

The forces behind the “Rage Against the War Machine” rally: Libertarian Party turns to anti-Semites and the fascist right

Jacob Crosse
2 March 2023

On February 19, in Washington D.C., the Libertarian Party and “People’s Party,” along with disoriented middle class elements and outright fascistic individuals, organized what was marketed as the “Rage Against the War Machine” rally.

The event, billed by organizers Angela McArdle of the Libertarian Party and Nick Brana of the People’s Party as an attempt to bring the “left and right” together in opposition to the war in Ukraine was, the *World Socialist Web Site* noted, a “reactionary political freak show.”

The *World Socialist Web Site* will be further analyzing the main organizers and speakers at the event, confirming its thoroughly reactionary character. This article focuses on the Libertarian Party and its overt orientation to the fascistic right.

The central political perspective behind the rally was provided by the Libertarian Party, which was listed as the main organizer—above the People’s Party on the official “Rage” website.

Libertarian Party Chair Angela McArdle moderated the “Rage” rally along with Brana. Of the 19 speakers, three were or are currently members of the Libertarian Party: Ron Paul, Scott Horton and Daniel McAdams.

Commenting on the leading role of the Libertarian Party in organizing the event, Max Blumenthal of the *Grayzone*, in a February 16 podcast promoting the rally with fellow speaker Scott Horton, noted that the event was “substantially planned by the Libertarian Party.”

Besides providing the political perspective, the Libertarians also financed much of the rally. The Mises Caucus donated at least \$1,000 to be one of five “Silver Sponsors” for the rally.

While Libertarians have always advanced a far-right hyper-capitalist economic program, following the election of Donald Trump in 2016 and a further shift to the right by the American ruling class as a whole, members of the party, chiefly represented in the Mises Caucus, have made a marked turn toward fascist militias and anti-Semitic forces.

The Mises Caucus is the largest faction within the Libertarian Party and took control of the national apparatus in 2022 following the national convention in Reno, Nevada. McArdle was the California organizer for the caucus and a former board member.

As part of her campaign to seize the chair of the party last year, McArdle, with the backing of the caucus, spearheaded efforts to overturn limited vaccine mandates in Los Angeles County.

After earning the support of the anti-vaccine contingent of the party, McArdle shored up her candidacy when she refused to condemn vicious anti-Semite Bryan Sharpe, also known as “Hotep Jesus,” at the Libertarian Party’s Alabama State Convention in March 2021.

Sharpe had previously been invited to the Conservative Political Action Conference and been interviewed positively on Fox News.

On his blog, Sharpe previously praised the far right for not being “afraid to call out the Jews.” He also defended the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017, writing that the “Blacks are so removed from reality... this is not a demonstration against blacks. This is a dispute between right and left—Liberal versus Conservative. Maybe even White vs. Jew.”

At the 2021 Alabama convention, a Libertarian Party member asked McArdle how she could have invited Sharpe to the national convention given his history of “anti-Semitic views.”

McArdle responded, “I reject the premise of your question. I don’t actually think that someone who’s trying to be a truth-seeker and understand what’s going on—and asked *the question* about whether or not Jews run Hollywood is an anti-Semite.” (Emphasis added)

An early indication of this shift to fascistic politics within the Libertarian Party was expressed in the takeover of the party by the Mises Caucus.

The Mises Caucus, named after the Mises Institute, which is currently led by Jeff Deist, was founded by Michael Heise on August 20, 2017. Several leading Libertarian Party members, including current chair McArdle, have been board members of the Mises Caucus, and many are “trained” by the Institute, located in Auburn, Alabama.

The Ludwig von Mises Institute, named after the reactionary Austrian economist, was founded by Llewellyn Rockwell Jr. in 1982, with financial backing from Ron Paul. A 2000 report by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) categorized the Mises Institute as “Neo-Confederate.”

In a January 11, 2023 interview on Reason.com, Heise pointed to the “Rage” rally as an example of the new type of “outreach” the Libertarian Party was undertaking under the leadership of the Mises Caucus in an attempt to grow the party.

Heise explained that the “anti-war rally” would be an example of the “first harvest” reaped of the new “fruits” cultivated under the far-right Mises Caucus leadership.

Jeff Deist, the president of the Mises Institute, is close to both Heise and McArdle, appearing on podcasts and right-wing events with both of them.

Deist has been at the Mises Institute since at least 2014. Before he was the president of the Institute, Deist, as he explained in a recent interview with fascist Patrick Casey, a co-organizer of the Unite the

Right rally, “worked on Capitol Hill with Ron Paul.”

Casey was one of the leaders of the neo-Nazi group Identity Evropa and assumed leadership of the organization following the Unite the Right rally, which Identity Evropa played a main role in organizing. After Casey took control of the organization, in an attempt to distance the group from Charlottesville, he tried to rebrand the group as the “American Identity Movement.” However, this was not successful, and Casey stopped actively organizing within the group in 2020.

