

# The Public Eye

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David S. Holloway/Getty Images

With 100,000 members, College Republicans are the fastest growing sector of the campus right. Here the Cedarville University College Republicans Club in Ohio celebrates election night in 2004.

## Conservative Campus Organizing

### Growing Pains or Arrested Development?

By Pam Chamberlain

“A few years ago,” the *Washington Times* reported in a story last year, “Jeff O’Holleran said he began to realize that he was different from the other boys he knew.... Yesterday, he said, it was time to come out of the closet. In the middle of a crowded university dining area, he took to the podium and announced, ‘I’m Jeff, and I’m a conservative.’ Coming Out as Conservative Day had begun at the University of Colorado.”

To judge by the amount of media attention, the campus Right had a good year. Or a good two years. Besides Coming Out as Conservative Days, students staged a Capture an Illegal Immigrant Day, published

increasing numbers of campus newspapers with decidedly right-wing editorial policies, and lobbied for a Student Academic Bill of Rights on multiple campuses and in several state legislatures to bring attention to what they saw as silenced conservative voices on campus (see flyer on pg. 7).

They conducted campaigns accusing professors of liberal indoctrination and discrimination. When they brought in big-name conservative speakers, the events were provocative enough to tempt some pie throwers from the opposition. And in 2003 administrators at Southern Methodist University shut down campus Republicans’ affirmative action bake sale, a popu-

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## Thinking about Elephants

Toward a Dialogue with George Lakoff

By William A. Gamson and Charlotte Ryan

Since last November’s election, George Lakoff’s book, *Don’t Think of an Elephant!*<sup>1</sup>, has deservedly captured the imagination of mainstream Democrats and of many progressives as well. He offers us the promise that we can achieve our political vision if only we spent a little more time “framing” our messages to appeal to mainstream America.

For a large number of Americans, he argues, the Right creates a personal connection to policies such as tax cuts for the wealthy and the idea of small government by communicating values — values like personal responsibility and the importance of a strong “traditional” family rather than big government to solve most social problems.

But we shouldn’t get so excited about Lakoff’s contribution that we overlook

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# Guest Commentary

## Philanthropic Patriot Games

*How the U.S. Government  
Targets Charities in its War on Terror*

By Teresa Odendahl

Recent front page stories in newspapers such as the *Washington Post* document the Bush Administration's use of misleading statistics in the war on terrorism, lack of evidence for convictions, the difficulties of removing a name from a watch list once it has been added, and a heavy-handed use of immigration law. Although it is covered far less in the mainstream press, nonprofit organizations are also a target of Bush's new security regime. Shortly after 9/11, a Treasury official declared, "Our fight against the financing of terror has expanded to the abuse of charities."

In an inconsistent but insidious manner, disorganized, uncoordinated U.S. government agencies with little real knowledge of the charitable sector have found it to be a vulnerable scapegoat. Rather than dissenting, major foundations are inappropriately acting as anti-terrorism enforcers, creating a funding chill in international grant making and perhaps even encouraging advocacy groups to be less open in their criticism of the current administration.

My interviews between January and May 2005 with officers of ten of the largest foundations making international grants determined that a series of federal orders leads them to regularly check terrorist watch lists and require grantees to certify that they are not associating with or supporting terrorism. Grantees, particularly in the Global South, reported to me that they are being defunded, especially if they refuse to sign the certification agreement. *But they will not go on the record for fear of further funding cuts or attracting unwanted attention.*

What is creating this climate of fear? Executive Order 13224, signed by President Bush on September 24, 2001 — right after the 9/11 attacks and a month before Congress passed the USA Patriot Act — broadly prohibits "transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism."

The authority for this Executive Order comes from the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), which dates back to 1977.

Nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations are covered in the section that reads: "The term 'person' means an individual or an entity... an association, corporation, organization, group or subgroup."

In our dire political climate, could overly broad language of another section make it illegal for advocacy groups to dissent or try to counter "patriotic" policies? That is the section that reads:

"[T]he term 'terrorism' means an activity that... involves a violent act," or "appears to be intended" among other things "to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion."

The Executive Order introduced a blacklist of individuals and organizations suspected of terrorism, materially aiding terrorism, or associating with terrorists. IEEPA, and international law permit humanitarian assistance for these suspects, including food, clothing and medicine. But this is outlawed under the 2001 Executive Order. Even children

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ISSUE 49

# The Montana Human Rights Network

## Fighting the Far Right With Research

By Abby Scher

In April 2005, Kevin McGuire, an engineering student at the local state university, ran for the Bozeman, Mont. elementary school board. He was a newcomer in town, hailing from Santa Rosa, Calif., and part of the white flight flowing into the state. His parents had bought him a house. At one point, McGuire walked around with a swastika shaved into his head.

The summer before, the town was in an uproar because someone was anonymously spreading flyers from the National Alliance, a white supremacist, anti-Jewish group. The flyer featured a big photo of a child under the headline “Missing: A Future for White Children,” like children on milk cartons. “There will be no future for her in the Third World America that our nation’s enemies are planning...”

Then in the run up to the Presidential election, Bozeman residents received a National Alliance election guide denouncing globalization, the loss of American jobs to the third world, the shrinking white population, and US-waged Zionist wars. Like other fascist literature, the flyers mixed widely held concerns with anti-Semitic conspiracies: “George Bush ... cynically used the tragedy of September 11th to silence dissent and to launch the war for Israel his Zionist neocon handlers wanted.”

People wondered who was tucking neo-Nazi literature in their corner of Montana paradise. Bozeman is a cow town turned university center, whose 30,000 residents include wealthy folks drawn by the beauty. Everybody was talking. Some people started organizing. That summer, they reinvigorated the Gallatin Human Rights Task Force.

By December, their mystery was solved. At a City Council meeting that month, Kevin McGuire “came out” as the town’s



Erik Petersen, Bozeman Chronicle

*A small group of National Alliance supporters confront Martin Luther King, Jr. Day marchers in Bozeman, Mon., in January.*

National Alliance representative. At the same meeting, human rights activists presented a petition with almost 1000 names calling on the council to denounce the

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flyers, which it did. A month later, more than 1000 people marched in the bitter cold through the heart of Bozeman to celebrate Martin Luther King’s birthday and visibly show that white supremacy does not belong there. And the Bozeman School

Board approved a resolution proposed by the Gallatin Valley Human Rights Task Force saying “All Are Welcome Here.”

McGuire’s candidacy, which he based on discrimination against European Americans in the school curriculum, inspired double the usual turnout in the school district race. He was soundly trounced, winning 3.6% of the ballots in the April election – 157 votes out of just over 4200 cast. Thanks (at least in part) to the Gallatin Human Rights Task Force.

There are many strands to the story of how the Gallatin Human Rights Task Force marginalized McGuire’s white supremacist program — while organizing for gay and other civil rights — in their town. But let us focus in on one piece — how research is a vital part of their organizing. Research helps lower the fear of residents, informs activists for their interviews with the media, disarms the arguments of

the far right, and keeps conspiracy theories that interfere with organizing at bay.

Some local activists do their own research, but in Bozeman's case one of the leaders of the Gallatin Human Rights Task Force was Stacey Haugland, a board member of the Montana Human Rights Network. So she knew the Network would have the background on the National Alliance and could help place McGuire in the political firmament.

"The biggest support we got from them was huge amounts of research," said Haugland. Haugland, a nurse/midwife, originally became involved with the Human Rights Network when she was targeted by anti-abortion activists with "Wanted Dead or Alive" posters while serving as a very visible abortion provider in Bozeman. "Travis [McAdam, the Network research director] showed up and said: this is their history."

The Montana Human Rights Network also informed the Bozeman group of successful tactics used to fight white supremacists in other towns, like the need to reach out to congregations and do interfaith organizing, and not to compromise with racism.

From McAdam, they learned the National Alliance — which by the summer of 2005 fell into disarray from leadership squabbles — had a history of violence. That is part of their attraction. And in McAdams' two visits to Bozeman, they learned the National Alliance is distinctive among white supremacist groups because it has a source of income in Resistance Records, a

white power music label. They also try to "mainstream" themselves by putting the overt racist or anti-Semitic language in the closet to present themselves as a benign "European rights" organization — just as McGuire attempted to do by talking about "European Americans" in his school board

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**Research brings in experience and tactics to help organize a community response. It provides activists with the brute facts and context for understanding what you are in the middle of.**

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race. And they learned that literature drops are the National Alliance's calling card.

"It announces the National Alliance is around and it really puts the people National Alliance doesn't like on notice and puts a degree of fear in them," McAdam explained.

Just receiving that information on literature drops ratcheted down the fear in the area.

"People said, 'oh I'm so glad whole neighborhoods received them,'" McAdam recalled. "I thought I was being targeted.' — either because they are liberal, or Jewish, or a son or daughter is married to a person of color..."

The Montana Human Rights Network also shared the experiences of dozens of other struggles throughout Montana — a magnet for far right groups — and the northwest, relying on research by colleagues at Southern Poverty Law Center in Atlanta, and Political Research Associates in Boston [see box].

Based in the state capitol, the Network has affiliated human rights groups in towns across the state, and two staff organizers who support their development, along with someone assigned with representing their interests in the state legislature. "Our research component differentiates us from other groups doing community organizing in the state," McAdam explains. "So when something happens, we've seen it before. So we are able to go into the community that is facing some sort of crisis situation and we can say, 'here is what is going on.'"

"The Montana Human Rights Network provides historical perspective and organizing advice," Haugland agreed. "They say, well, in Billings, this is what happened."

In 1993, Billings made headlines for challenging anti-Semitism and white supremacy when the whole town stood up against the harassment of Jewish and native American residents (as seen in the documentary *Not In Our Town*). On the advice of the Human Rights Network, the Gallatin Human Rights Task Force brought in a leader from Billings, Margaret McDonald of the Montana Association of Churches. With McDonald's support and advice, the interfaith organizing in Bozeman has created rich relationships and strong, visible statements of solidarity among Mormons, Sikhs, Jews, Protestants, and Catholics. The tolerance can extend to gays and lesbians. A woman student marveled that at a recent Holocaust memorial hosted by the Mormon congregation, her Mormon professor asked to meet her girlfriend.

Another piece of organizing advice given by Ken Toole, the codirector of the Montana Human Rights Network, was: Give no quarter. Other encounters with the far right show that you must confront each individual even if they seem isolated, Toole said. Otherwise your Montana town will seem attractive to other group members who will then flow in from out-of-state; you don't want one to become many. And bargaining with them does not work — as Toole said, how do you bargain over white

### Groups researching the Right in support of organizing:

People for the American Way, [www.pfaw.org](http://www.pfaw.org)

Center for New Community, Chicago, [www.newcomm.org](http://www.newcomm.org)

Montana Human Rights Network, Helena, [www.mhrn.org](http://www.mhrn.org)

Political Research Associates, Boston, [www.publiceye.org](http://www.publiceye.org)

Southern Poverty Law Center, Atlanta, [www.splc.org](http://www.splc.org)

Texas Freedom Network, Austin, [www.tfn.org](http://www.tfn.org)

supremacy? You need to create a sense in the community that this is outside social bonds and bounds.

