



Jefferson and Civil Liberties: The Darker Side

Leonard W. Levy

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In the most controversial analysis ever written of the apostle of American liberty, the distinguished constitutional historian Leonard W. Levy examines Jefferson's record on civil liberties and finds it strikingly wanting. Clearing away the saintliness that surrounds the hero, Mr. Levy tries to understand why the "unfamiliar" Jefferson supported loyalty oaths; countenanced internment camps for political suspects; drafted a bill of attainder; urged prosecutions for seditious libel; condoned military despotism; used the Army to enforce laws in time of peace; censored reading; chose professors for their political opinions; and endorsed the doctrine that means, however odious, are justified by ends. "Implicitly," Mr. Levy writes, "this book is a study of libertarian leadership in time of power and time of danger...Jefferson should be seen [by his biographers] as a whole man in the perspective of his times, but my task is to determine the validity of his historical reputation as the apostle of liberty." "Blunt words and blunt facts...an indispensable book." *Commentary*.

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