Across the Atlantic they were laughing and clapping to [Jud Süß](#). Man is [Caliban](#), everywhere.

Consider one of America's most revered 20th-century writers. I mean, of course, Ezra Pound. No I don't—I mean Ernest Hemingway. [According to George Plimpton](#), Hemingway liked to have a few daiquiris and then go watch Che mow down political prisoners with a machine gun. Hem and Che both remain cult heroes worshipped by cool people everywhere. Hey, what national guilt? It's all cool, right?

Heck, if the Nazis had pulled it out, we'd be wearing [Reinhard Heydrich](#) T-shirts instead. Power, victorious power, is always and everywhere adored.

Its crimes? Well, the winner always has some good excuse. Who ever was prosecuted for Allied war crimes? What war crimes? Bueller?

Cured of that antibody yet? There's actually a second one:

America is a communist country.

is trivially translated, certainly if you're a communist (and we're all communists), to (in communist jargon):

America has achieved communism.

Achieved! Who said anything about achieved? The Soviet Union was a communist country. Right? Did it achieve communism? Did it even claim to have achieved communism? Of course not.

Obviously, a communist believes that when communism is achieved, social, political and economic equality will be achieved. In the Soviet Union, there were enormous social, political and economic inequalities. In America, there are enormous social, political and economic inequalities.

Of these inequalities, a communist would say, with [Boxer](#)—we must work harder! An anticommunist would say: of course you can't achieve these goals. Communism creates enormous destruction while failing to advance at all toward its stated goals. That's kind of why communism sucks so much.

Moreover, it would seem obvious that, by taking the stance not that the failure to achieve communism means that communism doesn't work, but the stance that the failure to achieve communism means we haven't worked hard enough to achieve communism—you may not have chosen the best counter-argument against an anticommunist who irrationally persists in calling you a communist.

Yes—America, original homeland and sole remaining capital of communism, is also the nation of hedge-fund billionaires in the Hamptons. Actually, if you look closely, you'll see that for every libertarian billionaire there are ten “progressive” ones—with about twenty times as much money. But hypocrisy, too, is as American as apple pie.

But probably the most sophisticated antibody to *AIACC* is the *dualist* interpretation of communism. The dualist believes that there are two kinds of

leftism in the 20th century: moderate liberalism, which is as meek and mild as a spring lamb and wants nothing more than to rectify “social injustice,” and radical communism, a criminal deviation which sullies the name of the moderates by, you know, murdering hundreds of millions of people.

This antibody is easily recognized as the logician’s friend, [No True Scotsman](#). No true Scotsman would massacre political prisoners. If Scotsmen are found massacring political prisoners, they are found not to be true Scotsmen. The fallacy is subtle—it is fallacious only because the distinction is manufactured as a consequence of the test. For example, if we discovered that Highland Scots committed massacres and Lowland Scots did not, it would not be No True Scotsman, because the Highland/Lowland distinction exists objectively prior to the massacre/no-massacre distinction.

It’s an interesting exercise to try to construct a meaningful and objective prior distinction between an American communist and an American liberal of the mid-to-late 20th-century. For example, we could look for a partition of the social graph. Perhaps liberals hate communism so much that they never invite communists to their parties? Or fire them, for communist comments on Twitter? We do see some partition between the moderate and extreme left—but if anything, it’s the extreme left that tends to socially exclude the moderate left. But not with enough consistency to make a good test.

What, for example, is a “progressive?” If the anti-communist liberal (as opposed to the anti-Communist, i.e., anti-Soviet, liberal—a very real phenomenon) were a real phenomenon, and viewed communists the same way he viewed Nazis, for their remarkably similar human rights offenses, we’d expect him to avoid communist political terminology. For much the same reason that, as cool as that glyph looks, you’ll never ever see a swastika in an Apple ad.

Whereas actually, codewords like “progressive,” “social justice,” “change,” etc., are shared across the [Popular Front](#) community for the entire 20th century. They are just as likely to be used by a Cheka cheerleader from the ’20s, as a Clinton voter from the ’90s.

