



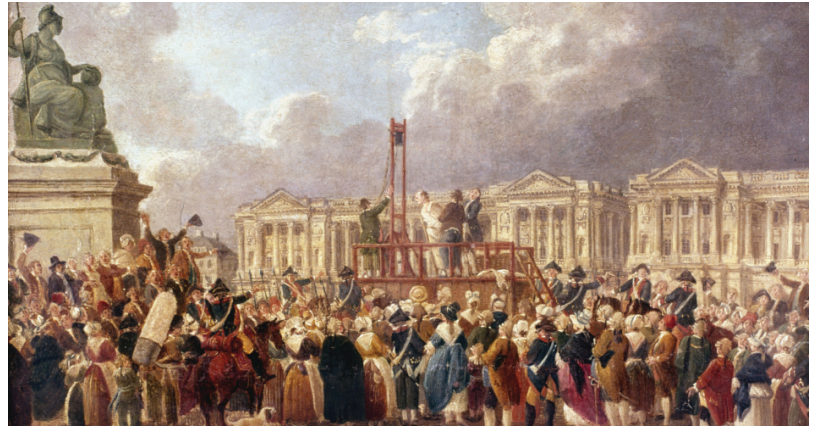
Written by [Steve Byas](#) on November 25, 2025

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The Murderous History of the Left

AT A GLANCE

- Leftist violence is nothing new.
- The French Revolution is an early example.
- That bloody revolution has inspired leftist radicals ever since.
- Violence and anarchy are used to make a targeted country ungovernable.



French Revolution (Photos.com/Getty Images Plus)

The murder of a private citizen — conservative activist Charlie Kirk — simply because of his opinions and ideology has shocked the nation.

The assassination of public office holders and candidates of all stripes in various nations of the world, including our own, has happened far too often. But the murder of Kirk is something new. He was neither a public office holder nor a politician. Yet, his visits to college campuses across America were generating a renewed interest in the cause of limited government, individual liberty, free enterprise, and traditional values among the young.

And for that he was shot by a left-wing ideologue at just 31 years of age.

In recent years, incidents of leftist rage, violence, and even murder have become increasingly common. James T. Hodgkinson, a supporter of socialist Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, tried to kill Republican members of Congress in 2017 while they practiced for the congressional baseball game — an event that has symbolized the civility of American politics in the past. Nicholas Roske, another leftist, attempted to assassinate Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh in 2022. UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson was murdered on the street in broad daylight in December 2024 by leftist Luigi Mangione. Incendiary rhetoric against Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents no doubt inspired an attack upon a Dallas ICE facility in September.

And, of course, presidential candidate Donald Trump was targeted twice for assassination by political leftists during his successful 2024 campaign. Had he not turned his head suddenly and slightly in Butler, Pennsylvania, that summer at an outdoor rally, he would have been killed on the spot.

We should not be surprised at these homicidal leftists. Democratic Party leaders have regularly referred to President Trump and other Republican and conservative leaders as “fascists” and the like. Representative Maxine Waters, a California Democrat, publicly incited harassment of Republicans during a 2018 rant:

If you see anybody from that Cabinet in a restaurant, in a department store, at a gasoline station, you get out and you create a crowd. And you push back on them. And you tell them they're not welcome anymore, anywhere.



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If they are not welcome *anywhere*, then one could reasonably take that as advocating violence against them.

Some, such as Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and then-White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, were harassed by leftists while simply visiting a restaurant for a meal. Even private citizens who dare to wear hats with “Make America Great Again” on them have been assaulted in public eating establishments.

Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) was assaulted on his own front lawn by next-door neighbor Rene Boucher, who was a supporter of Bernie Sanders. The man did not like Paul’s conservative stances, but the left-leaning media quickly dismissed any political motive, arguing that the man was instead angry because some of Paul’s grass clippings were blowing over onto Boucher’s lawn. Paul was struck from behind so hard that he suffered broken ribs and a punctured lung, causing him to have multiple bouts with pneumonia.



Assassination of President William McKinley in 1901 (Photos.com/Getty Images Plus)

Mike Wagner, a professor of journalism at the University of Wisconsin, certainly indicated that he supported the assault on Paul *because of Paul’s libertarian-conservative ideology*. “Where have you gone, Rand Paul’s neighbor,” Wagner said, “a nation turns its lonely eyes to you.” What else besides political ideology would inspire such a remark? It is doubtful that Wagner was upset because some of Paul’s grass clippings made their way onto Boucher’s lawn.