Research brings in experience and tactics to help organize a community response. It provides activists with the brute facts and context for understanding what you are in the middle of. Those able to deploy that research are better able to win media attention from reporters seeking “both sides” of the story. And research itself can become part of the organizing strategy, as people contribute to the knowledge of what is happening in their town and gain a small sense of control in the process. But it has no impact on its own unless residents create new relationships with people they’ve never spoken with before to create a positive view of the town.

As Tarso Luis Ramos, former research director of the Western States Center in Portland, Ore., once remarked, research isn’t a “silver bullet.” It will not discredit the opposition on its own and make them shrivel up and go away.

Research is also more effective when local activists are part of the research team.

McAdam, as research director of the Montana Human Rights Network, does a lot of the “opposition research” on the right that local activists use to counter its influence. A native of Great Falls, Mon., he tracks far right groups in his state and their members, partly through their public statements in newspapers and websites, partly by attending their events, but also with the help of activists in small towns around the state who call in with information.

Seeing McAdam in action is seeing a community enterprise. For instance, since 2000, he has tracked threats and attacks from the far right on environmentalists in the Flathead area in the north of the state in an attempt to stimulate attention from the media and law enforcement. Kate Hunt, a sculptor whose activist role in the Flathead seems to be local researcher, continues to call McAdam regularly and send him recordings of a local hate radio jock who she monitors while working in her stu-

### Fighting Hate in the Flathead

The story of how a homegrown militia, a local hate radio personality named John Stokes, and anti-environmental sentiments created a volatile threat to progressive activists and town officials in the northern Montana area called the Flathead is told in “The Fire Next Time: A Not in Our Town Special” broadcast in July on PBS’s POV.

Created by Patrice O’Neill, executive producer of The Working Group based in Oakland, Calif., it is a follow up to her 1995 documentary, “Not in Our Town.” This first documentary showed how residents of Billings challenged local white supremacists, and has been used in local organizing and town discussions ever since. In creating both, O’Neill drew upon Montana Human Rights Network research, and she continues to read its newsletter to keep track of the far Right in the state.

“The thing that they had done so effectively is that they had been monitoring John Stokes’ radio show for a number of years. They were able to look at repeated patterns, to get a gauge on what is going on there, and quote accurately,” O’Neill said.

John Stokes is a former real estate developer from Washington state who bought a Flathead radio station and broadcast the location of local environmentalists with the invitation to go after them. As locals called the Montana Human Rights Network about the problem, its staff put them in touch with each other and helped them form a group to challenge the threatening atmosphere that had public officials and environmental advocates frightened for their lives. That group included Kate Hunt, a local sculptor who worked with Network researcher Travis McAdam in monitoring John Stokes’ hate radio broadcasts and continues to send him tapes.

“Travis McAdam did a wonderful job and cataloged [Stokes’ broadcasts] really well,” O’Neill said. “You often don’t have it recorded: People say, ‘Oh, I heard so and so on the radio.’ Well what exactly did they say and when?”

Throughout O’Neill’s documentary you hear Stokes’ radio threats that were catalogued by the Montana Human Rights Network.

dio.

McAdam’s published research on the threats in the Flathead, created with the help of people like Hunt, helped win media attention to the problem by providing credible expert testimony. But the police only got heavily involved once they were threatened directly themselves. The documentary *Fire Next Time*, broadcast in July on public television’s POV, documents this dynamic, and relied on Montana Human Rights Network research [see box].

McAdam’s next report will be on McGuire, tracking more of the white supremacist’s background, the names of the other members of his Bozeman group — once again with the help of the locals. “I get a lot of calls, tips — ‘I saw this guy handing out National Alliance literature. I got a license plate.’ I sort fact from fiction.”

With the other Human Rights Network staff, he builds an analysis of what is going on, so that they provide a context and not just “the facts” for those who need it. By telling a larger story that stitches together an understanding of how far right groups have an impact despite their tiny numbers,

they inoculate against left-wing conspiracy theories.

One social context is the broader field of electoral politics: how far right ideas against planning and for inviolate property rights (ideas that cast environmentalists as fascists trying to take away people’s rights), move “from margin to mainstream” as Toole puts it. A Human Rights Network study from 2000 charts the rise of the Constitution Party in Montana with exactly those politics, bringing together what McAdam calls “the wackiest of the Christian Right with the anti-government politics of the militia movement.” In 2004, a local candidate from the Constitution Party secured 40% of the vote for a seat in the statehouse representing the Flathead area.

Last spring, McAdam prepared a backgrounder for a state legislative committee on the “Sheriff’s First” bill that would have designated sheriffs as the only legitimate law in a county — requiring the federal government to secure their permission before operating within its borders. His research traced the bill’s roots in the far right’s idea of “posse comitatus” and local

sovereignty.

“We have a very comprehensive concept of the right, all the way from the Republican Party to the kooky far right. And so we track how those kooky ideas come into the mainstream,” says McAdam. “That differentiates us from those who see these groups as dangerous because they’ll occasionally blow something up.”

What is striking when talking to local activists in Montana is that they are desperate for information about the individual who has come into their town (who is Kevin McGuire?) or a particular group (who is the National Alliance?). It is personal to them. You can see the attraction of providing one of Ramos’ “silver bullets,” perhaps one of those old-style spider web charts that suggest guilt by association. The Human Rights Network provides that detail, but doesn’t stop there and offers activists an analysis of why and when the far right’s views are potent.

### New Research Directions

At a June leadership retreat sponsored by the Montana Human Rights Network on the outskirts of Yellowstone Park, the staff posed the role of research in a totally different context — building political power in the state.

This proactive stance is totally in keeping with the Network’s program. A few years ago, it expanded from opposing the far right in the state to more deeply challenging the ills that make that form of politics attractive to residents who are economically disenfranchised. To promote broader access to health care or widespread planning to preserve the environment against far right anti-planning sentiment, Toole and his codirector Christine Kaufman both ran for the state legislature — and won. Their leadership retreat brought together legislators and advocates for training and strategizing.

“The Nazis [like Kevin McGuire] give us the opportunity to have a whole lot of people in the room,” explained Toole. “But you got groups that are a mile wide and an inch deep.” Coalitions have been known to dissolve once the agenda

expands to promoting civil rights for gays and lesbians. In wrestling with the quandary of how to build a broader progressive base, he and his allies turned to research for help. But in this context, it is not just research on a particular far right group or tactics in fighting it, but on the strongly felt sentiments of voters and potential voters in the state.

“The reason research is so important is

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**Without good research, progressives are tempted to fight “the battle you didn’t choose,” or whatever pops up in front of them.**

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how are we going to build power if we don’t know where we are starting from,” said Greg Haegele, Deputy Conservation Director with the Sierra Club in San Francisco, who ran the retreat’s research discussion. He is no stranger to the issue in Montana, having generated data while running political campaigns in the state and while serving as director of a policy institute formed by the Human Rights Network.

Without research that illuminates the landscape, campaigners would be working blind, or with old information derived from past experience. Montana is deeply polarized, and confusing. It has slightly more registered Republicans than Democrats, yet elected a Democratic governor and Democratic senators, while backing Bush in 2004.

Yet the form of research Haegele is talking about is not the standard “opinion” polling done by parties in an election year or the parties’ nasty style of “opposition research” where they try to dig up dirt on

their rivals. These research techniques evade the deep context that those truly engaged with challenging the far right feel is so necessary to understand if they are to communicate beyond the shallow truisms of progressives. And polls often miss the subcultures governing a small state like Montana, where a gun toting hunter of a Democratic candidate like Brian Schweitzer was just elected governor.

“On the progressive side, I don’t think we have pollsters who can get at the deepest issues,” said Haegele. “We’re really focused on the appearance level.”

He says what is actually needed is to understand the deeply motivating feelings of people that he calls “public sentiment,” feelings which go beyond the issues captured in “public opinion” polls, around cultural issues, the role of government, etc.

Without good research, progressives are tempted to fight “the battle you didn’t choose,” or whatever pops up in front of them. Or you assume low-income voters are with you — without looking at current information. “If you don’t know where you are, you aren’t going to spend your resources wisely about where you want to go.”

Still some in the room wanted to understand the bolt and tackle of the right.

“We don’t spend the time to study the other side to know why they are effective,” said Jason Miller, a leader with the state carpenters’ union. “Locally what moves them? How do they run their campaigns? Where does all the money come from and how does it get dispersed?”

Another job for Travis McAdam of the Montana Human Rights Network. ■

*Sources: Bozeman Daily Chronicle, January 12, 2005; Jay Taber, “Research as Organizing Tool,” <http://skookumgeoduck.blogspot.com/2005/06/research-as-organizing-tool.html>.*

*Abby Scher is editor of The Public Eye and a sociologist. A recipient of the Ford Foundation’s Leadership for a Changing World award, she got to know the codirectors of the Montana Human Rights Network through the program.*

CONSERVATIVE ORGANIZING *continued from page 1*

lar tactic where conservative students illustrate the ills of disparate treatment by discounting prices for white women and people of color, while burdening white men with paying full price. .

Conservative student activists have developed a reputation of being fiercely committed, well-trained, and fearless. They have shed their “button-down” image, once associated with the anti-Communist Young Americans for Freedom in the 1960s, and emerged as an energetic, largely secular co-ed force with a message and a megaphone. The mainstream press regularly describes college conservatives as growing in visibility and sophistication.

But how influential have they been? Very, if the test is the depth of ties they’ve built with the broader conservative establishment and their grooming for future leadership. A dismal failure if you consider the freeze on real campus debate and the few new campus recruits they’ve attracted to their cause. But that might change if they learn to reach the evangelical Christian students who have thus far remained lukewarm to the largely neoconservative campus activists.

## Swimming Upstream

Student organizing is limited by a highly transient population with fewer ties to campus life and less free time than in the past. Given the academic and financial pressures on today’s college students, any political activity probably should be con-

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## A list of alumni members of campus-supportive programs reads like a Who’s Who of current Right strategists and spokespeople.

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sidered an achievement. Both progressive and conservative students complain of the difficulties of organizing on campus. But conservative students work with far fewer numbers than their progressive counterparts

while making more noise.

Although the number of entering college students who identify as on the Right is slowly growing, conservative student activists historically were a distinct minority on campus, and remain so. In 2003, 24% of first-year students identified as conservative or very conservative, compared with 31% identifying as progressive. (see graph on pg. 11).<sup>1</sup>

Progressives not only have a slightly larger pool to work with, they are also more successful at recruiting. According to PRA’s sampling of U.S. colleges in our study of campus activism, *Deliberate Differences*, progressive political groups outnumber conservative ones on campuses by a ratio of 4:1.<sup>2</sup> There is, after all, a gap between holding an opinion and encouraging others to agree with you. In fact, when we conducted over 100 interviews on eight campuses, we found only a small core of conservative activists, usually no more than a handful, working at any one school.

