

twentieth century was also the basis of the infamous "Historian's Controversy" that embroiled the German historian Ernst Nolte some years ago.

Nolte, an eminent historian and former student of the existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger, argued that the murderous policies of the Nazis were not only a reaction to Bolshevism, but also an heir to Soviet-style mass murder. This was unacceptable among neoconservatives for a number of reasons; in those circles, Nolte was quickly branded an "anti-Semite." The minimization of the impact and evil of the Bolshevik regime is not necessarily a phenomena of the left.

The Trotskyite line is simple: the Revolution was a high-minded project that went sour under the auspices of Stalin. It practically jumps out of the neocon commentary. It also misses the point entirely. The liquidation of whole classes is part and parcel to the internal logic of communism.

Part of the neoconservative inability to deromanticize the victims of the Stalin purges may be a reluctance to admit that an earlier affinity for communism was an affinity

for a doctrine based on exterminationist tenets. In contrast, paleos harken back to an old America which valued individual liberty and peace. I wonder, which movement really started out in the "fever swamps"? ■

A Tale of Two Terrorists

by Justin Raimondo

As a barometer of the political atmosphere in this country, observe the elite's diametrically different reactions to two accused terrorists: Tim McVeigh and Theodore Kaczynski. The former, along with co-defendant Terry Nichols, accused of bombing the Oklahoma City Federal Building, has been vilified by the media, federal prosecutors, and the President himself as part of a supposedly dangerous trend on the right that is said to include militia groups, talk radio hosts, and Pat Buchanan. McVeigh's alleged ties to militia groups (later proven false) provoked a storm of abuse hurled at the right, and a witch-hunt that is ongoing. Clinton gave us a preview of his 1996 reelection campaign theme by inveighing against the alleged threat of rightwing "extremism."

On the other hand, consider the hero's reception given to Kaczynski, the "Unabomber," by the chattering classes. "I think of him as a mis-

guided, very quixotic romantic figure of another era," said novelist and critic Joyce Carol Oates in the *New York Observer*. "I just feel I understand him."

The glamorization of the Unabomber caught on with the publication of his crazy environmentalist manifesto, which seeks to repeal the Industrial Revolution. It is only natural for our *literateurs* to lionize this monster. Sure, they "understand" him, the "alienated" intellectual misunderstood by society, a "genius" who went to Harvard and whose "idealism" prevented him from succeeding in life. The Unabomber's biography could easily pass for one of their own literary constructions, in which the sensitive artist hero is martyred to the brutal materialism of a heartless capitalist society.

While *bourgeois* writers and academics can afford to mythologize a mass murderer from a distance, the Unabomber Fan Club also includes his unreserved admirers, who have created a "Un-abomber for President" website. Their logo

is a wrench between two cogs; at the tip of the wrench is a bright red star. According to Professor Robert Harrison of Stanford, the Unabomber's life and ideology can claim "a very, very long line in American thinking. It really goes back to the Puritans," he says, citing the American love of "self-determination."

"What the Unabomber is talking about is in a sense the same thing. Only it's no longer religious."

But the canonization of the Unabomber is in fact the grotesque culmination of an explicitly religious impulse: his fans and fellow-travelers, including those who claim to "understand" him while carefully

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disavowing his methods, are neo-pagans who see in Kaczynski the first martyr to the cause of Gaia, the earth goddess.

This has always been the principle at the core of the environmentalist mythos: worship of trees, rocks, and rivers is the perfect postmodern religion. God is eliminated, along with such reactionary doctrines as Christianity. The earth is not a ball of rock floating at the edge of the galaxy, but a sacred being whose body we all inhabit, desecrated by humanity. All the shibboleths of liberalism are rolled into a single package: not only environmentalism, but also globalism and anti-capitalism.

Spiced with pagan mysticism and served up as a "we are the world, we are the children" hash, the elites find all this appetizing, and therefore cannot get enough of the Unabomber. Environmentalist Kirkpatrick Sale, on the talk-show circuit, says that "technology is overwhelming us psychologically, eco-

nomically, socially. I think that has to be put on the agenda and talked about. And I think that's exactly what the Unabomber has succeeded in doing."

If anyone had made a similar statement about Timothy McVeigh, he would have had a visit from the FBI the next morning.

Not much is known about McVeigh's political beliefs, except that he and Nichols are supposed to be "anti-government." McVeigh is widely believed to have been inspired by *The Turner Diaries*, a novel that tells the story of a future race war in the United States.

Whatever his real views, McVeigh is hardly the sort to inspire the elites to adulation: a lower-middle class boy who had the poor taste to join the military, he too was a loner, but not the sort of loner lionized by cafe society. He, too, was "alienated"—not from capitalism, or industrialism, but from the *government*, which he allegedly (and correctly) blames for the Waco mas-

sacre. This, of course, is the kind of alienation the elites want to stamp out.

The villainization of McVeigh was and is just as inevitable as the beatification of Kaczynski. This in spite of the fact that the Unabomber's guilt is a virtual certainty: the original manuscript of his manifesto that was published by the *New York Times* was found in his sylvan retreat, and the physical evidence mounts by the day. On the other hand, the guilt of McVeigh and/or Nichols is very much in doubt and the circumstances surrounding the Oklahoma City bombing are shrouded in murk. Whatever may turn out to be the facts in the Oklahoma City case, at this point they are far from clear—and yet, the accused are depicted as monsters.

This is the moral of the tale of two terrorists: the trailer-park rightwing variety is evil, while the Harvard-educated tree-hugging brand is idealism, however misguided. ■

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