



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on June 19, 2010

MSNBC's Matthews: Fear Mongering Over "New Right"

For weeks MSNBC's Chris Matthews had been hyping and hawking his new soon-to-be-unveiled "documentary" on the Tea Party movement and the "New Right": On his own MSNBC nightly program, *Hardball with Chris Matthews*; on his NBC weekend program, *The Chris Matthews Show*; on the MSNBC *Hardblogger* post; on MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show*; as well as on left-wing blogs and websites — *The Daily Beast*, *The Daily Kos*, *The Huffington Post*, etc.



The great unveiling of "[Rise of the New Right](#)," came on a special presentation of *Hardball* on June 16. For all of the hand wringing and hyperventilating by Matthews, Maddow, and company about the supposedly scary, violent, angry, hateful, extremist, racist nature of the growing opposition to Big Government in general and President Obama in particular, the hour-long program was amazingly threadbare. Unable to produce any genuine evidence to back up the ongoing liberal meme of a dangerous threat to the Republic posed by conservatives and Tea Party activists, Matthews and his MSNBC crew resorted to the usual media tricks: heavy on quick-cut images of Tea Party rallies and activists interspersed with anti-Obama signs, lots of images of people with guns, and snippets of interviews with and statements by conservatives carefully cropped to fit a menacing narrative boosted by ominous music and Matthews' angst-ridden commentary.

"Rise of the New Right" opens with Matthews gravely intoning: "Tea parties, birthers, patriot groups, militias. Their common cause: a raging hostility toward the elected government of the United States.... Their common enemy: the President of the United States, Barack Obama.... Tonight, a hard look at the rise of the New Right."

Actually, rather than a "hard look," the Matthews "documentary" turned out to be the predictable hard-left attack on virtually everyone to the right of Nancy Pelosi and Fidel Castro. It adds nothing of



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substance to the months of scurrilous propaganda (which *The New American* exposed in our May 13 cover story, "[Media Bias: Demonizing the Right](#)") that have been lobbed at the Tea Parties, constitutionalists, and opponents of Obamacare, the "stimulus" spending, bailouts, and Big Government. It is more of the frothing, vacuous fulminations for which Matthews and the MSNBC chorus are infamous.

Some of Matthews' pals on the far left confirm our take on it. Samuel P. Jacobs of the left-wing Daily Beast, in his [admiring review](#) of "Rise of the New Right," makes these revealing comments:

Matthews' mission is two-fold. He wants to suggest that there's little daylight between people who figure in Washington polite company, like fellow commentator Pat Buchanan or Dick Armey, the leader of the activist outfit FreedomWorks, and those who are positioned closer to the fringe, like Beck or online radio host Alex Jones. Placing Buchanan and Armey, as well as Palin and Paul, in the same space as Jones, who warns of a forthcoming "police state" designed "to carry out an orderly extermination of at least 80 percent" of Americans, is a neat trick. It will come in handy for those on the left looking for a compelling storyline heading into this fall's election.

A "neat trick"? Perhaps, but nothing new. Actually, it's rather old hat: the media cooking up something "handy for those on the left" going into the election cycle. Jacobs continues:

Matthews' second aim is to show that the hate and fear on the right is nothing new. It existed before the stock analyst's rant and before [Glenn] Beck's chalkboard displays of paranoia. Matthews gathers the whole gang of conservative prophets, who bemoaned the coming totalitarianism of the American state during the last century, for a brief reunion. Father Coughlin, Strom Thurmond, Joseph McCarthy, Barry Goldwater, a young Ronald Reagan, Phyllis Schlafly, and Buchanan, once again, are all invited to take credit for the right's current hysteria. Matthews' point is clear: The tea partier, spouting off about her Muslim president who wants to steal her liberties, may be shallow, but her connection to American history is deep.

