

RACIALIZED ANTICOMMUNISM AND TRENDS IN ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE

2/21/22

It would be a mistake to suggest, as has been done in some online circles, that antisemitism and sinophobia are *literally the same phenomenon*, just as it would be wrong to claim that triangles and squares are the same on the basis that they are both polygons; however, there *are* indeed important structural similarities that require analysis. It would be more accurate to say that antisemitism and sinophobia are historically specific applications of a broader phenomenon: fascist scapegoating of a national or racial minority for rising class and communist consciousness. We refer to this phenomenon as “racialized anticommunism.” Again, using antisemitism as a catch-all label would be too historically imprecise and misleading; it is only the most apparent historical example (and, indeed, possibly the first example). As capitalism enters crisis and class consciousness grows, those looking to divert radical energy away from capital need to identify an *external* cause for people's problems (lest they come to identify the capitalist system itself as the underlying cause). This form of scapegoating has been unique in that it also seeks to identify communism and communists as the cause of worker's toil under capitalism, a trick which has been widely successful due to disinformation about the history of communism, and through disinformation on what communism even means (many people today who identify communism as their enemy will inevitably fail to define it). When people living under capitalist systems identify communism as the source of their struggle, this is, in fact, the work of fascism. And when the source of the communist menace is identified as a particular racial group, then we have racialized anticommunism. That is to say, this phenomenon isn't simply racial chauvinism nor simply anticommunism, but racial chauvinism tempered with anticommunism. Fully understanding this will allow us to analyze fascist mobilizations against minority groups outside the particular case of the Nazis targeting Jews; in particular, we use this theory to analyze current trends in anti-Asian violence, and attempt to outline a strategy for combating it.

First let us consider what Stalin once said about antisemitism:

“National and racial chauvinism is a vestige of the misanthropic customs characteristic of the period of cannibalism. Anti-semitism, as an extreme form of racial chauvinism, is the most dangerous vestige of cannibalism.

Anti-semitism is of advantage to the exploiters as a lightning conductor that deflects the blows aimed by the working people at capitalism. *Anti-semitism is dangerous for the working people as being a false path that leads them off the right road and lands them in the jungle. Hence Communists, as consistent internationalists, cannot but be irreconcilable, sworn enemies of anti-semitism.”* ([Pravda, 1931](#) — emphasis added)

Two points here are important: first, he distinguishes antisemitism from national and racial chauvinism generally, and, second, he says that antisemitism is the most dangerous vestige of cannibalism *because it directs the worker's energy and hostility away from*

capitalism. This is not to say, however, that antisemitism is any kind of national or racial chauvinism that serves this function — all sorts of chauvinism do so! More to the point, the antisemitism that was prevalent in Russia, that Stalin is addressing, could not have been specifically anticommunist in nature, because it predated communism (and predated the fascists who would come to utilize it as such) — and thus to use antisemitism to describe all sorts of racialized anticommunism would be an obvious error. Even today, not all anti-Jewish chauvinism is strictly anti-communist! Not to further belabor the point, but here Stalin describes antisemitism (and thus all chauvinism) as deflections of ire *away from capitalism*, but notice that it's not specifically deflected *towards communism*. How antisemitism came to be a scapegoat *away from* capitalism generally and *towards* communism specifically requires additional historical context.

