



Written by [Charles Scaliger](#) on August 6, 2018

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Done With Conservative Democrats

What did Congressman Larry McDonald (shown) have in common with writers John T. Flynn and Albert J. Nock? For one thing, all three were prominent 20th-century opponents of Big Government. John T. Flynn's *As We Go Marching* and Albert J. Nock's *Our Enemy, the State* were two of the last century's most important critiques of government power, while the Americanist conservative Georgia congressman was, until his untimely death in 1983, the president of The John Birch Society.



For another thing, all three men were Democrats.

Hard as it may be to believe in the Trump era, there was a time in the not-too-distant past where “conservatives” — including some very principled constitutionalists, paleo-conservatives, and the like — were lodged firmly in the Democratic Party, and were just as vexing to that party's establishment leadership as today's Liberty Caucus is to the GOP House leadership.

Even among many Democrats with more Big-Government, welfarist inclinations, it was once not uncommon to find influential politicians who were strongly pro-life (former Pennsylvania governor Bob Casey comes to mind) or pro-gun.

But something has happened to the Democratic Party, something whose roots lie decades in the past, but which has come to fruition over the past 30 years or so. That something is the movement of the Democratic Party far to the left, such that it has come to view what were once partisan squabbles with Republicans as an ideological death struggle with a foe that it has come to regard as its mortal enemy: the so-called Right.

Since the time of the Great Depression, the Democratic Party has been the party of Big Government, although in FDR's time, a number of conservative Democrats, mostly though not exclusively from the South, such as Harry F. Byrd, Rush D. Holt, and Josiah Bailey, formed a coalition in opposition to the welfarist programs of the New Deal. At the same time, some conservative journalists and writers, such as the aforementioned Flynn and Nock, lent credence to the “big tent” appearance of the Democratic Party. This Democratic “Big Tent” continued all the way into the Reagan era, when the “boll weevil” Democrats — also from the South — made political careers out of supporting Reagan's policies against the wishes of the liberal-leftist Democratic establishment, mostly made up of East and West Coast liberal elites.

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Because it was Democratic presidents who embroiled the United States in the Vietnam War, the emerging radical Left of the '60s initially targeted the Democratic Party, famously turning Chicago upside-down with rioting during the Democrats' 1968 presidential election.

But after the upheavals of the '60s and early '70s had run their course, the radical leftists who had



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inspired them began to see the Democratic Party as their more natural home. It was, after all, the party of labor unions and welfare programs such as the New Deal and the Great Society. Unions and welfarism were two of the most important concerns of the radical Left; there remained only to recondition the party to support radical social views as well.

Already in the 1970s, the Democratic Party had welcomed homosexual activists such as Harvey Milk in the San Francisco Bay area. Milk became the first openly “gay” elected official in the United States, with the support of many in the local Democratic establishment, including a young Dianne Feinstein. Unbeknownst to millions of blue-collar unionists in the factories of the Midwest and the coal mines of Appalachia, their Democratic Party was beginning to come under the control of a rising generation of cunning leftist radicals, whose Saul Alinsky-inspired vision of America’s future contemplated the complete overthrow of traditional moral values.

The antagonism of the radical Left for religion and traditional morality is perhaps the least-understood aspect of “progressivism,” and it dates to the very beginning of the modern socialist movement. Socialism, after all, seeks to become the sole mechanism for social order, supplanting not only all other forms of government, but also other social structures competing for men’s allegiance, chief among them family and religion. Thus all early forms of socialism sought to subvert religion and traditional morality in one form or another. Strict Marxists tried to eradicate family and church by force, while many early socialist communes in the United States and Europe in the first half of the 19th century practiced what now might be called “free love” and sought to eliminate traditional family ties. Contrary to popular views, socialism has never been purely, or even primarily, about economics. It has always been first and foremost about breaking down traditional morality and transforming itself into a veritable secular religion. This is why the Left seems so peculiarly fixated on social issues such as birth control, abortion, education reform, and same-sex “marriage.”

As the ’70s gave way to the ’80s and ’90s, the young radicals of the ’60s and ’70s, including the Clintons and many of their generation, found their natural political habitat in the party that had already embraced economic socialism wholeheartedly.

As the remaking of the Democratic Party proceeded apace, conservative Democrats who died off or retired were permitted no successors. For the gimlet-eyed radicals who took over the party machinery, policy disputes were less about budgetary matters and more and more about the very moral makeup of American society. Every single issue became a life-and-death struggle for the very soul of America, because the socialist program brooks no competitors in its quest to overturn every aspect of Judaeo-Christian morality.

This is the reason that radical leftist Democrats have, starting with Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas, transformed Supreme Court justice confirmation hearings into sordid spectacles of partisanship. Of particular concern are always the candidate’s views on certain linchpin moral issues, such as abortion, that are sacrosanct to socialists.

This transformation of the Democratic Party was greatly accelerated during the Obama presidency, when Barack Obama, a leftist radical from the Alinskyan tradition, took the reins of the presidency and proceeded to guide America very close to socialist nirvana, enacting several major planks of the socialist program, including socialized medicine and same-sex “marriage.”

This is the reason for the savage, even violent, opposition to President Trump, his agenda, and



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Republicans generally. For modern Democrats-turned socialist radicals, any who represent a potential change back to what used to be called “traditional family values” and all that those values embody, are not merely political opponents; they are bitter enemies who threaten to undo the work of decades of leftist subversion.

This, unfortunately, is the state of the Democratic Party in 2018. Most of its leadership are invested in a radical, secular, post-Christian vision of America that they have come tantalizingly close to achieving (indeed, with the election of Hillary Clinton and a Democratic majority in Congress, they probably would have achieved). And suddenly, thanks to Trump and the Make America Great Again campaign, their decades-long climb to sociopolitical ascendancy is threatened. It remains to be seen how this struggle for America’s very soul will be played out.

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