

Fake News and The Republic

by [Daniel Mallock](#) (August 2018)



Untitled, Robert Rauschenberg, 1972

We live in a world of data overload. In technology circles it's called "big data." This is a misnomer; a more accurate description is "totaloverwhelmingridiculouslyslantedinformationexcess."

In this divisive and highly charged environment of political and cultural conflict one might consider the availability of information from innumerable sources as beneficial. In large measure this is not the case. The idea that easy access to vast amounts of information might be detrimental rather than laudable may seem counterintuitive at first glance. But, what if the truth of the matter is that much of the information so readily accessible is biased, slanted, misleading, and outrightly fake? Here's the rub: what happens when the majority of Americans of whatever party or political viewpoint are unable to tell the difference between a factual statement and opinion/bias in news stories?

The disturbing results of a [outrageous and violent rhetoric](#) from politicians and public people (e.g., Democrat Congresswoman Maxine Waters) is a disturbing and dangerous development. The article in [Quillette](#) is important, enlightening, and revelatory and appears to validate the old clichéd adage about "history repeating itself."

Not only are the group think and mob mentality aspects of the current crisis of the left being challenged, the manipulation of the masses by leftist politicians and journalists is also being noted—and, in this case, creating a reaction that is a potential direct threat to the left itself.

Thousands of people are now involved in a growing movement called "[#Walkaway](#)" which is based on Facebook and was started by a young (openly gay) man in New York City. Disillusioned by extreme rhetoric, intolerance to opposing views, and what they perceive as "party line" manipulation by Democrat political leaders, leftist entertainers, and fellow traveler "journalists," thousands of Democrats around the country are publicly "walking away" from the party and even from liberalism itself.

Fluttergirl

[@luckslastmatch](#)

I decided to break down and say this. Violence is not what I signed up for. Seeing others attacked with bricks, bats, locks.. etc, for thinking "different". I did my research I won't be **manipulated** and lied to anymore. I'm not a victim because of my color or gender.

#WalkAway

Dr. Carol M. Swain

[@carolmswain](#)

I left the Democratic Party because It no longer shared my values & principles. Its leaders used fear tactics to frighten & **manipulate** the electorate. It promised a lot & only delivered for the elites. It is now the party of Saul Alinsky. #WalkAway

This is not to say that these former liberals of the [WalkAway movement](#) now self-identify as conservatives, generally they don't. (Dr. [Swain](#), quoted above, is now a conservative.) It means that a large segment of the democrat base is completely alienated from the party and from the liberal ideology that they once supported and are now essentially unrepresented in the political process; this is how political parties lose relevance, are swept aside and new political parties are born.

The rise of the American liberal revolutionary ideology is at least 50 years in the making—the election of Trump marks the

greatest challenge to both the ideology and the party that promotes it, thus this hysterical over-reaction from the left and anger, bitterness, frustration, and intolerance that now characterizes liberals. That the country is in revolutionary times is not worth contention because our American revolution itself never really ended. Only those without a complete grasp of the world and of politics cannot see that the American republic is an experimental marvel. This current phase is the latest culmination of many revolutionary moments and periods. This however does not diminish the dangers that it presents. A slow, sometimes imperceptible, leftist revolution has been happening in the country for decades—now we are in the counter-revolution period.

The cycles of history meander and twist and can be difficult to track. One of the repeated accusations from today's modern leftists is that the election of Trump was somehow unfair, that the election was somehow stolen from the leftist candidate (foreign "meddlers" anybody?), and that therefore President Trump is "not their president." This, in a sense, is a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the political system in the United States—when election results are unfavorable simply reject the results and the winner. There is a past presidential election that is worthy of review: the election of 1824.

William H. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury, appeared to be the leading candidate in the election until he suddenly became gravely ill. Clearly no longer physically capable of serving, the question of who Crawford's supporters would shift to became paramount. The two leading candidates for the presidency were John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts and Andrew Jackson of Tennessee, both of the same party (Democratic-Republican). Henry Clay was third. The outcome of the election

produced no outright winner (electoral majority not being gained by any candidate) forcing the election into the House of Representatives. The mood of the country was clearly in favor of Jackson, rather than Adams. Most (including the candidates) expected, based on this mood, that the election would go to Jackson.

Henry Clay of Kentucky, then Speaker of the House and losing presidential candidate, was insightful and ambitious enough to realize that his position as the lessor of three candidates polled placed him in the powerful position of deal maker. If Clay (knowing that the Crawford people supported him) ordered his supporters in the House to back either Adams or Jackson, Clay could leverage such a deal into a new position for himself, say, Secretary of State. The situation became one of backroom meetings and political strong-arming to sway support among members of the House toward a specific candidate of Clay's choosing. The supporters of Crawford would follow suit.

Jackson was approached by James Buchanan, representing Clay, with the message that if Jackson were to promise to make Clay the Secretary of State, then Clay would steer his own people and Crawford's toward Jackson and make Jackson the president. Jackson's response was unhesitating and unconditional refusal. Representatives of Clay approached Adams and made the same offer which Adams, to his swift regret, accepted. John Quincy Adams was elected president in the House vote, Jackson resigned his Senate seat and returned to Nashville.

The Adams-Clay deal became known almost immediately as the "Corrupt Bargain." This destroyed John Quincy Adams's reputation and did little good for Mr. Clay's. Popular feeling for both men throughout the Adams administration was low, and

the “Corrupt Bargain” charge appeared again and again in public and private—to the shock and dismay of both men. Jackson, on the other hand, knew that popular opinion was in his corner, he knew that like his father John Quincy Adams would not likely have a second term; he knew that he himself would most likely be the president to follow Adams. At his home “The Hermitage” he planted cotton and waited. (It should be noted here that the tombs of Jackson and his wife at the Hermitage were [vandalized](#) in April, 2018. This had never happened in the history of the tomb.)

Jackson knew that the election had been stolen by Adams and Clay, everyone in the country knew it. This became the great shadow upon John Quincy Adams’s otherwise positive reputation and a lifetime of impressive and valuable public service.

Jackson’s reaction to the “Corrupt Bargain” was muted and restrained. Jackson and his supporters were confident that his time would come. Though the election turned out against him Jackson did not call the system itself into question; Jackson did not “resist” the new president as illegitimate. Jackson bitterly (but quietly) accepted the outcome and prepared for the next election, which he won. His response to his election defeat set the standard for every defeated presidential hopeful and their supporters.

There is a portrait now of Andrew Jackson in the Oval Office of the White House. President Trump laid a wreath on Jackson’s tomb at the Hermitage shortly after the election of 2016.



The crisis within the American left which fuels all the controversies and ills of American political life today involves the rejection of the presidential result of 2016, declarations of “he’s not my president,” and bizarre and dangerous deconstructions of the political system itself and of the unity that is its foundation. Identity politics, rejectionism, and relentless agitation and deconstruction are meant to do one thing: [Agony and Eloquence: John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and a World of Revolution](#). He is a Contributing Editor at *New English Review*.

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