

The Bomb

by Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

The Oklahoma City bombing has deep implications for the future of liberty in America. The establishment Left and the neoconservative Right tried to use the event to silence every serious critic of government power. But it had the opposite effect. For it revealed the lying media for what they are, and galvanized the freedom movement to resist future violations of individual rights like Waco and Ruby Ridge.

Conservatives and libertarians—after being subjected to a reign of terror similar to the smears of the Old Right and the Goldwater movement—now understand the central government for the would-be totalitarian state that it is, and the opposition media for the willing handmaidens they are.

To understand the meaning of the bombing, consider that the President almost disappeared from history earlier this spring. Here's how the *Washington Post* described Clinton's "Snooze Conference" the day before the Oklahoma bombing: "Clinton was reduced to pleading his own relevance. It turned out the President didn't have much to say—and, to be fair, the reporters didn't have much to ask." People "had trouble staying alert." Only CBS carried the event live. "The presidency is shrinking," concluded the *Post*.

Less than 12 hours later, Clinton was Master of the Universe. The Great Pants Dropper bestrode the country like a colossus, controlled the media, and as the nation's new moral leader, denounced the bombers as "evil cowards." He even, with the geekess Janet Reno, called for a quick death penalty.

Aren't liberals supposed to favor rehabilitation? Well, it depends. The criminals who murder mere tax-

payers are poor babies deprived of playground equipment when young, and deserve leniency. The criminals who murder federal employees must be immediately executed.

We saw Franklin D. Clinton wielding his terrible, swift sword, comforting the afflicted, and holding a therapy session for the children of federal workers (with the children coming away terrified).

Then Clinton picked up his Bible—perhaps the one Hillary had famously thrown at him after one of their fights—and presided over a nationally televised church service. Also present was the Rev. Billy Graham, long-time pastor to the central state, who suggested that Slick Willie was such an eloquent moral voice that he could justly fill "any pulpit in America."

Maybe such a post was in the First Satyr's future, said Graham, but of course only after Clinton had served two terms.

For the White House, gory days were glory days. Clinton was finally being taken seriously. He was respected. He was a leader. In contrast to the day before the bombing, people hung on his every word. His moment had arrived.

So Clinton—typically—overreached. The media, looking for a Message in the rubble, had declared part of it to be this: if terrorism can happen in the heartland, it can happen anywhere. So Americans should be terrorized and let the federal government protect them with a police state.

That interpretation of the bombing was based on the idea that it was a random act directed at America. In that case, everyone

would have reason to fear. It also fit in nicely with the initial theory of blame: the Arabs.

We heard that Arabs attended the University of Oklahoma, that Oklahoma City was a hotbed of Islamic Fundamentalism, and that the FBI had files on all the Arab goings-

on. (We were also told that the FBI's hands were tied on investigating suspicious groups. In fact, its power is already virtually unlimited.) Some media-motivated people, notes Christopher Hitchens in the *Nation*, even stormed the house of an Iraqi couple in Oklahoma City, shouting about Muslims and terrorists. They broke windows and drove the

seven-months pregnant wife from room to room in terror. She went into premature labor and gave birth to a dead baby. Of course, no officials attended the funeral, and it was unreported in the national media. Then the composite sketches of the putative bombers were released, and the Arabs were quickly forgotten.

Thanks to a government-media campaign, the blame was suddenly shifted to "extremists," especially to the militias. Yet the state and local militias are one of the most notable and impressive innovations in political action in decades. While Capitol Hill conservatives were babbling about the line-item veto, real Americans were beginning to exercise their Constitutional rights. They read history and, in the spirit of our ancestors, formed associations to defend themselves in an increasingly dangerous world.

Uniquely, the militia movement has no central leader, no special status from the tax police or any other part of the government, no nation-

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wide mailing list, and no Beltway headquarters. It began at the grass roots and has stayed there, meaning it is not controlled by Washington or Wall Street, and is therefore hated by both. They are also armed, albeit defensively. It was inevitable that they would come under fire.

Also attacked were "right-wing extremists" in general, defined as anyone who thinks the federal government is a pain in the neck. But why is the charge of extremism, long a liberal device to shut down dissent, supposed to be a refutation? Because it's wrong to disagree with the Establishment on any substantive issue? Of course. Notice too that no leftist is ever dubbed an extremist.

One prime charge against the militia movement was that it taught Tim McVeigh his disregard for human life, or even helped him build the bomb (presuming he killed all those people).

But all reports indicate that the Northern Michigan Militia kicked McVeigh and his friends out of a meeting when they made trouble. This fits with everything we know about the militias: they are serious, patriotic, and not interested in troublemakers.

By the standards of American history, the militias—which adhere to the plain meaning of the Constitution and want the federal government to do so as well—are relatively mainstream. Many members hold to the "religion of Christianity," as one alarmed Association Press dispatch put it.

