

# The Rothbard-Rockwell Report

# TRIPLE R

## NATION OF REBELS

Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

**W**ashington is the most boring word in the English language. Is there anybody alive who really cares what the boobs on Capitol Hill are up to these days? Fewer people than ever know the names of their Senators and Reps. Why should they? In fact, does anyone really care who's president, except for prurient reasons?

It is symptomatic of the most encouraging and exhilarating trend of our times. We are living in the midst of a great government meltdown, a period in which leviathan still lives, but can no longer command anyone's attention—but for those it's victimizing at the moment. As a result, the government's hold on the public is less secure with every passing day.

This constitutes a radical reversal of American civic culture. As we learned in civics class, the key job of the American citizen is to stay involved. Follow the legislative process, salute the flag, honor the military, cheer for the home team (meaning the government), and, above all, vote. And the reason for this involvement?

The myth that we govern ourselves must be sustained and reaf-

firmed with every election. But voter turnout has been plummeting for nearly a decade. In next year's mid-term elections it could fall as low as 35 percent. But the really telling date will be the presidential election of 2000. What happens if they hold an election and nobody comes?

Mass civic involvement in the modern era requires certain political preconditions. The public needs to believe it is dependent, at some level, on the federal government. It gives us security (economic and personal) and, in exchange, we give it our undying (and dying) loyalty.

The key difficulty for the political right since the 1930s has been to crack this sense of dependency. If the growth of leviathan was ever threatened, the partisans of power were always able to play their trump card: we must have faith in government. And with a depression, a world war, and a cold war, who could disagree?

No longer. That civic culture has evaporated, and with it, the false sense of civic duty that sustained the American people's loyalty to government. Gone too are the social and political forces that have long suppressed the people's historical passion for revolt.

Albert Jay Nock called the state a fiction that would cease to exist when the masses either ignored it or mocked it. He was echoing a long line of classical liberals and political philosophers who have explained this central fact about the state: it is made up of a tiny minority. The governed must always outnumber the governors. This is why statecraft depends most fundamentally on the willingness to obey. That in turn requires that people have a darn good reason for doing so, since paying taxes, obeying regulations, and marching off to war are hardly in their interest. The past few years have provided us with dozens of examples of how quickly power can crumble when the public's willingness to consent is withdrawn.

That's precisely why the establishment is so worried about the present nationwide cold shoulder. Not paying attention to politics and to government pronouncements is one

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# INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

## ◆ Should the federal government be conducting murder trials?

First, there's the problem of moral credibility. The U.S. government doesn't exactly have clean hands. Forget Waco and Ruby Ridge. Murder has long been an essential part of U.S. foreign policy. Second, there's the problem of finding jurors courageous enough to rule against the feds. Would they face exposure? Audits? Wire taps? Worse? Just the prospect has a chilling effect. Third, the deck is inherently stacked against the accused: the world's biggest and most powerful government vs. a small fry with a government-appointed lawyer.

◆ "Inappropriate laughter" has long been a hate crime. Now it's struck that bastion of PC, Hollywood. When Universal Studios test ran its new movie, *The Jackal*, the audience laughed and cheered in all the wrong places. Bruce Willis, playing "The Jackal" terrorist, kisses a guy on the lips in a gay bar, leading the audience into paroxysms of laughter. Later, when the gay demands sex after they've gone home together, Willis shoots him, having staged the whole encounter so he could have a place to hide. The audience responded to the killing with loud cheers. The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) is demanding that both scenes be cut (*The Drudge Report*, June 10, 1997).

◆ The "socialist" French prime minister Lionel Jospin campaigned on a platform opposed to any increases in taxes and spending. The

Democrat Bill Clinton favors private investment, not foreign aid, for Eastern Europe. Laborite leader Tony Blair is against British labor union privileges. Now if only Republican conservatives would move that far to the right.

◆ What else do we need to know about U.S. "defense" than that the flaky, weepy, and depraved Kelly Flinn had a million dollars of taxpayers money spent on her training. Training to do what? Drop atomic bombs on foreign cities, killing hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, if Bill Clinton told her to. Such weapons—invented by Franklin D. Roosevelt's cabal of mad scientists—are inherently immoral, since they target non-combatants rather than opposing soldiers.

