

## Left wing takes on the left wing

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By Michael Costello for the Tribune

Commentary

Bruce Wyatt - State Farm

Can the Democrats heal the rift between the extreme left wing of their party and the scorched-earth left wing of their party? While the last election evoked considerable commentary regarding Tea Party intolerance for "moderate Republicans," a less-covered story was the growing intolerance within the left for its own apostates. Certainly the vulgar, spittle-flecked vitriol that the left loosed on Barack Obama after his compromise with Republicans on taxes and unemployment compensation revealed a severe distaste for those who stray from the shining path.

Obama seems to have moved a little farther along the mourning process than they have. He's negotiating. They're still in denial.

To fully appreciate the Democratic Party's radicalization, recall that Hillary Clinton was considered the conservative alternative to Obama during the 2008 Democratic presidential primary. But just a decade earlier, she was considered the far left's ankle bracelet on Bill Clinton to prevent him from wandering too deeply into moderation. She championed herself during that era as the "mouthpiece" for radical pseudo-rabbi Michael Lerner, who was at the time spouting his "politics of meaning," communism's fig leaf du jour.

Obama's radicalism made him friends and allies with such extremists as the Reverend Jeremiah Wright, domestic terrorist William Ayers and Charles Manson cheerleader Bernadine Dohrn. But today he is so far removed from his party's ideological leadership that he recently described himself in a New York Times interview as a "Blue Dog Democrat."

All throughout 2010, the chattering class speculated that the Tea Party would pull the Republican Party so far to the right that moderates would no longer be welcome.

Cited as evidence for this shift were three elections. When New York's Ruling Class Republicans nominated Dede Scozzafava in New York's 23rd district, conservatives rebelled and cast their vote for Conservative Party candidate Bob Hoffman. When the Ruling Class Republicans chose carbon cap-and-trade advocate Mike Castle as their man, the conservatives rebelled and, to the media's delight, chose Christine O'Donnell. In Utah, the always eager to compromise Sen. Robert Bennett was retired in the Republican primary.

A less-remarked-upon Democratic version could be found during the 2009-2010 Obamacare debate when Nancy Pelosi and Henry Waxman, among others, expressed their sentiment that they might prefer a smaller, more ideologically pure Democratic caucus purged of its less radical members.

November's election gave them what they wanted and the Democratic Party's radical rump is farther removed from the American mainstream than the most radical Tea Partier. And, as evidenced by their foaming-at-the-mouth reaction to Obama's tax compromise, they are even less tolerant of moderation.

The Democrats are now so far removed from moderation that they've been giving Obama the same sort

of anatomically impossible advice that made headlines when former vice president Dick Cheney suggested it to the execrable Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., back in 2004.

The all-time greatest Republican, Ronald Reagan, once famously remarked that he never left the Democratic Party; the party left him. His cabinet was sprinkled with former Democrats who felt the same estrangement as Democrats moved toward Leninist class warfare rhetoric.

The current Democratic Party leadership is composed of the very same people who gained their political footholds marching behind North Vietnamese flags during that era's antiwar protests. Obama's friend Ayers fantasized about overthrowing the U.S. government and handing over administration of the country to the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam and Cuba. His plans included consolidating power by executing about 25 million Americans.

The intervening decades have not moderated their views. And with eternity and retirement just around the corner, their patience is nearly exhausted as their radical goals slip further away.

As an aside, I must comment on an ABC News poll taken last week that found that most Americans were dissatisfied with the performance of the Republican majority elected last month. Note to ABC: They haven't taken office yet.

I saw a Pew poll taken shortly before the 2008 election that found that a significant proportion of Americans believed that Republicans controlled Congress when Democrats held majorities in both houses. The most ill-informed Americans identified traditional network news as their primary news source, with their viewers scoring only slightly better than supermarket tabloid readers. A monkey flipping a coin would have outperformed CBS viewers.

Is ABC really this ignorant? Or are they intentionally fostering ignorance among their viewers because it advances their partisan agenda?

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