In 2019, Casey teamed up with Hitler-lover Nick Fuentes to promote the “groyper” army and launch the “America First Political Action Conference.” Leading up to January 6, the pair backed Trump’s “Stop the Steal” campaign by mobilizing their followers in support of the coup. Both Fuentes and Casey were at the Capitol on January 6, though neither have been charged.

For their role in the coup, both Fuentes and Casey were interviewed by the January 6 Select Committee. In his deposition to the Committee, Casey admitted that he had an “unofficial leadership position in the America First movement with Nick Fuentes,” and that in the lead-up to January 6 he spoke at state capitals and at multiple events in support of Trump’s efforts to overturn the election.

In his friendly interview with Casey last week, Deist explained, “I met Ron Paul and began working for him... joining his staff in Washington D.C.” Deist added that he “met Lew [Rockwell], and a few years later I joined the Institute.”

In the over hour-long interview with Casey, the pair defended the capitalist system and private property and attacked immigrants, civil rights legislation and trans people.

Calling for the “entrepreneurs” to “get involved,” Deist said, “We need some of the wealthiest people in this country, some of those who it is awfully hard to cancel. If you are worth \$5, \$10, \$20... \$100 million or \$200 million you have to be out there fighting this stuff in a way that that \$40,000 grand a-year guy is not. If you care about this country, you really owe it to yourself to be fighting this stuff and striking a blow for reality. That is what it is going to take.”

Appealing to Casey’s fascist audience, Deist declared, “We can’t expect it to be bloodless, that’s not how it works. People are going to have to pay a price.”

“Absolutely!” Casey responded with a smile.

There is no question that the relationship between Casey and Deist goes back several years. In a 2017 speech titled “For a New Libertarian” and delivered two weeks before the Unite the Right rally, Deist called for a “deeply pragmatic approach to organizing society,” which includes “strong... elite... wealthy families” and for libertarians to “seize on” the rise of “nationalism” and reject “universalism.”

Deist ended his speech with an explicit call for libertarians to remake themselves in the image of the Nazis. “Blood and soil and God and nation still matter to people,” he said. “Libertarians ignore this at the risk of irrelevance.”

After Deist’s speech, current and former members of the Libertarian Party, such as neo-Nazi Christopher Cantwell, went on to participate in the fascist rampage in Charlottesville, which ended when another neo-Nazi, James Alex Fields Jr., drove his car into a crowd of counter-protestors, murdering anti-racist activist Heather Heyer.

On the day Fields murdered Heyer and injured dozens of others, neo-Nazi Shandon Simpson was photographed standing behind Fields Jr.

Last month in Washington, Simpson, along with neo-Nazi Matthew Heimbach, were photographed at the “Rage” rally by journalist Molly Conger.

In 2020, Unicorn Riot revealed that Simpson was a member of the

Ohio National Guard and had deployed to Washington D.C. as part of Trump’s fascistic efforts to suppress anti-police violence protesters.

In Telegram posts uncovered prior to deploying to D.C., Simpson told fellow neo-Nazis: “They activated my unit and we’re getting real ammunition to shoot and kill. Rahowa.” [RaHoWa refers to the neo-Nazi conception of Racial holy war.]

Heimbach has been a fascist his entire adult life. He has founded several neo-Nazi organizations, including the now-defunct Traditionalist Worker Party.

For his leading role in organizing the Unite the Right rally, on November 23, 2021 a jury found Heimbach and the organization he founded guilty of civil conspiracy.

In an article published the day of the “Rage” rally, It’sGoingDown.org reported that in a live-stream prior to the event, Simpson revealed that the appearance of Heimbach and himself at the “Rage” rally would not be a shock to organizers of the event. Simpson said that Heimbach “has had more communications with some of the people involved...”

At the “Rage” rally, Heimbach and his followers were allowed to set up a table and share their fascist propaganda.

The Center for Political Innovation (CPI), which is run by RT correspondent Caleb Maupin, was one of the “Bronze Sponsors” of the “Rage” rally.

After the “Rage” rally, Heimbach was photographed handing out fascist propaganda at an “after-party” organized by the CPI.

Benjamin Rubinstein, formerly of the CPI, confirmed on Twitter that “Heimbach and his crew” were “invited to the event by CPI without the knowledge of other organizers.”

Rubinstein noted that Heimbach and Simpson are “avowed Nazi” controlled by an Atomwaffen member and that is not a woke talking point.

There is not only a close political kinship but a direct line of communication connecting outright Nazis to the Libertarian Party, the principal organizer of the “Rage Against the War Machine” rally. Those supposedly on the “left” who participated in the rally served primarily to lend these far-right forces political credibility and legitimacy.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact