



Copperhead Chronicle

Even In Lincoln's Day Some Folks Recognized A Communist

By Al Benson December 9, 2020

Awhile back I printed off an article from <https://www.jacobinmag.com> by an Andre Fleche called America's First Red Scare. The article seemed to me to be a mix of truth and error and Mr. Fleche's somewhat left of center bias seemed to show through.

But he did get some things right. He noted: "Advocates from both sides argued their case in print and in public. Conservative newspapers warned Missouri's citizens to beware of heeding the advice of 'scarlet red speakers.' Good advice, for there were quite a few of those around even then. Contrary to what we have been taught, communism and socialism were problems in this country starting at least in the early 1850s and not in the 1950s as we have been told in what passes for history books today.

Fleche continued: "Slaveholders denounced abolitionists, immigrants, and activists as 'Pure red republicans! People rotten from the ground up, red all the way through to their kidneys'." That is true, but it was not only slaveholders that exposed them

Fleche observed that St. Louis Unionists armed themselves in order to prevent Missouri from seceding. He said: "Progressive Republicans, soldiers, and the German immigrant community took the lead. Revolutionary veterans from Europe, including such radicals as Heinrich Bornstein, editor of the St. Louis German language newspaper *Anzeiger des Westens*, played a prominent role in helping to organize the new Union volunteers." Notice Fleche's terminology here. "Progressive Republicans" Folks, that's just another term for socialist Republicans--the same kind of RINO's today that are willing to help the Democrats to try to defraud Trump of his legitimate vote count in the 2020 election.

Fleche's leftist bias bleeds through in his next comments. He tells us that "On May 10, 1861, the loyal regiments marched to the outskirts of town where they dispersed and disarmed a gathering of secessionist militias. As the victorious units marched their captives back through the city, radical journalists likened the scene to the revolution that had swept Europe in 1848." One of them wrote: "It was one of those splendid moments when emotion glowing deep in the heart of the masses suddenly breaks into wild flame." The captured Confederates took a little different view. They said, "These reds and forty-eighters are to blame for everything." This according to one conservative editor--and he was pretty close to the actual truth there.

Fleche contended that Southern secession tried first and foremost to protect slavery in the South, which was a misnomer because Southerners could have stayed in the Union and still kept their slaves. Lincoln said as much. The second part of his contention was a little more accurate. He noted that "...by establishing a Southern nation, Confederates also sought to forestall progressive political and social change, which they believed threatened to transform the American republic."

Fleche observed, correctly, that "In the years before the Civil War, white Southern intellectuals grew increasingly worried about progressive Northern thinkers. During the 1840s and 1850s, Northern reformers had advocated not only abolitionism, but also working-class trade unionism and utopian socialism. The Yankee editor, Horace Greeley took the lead in popularizing radical politics. In the pages of his widely read newspaper, the *New York Tribune*, he exposed readers to the latest work of contemporary social theorists." One of those "contemporary social theorists" was Karl Marx, the supposed founder of present-day communism. But,

then, Greeley was, himself, a socialist. I have on my shelf a book by Charles Sotheran called Horace Greeley And Other Pioneers Of American Socialism. It was first published in 1915 and then again in 1971 by Haskell House Publishers in New York. I'm not sure if it's even still available.

Greeley wasn't the only socialist around back in the day. There were lots of them around, lots earlier than we'd like to think.

And there were even some similarities with our situation today. In Missouri, many of the radical Unionists were in the city of St. Louis, while much the rest of Missouri was pretty conservative. How well does that pattern hold true today, not only in Missouri but in many of our other states as well. You have conservatives and patriots in the more rural areas of the state, but the big cities are mostly, with some exceptions, socialistic politically. Same when it comes to elections. The big cities usually vote socialist while the rest of the state votes conservative. I know it works that way in Louisiana. And it did in Illinois and Indiana when we were there.

Years ago, Dr. Clyde Wilson wrote an informative series of columns called The Yankee Problem in America. He was right. I don't recall if Dr. Wilson ever wrote a book by that title or not. He may have. Problem is, a lot of those Yankees that have been such a problem have also been socialists, and therein lies part of the problem.