The only militia group that found any use for McVeigh was the U.S. government's. He was highly decorated during the War on Iraq, winning the Bronze Star, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the National

Defense Service Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with two Bronze Stars, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, and the Combat Infantryman Badge. He served in the same unit as Terry Nichols, who is being held as a material witness in the bombing.

Here's how it works. You're decorated when you kill civilians and children in aggressive wars against countries that have never done anything to us. You're re-

warded when you kill civilians and children in Waco or Ruby Ridge. But you get killed when you kill civilians and children in a U.S. government building.

The liberals in the media kept up the drumbeat against any and all antigovernment sentiment—with the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and National Public Radio being the most egregious.

The focus, they said, should be on anyone who thinks the BATF and FBI went too far in Waco.

According to the *Times*, the "ashes of the Davidians" compound have become a dark and violent text for right-wing militants, in which many have read a call to bitter hostility to the Government." (Note: the *Times* always capitalizes the word Government.) The article went on to discuss—also in typical *Times* fashion—the Klan and "neo-Nazi skin heads."

Yet the idea that only crazies worry about the murders at Waco or Ruby Ridge is hardly plausible. The day of the bombing, the *Washington Times* ran one news story and two op-eds detailing the unanswered questions about Waco.

In fact, as much as the feds and the media hate it, there is an industry that does nothing but gather and report information about the Waco

siege, and it's not dominated by "paranoids," but by professors and journalists who see in the attack a textbook case of big-government malevolence.

Some stories even attributed the bombing to the 10th amendment movement, forgetting for a moment that this is supposedly led by Bob Dole. The property-rights movement was named as well and, inevitably, "angry white men." (A possible alternative title, I keep thinking, for this publication.)

Finally, we were told that the guilty parties were all those who think, in the words of the *New York Times*, that the government is "too big and too intrusive." Well, that's about 85% of the American people. Perhaps, as the liberals like to say, all of society is to blame.

But then Clinton made his error. He mentioned talk radio hosts as "promoters of paranoia" who use the "airwaves" to spread "hate." After four insufferable days of secret politicking, he had switched to open politicking. He conceded in a later speech that while unfortunately "they" do have free speech rights, "we" also have them and are going to use them to denounce "hate." Hate is another one of those useful smears like extremism. Aren't we supposed to hate, say, the militias? Of course we are, but we are not allowed to dislike Washington, D.C., the media, or any other part of the ruling class.

Up until this time, the Right had been silent or apologetic. The editorial page of one conservative paper even denounced Americans who think we have a "supposedly tyrannical government." But once Clinton made his agenda clear—to smear everyone who doubted the absolute authority and goodness of the central state—conservatives and libertarians began to speak out. This was despite an almost universal fear of the possibility of BATF or FBI investigations, and the certainty of media libel.

The men and women of the

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Right realized that Bill Clinton would try to turn this bombing to his political advantage, as he does with everything except his concubines. Still, his arrogance was astonishing. He actually compared criticism of the government to promotion of terrorism. In this effort, he was aided by the neocon press as by the liberal, both of which conducted witch hunts reminiscent of the smears of the Old Right during the New Deal.

But Clinton was not smart. He was openly using other people's deaths to deflect attacks on himself and his wife for their corruption in every sense. Indeed, Hillary was also sickening in her role of Comforting Mom for the Children of America, at least those she doesn't want to abort. That very weekend, they had been deposed under oath by the Whitewater special counsel, and it was hardly noticed.

The Clintons were reaching, but what did they have to lose? Clinton, after all, didn't win a majority in 1990. His and Hillary's private activities are common knowledge. Their socialized health plan bit the dust. He lost the mid-term elections. Then the dollar fell and the economy continued to slog. To top it off, a well-organized and dedicated opposition plausibly accuses Bill and Hillary of everything from bribe-taking to winking at murder. So they struck back.

They were helped by the entire liberal network. Consider the full-page ads taken out by a federal union a week after the bombing. "The United States of America is a government [catch that?] of, by and for the people," claimed the American Federation of State, Country, Municipal Employees. "Next time you hear someone viciously attack our government, and the Americans who work for it, tell them—STOP IT. THIS IS OUR GOVERNMENT."

Oh? In the real America, we drink freedom with our mothers' milk. Even a powerful and orchestrated smear can't purge that from

our hearts or from our history. So when the public realized what was going on, there was a backlash against Clinton and the media. The talk show hosts fought back, and the freshmen Republicans denounced Clinton and the media as well, despite a chilling attempt to connect Steve Stockman (R-TX) with the bombing because his office had received an early faxed report on it.