Hate, fear, paranoia, hysteria — the default emotive lexicon of the liberal-left when they can't honestly debate the issues. Jacobs culminates with the following comments:

At last, Matthews offers his own bit of prophecy, pointing to the violence of the recent past in Oklahoma City as one possible path for the American future. When the words of Barry Goldwater — "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice" — turn up on a brick thrown through the window of a local Democratic committee, the pundit's history lesson doesn't seem so farfetched.

That, of course, is precisely what Matthews is aiming at. In "Rise of the New Right" Matthews attempts to sharpen and concentrate the message he has been harping on for months: that the angry rhetoric of Tea Parties and other voters ticked off about unresponsive Big Government and destructive, out-of-control spending, is somehow seditious and portends violent insurrection.

In his "documentary," as on his past *Hardball* episodes, Matthews feigns serious alarm over the adoption by the Tea Party movement and other patriot groups of the Gadsden flag — the historic Revolutionary War flag with a yellow field and the coiled rattlesnake, with the legend "DON'T TREAD ON ME." For some reason Matthews insists on seeing in this patriotic invocation of a symbol of our heritage (which was also one of the earliest symbols of the United States Marine Corps) some sort of threat of violent armed rebellion. We are not aware of any similar anxiety from Matthews regarding the ubiquitous Che Guevarra images adorning the t-shirts, caps, and posters of his fellow left-wing anti-war demonstrators. Of course, in the circles which he associates, the Gadsden symbol of defiance against



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tyranny is probably more threatening than a silk screen of Che, who helped institute murderous Communist tyranny in Cuba and endorsed and supported it elsewhere.

Scare the Heck Out of Liberals?

The liberal-left *Huffington Post* carried this headline over a story by Jack Mirkinson on June 16: "Chris Matthews: 'Rise Of The New Right' Special Will 'Scare The Heck Out' Of Liberals."

Will the Matthews hit piece really scare that many people? Hard telling. Regular MSNBC viewers with a penchant for going weak in the bladder at the sight of a firearm, or who tend toward apoplexy or coronary when someone speaks less than reverentially about Savior Obama, may want to stock up on Depends and Digitalis before viewing this presentation.

However, judging by the posts on *HuffPo* and other similar liberal-left web sites, it appears many liberals are disappointed that Matthews couldn't come up with scarier material with which to indict his chosen targets. Despite all his huffing and puffing, Matthews couldn't even build a strong enough case to blow down his own straw man.

Apart from the MSNBC studio's creative editing and atmospheric, the raw material is pretty tame ... and Matthews is pretty lame. His MSNBC crew and his leftist allies at the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and Media Matters obviously cherry-picked through mountains of opposition research to find the few "damning" quotes and video clips they spliced together for this montage. However, except for those already disposed to this kind of febrile propaganda, even Matthews narrating theatrics will probably fail to generate the fear he's obviously aiming for.

The villains he has lined up for his Rogues Gallery of the Right — Senator Joe McCarthy, Senator Barry Goldwater, John Birch Society founder Robert Welch, Sarah Palin, Glenn Beck, Rep. Michele Bachman, Rush Limbaugh, Pat Buchanan, Rev. Jerry Falwell, Phyllis Schlafly, Alan Keyes, former Rep. Dick Armey, Tea Party activists — really just don't look or sound that scary or crazy. They are expressing concern about the ever-growing power, reach, and cost of government, and the concomitant steady destruction of the constitutional restraints on that government. Their appeals are for rolling back government to its proper constitutional bounds, not for overthrowing or destroying it, as Matthews implies. Even the militia members, who were interviewed while conducting armed exercises in the snow-covered Michigan woods, probably wouldn't come across to most Americans as the menacing threat Matthews had hoped; those interviewed seemed pretty calm, rational, thoughtful, and level-headed.

Matthews' main "trick" (to repeat the compliment of Daily Beast's Jacobs) in "Rise of the New Right" is to insinuate repeatedly that the common political expressions and symbols used by both Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, should be seen as uniquely and especially dangerous when spoken by "right-wing" patriots.

