

Defending Joe Biden to the Right

My establishment conservative acquaintances are still swooning over an anti-Biden tirade that Mark Levin delivered on his TV program last week, when we learned that our current president is the most racist person who has ever occupied the Oval Office, [a charge that was then qualified with the phrase "since Woodrow Wilson."](#)

Only two points in this rant seem even minimally true. One, Woodrow Wilson was a zealous "scientific" racialist who segregated the federal civil service. By 1913 this crusader for democracy abroad had [imposed segregated facilities](#) on all departments of the federal government. Two, Biden has rushed to racialize every crisis or disagreement with his Republican opponents. He has accused them and other white Americans—suspected of being Republican—of systemic racism and has even tried to turn a new voter identification requirement in Georgia into an extreme form of Jim Crow. This stunt was already prefigured in [Biden's warning to a Democratic](#) audience in 2009 when he said of Republicans "they gonna put y'all back in chains." Joe is certainly the most racially polarizing president in American history, surpassing even Barack Obama, but there is no evidence I've seen suggesting he is a white racist.

The proof Levin keeps throwing at his viewers, most emphatically last Sunday, only indicates that Biden spent most of his 36 years in the Senate as a conventional Northern Democrat. As one might expect, he cultivated friendly relations with Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, who eventually became [the leading Democrat in the Senate](#). Although Byrd had been a Klan organizer in 1941, Biden met him many decades later, when Biden was his much younger associate.

Levin seems to think that the former Delaware senator was somehow irreversibly tainted with Klan connections because his superior in the Senate with whom he tried to get along had once been a Klan member. Byrd served in the Senate longer than any other member, from 1959, until his death in 2010, and it is ridiculous to assume that those many senators from both political parties who established cordial relations with him had their reputations sullied thereby.

Levin also goes into a lather that Biden maintained friendly relations (as did many Republicans at the time) with two Mississippi Democrats who consistently voted against civil rights legislation, Senators John Stennis and James Eastland. Long tenured members of the Senate, who could be counted on to vote for military expenditures and other programs that both parties backed, these Southern Democrats (aka Dixiecrats) were hardly moral lepers among their colleagues.

Stennis, Eastland, and other Southern Democrats helped members of both parties to build coalitions, even if their overwhelmingly white electorates were not as progressive on race issues as those of their Northern Democratic and Republican colleagues. Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas was a liberal darling in the late 1960s, whom my leftist university colleagues hoped would run for president because he was squishy soft on the Communists. He was also a firm segregationist from a Southern state.

Levin seems to be totally unaware of the political realities of the less politically correct age in which Biden rubbed shoulders with Eastland. The two agreed to work together to oppose forced busing, which involved the creation of judicially prescribed racial mixtures among students in classrooms. The fact that Biden, like other Democrats and Republicans, resisted this outlandish measure, was entirely to his credit. I have no idea why Levin, Sean Hannity and other Con. Inc. media stars imagine that Biden exposed himself as a racist by taking this stand. Should he have endorsed

the [continued, involuntary relocation](#) of white and black students from neighborhood schools to accommodate racial quotas for schools, as determined by judges? I wonder how well that would have played with Fox News viewers.

Levin also quotes statements made by Biden in 1977 to the effect that we'd all be living in a "racial jungle" unless we dealt more effectively with integrating schools. How was that call for [orderly integration](#), which it was, an expression of Biden's white racism? And why was Biden doing something [inexcusably wrong in supporting a crime bill in 1994](#) which created mandatory sentencing for criminal offenses? Given the erupting crime rate at the time, that may have been the proper course to follow, even if it disproportionately impacted young black males, who unfortunately committed violent crimes at disproportionate rates. I'm still wondering why Biden's quip about people with ["slight Indian accents"](#) at coffee shops and convenience stores (made in 2008) has occasioned repeated expressions of indignation from hosts at Fox News. His statement seems no more than utterly bland light talk.

I'm finally at a loss to understand how someone who won just about every political race he entered in Delaware and throughout the country with overwhelming black support can plausibly be characterized as a white racist. Apparently black voters who gave Biden their support in his senatorial contests and in the 2020 [presidential race](#) were all badly deluded. They were endorsing a raging white racist if Levin's account is to be trusted. But this charge is so bizarre that it would push even some of us on the right who profoundly dislike Biden to rise to his defense.

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