While the number of conservative students who act upon their beliefs — the activists — remains very low on campus, this may be attractive in itself. Running the campus conservative paper or the lone conservative group on campus can offer some students a structure in which it’s acceptable to feel different. But a self-defined sense of being an outcast is too individualistic to create a particular culture that attracts large numbers of recruits. Their success lies not in numbers but in their deep relationship with the supportive organizations on the Right.

## A Targeted “Minority”

Conservative students manage to champion a range of issues, from opposing abortion and same sex marriage, to supporting the Bush administration’s foreign policy positions on Israel or the war in Iraq. No other consistent, national campaign by conservative students is as pervasive, however, as the attack on their own schools.

### Is Your Professor Using the Classroom as a Platform for Political Agendas? This Is a Violation of Your Academic Rights.

According to the American Association Of University Professors, the use of classrooms for political indoctrination is a violation of academic freedom.

*The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* declared: “Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.” (This clause was reaffirmed in 1970.)

If you are not taking a course whose subject is the war in Iraq, your professor should not be making statements about the war in class. Or about George Bush, if the class is not on contemporary American presidents, presidential administrations or some similar subject.

We do not expect our doctors to impose their political opinions on us when we go to them for treatment. We should likewise not be assaulted by the political prejudices of professors when we pay them for an education.

If your professor is abusing his or her teaching privilege or is confused about the professional obligations of an educator please contact us.

Students for Academic Freedom  
Contact information: (800) 752-6562

WWW.STUDENTSFORACADEMICFREEDOM.ORG

*In this ad, Students for Academic Freedom encourages students to report professors with “political prejudices.”*

## Conservative Adults and Higher Education Organizing

Some social conservatives ultimately seek to return higher education to an idealized time when a college education was reserved for only the very best, and a single canon of texts could knit together the shared cultural assumptions of society's leaders and policymakers. That this ideal was primarily for white men is seldom discussed.

For instance, the conservative National Association of Scholars was founded in 1985 to critique multiculturalism and affirmative action. Today it lists among its hopes: to “recall higher education to its classic function of grounding students in the rich heritage of their civilization” and to “encourage intellectual balance and realism in campus debate on contemporary issues.”<sup>19</sup> The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, co-founded by Lynne Cheney and her more moderate counterpart Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-CT), prefaced its provocative critique of post 9/11 liberal faculty quotations with, “ACTA has launched the Defense of Civilization Fund... to support and defend the study of American history and civics and of Western civilization.”<sup>20</sup> Allan Bloom, author of the 1987, but still-influential, *The Closing of the American Mind*, lamented, “[T]he university as we know it, in its content and its aim, is the product of the Enlightenment... This project has lost its unity and its focus.”<sup>21</sup>

ACTA works with college and university trustees to ensure responsible management of higher education resources, end grade inflation, establish a solid core curriculum, and restore intellectual diversity on campus.<sup>22</sup>

While small, these groups recognize their strategies must be long-term, and they are slowly claiming influence among higher education policymakers. The new president of the University of Colorado, Hank Brown, for instance, is a cofounder of ACTA, assuming leadership of a university still reeling from a controversy over one of its professors, Ward Churchill, who became a *cause celebre* for his radical political analysis in the aftermath of 9/11.

The campus Right is well known for its ability to deliver a consistent message across campuses: Student conservatives are an abused minority because of their unpopular political ideas and the dominance of liberal thinking. Crafting such a message and sticking to it is a key lesson of adult organizations supportive of the campus Right.

Typical comments from conservative students reflect this sentiment. “I’ve made conservative statements in class and been hissed,” reported a Northwestern student. A student at Washington and Lee University explained, “I was sick of being ridiculed by my teachers for being a Republican.”

They demand that colleges change to make the campus safe for conservative students and faculty and to make room for a “diversity of thought.” The manner in which they deliver this message is pretty consistent across campuses, heavily depending on sarcasm, personal attack, and activities geared to attracting publicity. For instance, two college seniors wrote in an op-ed in the conservative paper *MassNews*, “To be openly conservative at Wellesley is to

contend daily with emotionally driven ‘testaments,’ shrill libel and hateful words in the name of ‘progress’ or ‘peace.’... What makes us better citizens and leaders is diversity of thought — not melanin levels. If we had more professors who disagreed with the tyrannical majority, more of us would hear both sides.”<sup>3</sup>

All the conservative students we interviewed for our study earnestly described their experience in this way. Sometimes they added that they felt like outcasts, because progressive activists outnumber them at their schools. Rich Lowry, editor of the *National Review*, explains, “If you’re a conservative, usually you kind of like going against the crowd a little bit. That’s sort of the appeal of it.”<sup>4</sup> The message works so well that it has actually become a frame for conservative students’ reality — “conservative student as beleaguered underdog.” The frame succeeds in two other ways. It identifies the speakers as the conservative voice on campus, and the publicity it draws is part of a long-range strategy on the larger Right to increase public criticism about the current state of higher education.

## The Clash of Ideas

The higher education agenda of various conservatives in the larger Right is much more complex than angry student speech about liberal bias on campus. At its roots, it has to do with traditionalist conservatives’ claim that progressive reforms of the past few decades are a fundamental threat to higher education that changed who goes to college and what students learn once they get there.

Their glib claim that liberals have taken over higher education is connected to reality by a slender strand of truth. Affirmative action and curricular reform have taken hold because of progressive organizing on campuses. For instance, women’s studies programs launched in the 1970s and 80s to fill gaps in the college curricula have grown to a network of nearly 400 campus-based programs. Colleges’ support for multiculturalism similarly created the potential for profound changes in how students view and study people of color.

Power dynamics among social movements change all the time, so it was only a matter of time before a backlash developed, led by conservative strategists and ideologues who saw these achievements as threats to a key institution they felt they once controlled. Evidence of this backlash can be seen in adult conservatives’ decade-long attack on affirmative action and repeated attempts to cut federal funding for financial aid (see box on left).

Not all adult conservatives’ views find secure homes among student groups on campuses. But when neoconservative students win media attention for their claims that they are not safe to express their ideas on campus, or when they organize against a particular liberal idea like affirmative action, they make it easier for these other conservative criticisms of higher education to win attention.

Cutting federal support for financial aid; attacking multiculturalism and area studies in the academic and mainstream media; a call for the return to a traditional, Eurocentric curriculum; and a lament on the general decline of the meaning of a college degree — all are examples of a larger, off-

campus neoconservative agenda to take back higher education.

One segment of the campus Right grows without much support from outside organizations. Conservative Libertarian thought has a small but loyal following on campus, fueled in part by a youthful resistance to social regulation and the attraction of Ayn Rand's books, and reinforced by the support for free market capitalism in many university economics departments. Its strengths are a clearly defined social and economic ideology and a third party electoral infrastructure.

Once only visible at elite schools like the University of Chicago, libertarian student groups have begun to crop up at a variety of schools, including public universities like Appalachian State in North Carolina.

### Grooming the Next Generation of Leaders

Tygh Bailes, on the other hand, is a poster child of how off-campus organizations can help students use campuses as a training ground for a career in conservative politics. While a student at Hampden-Sydney College, "Tygh used techniques he learned at The Leadership Institute's Youth Leadership School to become Student Government President."<sup>5</sup>

Many observers have admired the well-developed network of national organizations like the Leadership Institute that support the Right on campus.<sup>6</sup> In providing organizational support, off-campus networks, and communications strategies to help conservative students create a campus presence, their goal is more leadership development than movement building. As one website clearly proclaims, "The Leadership Institute's mission as to identify, recruit, train and place conservatives in politics, government, and the media."<sup>7</sup>

While not monolithic, together these groups train and sustain a conservative student voice on campus, teaching students not only how to campaign for student government but also to amplify their message to attract the largest audience.

Along with the Leadership Institute, national organizations like the Young

### Conservative Groups Supporting Campus Activists

#### American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), Washington, D.C.

[www.goacta.org](http://www.goacta.org)

Established by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute in 1994 and first directed by Lynne Cheney, ACTA has members from over 400 colleges and universities. According to its website, ACTA's quarterly publication, *Inside Academe*, has over 12,000 readers, including over 3,500 college and university trustees.

#### College Republican National Committee, Washington, D.C.

[www.crncc.org](http://www.crncc.org)

The College Republican National Committee (CRNC) is a college campus political organization that "provides training in conservative thought, political technology, and grassroots lobbying." In recent years, CRNC claims it has tripled in size due to outreach programs like the Field Program, Women's Outreach, Minority Outreach and Jewish Outreach. (website)

#### Collegiate Network, Wilmington, DE

[www.collegiatenetwork.org](http://www.collegiatenetwork.org)

Established in 1979, the Collegiate Network provides funding to conservative students and campus publications and provides technical assistance to student journalists.

#### The Fund for American Studies, Washington, D.C.

[www.tfas.org](http://www.tfas.org)

Established in 1967, the Fund for American Studies runs four summer institutes on conservative economics and political theory at Georgetown University and a semester-long program there as well.

#### Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Inc., Wilmington, DE,

[www.isi.org](http://www.isi.org)

Founded in 1953, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute is dedicated to promoting conservative thought on campus. A mainstay of the traditional Right, the Institute publishes *CAMPUS: America's Student Newspaper*, *CAMPUS.org*, *Intercollegiate Review*; *ISI Update*, *Political Science Review*; and *Modern Age* and maintains a publishing house. The Institute opposes multiculturalism and all forms of liberalism. It also houses the Collegiate Network of conservative student newspapers.

#### Leadership Institute, Arlington, VA

[www.leadershipinstitute.org](http://www.leadershipinstitute.org)

The Leadership Institute is a major conservative training ground for right-wing youth. The Institute includes an employment placement service and intern program that places institute attendees in prominent right-wing organizations. Founded in 1979 by Morton C. Blackwell to "identify, recruit, train, and place conservatives," the Institute has trained over 40,000 students.

#### Students for Academic Freedom, Washington, D.C.

[www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org](http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org)

Founded by David Horowitz, Students for Academic Freedom (SAF) is an information center for "promoting intellectual diversity" on campus and "defending free speech" for conservative students. It actively engages students in promoting Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights. As of August 2005, SAF reports that it has 135 campus affiliates, organized primarily on the Web.

#### Young America's Foundation, Herndon, VA

[www.yaf.org](http://www.yaf.org)

The Young America's Foundation provides conferences, seminars, educational materials, internships and speakers to high school and college students. The Foundation was established by friends and former leaders of Young Americans for Freedom, but is no longer affiliated with them. It coordinates the National Conservative Student Conference and the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). The Foundation also manages the Reagan Ranch in California and runs the National Journalism Center program.

American Foundation, Intercollegiate Studies Institute, the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, and the Fund for American Studies offer generous resources to campus-based activists who readily receive them (see box). These groups are well funded by prominent foundations on the Right, including three of the largest: the Bradley, Sarah Scaife, and Olin foundations. According to Young People For, a branch of the liberal People for the Amer-

ican Way, these five organizations together spend over \$30 million a year to support conservative college student programs.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, there is no equivalent funding or infrastructure on the Left.

