

# Anthony Gregory on Peaceful Dissent and Government Crackdowns

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Over at *Campaign for Liberty* yesterday, Anthony Gregory released an article detailing various historical examples of the U.S. federal government targeting peaceful dissenters.<sup>1</sup>

This article comes after a recent release of a memo to the state of Missouri, a memo conflating belligerent, right-wing extremist groups—some of whom are racist or anti-Semitic, some of whom are violently opposed to open immigration, some of whom want to impose upon the American people a system of national social-

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Gregory, “Peaceful Dissent and Government Witch Hunts,” *Campaign for Liberty*, <http://www.campaignforliberty.com/article.php?view=28> (cited March 19, 2009).

ism—with others who, like many of us, simply want to get big government off of our backs.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, tax protesters, second amendment advocates, anti-war activists, goldbugs, Ron Paul enthusiasts, and “sovereign citizens” (who sound like agorists and other natural-law libertarians from the description given)—all my kind of people—are lumped together with the sort of terrorist scum that would burn crosses on other people’s property, blow up abortion clinics, harass undocumented migrant workers, or—like Timothy McVeigh—blow up buildings with innocent people, including children, inside.

On the surface, one might assume Gregory’s article is nothing more than an explanation to people interested that these are two very different camps, and that the sort of people who frequent *Campaign for Liberty* have no connection to the violent, aggressive goals of various right-wing extremist groups in operation. But Mr. Gregory’s article goes much further than that.

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<sup>2</sup> “The Modern Militia Movement,” MIAC Strategic Report, February 20, 2009, <http://documents.scribd.com/docs/1xduds3zv8npsq67ktoc.pdf>.

Gregory's article takes an in-depth look at the tendency of the government, over the course of U.S. history, to overreact to criticism and suppress dissent, even those most peaceful of dissenters, the Quakers. Starting from the horrendous Alien and Sedition Acts of Adams and his Federalist Party, the U.S. government has cracked down on free speech and peaceful dissent of Americans from all angles of the political spectrum—left, right, and centre.

There is a lot of history here, and although Gregory handles the material with breathtaking clarity, I'm left wanting to read more. No doubt, a book could be written on the subject, detailing these various episodes, the various uses of counter-intelligence and infiltration by U.S. officials. If Gregory were to tackle such a subject in book form, I would surely order a copy.

In any event, this article is worth the read.