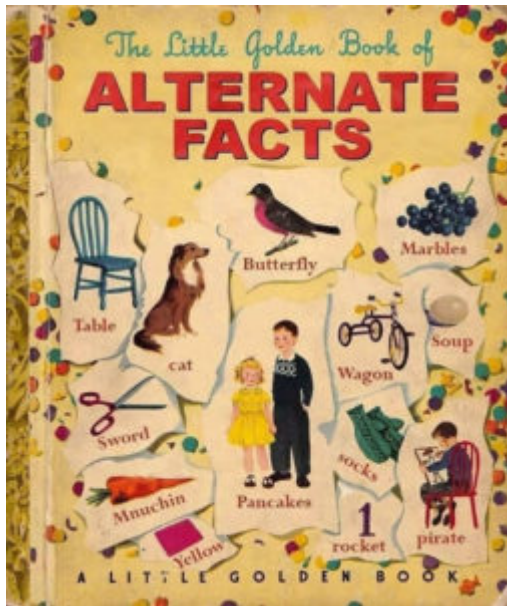


Cast adrift in a [Brave New World](#) of [fake news](#) and [alternative facts](#)?

I grew up with them.



Long ago on a planet far away (the twentieth century in Philadelphia), I had a friend whose father was a member of the [John Birch Society](#). My father, in contrast, was a dyed-red-in-the-wool [leftist](#).

We agreed that if her father vented in Latvian and mine ranted in English, they would become fast friends.

Neither of them could wait for the newspapers that were their lifeblood. Since [social media did not yet exist](#), they had to depend on [ideologically pure](#) journals on the [Right](#) or Left. Every article promised many happy hours of rage, righteous indignation, fuming, fulminating, and finger wagging. They were early adapters of the discovery that [politics are a wonderful medium for venting](#)-unloading pent up resentment, frustration, fear. Good times.

My friend and I never thought that our fathers' peculiar behavior was an early version of what is now an international epidemic of [Orwellian 1984](#) post-truth [media manipulation](#) and [alternative facts](#). We just found it embarrassing—even more embarrassing than fathers who privately looked at pinups of naked women in [Playboy](#) in the olden days before the [World Wide Web](#) became the most convenient [purveyor of pornography](#)).

## ALTERNATIVE FACTS-A BOOMER MEMOIR



Normal Dads yelled—at the referee of their favorite sports team. Ours paid for subscriptions to yell about their own radically opposed versions of politics, which they fueled in a very similar way—through alternative facts.

My father didn't have to read a book or see a film to give his opinion or review. He knew in advance if it was truthful or worthwhile depending on the source. Everything from the [New York Times](#), the blatantly [capitalist Wall St. Journal](#), [CBS](#), [ABC](#), [NBC](#)—all the sources that the [alt-right](#) now sneeringly calls “media”—was automatically suspect. But my parents proudly displayed [Soviet Life Magazine](#) on their coffee table, an propaganda publication for the ideologically-driven and/or terminally naïve, full of pictures of apple-cheeked peasants dancing with tractors.

[The only exception was the I.F. Stone Weekly, written by a professional investigative journalist. Although Stone was definitely a leftist, he bitterly denounced the misdeeds of Soviet](#)