

by Samuel Francis

Roads to Revolution

For at least a month after the mass murder in Oklahoma City, the official sentinels of the federal leviathan threw themselves into a state of panic that was probably unprecedented in the country's history. It remains unclear how much of the hysteria and paranoia they injected into their own minds they actually believed and how much they simply fabricated in a desperate effort to smear their enemies in the national outback and prepare for a concerted crusade of political repression. But what became obvious in the bombing's aftermath is that the elites entrenched in the megastate and its fortifications in the dominant institutions of culture and the media are coming to resemble the doomed defenders of 15th-century Constantinople helplessly watching the Ottoman hordes swallow one province after another and inexorably proceed toward a capital inhabited by an isolated and terrified populace of court functionaries, eunuchs, and courtesans. If the popular contempt for Washington that surfaced in last year's congressional elections excited the anger and fear of the nation's rulers, the Rorschach Test of Oklahoma City seemed to drive them over the edge into a condition close to full-blown insanity.

The unspoken premise of their response to the bombing was that the entire American people had gone crazy, tucking semiautomatic weapons under their windbreakers, concocting fertilizer bombs in their backyards, signing up with militias, hate groups, and fundamentalist churches, and harboring the darkest conspiracy theories about the United Nations, the Jews, the B.A.T.F., and Hillary Clinton. No one was safe. The sinister accomplices of Timothy McVeigh were everywhere, and indeed in the days following the bombing, the FBI received no fewer than 8,000 "tips" identifying the mysterious "John Doe #2" as the man down the street, the fellow in the supermarket, the guy in the next motel room last night. Reporters solemnly asked House Speaker Newt Gingrich whether he thought his mild critiques of "big government" had contributed to the act of madness in Oklahoma, and at

least two prominent black journalists tried to blame the massacre on white men in general. Gun control groups tried to implicate the National Rifle Association, while the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, the major news magazines, and countless pundits and self-appointed "experts" on extremism sought to connect gun owners, home schoolers, the religious right, tax resisters, Confederate Flag defenders, largely nonexistent "white supremacists" and neo-Nazis, and, most of all, the ominous and sinister "militia movement" with the bombing.

Foremost to use the atrocity for political purposes, President Clinton, in what was perhaps the most repellent act in his low and unnotable career, exploited an ostensible commemoration of the victims of the massacre to link conservative talk show hosts to the kind of language that supposedly incited the bombing, and a few days later he tried to smear the NRA with the same opaque accusation. In the meantime, he concocted a frightening legislative package that enhances the police powers of the federal government to levels that Felix Dzerzhinsky would have envied, all for the purpose of spying on and controlling his more outspoken critics on the right under the guise of "fighting terrorism."

Of course, the entire delirium was founded on a false but never-questioned assumption—that the bombing was in fact the work of anyone on the "right" in any sense. Mr. McVeigh, who has exhibited serious mental problems since he was a teenager, had no connections to any right-wing group or movement. He had apparently attended one meeting of the so-called "Michigan Militia," along with his pals, the Nichols brothers, one of whom had started blabbering sentiments the militia members found objectionable and was promptly told to leave and not come back. None of them was ever a member of the Michigan Militia or any other militia group, as the Michigan Militia itself quickly announced, and some weeks later Mr. McVeigh's lawyers stated that their client firmly denied any membership in any such organization. Nevertheless, for weeks, virtually every newspaper in the country repeatedly inserted into every news story the sentence,

worthy of Lyndon LaRouche, that "McVeigh has been linked with the militias." But as a matter of fact, the only real "link" that existed between Mr. McVeigh, the other main suspect, Terry Nichols, and any organized group was that they had both served in the Army and in the Persian Gulf War. Mr. McVeigh's zest for blowing up Iraqis helped earn him speedy promotion to sergeant and a chest full of medals, and it perhaps tells us more than we want to know that the unprovoked slaughter of Iraqis by American forces in that war seemed to elicit the only talents Mr. McVeigh possesses and that the Army seems to have been the only institution in Mr. McVeigh's life in which he was able to do anything well. If it's a "link" to Oklahoma City you're looking for, the Persian Gulf War seems to have provided some excellent schooling.