The dualist constructs his Scottish strawman as follows: [Jimmy Carter](#) is a vegetarian intellectual; [Felix Dzerzhinsky](#) was a cold-blooded killer. Therefore, it is absurd to refer to both using the same label, for the same reason it is absurd to imagine Jimmy Carter snuffing out kulaks and reactionaries with a bullet

in the nape of the neck. Thus we create two categories of “progressive,” the “nice progressive” (who sounds like NPR) and the “nasty progressive” (with a bad Slavic growl). And thus, since “communist” means “nasty progressive,” and there are no executions of dissidents and hence no nasty progressives in America... it is absurd to consider America as a communist country.

True. On the other hand, it is also absurd to imagine [Rudolf Hess](#) (a rather Carter-like personality) shooting anything larger than a rabbit. No doubt, if the Nazis had won the war, the whole Holocaust thing would be considered an unfortunate (but understandable) aberration of Himmler and Heydrich. (Hitler never put it in writing, very much for this purpose.) No *true* Nazi would do any such thing.

And indeed, most Nazis never hurt a single Jew. And nonetheless it does not seem at all illogical to maintain a *monist* interpretation of both Nazism and fascism, which does not separate fascists or Nazis into “nice” and “nasty” and exculpate the former from the crimes of the latter. Indeed, much good ink is shed over the guilt of the innocent gullible Hitler voter. Who’d never even heard of Auschwitz, much less approved of it. But guilty he remains, eh?

No one at Gawker is shooting anyone in the nape of the neck. On the other hand, no one at Gawker has the option to shoot anyone in the nape of the neck. So we can’t really know whether they would or they wouldn’t, can we? There sure does seem to be quite a bit of hate out there, however. My guess is that most wouldn’t, but some would. And isn’t some all it takes?

So—now that we know what American communism *isn’t*, let’s look at what it *is*. Then we’ll see what it gets out of purging people. Then we’ll see how to dodge the purge.

Of course, *communism* is an ambiguous term and we can define it in any way. One of the easiest ways to see why America is a communist country, for instance, is to define *communism* as a cultural tradition, essentially a religion, which is transmitted through early nurture like a language. Although languages are not, of course, encoded in our genes, they have an evolutionary history like that of genetic traits. Englishmen are related to Germans, English is related to German.

Language and dialect diversity hasn’t done well in the 20th century, but political and cultural traditions have taken the biggest hit of all. Both worldwide

and in America, the set of belief systems is far narrower in 2013 than in 1913. Broadcast technology kind of does that. Political and military developments have, of course, played a role as well.

What this means is that if you look for Americans in 1913 who have the same basic worldview of an ordinary American college student in 2013, you can find them. But you can't find a lot of them. The cultural mainstream of 2013 is not descended from the cultural mainstream of 1913, most of whose traditions are entirely extinct. Rather, it is descended from a very small cultural aristocracy in 1913, whose bizarre, shocking and decadent tropes and behaviors are confined almost entirely to exclusive upper-crust circles found only in places such as Harvard and Greenwich Village.

What were these people called? By themselves and others? Communists, generally. Though when they wanted to confuse outsiders, they'd say "progressive"—and [still do](#). But poking at this paper-thin euphemism, or any of its friends—"radical," "activist," and a thousand like it—is "[Red-baiting](#)" and is *just not done*. You've got to respect the [kayfabe](#).

For example, my favorite example of a culturally ancestral aristo-American is [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#). Higginson is best known for discovering [Emily Dickinson](#), which may have been the only good deed he did. But as a young man, he made pioneering strides in terrorist finance as a member of the [Secret Six](#). (If you have to get your balls groped at the airport, it's because America isn't your country. It's John Brown's country—you just live here.) In the 1890s, he worked hard to promote [revolution in Russia](#). Some friends Russia had! And as an old man, Higginson helped Jack London and Upton Sinclair start the [Intercollegiate Socialist Society](#); which later became the awesomely named [League for Industrial Democracy](#), which really should have been a band or at least a nightclub; which begat the [SDS](#); which begat (shh!) [B. H. Obama](#)...