The freshmen, unlike Gingrich and Dole, also questioned Clinton's "anti-terrorism" bill to expand federal police supervision of everyone who questions the feds. They pointed out that the bombing's root cause was centralization, especially of police power, and the abuses it leads to, and therefore exactly the wrong response was more centralization.

When Ted Koppel took his *Nightline* show to Decker, Michigan, and asked people their opinions of the government, the masses were all too forthcoming. They said: a) it's possible that the government had a hand in the bombing; b) they definitely fear the government; and c) they still wanted answers about what happened at Waco. That will teach Ted not to leave the Washington/New York corridor.

Even further outside it, in London, *The Spectator* reported the kind of cold-water truth that never appears in the American media, now dedicated to convincing us that civilian federal employees were the virtual heart and soul of Oklahoma City and America, and if they're not beloved in your life too, you must be an evil coward.

"The Federal Building," reported Mark Steyn, "exists in the same relationship to Oklahoma City

as the Chinese Embassy does to London. It is not Oklahoman; it represents a remote and not entirely benign power. And with the exception of the armed forces and local postmistress (though not the post office itself), most Okies don't give a skunk's patootie about federal agencies."

Koppel had been most taken aback by all the people who thought that the government might be behind the bombing. What he didn't know was that circumstantial evidence to this effect had floated around the country for days before his show was taped.

Some bomb experts suggested a car bomb could not have caused this type of linear damage, and thus

there had to be other bombs in the building. Others said that there were two blasts, not one. Some people said that undercover agents could have provoked the act. The Congressional hearings on the BATF and Waco are now indefinitely delayed, and there are no more calls to abolish the BATF and turn its unconstitutional duties (alcohol, tobacco, and firearms being no business of the federal government's) over to the FBI. Still others pointed out

that the government employs squads of professional assassins in such agencies as the CIA, which has used carbombs in Lebanon.

Other suspicious types pointed out that in the investigation of a murder, the first question is "*Cui bono?*" Who benefits? The fact that a grandson is made richer by his grandfather's death doesn't mean he pushed the old man down the stairs, but he's the first one the cops look at. The only entity to benefit from this bombing, these same people

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point out, is the central government.

How can the Establishment pretend to be shocked at such speculation? This is, after all, a country where books on the JFK assassination—which the rotten Earl Warren tried to blame on the Right—still contribute substantially to the GNP. It is silly to think that people wouldn't look beyond the Official Story.

The government and its friends tell us that the bombing was definitely not the work of a Lone Nut, but rather of a vast right-wing conspiracy. Lee Harvey Oswald, on the other hand, was definitely a Lone Nut, and acted entirely on his own.

If the government had wanted to prevent this bombing, not a police state but a full-scale investigation of Waco, and a subsequent prosecution of the killers, might have done it. Instead, the Executive Branch paid tribute to the agents who were killed in the raid, exterminated everyone else (a fact which even the mainstream media has stopped denying), and punished the Branch Davidians who were away from their home with a 40-year prison term.

If the Waco siege taught us about the nature of government power, the Oklahoma bombing has taught us about what liberals and neocons really want: a total shut-down of right-wing dissent by means of intimidation or, even better, by "hate speech" laws that forbid the distribution of material deemed paranoid, racist, or antigovernment. If such laws ever do pass, it won't just be Nazi novelists in West Virginia who go to jail, but anyone outside of the mainstream who bothers the government.

Already, in the days following the bombing, the FBI raided house

after house. In Arizona, they visited a trailer park where Tim McVeigh had lived fully two years earlier. Spying a "Don't Tread on Me" flag on one trailer, the agents surrounded the place, forced the man out, and searched and destroyed his home.

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Where the sentiments of 1776 constitute "probable cause"? Yes, as the *Washington Post* pointed out, the American Revolution had a "dark side": it was "antagonistic to government and to centralized government power."

Beside, granting new powers to an already oppressive federal police won't stop domestic terrorism. It will only

confirm the belief of many groups that the government is out to get them, and alienate even more people from the political process.

It is this alienation that can tempt unstable people to violence. Only returning power to the states and localities, and guarding against any more Waco-like raids, will undo this alienation: not a million-man FBI.

The federal building in Oklahoma City should not be rebuilt, and all the other federal buildings should be sold to private enterprise or torn down. The feds have plenty of office space in D.C. They should not be allowed to have imperial outposts in the sovereign states.

Finally, Bill Clinton, the media, and all those who assisted them should never be forgiven for using the Oklahoma tragedy to create a *real* climate of fear, in which many decent Americans wondered whether the feds would soon be

breaking down their door to confiscate their guns and subversive literature, before hauling them off to seditious libel trials.■

The Return of the Smear Terror

by Justin Raimondo

As the American Right picks itself up off the ground, recovers its senses, and wonders what to make of the Oklahoma City bombing, conservatives must turn to the history of their own movement to get some perspective on the problem they now face. As they brave a barrage of smears from a hostile media and a President desperate for any political advantage, they should remember that conservatives have faced similar crises on at least three previous occasions.