◆ Commie poet, pederast, dooper, and culture-wrecker Allen Ginsburg (1926-1997) is hailed by *Rolling Stone* magazine for his "talent and example." The magazine is especially proud of Ginsburg's 1984 article, "Thoughts on Hearing the Beatles for the First Time": "I remember the precise moment, the precise night, that I went to this place in New York City called the Dom and they turned on 'I Want To Hold Your Hand,' and I heard that high, yodeling alto sound of the OOOH that went right through my skull, and I realized it was going to go through the skull of Western civilization.... I remember realizing...that black dancing had been brought back to the white West, people were going to return to their

bodies—Americans were going to shake their ass. The Beatles changed American consciousness, [doing] more than anything or anyone to prepare us for some kind of open-minded, openhearted relationship with each other—and the rest of the world." Sex, drugs, and rock and roll.

◆ Is the federal government to blame for the North Dakota flooding? The *New American* points out that since 1993, the feds have "halted the clearing of weeds, trees, and silt from flood channels," which has compromised the structural integrity of earthen levees and clogged channels, thus causing backups (June 9, 1997). Is there anything wrong with this country that isn't traceable to the central state?

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♦ **Ain't government regulators wonderful?** An FAA airplane—a Learjet, no less—nearly crashed into a twin-engine, 37-seat USAirways propeller plane in mid-May. The commercial plane had been cleared for takeoff at D.C.'s National Airport, and had just lifted off the ground, when the federal boneheads taxied onto the runway—unannounced. A split second spared the lives of the citizens, almost killed by government malfeasance. The government must have supposed it had the right of way, as it does in the rest of national life (CNN, May 15, 1997).

♦ **How awful that the lovely Bonnie Honig of Harvard is being denied tenure,** wails the *New York Times* in a front-page story. It seems that president Neil Rudenstine doesn't think her work is up to speed. And of what does this great scholar's work consist? Extreme feminist, egalitarian, deconstructionist, postmodern rants, complete with the usual wooly-headed jargon designed to throw sand in readers' eyes. It seems that La Honig is an "expert" on Hannah Arendt, the fierce opponent of the totalitarian state (and social democracy too). Honig's scholarship consists of denouncing Arendt for not championing blacks, women, the "poor," and other official victims (*New York Times*, May 19, 1997).

♦ **Congratulations to Ron Paul.** His great amendment to get us out of the UN garnered 56 votes in the House. More important, a nationwide campaign by patriotic groups resulted in other Congressmen being flooded with mail and calls telling them to back Ron. Since no regular American wants anything to do with the UN, this is a great consciousness-raising issue. No more taxpayer money for the UN. The U.S. should

pull out, and invite the rump organization to head for foreign shores.

♦ **What Republican traitors opposed Ron?** Courtesy of Gun Owners of America, here they are. (Note: all Democrats voted against the Paul Amendment, except Hall [TX] and Taylor [MS].)

Archer	Gilman	Oxley
Armey	Goodlatte	Packard
Bachus	Goodling	Pappas
Baker	Goss	Parker
Ballenger	Graham	Paxon
Barrett (NE)	Granger	Pease
Barton	Greenwood	Peterson (PA)
Bass	Gutknecht	Petri
Bateman	Hansen	Pitts
Bereuter	Hastert	Porter
Bilbray	Hastings (WA)	Portman
Bilirakis	Hayworth	Pryce (OH)
Bliley	Herger	Quinn
Blunt	Gill	Radanovich
Boehlert	Hilleary	Ramstad
Boehner	Hobson	Redmond
Bono	Hoekstra	Regula
Brady	Horn	Riggs
Bryant	Hostettler	Rogan
Bunning	Houghton	Rogers
Burr	Hutchinson	Roukema
Callahan	Hyde	Sanford
Calbert	Inglis	Saxton
Camp	Jenkins	Sensenbrenner
Campbell	Johnson (CT)	Shaw
Canady	Kasich	Shays
Cannon	Kelly	Shimkus
Castle	Kim	Shuster
Chabot	King (NY)	Skeen
Chambliss	Klub	Smith (MI)
Christensen	Knollenberg	Smith (NJ)
Coble	Kolbe	Smith (OR)
Collins	LaHood	Smith (TX)
Cook	Latham	Smith (WA)
Cooksey	La Tourette	Snowbarger
Cox	Lazio	Souder
Davis (VA)	Leach	Spence
Deal	Lewis (CA)	Stearns
Diaz-Balart	Lewis (KY)	Sununu
Dreier	Livingston	Talent
Dunn	LoBiondo	Tauzin
Ehlers	McCollum	Taylor (NC)
Ehrlich	McCrery	Thomas
Emerson	McDade	Thornberry
English	McHigh	Thune
Ewing	McInnis	Tiahrt
Fawell	McKeon	Upton
Forbes	Metcalf	Walsh
Fowler	Mica	Watkins
Fox	Miller (FL)	Watts (OK)
Franks (NJ)	Molinari	Weldon (PA)
Frelinghuysen	Morella	Weller
Gallegly	Myrick	White
Ganske	Neumann	Whitfield
Gekas	Northup	Wicker
Gilchrist	Norwood	Wolf
Dillmor	Nussle	Young (FL)