What should be particularly alarming about this increase in politically inspired violence is that many on the Left applauded the murders of Charlie Kirk and Brian Thompson. According to a recent poll by YouGov, 24 percent of individuals who describe themselves as “very liberal” say it is acceptable to be happy about a public figure’s death. Only three percent of those who identify as “very conservative” thought that. About one fourth of the “very liberal” crowd agreed that politically inspired violence can be justified, but only three percent of those of the “very conservative” persuasion thought so.

Perhaps even more shocking, the Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) found, “A broader ‘assassination culture’ appears to be emerging within segments of the U.S. public on the extreme left.”



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Homicidal History of the Far Left

While violent, even homicidal, action on the part of the extreme Left may be increasing in frequency and intensity in recent years, it is hardly a new tactic.

In fact, murder has been practiced by those on the Left since the days of the radical, conspiratorial societies — most notably the Jacobins — that brought on the bloody French Revolution. The symbol of the “Old Regime” of the Bourbon monarchy was a prison fortress, the Bastille. At one time, under previous kings, it housed hundreds of political prisoners. Under King Louis XVI, only seven prisoners remained — none of whom was a “political” prisoner. All of this was unknown to most of the mob that demanded entrance to the fortress. The governor of the Bastille, Marquis de Launay, chose to capitulate without a fight. The mob, agitated by the incendiary rhetoric of the secret societies, then proceeded to butcher de Launay, stabbing him repeatedly and finally decapitating him with a pocket knife. His severed head was placed at the end of a pike and paraded through the streets.

The revolution increased in intensity until the king and queen were both executed. Their deaths were followed by the Reign of Terror — carried out by a faction of the Jacobins — in which thousands of French citizens, mostly commoners, were murdered. One friend of Queen Marie Antoinette was cut into pieces, beginning with her female parts.



The Haymarket Riot in Chicago in 1886 (public domain)

One person who was inspired by the sheer brutality of the French Revolution was a German, Karl Marx. He joined the League of the Just, a group founded by radicals also inspired by the Reign of Terror, and eventually wrote their platform, *The Communist Manifesto*, when their group was renamed the Communist League. While today it is common to consider communism and socialism as two different ideologies, in Marx’s day the two terms were used interchangeably.

But they were all radicals, and they shared a belief that violence was necessary to bring about their dream of socialism. Some, like Marx, believed the communist society would come after a spontaneous and violent revolution, followed by a period of “re-education” in which opponents would either come to accept communism or face elimination. Others believed that socialism could be implemented through the ballot box, while others were revolutionary socialists who argued that violence and even mass murder would be necessary to bring about a successful revolution. Even those who argued for taking power through political means expected that their society would be implemented by force once they



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gained the power to enforce their rule.

It should be noted that all of this has caused some confusion. Oftentimes there are objections to calling a radical a “communist” if the person is not a card-carrying member of the Communist Party. But it should be noted that there did not exist an official communist government in any country until the Bolsheviks took over Russia in 1917. As has been said, these radicals themselves used such terms as “socialist” and “communist” in an interchangeable fashion.

Many also described themselves as *anarchists*. As “anarchist” is defined as a person who is for no government at all, and communism is an example of a totalitarian governmental system, it is perplexing to hear those on the far Left in the 1800s called anarchists.

The explanation is that, as there were no communist governments at that time, socialists and communists looked upon government as simply a tool to protect private property. As opposition to private property is a cardinal principle of communism, “anarchist” was a term often used to describe an advocate of socialism or communism. With this understanding, the enemies of socialism and communism were dubbed “capitalists” (the private owners of the means of production). Their protectors, then, were governments and their agents, such as local police and prosecutors.

Transatlantic Anarchism and Communism

While communist-inspired revolutions rocked Europe beginning in 1848, the United States saw little of that violence. That began to change in a huge way with the arrival of socialist revolutionaries — fleeing Europe after the failed revolutions of 1848 — in America. Even more arrived in the years after the American Civil War. While many of these immigrants from Germany, Italy, and Eastern Europe were simply looking for the opportunity offered by the freer economy in the United States, there were also many who were socialist revolutionaries of various stripes.