The dozen or so campus-supportive organizations mostly offer training off campus. A critical mass of students travel to retreats, conferences, and internships, where they discover and define a group identity by learning and living together. If

the identity of many conservative students on campus is akin to an oppressed minority, the collective character of participants at these events is one of joy and relief at having found eager, ambitious, and focused fellow students ready for action. The opportunity to identify with a conservative student culture certainly exists, but students often have to travel off-campus to find it. One student testified:

I have faced so many obstacles, at times I have felt like abandoning my fight for a balanced campus.... However,...after attending the National Student Conservative Conference last August,... [I understood] that I was not alone in my struggle, [Back at school] I strongly voiced my commitment towards conservatism. On one of the most liberal campuses in America, I received the highest number of votes in all of the races run and easily secured my [student government] seat.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the national organizations offer an impressive collection of incentives for joining the team. These include free or subsidized trips to conferences, academic credit coupled with opportunities for fellowships and internships, chances to study conservative economic and political theory with well-respected scholars, access to conservative decision-makers in Washington, and the opportunity to jumpstart a career on the Right.

It does not matter if they reach only a few. The elite of the campus-supportive conservative organizations are identifying young conservatives and grooming them for leadership, while others, like Young America's Foundation or Students for Academic Freedom, provide basic training for future foot soldiers in the larger conservative movement.

Organizations like the Fund for American Studies, which runs conservative summer courses at Georgetown University, or the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, which maintains a publication list of nearly 200 conservative titles directed at college students, are committed to bringing conservative political theory to students. The Fund for American Studies has offered

summer school courses on conservative political and economic theory for 35 years, reflecting its commitment to the long-term strategic value in serious academic study of conservative ideology.

One might think the effect of the approach of organizations like the Fund for American Studies is diminished by their outsider status and the small number of students they reach. But their influence is augmented by other conservative institutions inside higher education, including endowed chairs, policy centers and graduate fellowships funded by the same set of conservative foundations.<sup>10</sup>

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### Conservative pundits amplify the voice of the contemporary campus Right beyond its relatively small size.

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Some networks have been in place in for decades. For instance, the organizational founders of three conservative student-supporting groups are among the luminaries of the neoconservative movement. William Simon and Irving Kristol of The Institute for Educational Affairs (IEA) decided to fund conservative campus papers in 1979. Simon was Secretary of the Treasury under Nixon, and Kristol has been a publisher of several important conservative journals and is a fellow at the neoconservative think tank, the American Enterprise Institute. IEA merged with the Madison Center, founded by William Bennett, Secretary of Education under Ronald Reagan, and Allan Bloom, the University of Chicago intellectual who decried the liberal drift of higher education.

Eventually the Collegiate Network—as this campus newspaper grants program came to be called—moved to the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, which had been founded 43 years before by William

F. Buckley, Jr., the father of conservative campus activism and author of *God and Man at Yale*.

The organizations that came together in support of campus publications do not necessarily share the same perspective on all issues, including “strong government”-style neoconservatives like Kristol, with traditional “small state” conservatives like Buckley. They are, however, willing to share responsibility for supporting campus publications as a key element of conservative strategy.

When conservative students take advantage of the resources available from such campus-supportive organizations, they can accumulate the generic personal assets of leadership development and political skills building. Beyond that, however, choosing to associate with these organizations is a good career move — it enhances their résumés and allows access to the necessary networking that helps secure a job in an official political world dominated by conservatives. They can feel close to power, a heady attraction for careerists and non-careerists alike.

A list of conservative alumni of campus-supportive programs reads like a Who's Who of current Right strategists and spokespeople. Karl Rove, the White House Chief of Staff, Sen. Rick Santorum, (R-PA), Grover Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Relief, and Ralph Reed, the former director of the Christian Coalition and current Georgia political candidate, have all been associated with the College Republicans or their National Committee. Edwin Feulner, President of the Heritage Foundation, and Richard Allen, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, were involved with the Intercollegiate Studies Institute as students.

Ann Coulter and Dinesh D'Souza, prominent members of conservative campus speakers bureaus, each started a conservative campus publication with the assistance of the Collegiate Network. Along with other prominent conservative pundits, they provide a key role in the larger media by amplifying the voice of the contemporary campus Right beyond its relatively small size.

Tygh Bailes now runs the Grassroots Programs at Morton Blackwell's Leadership Institute. As Tygh's staff bio on the Institute's website says, "At The Leadership Institute, Tygh has helped train thousands of conservative activists to become more effective. In addition to speaking for The Leadership Institute, Tygh is also a sought after speaker for groups such as GOPAC and The Center For Reclaiming America."<sup>11</sup>

## The Campaign for "Academic Freedom"

There is no denying that conservative activists are creative in message delivery, consistent in focus across the country, and skilled in taking advantage of the political moment. All these aspects of conservative student organizing are important strategies developed with the help of the conservative institutes.<sup>12</sup>

The major conservative messages are that access to conservative political thought is not available on campus; that the big ideas on the Right are squelched when brought into classrooms by conservative students; and that there are very few faculty who teach conservative ideologies. The combined force of students and some off-campus strategists call for the return of "academic freedom" to U.S. colleges. The outcome of their actions, however, is just the opposite of their stated goals.

Ironically, instead of fostering open dialogue and debate, the conservatives' version of the campaign for academic freedom has actually diminished, and in some cases silenced, political discussion. A professor from Metropolitan State College of Denver reported resorting to taping her own lectures as a kind of protection against being attacked.<sup>13</sup> Another faculty member, this time from Monmouth College in Illinois, took her children out of school for a few days after challenging a visiting conservative and being harassed for it.<sup>14</sup> Students we interviewed with views across the political spectrum said they could not rely on faculty for political mentoring. Almost all the professors we spoke with, both conservative and progressive, including those who teach political thought,

reported they avoid getting involved with student politics.<sup>15</sup> In effect, this aggressive conservative campaign has silenced both faculty and students who fear being attacked by critics on and off campus.

Students from all political backgrounds reported that they experience very little debate on campus about political ideas. It's not that students avoid expressing their opinions, but there is limited interaction and even less dialogue with those who disagree.<sup>16</sup> Granted that discussion across difference of opinion is not comfortable for many people for a variety of reasons, but this apparent lack of engaged conversation among students may be a symptom of something else. One hint of what that might be is the aggressively combative stance of many conservative spokespeople on campus.

## What's Next?

For many conservative students and their adult supporters, the system skillfully prepares the next generation of conservative leaders, using the campus as a rehearsal space. The common frame of conservative student as underdog resonates with many, and appeals to an apolitical sense of fairness on the playing field. It falls short, however, of an adequate set of principles that will tip the scales of public opinion and win students major victories, at least on campus.

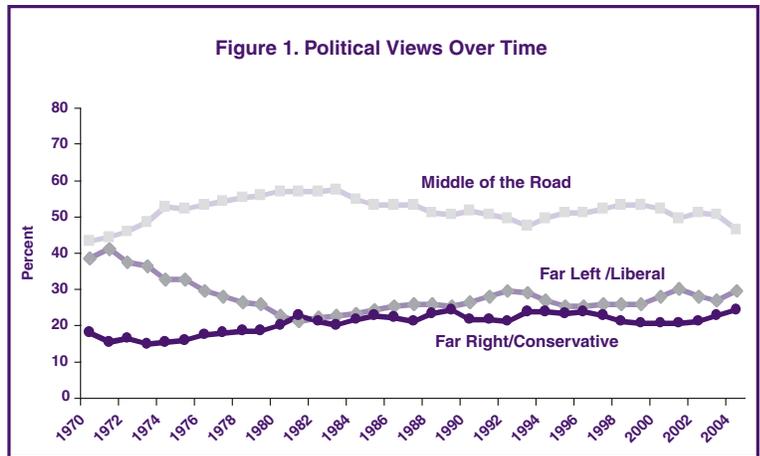
The most telling void in conservative campus power is the lack of a mass base of student support. Currently, there is just not enough of a critical mass of mobilized and organized conservative students to call itself a movement, and what exists is just not growing fast enough. The one exception is the College Republican National Committee (CRNC) which claims

100,000 members and is its own "soft money PAC." Rather than wielding the influence of a powerful united student voice, however, the CRNC's purpose is "to make known and promote the principles of the Republican Party... [and] to aid in the election of Republican candidates at all levels of government," as their chapter manual spells out.<sup>17</sup>

Strategists appear to have only a few choices. They could continue to work with the relatively small numbers of current conservative activists, helping them refine and amplify their messages for attention far beyond what their actual organizational size might warrant. They could build on a certain level of success, and leverage power from off-campus, by expanding alliances with national organizations like the Republican Party. They could encourage and support more groups that spontaneously develop around specific issues. The danger of this is that some groups may not completely agree with their benefactors. Because Libertarianism has some popularity on campus, it has been identified as a potential break-away group by young neoconservative leaders.<sup>18</sup>

A final choice is to expand the base, drawing from the large pool of non-politically active conservatives or even centrists. This is where conservative Christian organizations come into play.

It is too early to tell how much political force the Christian Right will have on secular campuses. But Christian evangel-



Source: "The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2004," The Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, p. 1.

ical campus groups are currently the largest growing category of campus organizations. Yet not all evangelicals are conservative. And organizations like Campus Crusade for Christ and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship have declined to join in with the largely secular network of campus-supportive conservative groups.

But as Christian evangelical ministry groups gain popularity on campus, their members can become targets for political organizing by both the Left and the Right. Progressive groups have already made some inroads in educating religious students through service learning programs, sometimes conducted by college chaplains that attract mostly apolitical students attracted to service projects involving social action, personal reflection, and academic credit.

On the Right, the Colorado-based evangelical powerhouse Focus on the Family offers internships and educational programs to students through its college student ministry. By reaching out to Campus Crusade and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, the organization could generate mass mobilization much as the Christian Coalition engineered the transformation of apolitical evangelicals into politicized Christian conservatives in the 1980s.

Opposing same-sex marriage through state constitutional amendments may be a new area for campus work if strategists can peel away enough of a base among an age cohort more tolerant on social issues than their elders. Student groups may compromise in this area in order to attract new socially conservative constituencies to conservative activism.

## Conclusion

Even though it has maintained a campus presence for decades, the conservative student “movement” is still in its adolescent development. It is old enough to appreciate mentors, accept support, and run many of its own campaigns, but not mature enough to understand its organizational deficiencies or recognize its potential power. As long as the larger Right maintains its power base in electoral politics, there will

be little incentive for students to do much more than run affirmative action bake sales and groom themselves for future leadership with the help of adult allies.

While small numbers of conservative students play out a seemingly limited role *on campus*, we need to pay more attention to the larger contest. These students enhance a “low intensity” form of attack on higher education curriculum and culture from the Right. Whether we like it or not,

## This aggressive conservative campaign has silenced both faculty and students who fear being attacked by critics.

U.S. campuses are politicized. These multi-leveled attacks have begun to erode the work of progressive educators and policymakers and threaten the very academic freedom the Right insists it defends. Progressive student activism cannot protect universities on its own.