Whether the regime's campaign of smear, terror, and repression will succeed in silencing its enemies and critics remains to be seen, but regardless of the delusions and misconceptions the regime's watchdogs have invented, they also, perhaps unintentionally, managed to uncover a real and important truth about the major social and political divisions that are beginning to redefine American political culture. The truth is that, even though the Oklahoma City bombing was apparently the work of a small and isolated band of crackpots unconnected to any larger organization or movement, the ruling elites of this country are sitting on top of a political bombshell that is considerably larger and more dangerous to them than anything Sergeant McVeigh could pack into a rental truck.

In their zeal to expose the alienation and resentments that supposedly fed the bombing, the national media did in fact reveal at least parts of this truth. Thus, *Washington Post* reporter Dale Russakoff, in a news story of May 5, interviewed the citizens of Meadville, Pennsylvania, on their reaction to the bombing and their general view of the nation and the world. What he discovered was an authentic populist counterculture that defines itself outside and against both the federal government and the dominant cultural mainstream of sitcoms and fast food,

fabricated compassion for minorities, and feary pseudoscience about endangered insects.

Few residents of Meadville seem to be members of militia groups, and few express much sympathy for or interest in them. One local, owner of a small manufacturing company, told the reporter, "I don't want anything to do with them, but I think I understand their attitude. If you ran a small business, you'd understand too. People are being squeezed more and more all the time. The government makes it impossible for small business to stay in business. Pressure just builds over time."

If that sentiment is dismissed as the voice of a disgruntled capitalist, it's matched by similar thoughts expressed by workers. A roofer told the *Post* reporter that his neighbors who own farms are being driven out of their livelihoods; "if a cattail grows, it's a wet land; if a beaver moves, it's a habitat." Another, asked about the Oklahoma City bombing, said he thought it was "a damned good start"; "if we think we'll take control of our destinies without some bloodshed, that's pretty naive thinking on our part. There's no peaceful solution to this problem. There are too many people living unfairly off the system. Every day I go to work to support people on welfare. The American dream they sold us was the American lie, they're waiting there to take it all away."

Yet another Meadvillian said he believed the federal government itself perpetrated the bombing so it could create a crisis and suspend civil liberties (and given Mr. Clinton's draconian "counterterrorist" legislation, that interpretation hardly seems implausible). "I'd just as soon go down the middle of the road myself," he said, "but to combat radicals like our government—the IRS, the EPA, OSIIA, who come in our company like the Gestapo, picking on us because we generate money—you've got to have radicals like militias."

The residents of Meadville are in fact generally a conservative lot, and Republicans win easily in the area. But what these citizens have to say about their government and its agenda is just a little bit different from the harmless nostrums about "family values" and balanced budgets that Mr. Gingrich and Phil Gramm are trying to feed the country as the "Republican Revolution." What these citizens are talking about, even when they don't know it, is revolution plain

and clear. Moreover, while most of their grievances about Washington are perfectly consistent with conventional conservative complaints about Big Government, high taxes, and bureaucratic intrusions, their explanations of their problems and their solutions for them are rather different too.

Many have seen videos or read material about the "New World Order" and the United Nations conspiracy to seize power and destroy national sovereignty, and not a few listen to shortwave radio programs that advocate hanging politicians with nylon rope. In other parts of the country, U.N. conspiracy theories, coupled with more violent resistance to taxes and regulation, form the framework of an incipient revolutionary consciousness. In some Western states, the *Chicago Tribune* reported recently, federal law enforcement officials have contracted what is now known as "Weaver Fever"—a syndrome characterized by reluctance to take armed action against dissidents, even when they're known to have violated the law. The explanation of "Weaver Fever" is supposedly that the feds are treading more carefully in the wake of the blundering and perhaps murderous siege of white separatist Randy Weaver's cabin in Idaho in 1992, when federal goons shot and killed his wife and son. The feds don't want yet another massacre because it's bad for P.R., you see, and maybe also they've begun to learn that if you shoot down innocent citizens long enough, the citizens start shooting back.