This is why so many in the anarchist-communist movement of the late 19th century and early 20th century were foreign-born. English-speaking revolutionaries were rare.

Peaceful avenues of improving the lot of factory workers were generally opposed by these 19th-century anarchists. For example, when labor unions agitated to get companies to adopt the “eight-hour day,” foreign-born socialist anarchists opposed the effort, arguing that this would only delay the socialist revolution that would destroy capitalism and implement the communist society they desired.



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Russia's Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 (public domain)

This difference led to a peaceful effort to win the eight-hour day from private-company owners degenerating into the deadly episode known as the Haymarket Riot in Chicago in 1886.

"Cyrus McCormick, owner of a harvester works in Chicago, had refused to accept a union to represent his employees," the late historian Clarence Carson explained in *The Growth of America*. But McCormick did grant the eight-hour day, and gave workers a half-day off to celebrate. Radical anarchists were incensed, however, and a protest meeting was called to be held at Haymarket Square. "Provocative circulars [were] printed in both German and English," Carson explained, calling for "revenge," specifically against the police.

When police arrived at the event, a bomb was thrown at them, killing one and wounding several others. In an ensuing battle, seven policemen were killed, and more than 60 others were injured. Several of the radical leaders were arrested, tried, and convicted for incitement to murder, and four were eventually executed. As has been a typical tactic of the Left, however, the anarchists argued that the four who were executed were innocent martyrs. Unfortunately, many historians have bought this communist line, even though the facts tell a different story.

The anarchists had been openly advocating for the use of dynamite as a revolutionary tool for some time, especially after it was used to assassinate Czar Alexander II of Russia in 1881. Timothy Messer-Kruse, writing in *The Haymarket Conspiracy*, explained that the czar's murder "fired the minds of American revolutionary socialists because it seemed to validate the new revolutionary ideas spreading quickly on both sides of the Atlantic, including the idea that violent actions were valuable not only for their direct effects," but also for their "educational power." "And true revolutionaries did not allow for their actions to be impeded by the sentiments of a false bourgeois morality."

One German communist, Karl Heinzen, was blunt: "Murder is the principal agent of historical progress." *Truth*, a revolutionary socialist newspaper published in London, was equally explicit in support of murder to advance the communist dream: "The current industrial system must pass away," but will not do so "until washed out in blood."

Such rhetoric was also common among anarchist-communists in the United States at the time of the Haymarket Riot. Albert Parsons, speaking outside the Chicago Board of Trade a little more than a year before the Haymarket episode, pleaded with a crowd of his fellow radicals to "use the gun and



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dynamite” to fight the “capitalists and robbers.”

Despite overwhelming evidence that a cabal of anarchists plotted the Haymarket Riot with every intention of killing police officers, most history books leave the impression that these conspirators were innocent of actual murder — as though the dynamite just ignited itself. Yet, one of those convicted of the bombing plot, Louis Lingg, had distributed a letter to fellow anarchists a few months earlier advocating exactly what happened. “The first of May is coming near,” Lingg wrote, “We will have to kill the monster.” He added, “You must kill the pirates. You must kill the bloodsuckers.”

Another conspirator, August Spies, told his fellow anarchists, “Arm yourselves.” He argued that the push for the eight-hour day was just a step on the road to violent revolution. Alluding to the actions of the French Revolutionaries a century earlier, Spies said, “Until the last stone of the robber bastille is removed and enslaved humanity is free,” they must fight onward. Any man advocating compromise “should be sat down on at once.”

Reminiscent of the 2020 Black Lives Matter riots, the Haymarket conspirators called for ambushing the police.

Messer-Kruse, an historian at Bowling Green State University, concluded in *The Haymarket Conspiracy*, “Haymarket’s blast was not the work of one disgruntled worker, one fanatic, or even one small group of miscalculating radicals. It was the culmination of an ideological movement.”

20th-century Murderous Radicalism

Emma Goldman was a Russian-born anarchist revolutionary who, as did those in the Haymarket conspiracy, inspired violence as a political tactic. Her rhetoric against the capitalist system and the government that supported it led an anarchist, Leon Czolgosz, to assassinate President William McKinley on September 6, 1901. Goldman was attracted to anarchism after the Haymarket conspiracy, and plotted, along with her lover, Alexander Berkman, to assassinate financier Henry Clay Frick as an act of the “propaganda of the deed,” as they called it. Frick survived the homicidal attack, however. Goldman later wrote an article in defense of Czolgosz’s murder of McKinley, as did other anarchists of the day.