The first attempt to marginalize the Right occurred in the 30s, and was largely successful. Fighting the New Deal and FDR's drive to war, the pre-World War II Old Right fought heroically against overwhelming odds, and was finally driven underground by state repression.

In the postwar period, a rightwing resurgence threatened to sideline the Truman administration, just as conservatives are upstaging Clinton today; the response of the Left (and the Eastern Republican Establishment) was a furious campaign of calumny that has its echoes in today's anti-"extremist" hysteria.

In the 60s, when the Right took the GOP back from the Rockefeller wing of the Republican party, liberals raised the specter of "extremism" and linked GOP presidential candidate

Barry Goldwater with the much-demonized John Birch Society.

It was the noted author, journalist, and courageous Old Right leader John T. Flynn who first put a name to what we are experiencing today: he called it "The Smear Terror," in a pamphlet of the same name published in 1947. At the time, the Left was moving in to wipe out the last remnants of resistance to the New Deal, seeking to link the Old Right with Hitler and Tojo, and conducting a series of trials for "sedition" designed to drive the Old Right out of American politics. In describing the methodology of the smear terrorists, Flynn wrote:

Briefly here is the trick: First it is necessary to select what I call a Smear Carrier, some person who is either guilty or actually convicted of an offense is selected. He is loaded with infamy for all to see. He, however, is not the real intended victim. The real victim is some prominent senator or congressman or political or business leader or writer against whom nothing could be proved and who could not be libeled with impunity. Having completely covered the Smear Carrier with guilt, the smearer proceeds to link him with the real victim. He merely mentions that the intended victim knows the Smear Carrier, or that he has written him a letter or got one from him or received him in his office or appeared at some public meeting with him. By mentioning the victim frequently in this way the reader gradually absorbs the feeling that there is something wrong with him. . . . [I]f every time the Smear Carrier is mentioned he is referred to as the 'friend of Senator X,' it will not be long before the senator himself is as effectively smeared as the Smear Carrier whose guilt has been splashed on him.

This is as accurate an assessment of what is happening in the Oklahoma bombing case as you are

likely to read in a contemporary journal. Today's Smear Carrier is Timothy McVeigh, and a small group of weirdos and ne'er-do-wells — and the intended victim is the rising tide of rightwing populism that threatens to topple the federal tyranny.

Students of propaganda techniques can only stand in awe of the smear campaign now being unleashed against the American Right. Like a well-oiled machine, its parts meshing and moving in perfect unison, the mainstream media put out the official government line: that Timothy McVeigh, the accused mad bomber, is a member of the Michigan Militia, and more than likely a small cog in a vast conspiracy to overthrow the federal government by force of arms.

But Timothy McVeigh was never a member of the Michigan Militia or of any other regular militia organization. In fact, McVeigh and his friends, Terry and James Nichols, attended exactly *one* meeting of the Northern Michigan militia — and were asked to leave when they began acting as if they were provocateurs, lunatics, or both. Seemingly intent on casting as wide a net as possible, the Justice Department has embarked on a campaign to smear, harass, and destroy the burgeoning militia movement — and in this they have plenty of support in the media.

It doesn't take much research to demonstrate that the ideology of McVeigh, and the Nichols brothers, is far too rich a mix for the average Middle American to digest. They are members of the "Patriot" movement, a tiny dissident faction actively seeking a military confrontation

with the feds. Whereas the mainstream militias are purely defensive and have a more political character, the Patriots insist that an armed conflict is not only inevitable but imminent.

Their online catalog prominently features the videos of one Mark Koernke, described therein as "an ex-military 96B intelligence analyst / 97C counter intelligence coordinator." In reality, the 37-year-old Koernke works as a janitor at the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor. He broadcast his own shortwave radio show, "Mark from Michigan," until his sponsor took him off the air, but his main activity seems to be the production of dozens of videotapes, all directed at the militia movement. In

"America in Peril" and a series of "Home Seminars," Koernke predicts a fiery Armageddon pitting the militias against the U.S. government, in what he calls an "American Holocaust 1995."

It was Koernke who sent the following cryptic fax message to the office of freshman Rep. Steve Stockman (R-Texas) an hour before the bomb went off: "First update. Bldg 7 to 10 floors only. Military people on scene — BATF/FBI. Bomb threat received last week. Perpetrator unknown at this time. Oklahoma."

For a janitor, Koernke sure gets around: he has spoken in Bakersfield, California, at Hillsdale College, at meetings in South Carolina, and — although Koernke denies it — in Florida, where he was allegedly spotted in the company of McVeigh. Lurking around the edges of the militia movement, Koernke is a publicity hound who nevertheless does seem to have some connection to

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