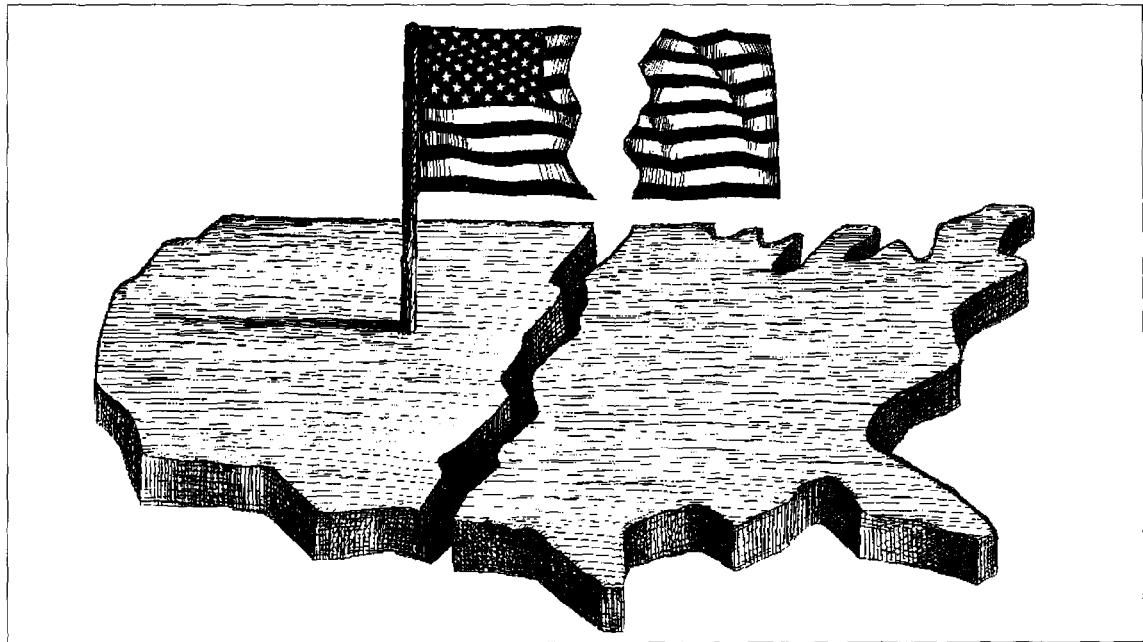
What is striking about the revolutionary consciousness in Meadville and many other locations—in the West and Northwest as well as in the Midwest and South—is that its adherents, Republicans and conservative though they may be, are not conservative movement groupies, and they don't learn their sense of desperation, their pet conspiracy theories, or their flirtations with political violence from conventional or mainstream conservative media and direct-mail barons. These are people whose consciousness is self-generated, bred by the economic and cultural annihilation they and their communities are facing, and the very fact that they are drawn to bizarre conspiracy theories and fantasies of armed resistance suggests that they lack any other plausible explanation for the abyss they face or any political strategy for avoiding collapse within it. Why shouldn't they talk conspiracy and revolution,

when all the establishment conservative movement offers them is more chicken doodle about the glories of free trade, more unrestricted immigration, more police power for the federal leviathan, more tax cuts for Big Business, and more contempt for and indifference to the Middle Americans whose votes elect Republican majorities?

What the Oklahoma City bombing has uncovered, then, is the beginnings of a clear revolutionary movement of the right among Middle Americans, a movement that is indeed misinformed as to the causes of their dispossession and not particularly adept at understanding what to do about it or how to formulate or accomplish their goals, but displaying nonetheless a firm rejection of the federal leviathan and a clear perception of who their enemies are and what the triumph of their enemies would mean for them and the way of life they want to live. While conspiracy theories about the United Nations and other fixtures of populist right demonology may be useful in engendering distrust of what those demons symbolize, those theories fail to identify the real political and cultural forces behind the symbols, and often they merely breed a mentality of despair, an apprehension that the demons are invincible and that the only recourse is to burrow deeper and deeper within a foxhole of fantasies.