The natural defenders of a university system are its leaders and its supporters. University presidents, established faculty, trustees, fundraisers, and the media that cover higher education issues are beginning to recognize their collective power as defenders of quality, accessible higher education. Groups as distinct as the American Association of University Professors, American Philosophical Association, and the National Women’s Studies Association are examples of national groups already voicing their opposition to the Academic Bill of Rights. Piecemeal attempts at appeasing conservative challenges may interrupt, but will not ultimately stop, the conservative move to claim the campus as its own. ■

*Pam Chamberlain is a researcher at Political Research Associates, publisher of The Public Eye. Thanks to Jean Hardisty, Tom Hayden, Josh Holland and Iara Peng for their help with this article.*

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Linda Sax et al., *The American Freshman: National Norms for 2004 Summary* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, 2005) 1. Available at: <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/findings.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Pam Chamberlain, *Deliberate Differences: Progressive and Conservative Campus Activism in the United States*, (Somerville, Mass: Political Research Associates, 2004), 2.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.massnews.com/2003\\_Editions/3\\_March/030403\\_mn\\_wellesley\\_lacks\\_diversity.shtml](http://www.massnews.com/2003_Editions/3_March/030403_mn_wellesley_lacks_diversity.shtml), July 11, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Hayes, “Birth of a Pundit,” *In These Times*, March 4, 2005, [p?]

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.leadershipinstitute.org/08-CONTACTUS/staffdirectory-bios-bailes.htm>, July 21, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> See for instance, John Colapinto, “Armies of the Right: The Young Hipublicans,” *The New York Times Magazine*, May 25, 2003, 30-59; Joshua Holland, “Why Conservatives are Winning the Campus Wars,” <http://gadflyer.com/articles/print.php?ArticleID=187>, June 24, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.leadershipinstitute.org/01ABOUTUS/aboutus.htm>, June 28, 2005. The Leadership Institute claims to have trained 40,000 students

<sup>8</sup> Young People For Foundation, “Conservative Youth—Focused Organizations,” training materials, 2004 and the 990 IRS form for the Fund for American Studies accessed at <http://www.guidestar.org/pqShowGsReport.do?npId=275986>, June 24, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.yaf.org/conferences/college/conference.asp>, June 28, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> People for the American Way, “Right Wing Watch—Buying a Movement,” <http://www.pfaw.org/pfaw/general/default.aspx?oid=2057>, June 22, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.leadershipinstitute.org/08-CONTACTUS/staffdirectory-bios-bailes.htm>, July 21, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> As recently reported in *The New Yorker*, a few conservative Christian colleges, like Claremont-McKenna or Patrick Henry, encourage students to sharpen their debating skills. Patrick Henry’s President Michael Farris says students “need these verbal-communication skills to defend their ideas. There’s no training like arguing against the best minds and then beating them.” Hannah Rosin, “God and Country,” *New Yorker*, June 27, 2005, 47.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, see the case of Oneida Mercanto in Jennifer Jacobson, “A Liberal Professor Fights the Label,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Nov. 26, 2004; Nikhil Aziz, “Campus Insecurity: The Right’s Attack on Faculty, Programs and Departments at U.S. Universities,” *The Public Eye*, Spring 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication.

<sup>15</sup> *Deliberate Differences*, 22-24.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-32.

<sup>17</sup> <http://crnc.org/resources/ChapterManual.pdf>, 53, July 13, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> David Kirkpatrick, “Young Right Tries to Define Post-Buckley Future,” *New York Times*, July 17, 2004, A1, A17.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.nas.org/nas.html#PURPOSE>, June 24, 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Jerry Martin and Anne Neal, “Defending Civilization: How Our Universities are Failing America and What Can Be Done About It,” (Washington, D.C., ACTA, February 2002 edition) 2.

<sup>21</sup> Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, New York, 1987, 256,262.

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.goacta.org/about\\_acta/mission.html](http://www.goacta.org/about_acta/mission.html), June 24, 2005.

THINKING ABOUT ELEPHANTS *continues from page 1*

some deafening silences or, to switch metaphors in midstream, some glaring blind spots in his way of framing American politics.

Lakoff is a cognitive psychologist but he weaves together insights shared by the sociologists, political scientists, and communications specialists who have been analyzing “framing contests” for the past 30 years. On the following points, he speaks for a broad interdisciplinary consensus:

**Facts never speak for themselves.** They take on their meaning by being embedded in *frames*, themes which organize thoughts, rendering some facts as relevant and significant and others as irrelevant and trivial. *Framing matters* and the contest is lost at the outset if one allows one’s adversaries to define the terms of the debate. To be self-conscious about framing strategy is not being manipulative. It gives coherent meaning to what is happening in the world. One can either do it unconsciously, or with deliberation and conscious thought.

A frame is a thought organizer. Like a picture frame, it puts a rim around some part of the world, highlighting certain events and facts as important and rendering others invisible. Like a building frame, it holds things together but is covered by insulation and walls. It provides coherence to an array of symbols, images, and arguments, linking them through an underlying organizing idea that suggests what is essential — what consequences and values are at stake. We do not see the frame directly, but infer its presence by its characteristic expressions and language.

The idea helps us understand why changing our political situation does not rest on just the media presenting the facts better or people paying better attention. Some progressives threw up their hands in dismay and frustration when polls showed that most Bush voters believed that there was a connection between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. The “facts” were clear that no connection had been found. If these voters didn’t know this it was because either the media had failed in its responsibility to inform them, or they were too lazy and inattentive to take it in.



THE FOURTH BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT

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But suppose one frames the world as a dangerous place in which the forces of evil — a hydra-headed monster labeled “terrorism” — confront the forces of good. This frame depicts Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda as two heads of the same monster. In this frame, whether or not there were actual meetings by agents or other forms of communication between them is nit picking and irrelevant.

**People carry around multiple frames in their heads.** We don’t simply have one way of framing an issue or an event. Lakoff emphasizes two meta-frames<sup>2</sup> or cultural themes operating in the United States, embodied in two competing family metaphors: the Strict Father vs. the Nurturant Parent. He sees these meta-frames as underlying, respectively, conservative and liberal thought more generally. But Lakoff is wise enough to recognize that we don’t carry around just one of these in our heads but both of them. One may be much more easily triggered and habitually used but the other is also part of our cultural heritage and can be triggered and used as well, given the appropriate cues.

In a framing contest, such as between liberals supporting gay civil unions and conservatives opposing gay marriage, a successful framing strategy involves the ability

to enter into the worldview of one’s adversaries. Lakoff does not demonize conservatives but makes a successful effort to enter into their way of thinking. In doing so, he illustrates a useful rule of thumb: To reframe a message effectively, you should be able to describe a frame that you disagree with so that its advocates would say, “Yes, this is what I believe.”

## The Problem with Strict Fathers and Nurturant Parents

As critics have pointed out, part of Lakoff’s appeal is the promise of a silver bullet through which liberals and progressives can rebuild their majority support if only they will follow the formula. Progressive values such as fairness, inclusiveness, empathy, and community have broad cultural appeal, Lakoff reminds us. Reframing political debate to focus on those values, then, is the roadmap to regaining power.

Well, yes and no. The family metaphor seems to work better as a metaframe for conservative thinkers than it does for progressives. But even here, there are fissures between conservatives who find it resonant and those who fear Big Brother rather than embracing Strict Father when thinking about the role of government. Some lib-

ertarian conservatives make common cause with liberals who don't like the government telling them what they can read or buy. It isn't very clear how the Strict Father model articulates with a free market meta-frame that underlies conservative support for the privatization of Social Security, for example. Strict fathers don't have invisible hands.

Furthermore, the nurturant parent embodied in the New Deal — America's soft version of the European style welfare state dating to the 1930s that brought us Social Security and federal labor regulation — resonates differently between those who call themselves liberals versus those who call themselves progressives. The nurturant parent metaphor doesn't really have a lot of resonance for people who see themselves on a quest for social justice. Nor is mutuality — a progressive goal or value — quite the same as nurturance. Locking arms and singing “We shall overcome” is about self-help and interdependence, about brotherhood and sisterhood, not parents.

Family metaphors are not the most likely frames for most people to use on foreign policy issues. Lakoff has little to say about another resonant meta-frame: The world is a dangerous place. Much has been written about the cultural roots of such a frame in supporting the Cold War and the nuclear arms race. One can substitute “terrorism” for “communism” and the same underlying frame remains serviceable. The superhero who rescues the innocents from unprovoked attacks by evil forces in children's cartoons isn't exactly a strict father or nurturant parent but a benevolent outsider who protects the whole family from outside threats. What to do about Osama and Saddam is not really about tough-love versus co-counseling.

### What Lakoff Obscures

Like any frame, Lakoff's framing of contemporary American politics highlights some things and obscures others. Lakoff

directs our attention to the message but he shifts attention away from the groups, political parties, governments, and other carriers of those messages, and the complicated, uneven playing field on which they compete. Social movements and the advocacy groups they spawn successfully challenge official or dominant frames frequently. They compete on a playing field in which inequalities in power and resources play a major role in determining whether they succeed. Nevertheless, some movements were

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**Christian Right organizations did a lot of movement-building work to further the success of their preferred frame but often remained behind the scenes. On the abortion issue, for example, they rarely speak to the media directly but support broader coalitions such as the National Right to Life Committee as spokespersons for their movement's frame.**

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dramatically successful against long odds in reframing the terms of political debate and it behooves those engaged in reframing efforts to analyze their experience.

In failing to embed framing guides in this broader movement-building context, Lakoff asks us to ignore not only the elephant in the room but also the moles, ferrets, chipmunks, occasional black panthers, raging bulls and wild boars, and the more domesticated donkeys and carrier pigeons. There is a whole menagerie out there that Lakoff is not thinking about. And it is this multi-faceted complexity that

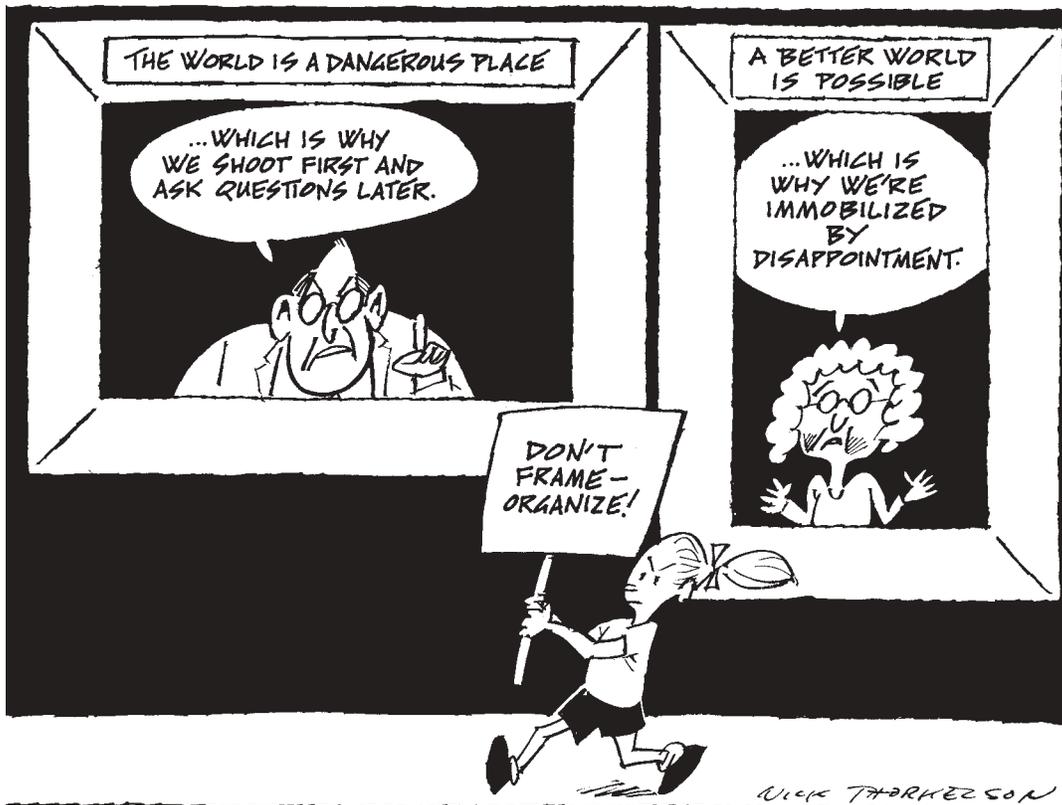
the Christian Right has, at times, effectively traversed.