In Weimar (and later Nazi) Germany, Jews became the primary anti-Communist scapegoat for essentially two reasons: pre-existing national receptivity to antisemitism *and association with Communism*. In other words, the Jews were already viewed, both in German society and elsewhere, as intrinsically connected to Bolshevism and the threat of global Communist revolution. This association between Jews and Communism developed into the 'judeobolshevik' conspiracy for numerous reasons, some of which comes down to confirmation bias, and some of which comes down to a very real trend that Jews of the time were indeed attracted to Marxism. For example, particularly visible Jewish personalities stood out among the members and leadership of, for example, the German KPD (such as Rosa Luxemburg), the Russian Bolsheviks (such as Leon Trotsky), and the Bavarian Independent Socialist Party (such as Kurt Eisner). That is, they stood out on their own merits, but moreover they stood out because people were already primed to look for patterns of Jewish plots and schemes. Luxemburg in particular participated in the failed Spartacist uprising, which further cemented concerns in German society about a combined Jewish-Communist conspiracy. Beyond these particular figures, there was a supposed overrepresentation of Jews among the Red Army and other revolutionary movements and groups which was, in truth, not altogether unprecedented. The overtly antisemitic and nationalistic politics of the German right precluded the possibility of Jewish integration, and the softer but still decidedly nationalistic politics of the German liberals permitted integration but at the cost of total assimilation, both of which tended to push Jews towards far-left politics. Of course promises of equality and internationalism would appeal to a group of people facing racial discrimination! Furthermore, a tradition of Jewish conspiracy theories was already well established at this point. For example, even in his own time, Karl Marx was occasionally accused of being secretly funded by Jewish bankers. Thus, more often than not, confirmation bias played a bigger role in manufacturing a Jewish plot out of the various Jewish Communists that did exist. In the Bavarian socialist republics, for instance, only a minority of leaders were actually Jewish, yet those few who were apparently became evidence of the 'judeobolshevik' conspiracy.

Judeobolshevism is the clearest case of the combined forces of racism and anti-Communism. It's crucial to understand that Jews were not merely an easy scapegoat, but, in fact, there was an *authentic* fear that Jews were responsible for the Bolshevik threat. [In one 1923 interview](#), Hitler had said explicitly that:

*“Our German workers ... have two souls. One is German, the other is Marxian ... We must root out the taint of Marxism. Marxism and Germanism, like German and Jew, are antipodes ... **the Japanese, unlike the Jews ... are not carriers of Bolshevism**”* (emphasis added).

Certainly, the view that Communism was a foreign ideology imported by malicious outsiders, that purely inorganic and subversive forces were at play in popularizing Marxism, was a very convenient idea for Hitler and the Nazis, as it precluded the idea that German society itself was fundamentally at fault for producing economic and political crisis. But the lengths the Nazis went through to carry out the final solution even in the midst of existential war belies that, on some level, *they truly did believe this* and weren't merely saying it opportunistically. The Jews weren't scapegoated for Communism simply because they were hated, but, conversely, *the extent to which Jews were so reviled was directly tied to their purported connection to Bolshevism*. Thus, in order to save Germany from the plague of Bolshevism, they carried out genocide against the people they earnestly thought was responsible.

This pattern of racialized anti-Communism has been repeated across different nations, targeting different groups, at different points in time, but following a similar structure. There was a period here in the USA, for instance, when African Americans were a target of racialized anti-Communism. Similarly, the Lavender Scare — though not a racial target — created a “personified anti-Communism” of an out-group (in this case, homosexuals). Finally, consider the Indonesian genocide which killed on the order of one million people from 1965 to 1966: while primarily targeting Communists, ethnic Chinese and Javanese Abangan were massacred as well *for their association with Communism whether or not they actually held communist sympathies*. Complete analyses of these examples are out of scope, but they remain relevant in illustrating that this phenomenon is not unique to interwar Europe or to Jews specifically.

Indeed, in our current circumstances here in America, we may be seeing a similar trend beginning to materialize again. Material conditions are declining: labor power is destroyed, infrastructure is crumbling, the middle class is downwardly mobile and collapsing, our political representatives continually fail to appear relatable or provide meaningful legislation, people have grown skeptical of our institutions, our last few major military interventions were all disasters. In a word, people are generally growing more discontent, disillusioned, and hopeless as these economic and political crises develop. Consequently, class consciousness, labor militancy, and explicit support for socialism are all growing in proportion to these crises, in particular with the younger generations who have little to no memory of the “threat of the communist bloc” or of “better days.” In short, the stage is increasingly set for fascist militancy. However, outside of fringe fascist and white supremacist groups, antisemitism has no mass basis in contemporary America. This is, in part, because it is widely associated with the Nazis, whom Americans have (rightly) been taught to hate and revile; Americans are proud of having defeated the Nazis, even to the extent that we exaggerate our actual role in doing so, claiming the role of antifascist from the Communists. It is also in part because Jews in America are not widely associated with Communism anymore, no doubt because post-war diaspora communities have tended to adopt more conservative or liberal politics. In contrast with Germany and other European powers, light-skinned Jews eventually found relatively mainstream integration into