For instance, the documentary features a news clip of Dr. Rand Paul, who recently won the Republican Senate primary in Kentucky, saying, "We've come to take our government back." This and other similar expressions by conservatives, alleges Matthews, are harbingers of violent revolution to come.

Nonsense!, notes Matt Lewis of PoliticsDaily.com. [Lewis writes:](#)

Matthews feigns that this is dangerous talk, but the "take our country back" slogan has been around forever — and employed by both parties. As Matthews' own documentary shows, MSNBC's Pat Buchanan used the line back in 1992. But Matthews fails to note that Howard Dean



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even wrote a book titled *You Have the Power: How to Take Back Our Country and Restore Democracy in America*.

Matthews has welcomed Howard Dean as a guest on *Hardball* without ever suggesting that Dean's rhetoric had put him in league with Timothy McVeigh or other terrorists.

We follow below with a few more examples of Matthews' charges in "Rise of the Right" that not only are absurd but hypocritical as well.

Who's Targeting Whom?

Reproducing a map from a Sarah Palin web page, Matthews ominously intones: "Sarah Palin posted a map on Facebook putting the districts of Democrats who voted for the health care bill in the cross hairs of a rifle. It's controversial imagery, but gun symbolism plays to the New Right."

The implication is that Palin was suggesting to her followers that those members of Congress should be gunned down. But, as Jim Hoft of GatewayPundit and others have pointed out, the Democratic Leadership Council used a similar map with similarly "violent" targeting in 2004 (still on the DLC website [here](#)).

It can be argued the DLC even went further, since they refer to their targeting strategy for the Midwest as a "heartland strategy [that] would wreak havoc behind enemy lines." Oh my! Strategy, havoc, enemy lines? Sounds ominously militant and violent, doesn't it? Undoubtedly, numerous other examples could be unearthed. Obviously, this kind of lingo is used all the time in political campaigns — by all sides, as Matthews well knows. Chris Matthews regularly reminds his *Hardball* guests and viewing audience that he's been around politics a long time. And indeed he has; he was a staffer for Presidents Carter and Clinton, as well as for Democratic Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, all of whom are/were notorious for brass-knuckled political action and incendiary political rhetoric. It strains credulity to suggest that Matthews is honestly fearful that the Palin political targets were really meant to paint bullseyes for assassins on the backs of Democratic incumbents.

Whose "Regime" is Being Gored?

Like the Gadsden flag issue, in "Rise of the Right," Matthews returns to an issue he has flogged many times before: Obama critics such as Rush Limbaugh who refer to the Obama administration as the "Obama regime." This is beyond the pale, completely unacceptable, says Matthews, and is obviously a dark portent (he suggests) of a violent right-wing coup in the offing.

Matthews began making a major issue of this back in April. "I've never seen language like this in the American press," Matthews said on *Hardball*, "referring to an elected representative government, elected in a totally fair, democratic, American election.... We know that word, 'regime.' ... You go to war with regimes. Regimes are tyrannies. They're juntas. They're military coups. The use of the word 'regime' in American political parlance is unacceptable, and someone should tell the walrus [Rush Limbaugh] to stop using it."

Matthews continued on the rant. "I never heard the word 'regime,' before, have you?" he asked NBC's Chuck Todd. "I don't even think Joe McCarthy ever called this government a 'regime.'"

Yes, Matthews seems really, really traumatized by this supposedly completely unprecedented, barbarous, uncivil use of provocative, disrespectful terminology in reference to the presidency. *Except* that he would be more convincing if he and his colleagues had observed the same decorum in reference to the previous regime (er, administration).



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All of this prompted Byron York at the [WashingtonExaminer.com](#), to suggest: "It appears that Matthews has suffered a major memory loss." As York noted, "a search of the Nexis database for 'Bush regime' yields 6,769 examples from January 20, 2001 to the present." This includes many references by writers for the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and MSNBC commentators, including — yes, you guessed it, Chris Matthews. York writes:

[O]n June 14, 2002, Chris Matthews himself introduced a panel discussion about a letter signed by many prominent leftists condemning the Bush administration's conduct of the war on terror. "Let's go to the Reverend Al Sharpton," Matthews said. "Reverend Sharpton, what do you make of this letter and this panoply of the left condemning the Bush regime?"