♦ **From the lying ads for the movie *Buddy*, you could easily think it a**

**warm-hearted family flic.** In fact, it's a dark and creepy film—allegedly based on a true story—about a neurotic 1920s rich couple, Dr. and Mrs. Lintz, who maintain a huge private menagerie on their Long Island estate. They dress their chimps like children and have them live in their house. Then the crazy Gertrude Lintz character—played by Renee Russo—decides to raise a baby gorilla to adulthood, and has a definitely odd and implicitly sexual relationship with him before he almost kills her. This is no children's movie. Cheaply made and alternatively boring and weird—without one interesting character, animal or human—it is no adult film either. Bad robotics as well.

♦ **Burned Bush:** Texas Governor George W. Bush was blocked by the legislature in his centralizing, tax-raising scheme to move school funding from the localities to Austin. Why did he want to? To make everyone "equal," of course. Then Bush barred from his press conferences *The Lone Star Report*, a political newsletter co-edited by famed newsman Bill Murchison, on grounds that its opposition to his plan was "unfair." But Bush had to back down after his actions were reported nationally by columnist Bob Novak (June 9, 1997).

♦ **Will St. Petersburg secede?** The two major secession groups have just joined forces to take their relatively prosperous city out of the statist Russian Federation. Secessionists note that independence—as a fourth Baltic republic—is the only answer to the continuing socialism and increasing tyranny of the central government in Moscow. We are, they say, a "European city in an Asian empire" (*Strategic Investment*, May 14, 1997).

♦ **The air-bag fiasco has done serious damage to the government's regulatory credibility.** These supposed life-saving devices have killed 66 people, 39 of them children. Since the expensive bags were forced on the public, these deaths are blood on the hands of the bureaucrats and lobbyists who imposed them. And pay no attention to the far-flung estimates that they've saved 1,800 lives: the government doesn't disaggregate the data according to whether the life saved was due to air bags or seat belts.

Neither do the data consider how many people may have suffered "minor" injuries from air bags, like facial burns and eye injuries. Anecdotally, however, it appears that this is extremely common—and permanently disfiguring. The usual victims are women five feet tall or shorter. The National Transportation Safety Board has been reduced to suggesting, on National Public Radio, that such people install pedal extenders.

Why won't the government allow consumers to disconnect their air bags? Of course, there's the natural bureaucratic mentality that never admits a mistake. But usually in such cases, there are private lobbyists also against the idea. Well, here's the smoking gun: the main supplier of air bags is TRW, the influential merchant of death and corporate lobbying power (CNN May 29, 1997). TRW is running full-page ads all over the country trying to "educate" the public about the glories of their air bags. The left once talked about profits as blood money. In this case, it applies.

● **The Paula Jones lawsuit—and the Supreme Court decision giving it the go-ahead—warms the heart of every freedom-loving American.** But reading the court decision is distressing. It turns out you can only sue the president if he

harms you in his unofficial capacity, which for all practical purposes means when he's out of office. While he's in office, he and his agents can steal your property, spy on your family and bank accounts, send you and your kids to war, wreck your business, and burn your church down—all without facing legal consequences.