Clearly, this is the authentic American tradition, unbroken and unchallenged. Accept no substitutes! And in fact, you can go to Google and read [T. W.'s writing](#), and observe that for the most part it's fresh as a daisy and could be read on NPR tomorrow, without shocking or even surprising anyone. In short—this is who we are. Of course, we can go back to No True Scotsman, or any of our other fallacies, and argue that there's some sort of transcendental difference between a "socialist" and a "communist." But really, why bother?

It's just obvious that we're [all communists now](#).

But what *is* communism? A tradition, sure—but what is in the tradition? Why does it work? Why does it rule?

In the terminology of the father of modern political science, [Gaetano Mosca](#), communism is a *political formula*—a pattern of thinking that helps a subject support the organized minority that governs him. Typically a modern political formula allows the subject to feel a sense of political power that convinces him that he is, in a sense, *part* of the ruling minority, whether he is or not (usually not). Since humans, and in fact all great apes in the chimp lineage, are political animals evolved to succeed in hierarchically ruled tribes, feeling powerful is deeply satisfying. Communism works because it solves this problem, more effectively than any other political formula in wide distribution today.⁶

When it comes to the formal governance process proper, of course, few are actually in the loop. Just as pornography can stimulate the human sex drive without providing any actual sex, democracy can stimulate the human power drive without providing any actual power. But one of the problems with American democracy today is that it's far too constant. It's like a single page ripped out of Playboy, pinned up in your prison cell. Fifty years ago it was still enthralling, even though your forebrain may have known it was meaningless. But eventually even your hindbrain figures out that it's just a piece of paper with some ink on it. And it sure doesn't help that your forebrain knows the real lady in the picture, while real and actually female, is actually on Social Security by now.

Witch-hunting on a purely informal basis, Popehat's "social consequences," scratches the political itch perfectly, because of course here is *actual power*—the power to harm other human beings—being exercised by ordinary people who are not mysterious DC bureaucrats. Never, ever understate how fun it is

⁶In a [series of essays](#) on "[Biological Leninism](#)," [Spandrell](#) offers a complementary analysis of communism's political formula that dovetails nicely with Moldbug's observation that "America is a communist country. For workers and peasants, read: blacks and Hispanics." Briefly, Spandrell argues that [Leninism](#) works because the Party offers high status to groups that would otherwise have low status, thereby ensuring their loyalty. In classical Leninism, such groups include the proverbial "workers and peasants," as well as Jews and other non-Russian ethnic minorities. In [Biological Leninism](#), or *Bioleninism*, they are "marginalized groups" like women, blacks, [mestizo](#) Hispanics, nonwhite Muslims (especially those of Arab, African, or "[Asian](#)" descent), homosexuals, and transgender people, where each group's status is determined largely by its biological characteristics.

to just chimp out for a minute. If you mock it, it's because you've never had a chance to be part of the mob. You can condemn it as a vile, base passion, which of course it is—and a human passion as well. We really are all Caliban.

But we have an angelic nature too, and our angelic forebrains need a cover story while the chimp hindbrain is busy biting off toes and testicles. Pure sadism is enough for the id. It's not enough for the ego. This is why we need communism.

And what is communism? As a political formula? Perhaps we can define it, with a nice 20th-century social-science jargon edge, as *nonempathic altruism*. Or for a sharper pejorative edge, *callous altruism*.

What is callous altruism? *Altruism* itself is a piece of 20th-century jargon. We could contrast it with the original word for the same thing, obviously too Christian to prosper in our age: *charity*. When we say *charity*, of course, we think of *empathic* altruism.

When we think of charity, we think not just of helping others—but of helping others whom we know and love, for whom we feel a genuine, unforged emotional connection. For whom we feel, in a word, empathy. Understandably, these people tend to be those who are socially close to us. If not people we already know, they are people we would easily befriend if we met them.

[Dickens](#), no stranger to genuine empathy, had a term for nonempathic altruism. He called it *telescopic philanthropy*. Who is [Peter Singer](#)? [Mrs. Jellyby](#), with tenure.