Czolgosz was born in Detroit to a Polish immigrant family, and joined the socialist club Knights of the Golden Eagle in the 1890s. After joining another socialist club, the Sila Club, he became an anarchist. After he heard about the assassination of King Umberto I of Italy at the hands of an anarchist in 1900, he resolved he would take a similar action and murder President McKinley.

McKinley was invited to speak at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, and, over the objections of his bodyguards, agreed to shake hands with a line of citizens. Carrying a .32-caliber revolver, Czolgosz moved along in the receiving line until he reached McKinley. He shot the president twice in the stomach, and McKinley died eight days later from infection.

Czolgosz was convicted and sentenced to death. He spurned efforts by clergy to get him to repent. He then told his brother, who asked him to reconsider, “Don’t you have any praying over me when I am dead. I don’t want it. I don’t want any of their damned religion.” It should be noted that the French revolutionaries, Karl Marx, and other communist leaders rejected Christianity and any other religion.

Before his execution by electrocution, Czolgosz explained why he assassinated McKinley: “I killed the



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president because he was the enemy of the good people — the good working people. I am not sorry for my crime.”

Such opposition to government, of course, changed when radicals were finally able to topple the Russian government in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that led to the formation of the Soviet Union in 1922. Soon afterward, the Soviets began efforts to spread their revolution to other parts of the world, including the United States, leading to what historians like to call the “Red Scare.”

While portrayed today as of little consequence, the communist movement in the United States was marked by the same violence that had marked all such movements, whether going by the name of communist, socialist, anarchist, Bolshevik, or something else.

Operating contemporaneously with the Red Scare were violent activists known as the Galleanists, so called because of their support for Italian immigrant anarchist Luigi Galleani. It is suspected that they were instigators of multiple bombings inside the country from 1914 to 1920. In addition to supporting anarchism through speeches and political protests, they advocated violent methods such as bombings. While Galleani was not likely involved directly in all of these bombings, his bomb-making manual *La Salute e in voi* was a go-to resource for violent radicals of the period. The manual included a woodcut of a guillotine, indicating that admiration for the French Revolution was still strong among the revolutionaries. (Readers might recall that violent radicals in the 2020 riots often featured a model guillotine in their protests).

Carlo Buda, the brother of one of Galleani’s followers, bombmaker Mario Buda, said that Galleani was a very powerful speaker and once one heard him speak, “you are ready to shoot the first policeman you saw.”

Among those inspired by Galleani’s murderous methods were Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. In April 1920, the paymaster for a South Braintree, Massachusetts, shoe factory was robbed and murdered, and these two radicals and followers of Galleani were charged with the crime. A jury found them guilty, and they were sentenced to death. They were finally executed by electrocution in 1927. By the time they were finally put to death, though, they had been portrayed as martyrs, with leftists around the world arguing that they were innocent of any crime, and that they were actually the victims! Protests supporting the two were held not only in the United States, but all over the world.

Sounding much like a spokesman for Marxist critical theory, Sacco said at his sentencing, “I know the sentence will be between two classes, the oppressed class and the rich class.” Vanzetti said, “I am suffering because I am a radical and indeed, I am a radical; I have suffered because I was an Italian, and indeed I am an Italian.”

Despite modern leftist tendencies to dismiss anyone who disagrees with them as some sort of “fascist,” Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini was among those who pleaded for clemency for the two left-wing radicals. Mussolini was a former leader in the Italian Socialist Party before becoming a fascist. Fascism and socialism are ideological cousins.

Interestingly, in 2005, the *Los Angeles Times* published a newly discovered letter from prominent socialist writer and journalist Upton Sinclair to attorney John Beardsley, revealing a conversation he had had with Fred Moore, attorney for Sacco and Vanzetti. In that conversation, in response to Sinclair’s request for the truth, Moore admitted that both Sacco and Vanzetti were in fact guilty, and that Moore had fabricated their alibis in an attempt to avoid a guilty verdict.