(Full disclosure: This writer and others at *The New American* have applied the word "regime" to both the Bush and Obama administrations. We are completely nonpartisan in this respect and condemn authoritarian and unconstitutional usurpations of power regardless of the party label worn by the usurper.)

Who's Throwing Bricks and Hurling Insults?

As mentioned above, Samuel Jacobs of the *Daily Beast* was impressed by Matthews' use of the image of the brick — wrapped with a Barry Goldwater slogan — that was thrown through the window of the Democratic Party headquarters in New York after passage of the Obamacare bill.

The film's unmistakable message is that this is the violent behavior that comes from those stirred by the supposedly hateful, anti-government, anti-Obama rhetoric of Palin, Bachman, Limbaugh, Beck, the Tea Parties, et al. Next thing you know they'll be blowing up federal buildings!

However, the fact is we don't know *who* threw the brick. And even if it had been proven to have been thrown by someone affiliated with the Tea Parties, that would be a pretty flimsy way to indict a movement representing *millions* of law-abiding citizens. Beyond that, though, is the fact that the odds are pretty good whoever did it was a *pro-Obama, anti-Tea Party* agent provocateur, rather than a right-wing activist. As noted in our expose, "[Agents Provocateurs Fuel Anti-Right-wing Propaganda](#)," this ruse has been used many times before. That's precisely what Maurice Schwenkler, an activist for Democratic Party and the SEIU, did in August 2009, when he and an accomplice smashed windows of the Colorado Democratic Party headquarters. Democratic leaders and their media allies had a field day denouncing the "hate" of their opponents, who were blamed for the incident: Republicans, Tea Partiers, opponents of Obamacare. And, of course, there were no retractions or apologies when Schwenkler was arrested and the scheme exposed.

Likewise, there were no condemnations by the Chris Matthews media choir for Obama activist Jason Levin, founder of [CrashTheTeaParty.org](#), who urged fellow liberals to infiltrate, discredit, and sabotage Tea Party events and to "dismantle and demolish the Tea Party by any means necessary."

Who's the Expert?

As is usually the case on *Hardball*, "Rise of the Right" resorts to experts who posture as non-partisan, fair, and balanced. Here's the lineup of supposedly impartial authorities, who disgorge the predictably long-on-accusation, short-on-substantiation charges against the "New Right":

- *Mark Potok, Southern Poverty Law Center*: Potok, a darling of the liberal-left media, has established himself as the "go to" guy for defamatory charges against conservatives and hit pieces masquerading as "research" and "intelligence reports" that smear opponents by bracketing them with neo-Nazis or other



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miscreants guaranteed to taint by association — even if there is no genuine association. Potok tells Matthews: "We've gone from numbers like, you know, 170 militias, to well over 500. There is a huge amount of anger out there. What we're really lacking at this moment is a kind of spark."

- *Eric Burns, president of Media Matters for America:* Media Matters is a far-left organization funded by homosexual activist James Hormel (of the Hormel Foods empire), George Soros, Peter Lewis of Progressive Insurance, the Ford Foundation, the Furman Foundation, the Tides Foundation, and Hollywood producer/activist Stephen Leo Bing. Media Matters regularly issues reports claiming to show that the major media — not just talk radio and Fox News, but virtually all the major media — are actually conduits of right-wing propaganda. According to these folks, claims of a liberal-left bias in the media are completely baseless.

- *Allan Lichtman, political historian at American University:* Although I am not familiar with Prof. Lichtman, according to the entry for him on Wikipedia, "Lichtman has testified as an expert witness ... for civil rights groups such as the NAACP, the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund and Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the Southern Poverty Law Center. He also consulted for Vice President Al Gore and Senator Edward Kennedy." Lichtman's appearance was used to provide the documentary with the obligatory academic imprimatur and a Lichtman statement tying conservatives to anti-Semitism.