To succeed, challengers need to integrate their framing strategies with broader movement-building strategies. This means building and sustaining the carriers of these frames in various ways — for example, by helping groups figure out how to gain access where blocked, and how to strengthen their ability to collaborate better with groups sharing similar goals. Framing contests are about a lot more than staying on message.

There is an irony here because Lakoff, to his credit, has been spending a lot of his time over the past several years talking to many of the “carriers,” convincing the political groups of the importance of framing. The danger here is that the focus on message, divorced from movement-building, reduces framing strategy to a matter of pitching metaphors for electoral campaigns and policy debates, or perhaps contracting with think tanks like the Lakoff's own Rockridge Institute to find the right hot buttons.

By focusing entirely on the content of the message, while ignoring the frame carriers and the playing field, Lakoff falls into the pitfalls of the social marketing model.<sup>3</sup> Without a strategy to build a base or constituency, and without democratic media reform, framing can become simply a more sophisticated, but still ungrounded, variation on the belief that you just need to communicate the right ideas — i.e. “the truth will set you free.” *To counter the assumption that the frame will set us free, framing strategies must not just address the content of the message or the style of debate but attend to base building and challenge the contours of the non-level playing field in which the contest is carried on.*

The one intermediary that Lakoff recognizes is the think-tank that helps its political allies to shape their message through its clever marketing skills. He



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rightly appreciates the skill of conservative social marketers ensconced in their well-funded think tanks like the Heritage Foundation or American Enterprise Institute. But he has nothing to say about the rise of a relevant social movement, the Christian Right, in the late 1970s. The Christian Right's infrastructure supported conservative frames in ways that went far beyond finding better ways of marketing their message. Political scientist Duane Oldfield describes how evangelicals built movement-oriented broadcast media and active local congregations to grow in political significance.<sup>4</sup> By the late 1980s, the influence of the movement was directed through the Republican Party.

Christian Right organizations did a lot of movement-building work to further the success of their preferred frame but often remained behind the scenes. On the abortion issue, for example, they rarely speak to the media directly but support broader coalitions such as the National Right to Life Committee as spokespersons for their movement's frame.

## People-driven framing

Lakoff's narrowness leads him to such lastounding claims as the one he makes in his introduction to *Don't Think of an Elephant!*: "There is only one progressive think tank engaged in a major reframing exercise: the Rockridge Institute." Perhaps it is tunnel vision stemming from Lakoff's roots in cognitive psychology that blinds him to the civil rights movement's "major reframing" of Black American experience, the feminist movement's "major reframing" of women's experience, as well as the major reframing of gay, lesbian, and transgendered experience, the reframing of labor (social unionism), and the major reframing of nuclear power.

The list of successful reframing efforts would be incomplete without mention of the Black feminist movement, that reframed the feminist reframing, and the environmental justice movement that reframed environmental organizing. In other words, not only are broad-based social movements critical to reframing efforts, but such movements ensure that reframing remains an active process of engagement with shifting political realities.

Nor does Lakoff acknowledge the rise of a media reform movement, whose participants engage in a variety of media critique, alternative and oppositional media, and media reform efforts. While we strongly agree with Lakoff that progressive framing efforts have lacked adequate resources, hundreds of organizations operating at the national, regional, and local levels have included reframing in their efforts to build progressive movements.<sup>5</sup>

The central lessons to be learned from Lakoff's omission is that building an effective framing strategy is not merely about more effective marketing expressed through catchy symbols that tap an emotional hot button and trigger the desired response. The problem isn't that it doesn't work — in the short run, it may — but that its singular focus on finesse in

individual framing undermines the goal of increasing citizens' sense that they can collectively change things. By treating potential participants as individuals whose citizenship involves voting and perhaps conveying their personal opinion to key decision-makers, citizens as collective actors are moved off of the screen.

In contrast, a participatory approach to promoting progressive frames looks at the failings of mass media with an eye on supporting a group's strength in building long-term, on-going relationships with journalists. Building these working relationships are themselves opportunities for framing contests that, when successful, further the prominence of one's preferred frame in the competitive media field.

An essential guide for progressives must address these issues as well as how framing strategies can draw out the latent sense of agency that people already carry around with them. In sum, a *participatory communication model* involves developing an ongoing capability of people to act collectively in framing contests. One doesn't transform people who feel individually

powerless into a group with a sense of collective efficacy by pushing hot buttons. Indeed, *one* doesn't transform people at all. People transform themselves through movement building — the work of reflection, critique, dialog, relation building and infrastructure building that synergistically constitute a “major reframing effort.”

### Conclusion

**F**raming matters but it is not the only thing that matters. There is a danger of “quick fix” politics — the sexy frame as the new hot button. Just as conservatives worked slowly and patiently for three decades, progressives need to start small and build big, to win back our base of support. Framing work is critical to this process, but framing work itself must be framed in the context of movement building.

Integrating framing and other forms of movement building is necessary if the frame carriers are going to be able to compete successfully against the carriers of official frames with lots of resources and organization behind them. This involves an explicit recognition of power inequalities and how to challenge them and a recognition of citizens as potential collective actors, not just individual ones. Think tanks that want to help progressives are an important component of creating a supportive infrastructure but they will fail if they adopt a social marketing model that ignores the nature of the playing field and focuses only on the message.

There is a story circulating on the Internet, attributed to Jim France of the Pavilion Hotel Group in Bangkok. Elephant rides were one of the main attractions at a resort hotel in Phuket. About twenty minutes before the first wave of the tsunami hit, the nine elephants became extremely agitated and unruly. They broke out of their confinement, climbed a nearby hill, and started bellowing. Many people followed them up the hill before the waves hit.

After the waves had subsided, the elephants went down the hill as a group and started picking up children with

their trunks and running them back up the hill. After the children were taken care of, the elephants started helping the adults. According to the account, they rescued 42 people. They wouldn't let their handlers mount them until the job was done.

To make the metaphor fit our message, let's add a detail that didn't actually happen. Let's imagine that in carrying out their rescue mission, the elephants confronted a group of government soldiers assembled to enforce a law against elephants acting as a pack. And imagine further that these nine elephants just ran right by the soldiers, brushing them aside to complete their mission. Now *there* are some elephants to think about. ■

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*This essay is the product of a collaborative process involving the MRAP (Movement/Media Research and Action Project) seminar including Matt Williams, Jeff Langstraat, Vered Malka, Michelle Gawerc, Johanna Pabst, and Jesse Kirdahy-Scalia.*

### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> They are *meta*-frames because we often want to talk about the framing of issues and specific events as well. Lakoff aims his discussion at more general world views that cut across multiple issues.

<sup>3</sup> Charlotte Ryan contrasts the social marketing, media advocacy, and participatory communication models in “Putting the Public in Public Health,” forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup> Duane M. Oldfield *The Right and the Righteous*. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Our own modest network at MRAP (Movement/Media Research and Action Project) has included at one time or another: the Grassroots Policy Project, the Advocacy Institute, Frameworks Inc, Institute for Policy Studies, Political Research Associates, Poverty Race Research Action Council (PRRAC), Community Media Workshop, the Progressive Communicators Network, United for a Fair Economy, Massachusetts Labor Extension Program, Northeast Action, Health Care for All, and many others including researchers based in academic institutions. We have run framing workshops for over 400 organizations, one of which, the Rhode Island Coalition against Domestic Violence [[www.ricadv.org](http://www.ricadv.org)] is publishing with us, a complete manual on participatory communication including framing processes. Also see Charlotte Ryan (1991) *Prime Time Activism: Media Strategy for Organizers*. Boston: South End Press.



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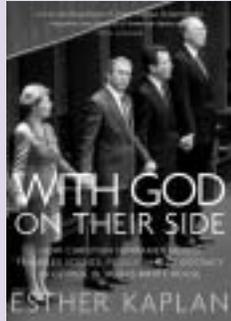
# Book Review

**WITH GOD ON THEIR SIDE**  
*How Christian Fundamentalists Trampled Science, Policy and Democracy in George W. Bush's White House*

Esther Kaplan

The New Press, 2004, 322 pages,  
 \$24.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Eleanor J. Bader



The story of George W. Bush's religious awakening has become a contemporary legend: a tale of a hard-drinker turned pious Christian. Whether it's true or not, Bush's alleged conversion is trucked out repeatedly, presumably because many Americans are comforted by the notion of a God-fearing executive who, like them, once wallowed in sin.

But like most legends, scrutiny reveals flaws in both the narrative and its denouement. In fact, Esther Kaplan's *With God on Their Side* exposes the turpitude and racism that undergirds the Bush administration, from justifying war by lambasting Islam as "a religion of violence" to endangering teenagers by denying funding for school-based sex education programs that mention contraception or abortion. It's a terrifying read, rife with examples. What's more, Kaplan's documentation connects the dots, demonstrating how Christian fundamentalism has intruded into virtually every aspect of U.S. life.

Let's start with GWB himself. While previous presidents have consistently affirmed their belief in God, Bush goes one step further and purports to have a direct line to the Almighty. Kaplan reports that when the president met with then-Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas in 2003, he told him that "God told me to strike at al-Qaeda and I struck them, and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did, and now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East." God also weighed in when Bush was pondering his first run for the White House. "God wants me to do it," he announced to televangelist James Robison. Months later, in the aftermath of 9/11, he told *Time* magazine that God had chosen him to lead the world's war on terror.

Not only does Team Bush believe itself to have Divine approval, it believes its agenda represents God's will. That's right: God is anti-abortion, anti-gay, and scornful of the Kyoto Pro-

ocol on Global Warming and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty on Nuclear Arms. He—there is absolutely no possibility of He being She—like the Bush administration, sees the United Nations as one step short of Satanic internationalism, *aka* One World Government. After all, just look at the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The thought of ratification, Kaplan writes, sends the Bush team into apoplectic panic. To hear them tell it, the Convention would require the United States "to hand over our right to decide our own laws on such issues as family law, parental rights, religious exercise, education, abortion regulation, employment pay scales, quotas in educational institutions, workplaces and elected offices, and forbid us from recognizing that men and women are fundamentally different."

