



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on April 12, 2014

Captain America Fights Totalitarianism to Box Office Success

The latest Marvel Comic-turned-movie, *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, has not only entertained huge audiences, it has won the opprobrium of neoconservative hawks globally for its biting critique of the surveillance/drone state.

Neoconservative flagship magazine *National Review* commissioned Armond White to [snivel](#) that the film “makes the latest installment of Marvel’s Captain America franchise oddly insincere and unconvincing. It vitiates that sometimes disingenuous phrase ‘I support the troops.’” White characterizes the movie’s version of Captain America, played by muscled Chris Evans, as “a cartoonish, idealized icon [that] stands in for military respect that has largely vanished from popular culture.”



“Aficionados often refer to comic books in terms of eras: the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age,” John Podhoretz [whined](#) in alarm for Bill Kristol’s *Weekly Standard*. “The same may now be true of the comic-book movie. Judging from last year’s mega-hit *Iron Man 3*, and the brand-new mega-hit *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, the comic-book movie has entered the Commie Age.”

What provoked such vitriol? What leftist political offense could cause such indignation from the cheerleading squad that favors ever more wars? As it turns out, it’s the message of defending the Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution from an out-of-control government. “[Marvel] said they wanted to make a political thriller,” Joe Russo, the film’s co-director, [told](#) the leftist *Mother Jones* magazine. “I just looked at the issues that were causing anxiety for us, because we read a lot and are politically inclined. And a lot of that stuff had to do with civil liberties issues, drone strikes, the president’s kill list, preemptive technology.”

Though the interview was given to a far-left magazine, the movie is in no way anti-conservative or pro-communist, but is instead anti-totalitarian. And constitutionalist-minded conservatives and libertarians can cheer this movie’s political message unequivocally.

Entertainment Weekly magazine [calls](#) the film “subversive,” but it should be no surprise to report that the film’s producers have publicly stated they have not been asked to provide a screening in the Obama White House. The policies the movie satirizes are the same Obama policies that neoconservatives have cheered. “This isn’t freedom,” Evans’ Captain America says, in finding out about a surveillance/drone operation about to go live; “this is fear.” The line may well have been copied from the speeches of libertarian-leaning NSA critic Congressman Justin Amash (R-Mich.) or his colleague Thomas Massie (R-Ky.).



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Other than the reviews from neoconservative mouthpieces, the film is already a box office success and has added to the success of the Marvel Comics movie franchise. The latest *Captain America* movie has received critical praise from the Tomatometer, an aggregate of professional reviewers on RottenTomatoes.com, of 89 percent. And it received an audience rating of 95 percent from the same website, the highest among movies in current release.

The movie brought the Marvel Comic franchise over the top as the largest movie franchise in history, overtaking the eight-part *Harry Potter* juggernaut on opening weekend. *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* earned nearly \$325 million worldwide in its opening weekend, with nearly \$117 million in domestic sales — the [best April opening of a movie ever](#). As BoxOfficeMojo [notes](#), “With strong reviews and good word-of-mouth, it seems like a safe bet that *The Winter Soldier* can wind up above *Thor: The Dark World* (\$645 million).”

This reporter has seen the movie, and it represents one of the best adaptations of superhero comics to the big screen, surpassed only by 2008’s *Batman: The Dark Knight* and — by a small margin — 2012’s *The Avengers*.

And the commercial success of a film that actually champions the Bill of Rights and warns of the dangers of an all-powerful government should put Hollywood on notice that the freedom message can be very popular at the box office. Neoconservatives may find *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* as loathsome as “communism,” but the movie has won significant praise from legitimate conservatives such as former Rand Paul aide Jack Hunter.

“*Captain America* is a movie that Edward Snowden and Glenn Greenwald would probably love,” Hunter [noted](#) at Rare.us. “It is a film that asks the viewer to be suspicious of the national security state and jealous of their constitutional liberties. It leads one to wonder whether Obama’s kill list might be morally hazardous. It questions whether some of the things governments do in the name of ‘keeping us safe’ are ethical, or even actually designed to keep us safe.”



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