American white identity, which might help explain this rightward shift. Judaism does maintain this historical vestige of Communist association, again, within fringe white supremacist groups, but rarely outside them. Thus, American fascism is not and will not be neo-Naziism (as much as the ideological fascists may wish it would be). And so, a different national minority must come to embody discontent and anticommunism for a fascistic mass mobilization against them to take place. It's certainly not difficult in America to identify any number of groups who are targets of long-standing racial discrimination, so the question simply becomes: *which one is most culturally associated with Communism?* We argue that today that group is (principally) the Chinese, though we are confident Asians of all nationalities will bear the brunt of it (in part because those likely to commit pogroms aren't likely to differentiate — consider that Sikhs and non-muslim Arabs were targets of discrimination following 9/11 — and in part because 'oriental despotism' is reinforced by broader associations between Asians and Communism — for instance, the Vietnamese and Koreans). In other words, which group of "ethno-national outsiders" is most commonly associated with Communism today? It is, of course, the Asians. We say principally the Chinese, on the other hand, because China in particular represents the greatest threat to America's imperialist hegemony, and this is reflected in the fact that it is the country most frequently vilified by the bourgeois media, by politicians and pundits and so on. So while we can expect the fascist rhetoric to principally target the 'chicoms' and the 'CCP,' we should be wary of increasing trends of anti-Asian violence and hate crimes generally (which we are, of course, already witnessing).

What follows is a conjunctural analysis based in part on the history of antisemitism and based in part on parallels and trends in anti-Asian violence already visible today — alongside some similar trends playing out against Russians during the ongoing conflict with Ukraine and the pivot in American foreign policy towards "great power conflict." One characteristic we can expect to see more of is the idea of "dual loyalty," an (often but not exclusively) antisemitic trope that suggests Jews have more loyalty either to their own national group or to the state of Israel specifically than to their fellow citizens. One recent and high profile case is that of Eileen Gu, a first generation Chinese-American immigrant who decided to compete for China in the the Chinese-held Olympics of 2022, and has since been the victim of viciously racist propaganda accusing her of "betraying America" and being "disloyal." In the immediate wake of this controversy, *The Nation*, which Wikipedia amusingly describes as a 'progressive magazine,' published an article on February 17, 2022 entitled [US-Born Children in China Will Have to Choose Between Rival Superpowers](#). Though it has since been edited, the version published on that date cited a white nationalist, anti-immigration group known as the Center for Immigration Studies: "The Center for Immigration Studies has estimated that 33,000 babies were born to maternity tourists in the US annually — with China one of the major source countries." (Accessible via the [WayBackMachine](#)). Both of these are examples of the bourgeois press with a clear motivation to foment anxiety over Chinese-Americans. The very next day, Enes Freedom, a basketball player who has become infamous for consistently repeating imperialist lies about China (consider where a celebrity like him might be getting his talking points and what material incentives he must have for repeating them), [said the following](#) on Twitter:



The message conveys several key points:

- China wants to undermine and destroy America.
- Chinese immigrants serve the interests of China in this task.
- These Chinese agents have infiltrated (or are infiltrating) the highest echelons of American society.
- And lastly: you personally should be scared of them.

The first point is taken for granted. The second point parallels accusations of Japanese immigrants of being loyal to the Japanese emperor during WWII — and lest it needs reminding, this was the justification for their internment. And quite critically, that third point parallels claims by the Nazis that the Jews had control over the German state, banks, institutions, and so on. To this point, we can expect statistics regarding Asian success or “overrepresentation” in universities, in high paying positions, etc, to be weaponized against them. This year, for instance, the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) reported that the average income for Asian Americans is higher than for white Americans, an easy target for fascists looking to direct the discontent of white working class people who are tired of hearing about white privilege. The propaganda campaign, alongside stochastic violence against Asian-Americans, is already under way, but if trends continue *unopposed*, then we believe that we can expect the following long-term phenomena (in the worst case scenarios):

- Expulsion of Chinese exchange students and limitations imposed on Chinese immigration and travel.
- Mainstream support, first in rightwing media then in centrist (liberal) media, for conspiracies that accuse the Chinese of being the “true elite” in American society and of being responsible for the various woes and crises of American society.