Indeed, Bush's posturing often reeks of anti-feminist backlash and is an overt reaction to the blurring of gender roles that women's and GLBT movements have trumpeted since Stonewall. But as horrifying as the administration's rhetoric is, it is their policies that pack the biggest punch. Take AIDS. Twenty-plus years into the pandemic, we know that reducing the risk of infection by practicing safer sex and using clean needles cuts transmission. Sadly, this is not a message fundamentalists wish to promote. Instead, an all-out war on condoms, hinged on the fact that prophylactics don't stop the Human Papilloma Virus, has been

launched. Money for programs that promulgate abstinence as the only solution to STDs, including AIDS, has been free-flowing. Worse, AIDS organizations critical of this stance have been punished. Fifteen groups, all previous recipients of federal funding, were called to task and subjected to months of intensive audits. Those reined in include the Gay Men's Health Crisis, The National Association of People with AIDS, and The Stop AIDS Project.

Similarly, Christian fundamentalists have swooped into public schools with curricula penned by religious rightists to teach abstinence to America's youth. Again, federal money—hundreds of millions of dollars—has been made available for a host of projects. Kaplan quotes John Marble, of National Stonewall Democrats, about his research into Teen Mania and other anti-sex efforts. "The abstinence-only message is deeply linked with Evangelical Christianity. You're really hoping everyone will come to Christ

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*With God on Their Side* presents  
 a deeply unsettling look at the  
 power Christian conservatives have  
 acquired. In championing a biblical  
 worldview, their politics supercedes  
 democratic pluralism.

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and wait till marriage for sex. If you're struggling with homosexual thoughts, you need to convert to Christianity and that will cure you."

And then there is abortion, an ever-present religious-right obsession. Bush's reinstatement of the Mexico City Policy, or Global Gag Rule, prohibits U.S. financed international family planning groups from performing abortions or counseling women about their options, even with funds raised separately. Hypocrisy rears its head here, Kaplan writes, because reducing family planning has caused a groundswell of abortions and an increase in female death from illegal procedures. "A Population Action International report," Kaplan continues, "cites clinic closures in country after country. In Kenya, five family planning clinics were shuttered after having their USAID funding cut off for refusing to comply with the policy; one facility was the only center serving some 300,000 people in a vast, poor neighborhood of Nairobi."

Sound absurd? Doubters need only remember that this is the Lord's volition, conveyed directly to GWB.

Other Divine orchestrations ally conservative evangelical power brokers with corporate leaders and judicial appointees who eschew church/state separation. While the book never fully explains the alliance between industrial big-wigs and religious

conservatives—Is it that power loves power? Or is wealth an overt display of God's beneficence?—the relationships Kaplan chronicles offer chilling proof of far-reaching partnerships.

In addition, I wish Kaplan had explained why a political faction so concerned with fetuses and childbirth is so blasé about global warming and environmental degradation. Will God somehow protect the lungs of Christian children? Or will Christ's return eviscerate such mundane concerns? The fundamentalist Right's lackadaisical response to pollution is hard to fathom, unless End Times prophecies depict the only future worth considering.

Despite these lingering questions, *With God on Their Side* presents a deeply unsettling look at the power Christian conservatives have acquired. Bush's boosters —The American Family Association, Concerned Women for America, The Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family, and The Southern Baptist Convention, among them—are champions of a biblical worldview that supercedes democratic pluralism. Kaplan presents these folks as forces to reckon with. If she is right, and I am sure she is, we ignore them at our political and social peril.

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### GUEST COMMENTARY *continued from page 2*

of suspected terrorists are not entitled to assistance under 13224.

Watch lists and the names on them are proliferating since Bush enacted the Executive Order. 13224 actually included the first "list" of only 27 names. When I checked in June, that one list had grown to some 202 pages (more than doubling since the fall of 2004). Additionally, there is some question as to the political motivations behind new entries on the lists, with foreign governments such as Columbia, Indonesia and Mexico allegedly lobbying the Bush Administration to add opposition groups and insurgents from their countries.

List checking by foundations, non-profit organizations, or other groups is not required by the Executive Order. But, by attaching the lists to the order, the government implies the need for such a review. So does the threat that the government will prosecute them under anti-terrorism laws for providing "material aid."

In November 2002, with Executive Order 13224 and the Patriot Act as the presumed legal basis, new government oversight of charities came in the form of the Treasury Department's "Anti-Terrorist Financing Guidelines: Voluntary Best Practices for US-Based Charities." These confusing guidelines affect foundation funding (especially abroad), international charitable organizations, Muslim-American groups, and potentially any nonprofit undertaking. My research confirms that it is now commonplace for foundations to "voluntarily" require grantees to certify that they are not supporting terrorists, and to check board members and employees against multiple terrorist lists.

This is even as funders and international relief groups call the guidelines unrealistic, impractical, costly, and potentially dangerous. The guidelines put the onus of ferreting out terrorists and terrorist activities on grant makers and nonprofit groups, rather than the U.S. government.

Here's an example. The Treasury guidelines specifically advise international funders to gather information on potential grantee groups, their employees, subcontracting organizations, and vendors, as well as to check the blacklists. In several references, the guidelines suggest that: "The charity should run the names through public databases..." They presume that charitable organizations are primarily laundering money, and demonstrate little understanding of charitable intent, mission or grant making practices.

A similar approach is central to Operation Green Quest, an effort involving many federal agencies to follow the money trail between American organizations and terrorists abroad. In a brochure designed to encourage banks and other financial institutions to report suspicious activity, the government urges them to watch out for charity or relief organizations that could be channeling funds to terrorists and notes that transfers between bank accounts of related



NICK JANKELSON  
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entities or charities could be signs of trouble. Many nonprofit organizations that have nothing to do with terrorists make such bank transfers as a regular part of doing their work, and they should not have to worry that they will be investigated for doing so.

Added pressure comes from the USA Patriot Act and the secret and wide-ranging power it gave the government to spy on any person or entity, including nonprofit organizations. The government can now seize property and freeze assets without first producing any evidence of wrongdoing. Making matters worse, the government can label evidence collected in these raids as confidential for national security reasons, which puts organizations in the untenable position of having to defend themselves against claims to which they are not privy.

The nation's Islamic foundations and public charities are under particular suspicion. The government froze the assets of several, such as The Holy Land Foundation, Global Relief, the Benevolent International Foundation, and the Islamic African Relief Agency, and placed them and their principals on terrorist watch lists. According to the 9/11 Commission, however, the government has not proven that these groups are guilty of any terrorism-related crimes and there have been no convictions to date. Ironically, the Treasury guidelines were released in response to Arab-American and Muslim-American organizations that had asked the Treasury Department for a roadmap on how to avoid legal penalties.

In the course of interviews with ten of the largest international foundations, sev-

eral said things similar to this officer: "Everyone agrees that the voluntary Guidelines are impossible to deal with... It would be difficult to make any grants if we followed [them]." Yet, the threat of liability, the penalty of frozen assets, and the advice of attorneys lead most corporate funders, major foundations, international relief organizations, and large nonprofits to pay them serious attention, in part because there is no "safe harbor."

While the largest foundations claim that they have not changed their priorities and processes for giving as a result of new security rules, they almost all check the watch lists on a regular basis. According to my research, some do it daily, while others do it weekly or monthly on every current and potential grantee. Just a month ago, however, the Justice Department's

Inspector General confirmed that the country's main terrorist watch list contains incomplete and inaccurate information. And foundations are confused by the multiplicity of black lists – not just the State Department's and the Treasury's, but the European Union's and those of individual countries.

In "voluntarily" requiring that the organizations they fund sign a document "certifying" that they will not "knowingly permit any portion of the grant to go to terrorism or violence," many employ language that has been all but codified.

Even while crafting these requirements, compliance officers at foundations scoff at the practice. "What does certification do? Wouldn't a terrorist just sign the letter?" There is a widespread sense that these administrative formalities are unlikely to yield effective results. Program officers view certification language as "useless and embarrassing," damaging trust in their work with the very groups that could make a difference in improving the conditions that lead to terrorism. Ironically, some also fear it "doesn't really protect you from being designated as having provided material aid."

## It is now commonplace for foundations to "voluntarily" require grantees to certify that they are not terrorists, and to check board members and employees against multiple terrorist lists.

Yet while inconvenient for them, the practice has led to the defunding of groups, particularly in the Global South, which have refused to sign. Other grantees tacitly agree with the funders to ignore the inane and untenable by complying.

No one is arguing that terrorism is not a real and dangerous threat. But, by enforcing elaborate, draconian rules, Washington

is doing what it claims to be against: harming charities and the people they serve while doing little to stem terrorism. The left hand of the government doesn't seem to know what the right hand is doing, creating a mess for funders, while also achieving the aims of conservatives who want to tame the NGO sector. (see Jean Hardisty and Elizabeth Furdon, "Policing Civil Society: NGO Watch," *Public Eye*, Spring 2004).

The civil rights and liberties of charities — especially those of Islamic relief organizations — are infringed upon by a policy that is both ineffective and aimed at the wrong enemy. Charities, foundations, international relief organizations, and non-governmental groups are not a major source of funding for terrorism. Rather, their work holds out the hope of positive social change in the world. ■

*Terry Odendahl, executive director of the Institute for Collaborative Change in Santa Fe, NM, conducted this research while the 2004-2005 Waldemar A. Nielsen Visiting Chair in Philanthropy at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute's Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership.*

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# .....*Reports in Review*.....

## REPORT OF THE MONTH

### Surveillance-Industrial Complex

**“The Surveillance-Industrial Complex: How the American Government is Conscripting Businesses and Individuals in the Construction of a Surveillance Society,”**

by Jay Stanley, *American Civil Liberties Union*, August 2004.

This summer, seven new state/federal “fusion centers” that aim to stream together and process “intelligence” generated by everyone from postal carriers and perhaps private data-mining businesses to FBI agents made headlines in a few places like Massachusetts and California [see Carol Rose and Chip Berlet, “Romney’s Spy Center,” *Boston Globe*, June 14, 2005]. So it seems fitting to go back to the American Civil Liberties Union’s August 2004 report on “The Surveillance-Industrial Complex” to understand the broader apparatus through which the government created the data flowing into these high-tech spying centers.

The report documents the pro-surveillance lobby of companies pitching high-tech spying technology to a government obsessed with stopping crime before it starts. It also highlights how the government recruits both individuals and companies to collect data and report suspicious behavior through watch programs, open-market data purchases, etc., as well as how it is collecting, saving, and using the data. For instance, it reports on wholly new volunteer programs created post-9/11:

- Police on the East Coast are embracing CAT Eyes — or Community Anti-Terrorism Training Institute — to train neighborhood watches.
- The Department of Homeland Security is funding Highway Watch to encourage truck drivers to report suspicions to a central control center. Citizen preparedness campaigns are widespread, and, in New York, encourage residents to call a statewide tip line.
- The FBI’s InfraGard built a network of 10,000 businesses (exactly which businesses is a secret) that may or may not be a network of tipsters.

