

The Red-Green Alliance: Marxists and Islamists



I thought I understood the Red-Green Alliance. At least in a general sense of what it was — leftists and Islamists finding common ground in some kind of oppositional politics. I filed it under “things I know enough about.” Then this afternoon, out of morbid curiosity, I actually sat down and read about it.

It’s not just a strange marriage of convenience. It’s a case study in how

movements with completely opposite end goals can work together long enough to do serious damage, and how the weaker partner in that arrangement almost always ends up destroyed by it.

Here’s the basic structure, which most already know. But it sets the stage.

“Red” refers to the radical left: Marxists, socialists, movements rooted in communist ideology. “Green” refers to political Islam: Islamist ideology, movements inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, the Iranian Islamic Revolution.

On paper, these two groups should have nothing in common. One wants a classless secular workers’ state. The other wants a global Islamic caliphate governed by religious law. Those aren’t compatible visions. Not even a little.

And yet somehow, some way, they keep finding each other.

The first major example happened in Iran in 1978 and 1979. Leftists, liberals, communists, and secular progressives all joined forces with Ayatollah Khomeini to bring down the Shah. They weren’t completely naive about his extremism.

Many of them knew his politics were reactionary. They just convinced themselves he didn’t have the ability to actually take over. They thought they could use him or at least outlast him.

They were wrong. Obviously.

After the revolution succeeded, the Islamists consolidated power and turned on their former allies. Executions. Purges. The leftists who helped bring Khomeini to power were among the first casualties of the state they helped create.

What makes that history even more damning is what was happening in the West at the same time.

When Saddam Hussein expelled Khomeini to a suburb of Paris in October 1978, Western journalists suddenly had access to him.

Over three months, Khomeini gave 132 interviews. He was portrayed as a pious reformer, maybe even a progressive figure. Intellectuals across Europe bought it.

Michel Foucault, one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century, traveled to Iran and wrote glowingly about the revolution in progress, describing it as a new form of political spirituality. He wasn't an outlier. He was the voice of the Western intellectual left, and he got it catastrophically wrong.

That's the historical lesson. And it's mind-blowing that it hasn't been learned.

Right now, in the West, you can watch this weird version of a tango play out.

The Democratic Socialists of America simultaneously advocate for transgender youth healthcare and call for globalizing the intifada. University protesters march under banners that combine socialist slogans with Hamas ones. Groups with names like "Queers for Palestine" exist, apparently without any awareness of what Hamas actually does to gay people in Gaza.

Philosopher Judith Butler, a prominent queer theorist, has publicly described Hamas and Hezbollah as part of "the global Left."

This isn't happening at the edges or in back alleys. It's happening in mainstream progressive spaces, on major university campuses, in prominent activist organizations.

And we already know it's not spontaneous. Qatar has spent hundreds of millions of dollars funding academic programs at American universities, including Georgetown and Northwestern, that promote postcolonial frameworks which happen to align with both progressive and Islamist critiques of the West. Al Jazeera and its digital outlet AJ+ push the same talking points to Arabic and English-speaking audiences simultaneously. Iran and China have used bot networks to flood social media with antisemitic content, particularly since October 7. These aren't coincidences running in parallel.

They're deliberate pressure on the same fractures. Ouch.

The violence this produces...In May 2025, Elias Rodriguez shot and killed two young Israeli embassy workers, Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim, outside a Washington DC event. He was captured on video chanting “Free Palestine” after the murders. His social media was full of socialist declarations and open contempt for the United States.

Days later, Mohamed Sabry Soliman threw incendiary devices at Jewish marchers in Boulder, Colorado. His online presence was wall-to-wall Muslim Brotherhood content.

Two attacks, two different ideological roads, the same targets.

Here’s what I find genuinely disconcerting.

The leftists in this alliance aren’t secretly Islamist. Most of them are sincerely progressive people who believe they’re fighting imperialism. The problem is that their energy and moral credibility are being put to work for a movement that would, if it got what it wanted, demolish everything they claim to stand for. Women’s rights. Gay rights. Secularism. Free speech. All of it.

They are, to quote a sadly tired and overused phrase that goes back to Lenin, useful idiots. There are no subtleties as to what happens to useful idiots after the revolution succeeds.

I do want to be clear about something. I’m not saying that everyone who criticizes Israeli policy, or who has concerns about U.S. foreign policy, is part of this alliance. That’s not the argument.

The Red-Green Alliance describes something specific. It’s an organized cooperation between Marxist radicalism and Islamism, aimed at taking down Western liberal democracy and, more explicitly, destroying Israel.