So, for example, in classic Bolshevik communism, who is the revolution for? The workers and peasants. But... in classic Bolshevik communism... who actually makes the revolution? Nobles (Lenin) and Jews (Trotsky), basically. To wit, the groups in Russian society who are in fact most distant—emotionally, culturally, socially—from actual workers and peasants.

Similarly, the most passionate anti-racists in America are all to be found, in early September, at [Burning Man](#). Everyone at Burning Man, with hardly an exception, is highly altruistic toward African-Americans. But, to within an [epsilon](#), there are [no African-Americans at Burning Man](#).

But wait—why is this wrong? What's wrong with nonempathic altruism? Why does it matter to the people being helped if the brains of their helpers genuinely light up in the love lobe, or not? Loved or not, they're still helped—

right?

Or are they? How'd that whole Soviet thing work out for the workers and peasants?

Heck, for the last 50 years, one of the central purposes of American political life has been advancing the African-American community. And over the last five decades, what has happened to the African-American community? I'll tell you one thing—in every major city in America, there's a burnt-out feral ghetto which, 50 years ago, was a thriving black business district. On the other hand, there's a street in that ghetto named for [Dr. King](#). So, there's that. And since we mentioned Mrs. Jellyby, what exactly has a century of telescopic philanthropy done for Africa?

Are Gawker and its ilk genuinely interested in bringing [women into technology](#)? Do they genuinely like either (a) (other) women, or (b) technology? Because it would sure seem, to the uneducated observer, that the *actual* effect of their *actual* actions is to *scare women away* from programming careers—on the grounds that, if they so much as master MySQL, they will be instantly raped by a pack of Satan-worshipping “brogrammers.”

Do you know what women who *actually* want to help other women learn programming look like? They look like [this](#). Sexist, check. Probably illegal, check. Recognizing that women are different from men in more areas than the chest compartment, check. (“Men's rights” activists, [shut the fsck up!](#) If you were real men and not communist pussies, you'd know that no one has any rights, least of all you. Only one thing makes right—that would be, of course, might—and whining that you're taking it in the tail, though taking it in the tail you are, is anything but a way to create *that*.)

(UC Berkeley when I was a grad student there had an excellent program, very similar, also (in practice) women-only, called the “CS Reentry Program.” I was ill-disposed to respect this program and the people in it, but reality quickly convinced me otherwise. It was later done away with, for exactly this reason—communism has to pretend to be gender-neutral. So it can't actually just help women by, you know, helping women. That would involve appreciating women for what they are. Which is obviously illegal in a communist country. Similarly, once while decoding a Victorian book I told my daughter that in “the old days,” many girls went to schools where there were no boys. She looked at me as

though I'd told her that in the old days, the whole world was made of chocolate.)

Can men be assholes to women? Can women be assholes to men? Well, actually, it's usually men who are assholes and women who are bitches—though not without exceptions. But broadly speaking, can everyone be assholes to everyone else? They can. They are. And if you're genuinely mentoring a younger person, with genuine empathy and a genuine interest in their genuine success, what you say in every case is: life is full of assholes. When someone is an asshole (or a bitch) to you, ignore him and have as little to do with him as possible.

Once you learn to recognize the distinction between empathic and nonempathic altruism, you'll see it everywhere. Empathic altruism—charity—is simply good. Nonempathic altruism—communism—is simply evil. There's not a whole lot of gray area between good and evil. Evil motivations can certainly, by coincidence, produce good results—but this is an accident, which has little or nothing to do with the supposed “good intentions.”

Consider our late lamented “Arab Spring,” a true “[spring surprise](#)” that is creeping closer and closer to having killed a million people. As Stalin said, of course, a million people is just a statistic. You need a visual. I like to work with Olympic swimming pools full of blood.

And why did the Arab Spring happen? It happened because our dear State Department incited revolutions across the Arab world. And why did State do that? They did it with the full-throated approval of the American people—all the American people, from left to right. As far as I can recall, UR and [David Goldman](#) were the only two pundits condemning this enormous crime, which has produced exactly the results we expected.

And what were the American people thinking? They were in a pure state of callous altruism. They thought, we'll *help* our little brown Arab brothers by supporting them in their enlightened democratic revolution. Mrs. Jellyby could not have expressed it better.

When you are motivated by genuine charity, and your charitable efforts backfire and actually harm the recipient of your help, you feel guilt and sorrow like nothing else. You're a witness to a horrific motorcycle accident. You run over to the man on the ground, pull his helmet off, hug him and give him CPR. Unfortunately, he would have been fine, except that you just severed his spinal

cord. How do you feel? Is your reaction: “Oh well, at least I tried?”

How did the American people react when their Arab experiment didn’t go so well? I’ll tell you exactly how they reacted. “Oh well, at least we tried.” And then they changed the channel. And that’s what’s wrong with callous altruism.

Of course, I’ll be guilty of this same crime myself if I harp too much on the “women and minorities hardest hit” line. What’s really wrong with callous altruism? It’s a damned *lie*, that’s what’s wrong with it. It steals charity’s good name and makes [Randroids](#) condemn charity and communism in the same breath. And all for stupid political power, with which it does nothing. I’m a grownup and don’t need political formulas. Order me to respect the Party, I’ll respect the Party.

I’ll tell you what the *real* emotion behind the Arab Spring was. Actually, [Beavis](#) can tell you better. “Fire is cool,” said Beavis. Fire is indeed cool. Americans were bored and needed some better CNN. They wanted to see shit burn. Shit indeed burned, and is still burning. Which was cool. So they got what they wanted. Not too different from the crowd in the [Colosseum](#), just less honest about how they satisfy their very simple chimp/human needs.

And it’s not just sadism that motivates callous altruism. Another source of venal satisfaction is that when you help people, or appear to help them, you become a patron. You gain *ownership* over them. When you help overthrow the dictator of Egypt, for example, you become in a sense the new government of Egypt. The old dictator was a strongman—the new dictator is a *weakman*, because he owes his job to someone else. That someone is you—the collective you, but you nonetheless. If you decide you don’t like your weakman, it’s easy to find another weakman.

The fear that someone, somewhere, is exercising power over someone else, is one of the most basic cues of the callous-altruist mentality. Let me kill the master and free the slave. Out of altruism! Not sadism or ambition, of course. My hands are pure.

But slavery is simply dependence, and the default state of the newly “freed” slave is to be dependent on his new master—you, because you killed the old master. So your sadism itch is scratched, because you get to kill; and your ambition itch is scratched, because you become a slavemaster.

(A slavemaster? You may not tell your dependent what to do all day. But

if you pay him to do nothing, he is still your slave—you may not ask him to work today, but you could tomorrow. He would have to obey your commands or starve. In other words, he's a slave. And of course, there's one thing you've surely bought—his vote.)

When Higginson and friends tried this experiment in the 1860s, roughly [a fourth of the slaves](#) died as a consequence of the operation. Not to mention all the other people killed. Naturally, since America is a communist country, this episode—which might under other regimes be viewed as an outbreak of mass criminal insanity—is considered one of the most glorious in our glorious history.

And this is why you don't want to be a part of the lynch mob. Even if you think there aren't enough women programmers and there should be more. It is not your forebrain that lusts for power. It is your hindbrain. [Forebrain... must... control... hindbrain.](#)

As for the mob's victims, who already understand this stuff—there's an easy way to not get purged. Don't play the fool. What is attacking you, though it seems like a frivolous phenomenon, is anything but. This is an active volcano which has claimed hundreds of millions of lives. Just firing you is a small, small thing for it. Just destroying your life—very easy. Don't mess with it. If you can avoid a fight with it, do.

And if you can't, don't be defensive. Attack. If possible, attack in depth and preemptively. (What do you think I'm doing here?) One of the things that this evil machine is capable of, for example, is covering up hatefacts—[realities](#) that embarrass it or contradict its narrative. Your goal in attacking it is to embarrass and contradict it, creating a counter-narrative that it cannot incorporate into its own entertainment product. If you succeed, *you will be covered up as well*—which is exactly what you want. So the purpose of your attack is not to draw attention, but to avoid attention.

And finally, I have one last message for Gawker itself:

[At long last, bitch, have you no decency?](#)

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