



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 19, 2021

Leftists Condemn Hearing “Both Sides”; Conservatives Defend It — and Both Are Wrong

Put simply, there really are just two sides to things: right and wrong. Ironically, though, the relativistic Left generally denies this explicitly but often behaves as if it’s true; the Right will (usually) explicitly acknowledge that it’s true but often behaves as if it’s not.

Related to this is a recently-launched effort to “cancel” commentator Ben Shapiro and a defense of him by the Federalist. Explaining the story, that site’s Emily Jashinsky [writes](#) that the “Politico newsroom melted into predictable chaos after Ben Shapiro guest-authored its sacred Playbook newsletter on Thursday, one day after MSNBC host Chris Hayes did the same. The Online Left used that juxtaposition to rail against the ‘both sides’ ethos they believe dominates the corporate press, which equates mainstream conservatives with mainstream progressives.”

(Note: If the “both sides” ethos dominates the corporate press, the two sides must be the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks.)

“This, they say, is at the root of the media’s failure. Hayes may be an ideologue, but Shapiro, the argument goes, is a reckless disseminator of bigotry and disinformation,” Jashinsky continues.

Now, whatever you think of Shapiro — and I agree with him on many issues and disagree on others — he’s highly intelligent and what’s known as a “sober, serious” commentator; hardly a bomb-thrower. So when the Left is trying to cancel him, well, let’s just say that if [InfoWars’ Alex Jones](#) was the canary in the coal mine, Shapiro is the whole mining crew.

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Jashinsky also mentions how actor Matthew McConaughey was impugned for having interviews with podcaster Joe Rogan and Professor Jordan Peterson, despite both of the latter being “liberal” on many issues. The Left just doesn’t want to hear “both sides,” Jashinsky and others lament. Yet this is another example of how while the Left is wrong, the Right is often wrong about what is wrong with it.

Consider: Only two sides are put forth in a dispute between just two people (unless you’re Anthony Fauci, who [embraces multiple sides all by himself](#)), but our country comprises 328 million people. How many sides does that equate to?

Even someone not pondering this deeply may realize this matter isn’t as simple “liberals vs.



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conservatives.” There are different brands of leftists, while “conservatives” likewise comprise neocons, paleocons, and other sub-groups. This, not to mention libertarians, greens, constitutionalists, anarchists, avowed Marxists, and others identified with established labels. So unless one means “right and wrong” or “good and evil” — in which case it’s clear which side is legitimate — it’s silly speaking of “both sides.”

This brings us to Jashinsky’s statement that “by disenfranchising Shapiro,” the Left is actually “disenfranchising a wide swath of the country.” This is true. Yet she then writes, “For some people, it’s also what makes fringe voices attractive.”

Question: On the fringe of what?

If it’s meant that they’re on the fringe of reality (Truth), that’s one thing. But this is never the implication. Rather, what’s meant is that they’re on the fringe of society; this ignores that sometimes society is on the fringe of reality.

Being labeled “radical” does not by definition mean you’re wrong, but simply that your views deviate greatly from the mainstream. A person insisting $2+2=4$ in a land where everyone maintains it’s 5 would be branded a radical by the radically wrong majority.

History, in fact, is replete with examples of “fringe” figures — from Galileo to Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis (puerperal fever) to Dr. Joseph Goldberger (pellagra) to Alfred Wegener (continental drift) and beyond — whose consensus-“canceled” assertions were later proven correct. So, sometimes, an extremist is just someone who is right 50 years too soon (or 50 years too late).

Related to this, many today act as if so-called cancel culture (stigmatization, in other words) is wrong in principle. Yet the real problem is that the wrong people and ideas are being stigmatized.

If this sounds like an endorsement of intolerance, realize that stigmatization is a historical constant. Marxists were stigmatized in the 1950s United States while Christians were stigmatized at the same time in Hungary; people could be “warned out of town” in early America, and ancient Greek philosopher Socrates was “canceled” to the point of execution for, allegedly, corrupting the young and “mocking the gods.” And it surprises no one when those advocating pedophilia or genocide are stigmatized.

Stigmas are corollaries of values, for valuing something implies that its opposite will be devalued (e.g., valuing honesty means stigmatizing dishonesty). And since a society will always have values, it will always have stigmas.

So I am endorsing intolerance, properly understood. That is, “tolerance” involves the abiding of a perceived negative (i.e., we’d have to tolerate a bad cold, but not a delectable meal; we relish the latter). As for actual negatives — things objectively evil — that can be eliminated, tolerating them is a vice.

Of course, though they’re acting mainly based on emotion and not intellectual understanding, this is essentially the Left’s perspective. There very much is an intolerable perceived negative that leftists believe should be eliminated: conservatives.

And we got to this point by losing the culture, thrusting us into a time when good is called bad. Where Marxists and their sympathizers once were stigmatized, now they’re in government ([Anita Dunn](#), Bill de Blasio, etc.) and other positions of power and stigmatize socialism’s opponents. Where vice was once “canceled,” now it’s valued and virtue is in the dock. Where faithlessness was once frowned upon, now it’s exalted as enlightenment and Christianity is closeted. The lesson here is simple:



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Culture war, like it or not, is a zero-sum game. Sit on the sidelines at your own peril.



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