Doesn't this mean that government is above the law? Sure, but as the Supreme Court points out, the very business of government is to violate laws everyone else is supposed to adhere to. The court cites its decision in *Ferri v. Ackerman* (1979) (try not to laugh yourself silly):

"As public servants, [government officials] represent the interest of society as a whole. The conduct of their official duties may adversely affect a wide variety of different individuals, each of whom may be a potential source of future controversy. The societal interest in providing such public officials with the maximum ability to deal fearlessly and impartially with the public at large has long been recognized as an acceptable justification for official immunity. The point of immunity for such officials is to forestall an atmosphere of intimidation that would conflict with their resolve to perform their designated functions in a principled fashion."

● **What's the "distinguishing mark" that Paula Jones saw?** Not a bald eagle tattoo, as rumored, but a mole the size of a quarter high up on the inside of the presidential left thigh, reports the *New York Post* (May 30, 1997).

♦ **We were startled when Clinton proclaimed as the key national goal for the next ten years, an AIDS vaccine.** After all, virtually all cases of AIDS are spread by sharing needles with infected dopers, or en-

gaging in anal sex. Imagine, says Charles Krauthammer, the president calling for the government to produce a vaccine against lung cancer so people could smoke to their heart's content (*Washington Post*, May 30, 1997). Hey, sounds like a great job for the private pharmaceutical industry!

♦ **Women who have their breasts enlarged** tend to drink a lot, dye their hair, and be promiscuous, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Are any of these risk factors for the troubles some implanted women have suffered (London *Daily Telegraph*, May 29, 1997)?

♦ **Chalk one up for the right to heal.** Dr. Stanislaw Burzynski of a famed Houston cancer clinic has won a battle with the FDA over his right to administer unconventional treatments, which his patients—usually abandoned by official medicine—swear by. The feds tried to nail him on interstate delivery of unapproved drugs, 34 counts of mail fraud, and contempt of court. After one deadlocked jury, a second unanimously acquitted him. So a 20 year legal battle ends in another blow to the evil empire (MS-NBC, May 29, 1997).

♦ **Free love wreaks havoc among elephants too.** Six months ago, scientists in Kruger National Park in South Africa implanted contraceptives—based on the human variety—in females. The results have been disastrous, for the contraceptives make the cow elephants appear to be permanently in heat. Under normal conditions, they're available for sex only two days every four months. Now, females are constantly harassed by permanently excited bull elephants, and baby elephants born before the experiment have



died from lack of care. The expensive birth-control scheme was tried since the traditional solution to overcrowding—letting the natives kill and eat the elephants—is now politically incorrect (London *Daily Telegraph*, May 29, 1997).

◆ **If you've seen one computer-generated dinosaur, you've seen them all.** Thinking of going to "Lost World: Jurassic Park"? Don't. Unlike the original, there is nothing scary or even tense in the remake, which also lacks a plot, acting, and dialogue. Worse, this time, the dinosaurs are the good guys, protecting their young against an evil Wasp businessman who wants to put one (horrors) in the San Diego zoo. All the capitalists are eaten, of course, while the environmentalists triumph. The commie organizations Greenpeace and EarthFirst are even praised by name. The male lead, Jeff Goldblum, might be on drugs as he mumbles his way through the movie. The girl who plays his 11-year-old black computer-expert daughter is also unconvincing as she single-handedly saves everyone by kicking away a thousand-pound velociraptor.

◆ **Buy and hold, James Grant says of UST Corp.,** maker of the Skoal and Copenhagen brands of tobacco snuff. The company is virtually debt free (and traditionally so) and enjoys \$1.4 billion in annual revenues. It's a top candidate for a takeover, even with the war on tobacco, and could take on a couple of billion in debt and not feel it. But it won't do so: management prefers insulating itself from the coming Fed-induced interest rate hike that will cause other companies to tumble hard and fast. UST, formerly U.S. Tobacco, was also a favorite of the late investment genius and conservative giant Bill Rickenbacker (*Grants*, \$650 per year, 30 Wall Street, NY 10005).

◆ **We hold no brief for Laurent Kabila, new head of the Congo, but why is he being trashed in the U.S. press?** We're told that he did not immediately institute democracy (just what everyone in that impoverished country needs, a vote), or name his cabinet quickly enough, or appoint Etienne Tshisekedi as prime minister. None of these points were raised when CIA-asset Mobutu Sese Seko was happily murdering and looting for more than 30 years. Nor were we told that Mobutu's full adopted name means: the rooster who mounts every chicken in the yard. As to Tshisekedi, he must be a CIA asset as well. Otherwise the press would not be babbling about him. The CIA likes to own the government and the official opposition in a country like the former Zaire. Kabila's sin is that he's not on the CIA payroll.