- Demands to stop doing business in China entirely. Production may move out of China, for example into India. If and when this decoupling occurs, war with China becomes much more probable.
- Boycotts on Asian-owned businesses and imports, leading either to a spontaneous mobilization of parastate actors committing arson or to a centralized state seizure of assets.
 - Organized pogroms against Asian communities — *most likely after disarmament.*
 - Internment camps for Chinese-Americans. Certain factions of liberals will wax poetic trying to remind people of the horrors of Japanese internment, but won't put up a fight and few will listen. This is especially likely in the event of war with China. Such a war will probably be sold on "protecting Taiwan from CCP aggression" and to "protect democracy in the ROC" if not simply for "the defense of the fatherland from Chinese subterfuge." If anyone still remembers the Uyghurs or the Tibetans by such a time, we have little doubt that propaganda about them will be put to good use justifying the conflict under the guise of "protecting human rights" as well.
 - Other historically antisemitic tropes will either be converted wholesale into sinophobic tropes, or we will see hybrid Judeo-Asiatic tropes emerge. For example, it is currently popular in alt-right/groyper communities to view SJWs, "transgenderism," feminism, "globohomo," and other forms of so-called "degeneracy" as a top-down Jewish conspiracy. They even lifted "cultural bolshevism" and turned it into "cultural marxism," which includes everything from the collapse of the nuclear family (feminism responsible) to BLM protests and ANTIFA (both astroturfed, funded, and controlled, of course, by the infamous Jewish billionaire George Soros). In short, either Jews will be said to be responsible for the 'chicom' trojan horse, or these sorts of conspiracies will be lifted from the shoulders of George Soros and placed upon the shoulders of a Chinese billionaire.

Certain voices amidst the ongoing Ukrainian crisis are already calling for some of these actions in regard to the Russians. Consider that the efficacy with which anti-Russian chauvinism has been fomented and normalized can be explained both by international competition (threat to imperial hegemony) and by vestigial associations with Communism owing to decades of propaganda; although Russia today is firmly capitalist, living memory of a Communist Russia remains very much intact, and is often intentionally inflamed by vague and hypocritical accusations of "authoritarianism." We have seen on numerous instances, for instance, people who genuinely believe that the Russian Federation of today is somehow still Communist or somehow fundamentally non-capitalist. In short, even if the conflict is decidedly unjustified, it should be incredibly alarming to us all that it has become normalized to dehumanize Russians, to refer to them as a horde of orcs, and, meanwhile, to support and downplay the various neo-Nazi/Banderite battalions of Ukraine while popularizing their neo-fascist slogans (eg, "slava ukraini"). This is setting the stage for fascist sympathy by the logic of "So what if they're fascists? *At least they're defending their fatherland!*" Moreover, this particular conflict between the US and Russia is only by proxy through Ukraine — if and when America enters into a direct, hot war

with China (as we suspect it could within the next, say, 20 years or so), we can comfortably expect a much greater and more intense mass mobilization of chauvinistic violence (in other words, one which goes beyond seizing imports or renaming foods).

This leaves the obvious question of what needs to be done to prevent these outcomes. Campaigns against anti-Asian violence are already underway and have been for a while, and yet some of these emerging trends are very, very recent! In other words, unless something changes, these campaigns will prove insufficient — thus the strategic question is of utmost importance. If we could be so bold, we would encourage Asian communities to set up parallel orgs to the Lavender Guard for their own communities; that is to say, organizations to arm, train, and organize each community while providing a political education, and offering an Asian working class perspective through the organization's media and propaganda team. We are immediately aware of one similar organization already, though their particular politics leaves much room to be desired. Furthermore, gun control, which will be used to disarm Asian communities, must be vehemently opposed, and communal arsenals, if possible, should be established across Asian neighborhoods. Beyond these things, the general fight against fascism and for Communism can prevent this potential genocide altogether, though we personally wouldn't hedge our bets on it.