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After the conclusion of the First World War in 1918, and the establishment of the American Communist Party, the United States experienced a spike in ideologically driven bombings. Included among the targets was Attorney General Mitchell Palmer, who served in that position from March 1919 to March 1921. Palmer's home in Washington, D.C., was bombed in 1919 by anarchists later linked to Luigi Galleani. He and his family narrowly escaped being killed when the bomb exploded in front of their home. A field agent from the Bureau of Investigation, Rayme Weston Finch, who had arrested some leading Galleanists, was also attacked. In April 1919 alone, 36 dynamite-filled bombs were mailed to leading American newspaper editors, justice officials, and businessmen.

Despite these bombings, many historians dismiss concerns about communism at the time, dismissing the Red Scare, and implying there was nothing really to be concerned about. Palmer recruited J. Edgar Hoover, then a mere 24 years old and a recent law-school graduate, to head up the investigations. Members of the U.S. Senate demanded that Palmer do something about all the bombings. Finally, he began what historians call the "Palmer Raids," in which federal agents raided the homes of suspected alien communists.

One of the most significant bombings happened in September 1920, two days after the convictions of Sacco and Vanzetti. A horse-drawn wagon stopped on Wall Street in New York City. The driver left the wagon, and a few minutes later a dynamite-bomb exploded, killing 38 people and injuring hundreds of others. The bombing destroyed some buildings and left permanent scars on others on Wall Street. Yet many argue today that there was really nothing to be concerned about during the Red Scare, comparing it to the Puritan witch hunts of the 17th century.

Radical Support for Murder Has Not Ended

Support on the Left for murder as a political tactic — the "propaganda of the deed" — has continued to the present day. Woody Guthrie, a very popular balladeer among left-wing Americans who wrote several columns for an official Communist Party newspaper in the 1930s and 1940s, actually wrote a song romanticizing a murderous outlaw, Charles Floyd, popularly known as "Pretty Boy Floyd." Guthrie's villains in the song were the government, banks, and the rich. Floyd, who was guilty of a string of murders and robberies, was described by Guthrie as an American Robin Hood. Another person praised by Guthrie in one of his many columns in the Communist Party paper was Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, who collaborated with Adolf Hitler in invading Poland and launching World War II. Guthrie claimed that Stalin had gone into Poland to help the poor.

Another leftist who saw murder as a political tactic was Theodore Kaczynski, better known as the Unabomber. Beginning in 1978, Kaczynski mailed or hand-delivered bombs that killed three and injured nearly two dozen.



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Donald Trump and Charlie Kirk (AP Images)

The Unabomber revealed his motive in a manifesto published by *The Washington Post*. The *Post* agreed to publish the anonymous paper in hopes someone could identify the author (which did happen). The 35,000-word manifesto, titled *Industrial Society and Its Future*, opposed all forms of technology. Kaczynski argued that violence and murder were justified to save the environment.

“The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race,” he wrote. The Industrial Revolution, he claimed, had “inflicted severe damage on the natural world. The continued development of technology will worsen the situation.”

He advocated “a revolution against the industrial system. The revolution may or may not make use of violence.”

After 17 years of terror, the Unabomber was finally caught and sent to prison.

Today, the murders by ideological leftist radicals continue. Charlie Kirk is the latest victim.

After reading some text messages from Kirk’s alleged murderer to his homosexual lover, one reporter for ABC News, Matt Gutman, appeared to heroize the killer. He said he’s not sure “if we have seen an alleged murder with such specific text messages” that were “very touching in a way that many of us didn’t expect — a very intimate portrait into this relationship between the suspect’s roommate and the suspect himself, with him repeatedly calling his roommate, who is transitioning, calling him ‘my love’ and [saying] ‘I want to protect you, my love.’”

Gutman later apologized, but making heroes of murderers and other violent criminals is not new. The Left has made heroes of murderers ever since the days of the French Revolution, and villains out of the likes of Charlie Kirk, who was simply expressing his opinions on politics, economics, and social issues. This tactic is as old as the French Revolution, and as new as contemporaneous events.

Late night “comedian” Jimmy Kimmel even had the audacity to suggest that Kirk’s killer was not a leftist (even though his parents said he was), but instead one of the MAGA crowd. Kimmel was continuing a grand tradition of the Left of, as the Bible says, calling good evil and evil good.



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