◆ **This month's Dumbest Voucher-Pitch Award** goes to Dan Coats, a Republican Senator from Indiana. He wants to spend your tax dollars sending the "poor" to private school. So he says: "it is inconceivable that anyone in good conscience could condemn low-income children to attend schools that not only fail to educate them but also cannot even assure their personal safety. Some of our public schools have become wastelands of violence and despair. We cannot begin to imagine the fears of a mother who is forced to send her child through barbed wire and metal detectors into a combat zone masquerading as an education institution." Note that this has nothing to do with the hoodlums actually attending these schools; it's the brick and mortar that's the problem (*Roll Call*, June 10, 1997).

◆ **Barbie has a new friend: Becky in a wheelchair.** "We for quite some time have had ethnic diver-

sity in Barbie's world," said vice president Nancy Zwiers, "but we were overdue in offering a friend who has a disability." But we may need an American Dolls With Disabilities Act: "Becky's wheelchair won't fit in most Barbie houses—even the elevator is too small" (CNN, May 21, 1997). In following the progressive agenda of the Americans With Disabilities Act, however, Mattel needs to take a further step. Surely diversity also demands Mentally Disabled Barbie.

◆ **Ever notice how handy the passive voice is?** Take the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*, swooning over the fact that some people at the University of Mississippi don't hate their ancestors. The school long ago dissed the Southern flag. Now the liberal chancellor wants to ban the mascot, Colonel Reb, and the playing of "Dixie" at football games, and some students are resisting. They even wave the dreaded flag from the stands. So it's perfectly reasonable that "violence broke out when a group of African American students got into an altercation at the Rebel Barn." After a Johnnie Cochran speech, "students rampaged through the store, ripping up every flag in sight" (May 22, 1997).

◆ **Media bias:** when leftist politicians like Clinton and Britain's Blair stop backing tax-and-spend policies, the media say they've "moved to the center," not to the right. When Republicans back tax-and-spend policies, they too have "moved to the center," not to the left.

◆ **"Conservative" coin dealer Craig Rhyne went belly-up last fall,** says Mark Skousen (*Mark Skousen's Personal Snapshots*, June 1997). Worse, Rhyne—owner of Rhyne Precious Metals in Seattle—took \$3.6 million

of his customers' life savings for himself. Rhyne is going to the federal pen for 33 months, but Skousen only criticizes him for "violating the number-one rule of business: always keep back some of your profits to protect yourself in bad times." What malarkey! This was no entrepreneurial error. Rhyne stole people's money. He's a thief. P.S. Does this mean that you should buy from Ron Paul Coins (which, we note in the interests of full disclosure, supports the *Triple R*)? Of course!

◆ **The glories of empire.** Should Puerto Rico become a state? Yes, says Don Young (R-AK), whose committee just passed a bill allowing a referendum on the topic. Not by Americans, of course, just by the Puerto Ricans. The excuse is the coming 100th anniversary of the War on Spain, when the U.S. attacked Spanish possessions in order to capture the Philippines as a coaling station for imperialism against China. Puerto Rico, Guam, and other jewels in the crown of Manifest Destiny were added bonuses. Our view: Puerto Rico should be set free, thus freeing the U.S. taxpayer.

◆ **Two cheers for Bruce Bartlett,** long-time supply sider, for exposing the fraud of the "national sales tax" supported by a number of think tanks on the take. Bartlett shows that to replace the income tax, the sales tax wouldn't be 16.6 percent as the official line has it. Instead, it would have to be 22.4, or, including the payroll tax, a whopping 36.1 percent. Talk about national disaster. The difference in the figures: the official studies have state and local governments paying sales taxes on their purchases, an assumption never explicitly figured into press releases (*Washington Times*, April 27, 1997). Now if Bartlett would just give up his beloved

"flat tax" and come out for lower taxes like the *Triple R*...