What the radicalism of the populist and revolutionary right needs is not only an alternative to a conservatism that is merely the obverse side of the megastate's bad coin but also an alternative to the conspiratorial and pseudoparamilitary infantilism that now informs it, a worldview that can more accurately identify and analyze the real enemies of Middle America who tremble in their salons over the march of an angry people they despise, and a strategy that can express the political goals that a Middle American movement should pursue, a political means for winning those goals, and an ideological vehicle that captures the real grievances of a dispossessed and exploited populace and mobilizes their anger for serious revolutionary victory. There is no reason those needs cannot be met, and those on the right who understand how to meet them need to start driving the vehicles of the Middle American revolution now, before Mr. Clinton's little expedition in smears and repression pushes them off the road.

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April 19, 1995

A View to a Kill

by Thomas Fleming

I do not know about the rest of you, but I can say where I was in the days leading up to April 19. I had been in Scotland in the preceding week, and on April 17, I was in a hotel in Dumbarton, not 20 miles from the Glasgow airport. Exhausted from a day of driving in the rain, I threw myself down on the bed and turned on the television to get a last glimpse of international news not scripted entirely by the U.S. State Department. What I found, instead, was one of the lesser James Bond movies, *A View to a Kill*, in which 007 foils a plot to detonate an explosion along a major fault line, thus causing a catastrophic earthquake.

I do not know whether or not, even in theory, such a thing is possible, but the bomb that blew a hole in the federal office building in Oklahoma City on April 19 has opened social and political fissures that seem wider every day. On one side stand all the liberal, respectable people pointing their fingers at the hate-mongers who have dared to criticize the government—and standing with them, it must be said, are most of the frightened hate-mongers themselves—and on the other side a chorus of angry Middle Americans responding to the cries of “Oklahoma” with an antiphonal chant of “Waco” and “Ruby Ridge.”

Listening to the radio in the weeks after the event, I became convinced that these two different sets of Americans inhabit parallel universes. On the right lunatic fringe, the talk was all of the mysterious government helicopter that was supposedly seen just before the blast. Caller after caller to Bob Grant implied that the Oklahoma City bombing is the Reichstag fire of the New World Order, and the level of detailed (surprisingly accurate) information on the criminal activities of the CIA,

FBI, and BATF gave the callers an air of calm reasonableness that is encountered only in intelligent paranoids.

Much of the information comes undoubtedly from science fiction and urban folklore, but the paranoid view of the American government is widely held by people who know what is happening: how children are snatched from their parents by feminist prosecutors like Janet Reno, who terrorize the children or the mother into testifying to abuses that never took place; how drug enforcement agents invade houses, tear them apart, looking for an excuse to confiscate the property they have already inventoried; how innocent and legal gunowners are harassed and persecuted by agents of the BATF who shoot first and ask questions later; how hard-metal fanatics get put on trial for treason, because they prefer to use gold in their transactions. Why worry about the U.N. training Gurkhas in Montana, when our own government is handing out a 00 license-to-kill to any bureaucrat with an itchy finger?

On the left border of the lunatic fringe were the President and his friends, leaping at the chance to condemn anyone who had ever spoken the word “Whitewater,” anyone who had ever imagined there might be something funny about the death of Vincent Foster (and so many other accident-prone FOB’s). A John Doe warrant was issued, both by the President and by his loyal columnists, against anyone who thinks that we might have too many taxes and too few guns. On one level, of course, the President’s calls for a crackdown may represent nothing more sinister than cynical opportunism, a chance to tar his Republican opponents with terrorism, a last desperate attempt to salvage his failed administration.

If that is what Mr. Clinton thinks, he is mistaken. Oklahoma