

Michael Costello

Last Sunday, while browsing my morning newspaper for fresh news, I came across one surprise. On page 3 of this paper I learned that Barack Obama's so-called green jobs czar, Van Jones, had resigned amid controversy.

"On the eve of historic fights for health care and clean energy, opponents of reform have mounted a vicious smear campaign against me," he said in his resignation statement. "They are using lies and distortions to distract and divide."

America's long national nightmare was over. And a relieved America exhaled a collective sigh of, "Huh?"

Many Americans had two questions. Who is Van Jones? What controversy?

The New York Times, for example, published its first story on the controversy Monday, about 30 hours after Jones' resignation. On Sept. 4, while the blogosphere was aflame with Jones stories, Byron York, writing for the Washington Examiner, tabulated every word dedicated to the Jones controversy by the New York Times, the Washington Post, ABC News, NBC News, and CBS news. All these mainstream news services finished in a dead heat with zero.

Since Jones' early Sunday morning resignation, elite opinion and the mainstream media have been lamenting the fact that the alternative media were able to drive from power someone they obviously admired. The New York Times' Thomas Friedman called the alternative media an "open sewer."

But this smear campaign amounted to the vicious and unfair disinterment of videotape and irrefutable documentation of Jones' radicalism. The most effective witness against Jones was Jones.

Jones claimed that his signature on a document lending support to the notion that President George W. Bush was complicit in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon were a result of his not reading carefully what he was signing. But that was not the only time his name and face appeared questioning the government's involvement in 9/11.

Nor could Jones explain away his racist rants about white boys and mass murder. He did not dispute videos in which he described himself as a communist. He apologized for referring to Republicans in crude anatomical terms. But he could not deny having said it. He was right there, on videotape.

Simply stated, he could not support his accusation that he was the victim of lies and distortions because all his critics really did was post video of Jones being Jones.

Some have questioned the vetting process that allowed Jones to slip through. And he was appointed without having to fill out Obama's much-ballyhooed questionnaire. So no one deserves the blame more than Obama.

Obama spent more than two decades in the congregation of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, whose racist, anti-American rants have also been posted to the Internet for all but the liberal media to see. It was Obama who counted the terrorists William Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn as "family friends."

Both were leaders of the 1970s terrorist group the "Weather Underground," which set numerous bombs

around the country. On Sept. 11, 2001, while Americans were watching in horror as the Twin Towers fell, New Yorkers were reading a Times interview in which Ayers said that his only regret from his terrorist heyday was that he "didn't do more."

His wife, Dohrn, was quoted in 1969 celebrating the Manson family mass murders: "Dig It. First they killed those pigs. Then they ate dinner in the same room with them. They even shoved a fork into a victim's stomach! Wild!"

It was not that someone in the Obama administration failed to properly vet Jones. It's just that Jones fits so neatly into this administration's view of mainstream. And he's in the modern Democratic Party mainstream. A 2007 public opinion poll found that 35 percent of Democrats believed that Bush had a role in the 9/11 hijackings. Another 26 percent weren't certain.

This was a rerun of the Chas Freeman episode. Obama selected Freeman to serve as his national security adviser. His nomination was sunk when bloggers turned over rocks the mainstream media did not want to look under. Bloggers exposed Freeman as virulently anti-Israel and possibly anti-Semitic. He argued that China did not crack down early enough or hard enough on Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protestors. The mainstream media looked the other way until Freeman withdrew.

The old media has yielded the job of comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable to the new media.

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