Who's the Real Extremist?

Although Matthews claims in "Rise of the New Right" to be seriously worried about the "extreme talk" of Tea Party activists, patriots, and conservatives, any fair-minded observer willing to spend some time viewing him on YouTube or checking out his *Hardball* and *The Chris Matthews Show* archives will quickly see that he engages in far more "extreme talk" and associates with people who are far scarier than any of the supposed right-wing villains featured in his new documentary. One of the easiest ways to pull up a bountiful harvest of outré Matthews quotes is to type "Chris Matthews" into the search engine at [Newsbusters.org](#), a website of the Media Research Center. It will pull up hundreds of examples of his frenetic bloviations, over-the-top hyperboles, and near frothing-at-the-mouth demonization of his opponents.

Matthews, for instance, calls Florida Republicans Stalinists and accuses them of engaging in "Stalinesque" purges, simply because they tossed out liberal RINO (Republican In Name Only) Charlie Crist for conservative Marc Rubio. Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, of course, was a communist mass murderer; millions of people were tortured and slaughtered in his purges. As far as we know, the Rubio faction in the Florida GOP has not harmed a single hair on the head of Charlie Crist or any of his followers; they simply used the legal election process to indicate their preference for Rubio. Isn't that what Matthews claims he is after when he complains about criticism of the "legally elected" government of President Barack Obama? Should Republicans in the Sunshine State be branded as murderers simply because they refuse to choose the "progressive" Republican that liberal-left Democrats like Matthews are comfortable with? Apparently, that's the way Matthews sees it.

In a January 29, 2010 appearance on the *Rachel Maddow Show*, Matthews compared conservative Republicans to the Khmer Rouge, the Cambodian communist regime that brutally annihilated over two million Cambodians and put many more into "re-education camps" for brainwashing: "What's going on out there in the Republican Party," [Matthews told Maddow](#), "is kind of a frightening, almost Cambodia re-education camp going on in that party, where they're going around to people, sort of switching their minds around saying, if you're not far right, you're not right enough." Again, isn't that engaging in



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really inflammatory, defamatory "extreme talk" — by Matthews' own definition? (Please note that Rachel Maddow, who feigns an alarm equal to Matthews concerning the "extreme talk" of the New Right, apparently was not bothered by the *Hardball* host's holocaust hyperbole.)

But perhaps the best illustration of the utter vacuity and hypocrisy of Matthews' claim to concern over supposed "extremism" in America and its possibly leading to violence and terrorism is his *Hardball* interview with "former" (but still unrepentant) Weather Underground terrorist Bill Ayers. Matthews the hard-knuckled hardballer was all softballs and solicitude, and oh-so willing to help the terrorist-turned-teacher (and Obama neighbor, colleague, and early prominent supporter) avoid having to answer any tough questions.

(Because even many well-informed readers may be somewhat hazy on Bill Ayers' terrorist background and his ongoing extremist ties to anti-American groups and foreign communist regimes, I am providing links here to several previous online articles on Ayers from *The New American* that provide considerable detail on his notorious recent and past activities: ["Terrorist Bill Ayers Misrepresents His Past"](#), ["Obama's Terrorist Ties and Radical Roots"](#) and ["Obama's Friend Ayers: Kill 25 Million Americans."](#))

Armed with the information in the articles above, it should be pretty difficult for any thinking, moral person to view Matthews' "interview" with Ayers as anything less than a disgusting syrupy valentine for an unreconstructed terrorist who participated in bombings (and with his wife, Bernadine Dohrn, may have actually planted bombs himself) and armored car robberies that resulted in the murder of several police officers. And, after watching William Ayers on *Hardball*, it should be obvious that it is Chris Matthews and his ilk in the Big Media, Big Government, and Big Academia whose extremism threatens America.

Thumbnail photo: Chris Matthews in his "Rise of the New Right" documentary



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