◆ **The Tim McVeigh trial didn't demonstrate that he was the bomber.** Even the *New York Times* was shocked that he was convicted on so little evidence. The government "presented no evidence of where or when the bomb was built and placed in the Ryder rental truck that carried it; no witness who saw Mr. McVeigh in that truck on the day of the bombing, and indeed, no witness who saw Mr. McVeigh in Oklahoma City that day." One reason for the weak case: the government eliminated any "witness who might have introduced problems for the government" (June 3, 1997). Hmmm. What problems might those be?

As to forensic evidence, no materials from the bomb were in McVeigh's car, on his shoes, or on his clothes. Meanwhile, Judge Richard Matsch wouldn't allow the testimony of paid ATF informant Carol Howe, who says the government had prior knowledge of the bombing. As Glen Wilburn of Oklahoma City, who lost two grandchildren in the bombing, told the *Rocky Mountain News*, "you bring Carol Howe in, let her tell her story, well, the federal government doesn't look too good." Neither would Matsch allow the full report on pro-prosecutor corruption at the FBI lab.

The predominant part of the prosecution's evidence consisted of victim testimony—proving what was never in dispute. More alarmingly, the government made McVeigh's politics the central issue in order to make a long-lasting political point: all right-wing populists are suspects. Their opinions are illegal and punishable.

Pursuant to its goal, the FBI lied to McVeigh's sister by telling her she could get the death penalty for

"treason," offered legal immunity to admitted liars and drug dealers, refused immunity to milder wrong doers who might help the defense, suppressed evidence, suppressed witnesses, and tarnished reputations. In the appalling cross examination of the heroic Deborah Brown—who risked prosecution herself by telling the truth about the Fortiers' frenetic drug use—the prosecution even minimized the seriousness of methamphetamine use. Say, isn't it the government that's been running a war on drugs for a quarter of a century?

The defense raised the strong possibility that McVeigh had *not* stolen a stash of guns from Arkansas (Michael Fortier's lawyer asked the prosecution not to claim the guns were stolen). The defense suggested that the license plate on McVeigh's car had been taken off by a third party, probably to provoke arrest. And a cross-examination of Michael Fortier revealed that the government signaled how serious it was about wanting him to cooperate by planting evidence in his jeep: earplugs like the ones McVeigh supposedly had in his possession when he was arrested.

Whether McVeigh is actually guilty (and to what extent), and how many others were involved, will always be a matter of dispute. Chances are that he knew something of the impending bombing, whether or not he actually helped arrange it or carry it off. But only a handful of people know for sure. And credible evidence has it that Andreas Strassmeir, the shadowy German national and ATF informant, was directly involved. He was allowed to leave the country after the bomb went off. The FBI, which interviewed 25,000 people, didn't want to talk to Strassmeir, and the judge didn't allow his name to be brought into the trial. **[RRR]**



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way, perhaps the most effective way, of rebellion.

Neoconservative pundits understand this as well as anyone. Bill Bennett told the *Wall Street Journal* that his new goal is to restore America's sense of national involvement, and for this reason, he no longer criticizes the government in his speeches.

Washington politicians have developed their own mode of response, and it is as silly as it is ineffective. They spend most of their waking days not legislating, but merely trying to hit on a subject that someone cares about. The trend has accelerated at a dramatic pace this year. Washington editors of major newspapers have been reduced to writing stories on the astounding lack of stories to write about.

Think back even two years ago, back when Congress still mattered. What plans they had for us, those Republicans. They would scrap welfare, abolish the income tax, level bureaucracies, restore defense. And how 'bout those Democrats? They were going to fix education, bring the Internet to the ghetto, cure AIDS, and generally eliminate all human suffering.

As usual, it was a pack of lies, but people were paying attention. They still believed. They still had faith in government. And what happened? The Republicans have already conspired a dozen times this year to raise taxes, with limited success (so far). Their welfare bill renamed programs and cut the states in on the deal, but cut no spending. And last we checked, all bureaucracies remain standing. Ho hum.

The Republican had their chance to restore the civic religion, but they have nothing to show for it.

They promised a revival and gave us gimmicks. What they didn't anticipate is that they would not have another chance. The loss of faith in government is now so deep in the public mind that there's no turning back. The bipartisan good-cop/bad-cop routine no longer compels belief.

The Republicans keep trying. Let's talk military. Stop the witch hunt against adulterers! Whoops, that doesn't go over so well with Christians. Try something else. Tax cuts! This time we mean it, except we'll raise them elsewhere by the same amount. Hmmm, a credibility problem on that front, so let's have hearings on something really interesting. How about pornography on the Internet?

