

The Bizarre Facebook Path to Corporate Fascism

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“The Facebook intervention is a qualitative escalation of the McCarthyite offensive.”

Facebook has assumed additional political police powers, disrupting a planned counter-demonstration against white supremacists, set for August 12th in Washington, on the grounds that it was initiated and inspired by “Russians” as part of a Kremlin campaign to “sow dissention” in the U.S. The Facebook intervention is a qualitative escalation of the McCarthyite offensive launched by the Democrat Party and elements of the national security state, and backed by most of the corporate media, initially to blame Hillary Clinton’s 2016 defeat on “collusion” between Wikileaks, “the Russians” and the Trump campaign to steal and publicize embarrassing Clinton campaign emails.

After failing to produce one shred of hard evidence to support their conspiracy theory, the anti-Russia hysteria mongers switched gears, focusing on the alleged purchase of about \$100,000 in Facebook ads by the Internet Research Agency (IRA), a St. Petersburg-based Russian company, over a multi-year period. The problem was, most of the ads had no direct connection to the presidential contest, or were posted after the election was over, and many had no political content, at all. The messages were all over the place, politically, with the alleged Russian operatives posing as Christian activists, pro- and anti-immigration activists, and supporters of the Black Lives Matter Movement. Special prosecutor Robert Mueller was forced to flip the script, [indicting 13 Russians](#) for promoting general “discord” and undermining “public confidence in democracy” in the United States – thus creating a political crime that has not previously been codified in the United States.

“Mueller was forced to flip the script.”

In doubling down on an unraveling conspiracy tale, the Mueller probe empowered itself to tar and feather all controversial speech that can be associated with utterances by “Russians,” even if the alleged “Russians” are, in fact, mimicking the normal speech of left- or right-wing Americans — a descent, not into Orwell’s world, but that of Kafka (*Beyond the Law*) and Heller (*Catch-22*).

Facebook this week announced that it had taken down 32 pages and accounts that had engaged in “coordinated and inauthentic behavior” in promoting the August 12 counter-demonstration against the same white supremacists that staged the fatal “Unite the Right” demonstrations in Charlottesville, Virginia, a year ago. Hundreds of anti-racists had indicated their intention to rally against “Unite the Right 2.0” under the banner of Shut It Down DC, which includes D.C. Antifascist Collective, Black Lives Matter D.C., Hoods4Justice, Resist This, and other local groups.

Facebook did not contend that these anti-racists' behavior was "inauthentic," but that the first ad for the event was purchased by a group calling itself "Resisters" that Facebook believes were behaving much like the Internet Research Agency.

"At this point in our investigation, we do not have enough technical evidence to state definitively who is behind it," said Nathaniel Gleicher, Facebook's [head of cybersecurity policy](#). "But we can say that these accounts engaged in some similar activity and have connected with known I.R.A accounts."

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Chelsea Manning, whose prison sentence for sending secret documents to Wikileaks was commuted by President Obama, said the counter-protest was "organic and authentic" and that activists had begun organizing several months ago.

"Folks from D.C. and Charlottesville have been talking about this since at least February," [Manning told](#) The New York Times.

"This was a legitimate Facebook event that was being organized by Washington, D.C. locals," says [Dylan Petrohilos](#), of Resist This. Petrohilos was one of the defendants in the Trump inauguration "riot" prosecutions. He protested Facebook's disruption of legitimate free speech and assembly. "DC organizers had controlled the messaging on the no UTR fb page and now FB made it harder for grassroots people to organize," he tweeted. The organizers insist the August 12 counter-demonstration — "No Unite the Right 2 - DC" — is still a go, as is the white supremacist rally.

Whoever was first to buy a Facebook ad — the suspected Russian "Resisters," or Workers Against Racism, who told the Daily Beast they decided to host their own anti-"Unite the Right 2.0" event because they thought "Resisters" was an "inexperienced liberal organizer" — there was no doubt whatsoever that the white supremacists would be confronted by much larger numbers of counter-demonstrators, in Washington. Nobody in Russia needed to tell U.S. anti-racists to shut the white supremacists down, or vice versa. The Russians didn't invent American white supremacy, or the native opposition to it. Even if Mueller, Facebook, the Democratic Party and the howling corporate media mob are to be believed, the "Russians" are simply mimicking U.S. political rhetoric and sloganeering — and weakly, at that. The Workers Against Racism thought the "Resisters" weren't worth partnering with, but that the racist rally must be countered. The Shut It Down DC coalition didn't need the "Resisters" to crystallize their thinking on white supremacy.

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The Democratic Party and corporate media, speaking for most of the U.S. ruling class — and actually bullying one of its top oligarchs, Mark Zuckerberg — is on its own bizarre and twisted road to fascism. (Donald Trump's proto-fascism is the old fashioned, all-American type that the white supremacists want to celebrate on August 12.) With former FBI Director Robert Mueller at the head of the pack, they have created a pseudo legal doctrine whereby "Russians" (or U.S. spooks pretending to be Russians) can be indicted for launching a

#MeToo campaign of mimicry, echoing the rhetoric and memes indigenous to U.S. political struggles, while the genuine, “authentic” American political voices — the people who are being mimicked — are labeled co-conspirators in a foreign-based “plot,” and their rights to speech and assembly are trashed.

That’s truly crazy, but devilishly clever, too. If “Russian” mimics (or cloaked spooks) can reproduce the vocabulary and political program of U.S. dissent, then all of us actual U.S. lefties can be dismissed as “dupes of the Russians” or “co-conspirators” in the speech crimes of our mimics — for sounding like ourselves.

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