Then there's the Democrats and their pants-dropping standard-bearer. Clinton jumps from topic to topic, promising national school uniforms one day, the abolition of human cloning the next, and a new Marshall Plan the next. No takers. Now he turns to the culture. Down with "heroin chic," says he. Big deal. Now to the evil of church burnings. They must stop! Do you hear me? Hello?

### **The loss of faith in government is now so deep in the public mind that there's no turning back.**

Actually, no one's listening. There was a time, not long ago, when a presidential press conference held the whole of the nation's attention. What he said was news for days afterwards, as was the endless amount of commentary and analysis on what he said. These days, networks won't run presidential press conferences. The politicians used to hate C-SPAN because it showed them as they are. Now they are glad for any airtime they can get.

Political books are an automatic bust when it comes to commercial sales. Lifetime political "analysts" complain that their recent tract on this or that aspect of party politics is returned unopened by publishers. Not even insider accounts—like Dick Morris's, this decade's most powerful political consultant—can avoid the remainder bins for more than two weeks after publication.

The same goes for the business of policy-making. Washington is packed with people whose lifetime ambition was to control us through the science of public policy. They study this, they study that, they issue reports, they write legislation. They master every detail of

**D**ean of the Austrian School of economics, American historian, founder of modern libertarianism, and restorer of the Old Right, Murray N. Rothbard (1926–1995) was a one-man army of liberty. The *Triple R* is inspired by his spirit, and dedicated to his vision.





the lobbies, the process, the rules. Then one day, nothing matters anymore. Policy is dead.

Since the New Deal, "policy science" was the purview of the left, and it erected institutes like Brookings and the National Bureau of Economic Research as fonts of planning wisdom. With Reaganism, the right stopped lobbing grenades into the beltway and tried its hand at policy science. Now, left and right cooperate in such goofy ventures as the "policy.com" website, where you go to find out the "news from the world of policy." It's a wasteland and a fraud. The "world of policy" is a den of thieves. The only correct policy is no policy.

For Heaven's sake, not even a measly package of disaster aid makes it through Congress as it once did. Every new proposal turns into a hot potato. Politicians complain they can't advocate anything without getting stomped to pieces by interest groups, constituents, e-mailers, and editorial writers. It's easy to lose heart when your business calls forth no love whatsoever, and only piles of hate.

Back in the early 1980s, we used to hear about legislative gridlock. The present political moment is about much more than that. It is the collapse of a century of national mythology. In Washington, no side wins. All sides lose. And no one cares either way.

This is a country in which the president's private parts are discussed more than his public policies. That coincides with declining tax compliance and audit rates. From the government's point of view, ridicule plus disobedience is an ominous combination.

But it's mass disinterest that really gets the liberals' goat. Frank Rich of the *New York Times* has

called for a televised trial of Bill Clinton to discover whether he really did expose himself to Paula Jones. His reason? Something must be done to restore interest in Washington. Not even political scandals do so; only 1 in 5 polled know who John Huang or Kenneth Starr is.

The military has been the biggest loser in the government meltdown. It was once respected for its moral uprightness and discipline, and for protecting us against sworn enemies abroad. It was an ordering center of society, and a military career was respectable.

But with the recent revelations on what a sex-soaked soap opera uniformed life has become, the military has dramatically shrunk in public stature.

And what about the shriveling FBI, once the nation's most exalted domestic bureaucracy? J. Edgar Hoover was a national hero for rooting out communists and plugging John Dillinger. Citizens paid attention to the "Ten Most Wanted." *The FBI Story* was a bestseller. A weekly tv show, scripted by the FBI and starring Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., got high ratings. The FBI always got its bad guy. It was to law enforcement what the Vatican is to religion. But now, only 1 in 10 people can identify the name Louis Freeh (while 4 of 5 know Tiger Woods).

The FBI now conjures up a different image: shooting civilians, doctoring evidence, covering up incompetence, engaging in bureaucratic malice. When CNN runs those clips of federal police sporting FBI and ATF windbreakers, does it inspire relief that we are

being protected, or hope that they won't come into your neighborhood? The central government's police have shifted roles from friend of the public to foe. Government, at least in a democracy, is not supposed to work this way. Yet all federal agencies are now seen as only the IRS once was: as direct threats to life and property.

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Only in this context can we understand such things as the China debate. A government the size of the U.S. thrives best when it is threatened by some foreign enemy. Foreign enemies cause us to cling to our own government for protection, to keep attention focused on distant bad guys and their virtuous opponents in D.C. China is the best candidate for the job: it's still officially communist, and, owing to cultural and language differences, most people are dependent on government and the official media to explain its politics and national ambitions. And practically everyone with a high stake in sustaining U.S. statism has jumped in to tell us how much of a threat China is to our national well-being.

There are other reasons why China is the enemy of the day. Industrialists and labor unions want its goods out of our country, for example. But that hardly explains the neocon/neoliberal effort to whip up war fever against this increasingly capitalist country whose taxes are less than half ours. Some communists! But the statists need an enemy. They'd like a war, or at least a cold war. That's why their propaganda tactics have borrowed so heavily



from the wartime manual of disinformation.

The key to conservative involvement in the demonization of China can be found in the foreign policy magnum opus of Bill Kristol and Robert Kagan. "The remoralization of America at home," they write in *Foreign Affairs*, referring to the much needed revival of popular respect for government, "ultimately requires the remoralization of American foreign policy." And why should conservatives care? "Deprived of the support of an elevated patriotism, bereft of the ability to appeal to national honor, conservatives will ultimately fail in their effort to govern America."

Try as they might, however, it is difficult to persuade the public that China is a threat to the American way of life. All foreign threats pale in comparison to our own tax troops, our own national police force, our own intruding bureaucracies and regulators. What's more, the war hawks have discovered that their biggest barrier isn't refuting the arguments of their critics, but getting any public attention at all for their views.

One key reason for national dissolution is that Americans are no longer dependent for news on the media cartel and the government that feeds it its stories. The rise of newsletters such as this one, the Internet, and other new modes of communication have busted up that monopoly.

Technophiles used to say that the information revolution brought down socialism. In fact, it was socialism's inherent unviability. But there is one empire that the infor-

mation revolution is indeed threatening: the U.S. government. That is why there is such a bipartisan consensus that the government has to regain control.

Another trend that is exploding the old civic culture is micro-secession from all official institutions. The home-school population is now bigger than the public-school population of 41 individual states. And these people are as hard core on politics as you will find.

In many ways, home schoolers are prototypical of the new American citizen: they pay no attention to national affairs and national figures on a daily basis, since they are boring and irrelevant. Their kids' education and family life beckon. Only when something directly threatens their freedom, even in the smallest of ways, do they prick up their ears. Then they go for the kill. And they

succeed. State legislators all across the country have learned this the hard way. Cross the home schoolers and you're dead.

From the government's point of view, the Oklahoma bombing had this benefit: it highlighted the dangers of too much rebellion. Clinton quietly credits it with his reelection. It frightened

many Republicans into compliance. But will its value as a propaganda vehicle last? That's doubtful. Fully 75 percent of people polled after the verdict said that more bombers were involved than McVeigh and Nichols. Think of what that means: 3 of 4 people think the government is lying, even about this case.

Is there anything that could

stop the present rebellion? A depression, possibly. A war too. But here's the key. At this stage in the government game, the power elite would be taking a huge risk to foment something of that magnitude to restore the national ethos. There's always the possibility that a big event could push the rebellion over the top.

The real right has always worked and hoped for the day when Americans of all stripes would hold in their hearts a constant, burning enmity toward central power. What we are in fact seeing is not hatred but disinterest. The government is trying to rule a nation of dropouts from the social democratic project. If the system can be brought down not with a bang but a yawn, so be it. It may be less dramatic than other great revolutions, but it can be just as effective. [RRR]

## POWERFUL SONG, MAN

Jeffrey Tucker

A documentary showing on VH1 channels is "Bill Clinton: Rock 'n Roll President," hailed by baby-boomer columnist Christopher Matthews as "an extraordinary look at a man and his generation." The documentary quotes Clinton as saying that "Eleanor Rigby," a famed Beatles song dripping with pseudo-profundity, "may be the most powerful song I ever heard." Matthews agrees "entirely."

Indeed, Matthews—former press secretary to Jimmy Carter—goes even further. "Of all the speeches

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