While citizens are cryptically alerted to watch and report

“suspicious activity” and report anyone who “does not seem to belong,” even more aggressive programs are being proposed to recruit everyone from mail carriers to utility employees—who have access to private residences—to act as de facto spies informing on any unusual sightings inside private homes.

At the same time that watch programs cultivate an atmosphere of distrust and racial profiling among individuals and communities, the government is recruiting companies to provide it with personal information on customers. It buys this information — collected by companies through routine purchases, supermarket loyalty cards, car rentals, banking, identification verification, routine background checks, and other transactions—and creates regulatory standards to make data easily accessible or simply requires or “encourages” its surrender. One of the biggest data companies, Choicepoint, says it sells data to 35 different government agencies including the FBI. The report explains that private companies are not restricted by the Privacy Act or subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

The notorious Section 215 of the USA Patriot Act allows the FBI to demand information about individuals involuntarily from libraries, bookstores, and internet service providers without court oversight, while another section allow agents to use National Security Letters to secure information on individuals from financial and other institutions which was once allowed only to research those with ties to suspicious governments. Even Las Vegas hotels were deemed interesting, receiving National Security Letters from the FBI in December 2003.

While some companies are forced to release their data with secret orders, others are actually lobbying the government to purchase and install the use of surveillance technology which they developed. Moreover, the information collected from all these sources can be fused to create detailed profiles on the private lives of billions of citizens. Together the innovations create an atmosphere of eroding checks on government and corporations, unchallenged by courts that have not caught up to the Brave New World threatening people’s liberties.

### *Other Reports in Review*

#### Who are the Domestic Terrorists?

**Terror From the Right: Almost 60 Terrorist Plots Uncovered in the U.S.**

by Andrew Bleiwas, Anthony Griggs and Mark Potok, *Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report*, July 2005.

The Southern Poverty Law Center gracefully turns Homeland Security logic on its

head with this simple report compiling the 60 terrorist plots in the United States devised by white supremacists and the Far Right since the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.

Although the *Congressional Quarterly* secured a draft listing from Homeland Security that marks animal rights and Earth Firsters as the nation’s gravest domestic terror threat, their property destruction is a far

cry from the deaths sought by the white supremacists, the report notes.

Among the more recent plots listed:

- David Wayne Hull, imperial wizard of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and an adherent of the anti-Semitic Christian Identity theology, was charged in February 2003 with buying hand grenades with the aim of blowing up

abortion clinics. The FBI says Hull also illegally taught followers how to build pipe bombs. He was convicted of weapons violations and sentenced to 12 years in federal prison.

- Antigovernment extremist and tax resister David Roland Hinkson of Idaho was charged with trying twice to hire someone to murder a federal judge, a prosecutor, and an IRS agent involved in a tax case against him. Hinkson had refused to pay almost \$1 million in taxes earned from his Water Oz dietary supplement company. He was convicted in 2004 on tax charges and in 2005 for the assassination plot as well.
- In April 2004, neo-Nazi skinhead Sean Gillespie videotaped himself as he fire-bombed Temple B'nai Israel, an Oklahoma City synagogue, for a film aimed at inspiring other racists to violently pursue their cause. He was found guilty of the attack and faces a minimum 35-year sentence without parole.

### Hijacked Day of Prayer

#### National Day of Prayer Task Force: Turning a Day of Faith into a Rally for the Christian Right

*Texas Freedom Network Education Fund, 2005.*

This report documents how the National Day of Prayer Task Force has turned this observance, established by Congress in 1952, into a battleground of the on-going religious culture war. The task force, housed in Focus on the Family and led by its leader's wife, discourages any non-Christian groups from participating in its programs and disperses the ideology of the Christian Right to the mainstream public through its prayer day activities. The Prayer Day is observed nationally, since the Reagan Administration, on the first Thursday in May.

The report argues that the organization spreads the language of the religious Right into mainstream politics and government in part by asking people to pray against the "promotion of homosexuality," the denial of God in public schools, and condom distribution. The Task Force organized more than 50,000 prayer events aimed at evangelical Christians. While the organization explicitly claims to be inclusive of Jewish tradition, in practice, the researchers say, this is false because it strictly adheres to the evangelical Lausanne Covenant, which champions the infallibility

of both the Old and New Testaments.

The Task Force lobbies the government to draw upon its themes in celebration of each year's National Day of Prayer. In 2005, 26 state governments — issued proclamations adopting the NDP Task Force's theme, "God Shed His Grace on Thee." The scale of its success in wooing state legislatures demonstrates the increasing popularity of this organization and its increasing involvement in the political sphere. Overall, the report argues that the NDP Task Force's political motivations skew the original purpose of the National Day of Prayer, which was to unite all faiths, rather than to be sectarian, exclusive, and religiously and politically divisive.

### Conservative Philanthropy, Take 2

#### Funding the Culture Wars: Philanthropy, Church, and State

*By John Russell, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, February 2005.*

NCRP's 2004 report, *The Axis of Ideology: Conservative Foundations and Public Policy*, made waves by documenting how 79 conservative foundations helped mainstream "radical" policy ideas, like huge tax cuts for the wealthy and privatizing Social Security, with large grants supporting the general operations of conservative organizations. It also found that conservative Christian organizations won 10% of the grants to fight access to abortion, promote school prayer, oppose gay marriage, and engage in other culture war causes.

In its 2005 report, "Funding the Culture Wars," NCRP uses the same data, plus some new data on evangelically oriented private foundations, to zero in on support for Christian evangelical organizations promoting policy changes. This is challenging, since evangelicals come in all political shapes and sizes. But in the end, Russell tracked 37 foundations and 3,162 grants totaling \$168 million. The average social service grant for work in the United States totaled \$59,346, and the average grant for policy and advocacy totaled \$48,541.

Focus on the Family, the Rev. James Dobson's enterprise which opposes access to abortion and gay marriage, secured more than \$5.5 million from 1999 to 2002 from 32 grantors. In the international realm, the report is particularly concerned with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which

will distribute \$180 million in grants for abstinence-only AIDS prevention programs in 2005, with several evangelical organizations eligible for the funding.

The report takes on the larger, more philosophical task of analyzing the challenges to the separation of Church and State posed by these grantees. But its difficulty in disentangling Right Wing from less advocacy oriented evangelical activity diminishes the usefulness of its analysis.

For instance, while Campus Crusade for Christ — which obtained \$17,271,852 in grant money — champions the role of the male as protector, it does not promote political campaigns on the issue.

### Perpetual Report

#### Bush's Other War: The Assault on Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

*International Women's Health Coalition, June 2005. www.bushsotherwar.org*

The Coalition regularly updates an extensive online report that provides one-stop shopping from various sources on President George W. Bush's domestic and international campaign against women's reproductive rights, access to health care and abortion, and sex education: [www.bushsotherwar.org](http://www.bushsotherwar.org). For example:

- In March 2004, at a regional planning meeting of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States was the only one of 38 countries in the western hemisphere that opposed making a call for greater access to reproductive health services and HIV/AIDS prevention programs.
- Poor women turn more and more to Medicaid for family planning services because of cuts to subsidized family planning programs. Because of its greater expense, this makes for bad health policy.
- One of Bush's nominees for a Federal court, James Leon Holmes, is former president of Arkansas Right to Life. The report offers one paragraph summaries of Holmes and other key judicial nominees.
- The site also covers such topics as giving legal status to embryos, blocking funding for international programs, and manipulating science for political ends. ■

# Eyes RIGHT

## BAD TASTE ON THE ALTAR OF MULTICULTURALISM

After the London bombings, Diane West insisted in a July 15th *Washington Times* op-ed that blind faith in multiculturalism was to blame for home-grown terrorism. According to West, Islam itself, including every Muslim from moderate to fundamentalist, is the real problem, but people will not say it for fear of hurting someone's feelings.

She convolutedly writes of "the gross incompatibility of Islam — the religious force that shrinks freedom even as it 'moderately' enables or 'extremistly' advances jihad —with the West."

And in a display of the hyperbole and bad taste common to a certain style of conservative commentators, she berates us all for remaining silent on the real threat to the West. "Much better to watch subterranean tunnels fill with charred body parts in silence," she quips in her piece entitled, "Facing Hard Facts."

But the *Times* headline was too tame for Townhall.com, a conservative digest of news with a broad readership. When it reprinted West's op-ed, it had become, "Burnt Offerings on the Altar of Multiculturalism."

Source: <http://www.washtimes.com/op-ed/dwest.htm>, <http://www.townhall.com/columnists/dianawest/dw20050718.shtml>

## HAIKU

Creationists have  
Designs on our  
intelligence  
Bad education

—Anon

## SCHLAFLY'S TOOTAME, TOO

A similar fate befell one of Phyllis Schlafly's columns in which she weighed in against an important piece of legislation — the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. "If Republicans are looking for a way to return to their principles of limited government and reduced federal spending, [this would be] a good place to start." And why? "It's a mystery why Republicans continue to put a billion dollars a year of taxpayers' money into the hands of radical feminists who use it to preach their anti-marriage and anti-male ideology, promote divorce, corrupt the family court system, and engage in liberal political advocacy."

But once again, her title was too tame for Townhall.com. While her own website, [www.eagleforum.org](http://www.eagleforum.org), topped it with the banner, "Time to Defund Feminist Pork," Townhall.com found "Time to Dispose of Radical Feminist Pork" much tastier.

Sources: <http://www.eagleforum.org/column/> and <http://www.townhall.com/columnists/phyllischlafly/ps20050718.shtml>

## DON'T MOURN THE WAR DEAD; PICKET

In 1998, Fred Phelps, the notorious pastor of Westboro Baptist Church in Kansas, picketed the funeral of Matthew Shepard, who was killed in an anti-gay attack in Wyoming. Phelps also likes to picket the funerals of those who suffered from HIV/AIDs.

In 2005, Phelps is winning media attention for picketing the funerals of the Iraq war dead, who he claims are dying in retribution for a bombing of his church six years ago.

In July, his target was a 19 year-old Idaho National Guardswoman, Carrie French, who died in June in Kirkuk and whose funeral was in Boise.

"An all-American girl from a society of all-American heretics," he told the Associated Press, apropos of nothing.

Source: Associated Press, June 14, 2005

## BLOG ALERT: SANTORUM EXPOSED!

Special kudos to the blog *Santorum Exposed.com* for posting a video clip of Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum arguing against birth control.

On the July 28th Nitebeat, a New England public affairs cable show, Santorum said, "I vote for and have supported birth control because it is not a taking of human life. But I'm not a supporter of birth control..."

"I think it's harmful to women. I think it's harmful to society to have a society that says having sex outside of marriage should be encouraged... Birth control to me enables that and I don't think it's a healthy thing for our country."

Within a few days, NARAL Pro-Choice America documented the times Santorum had in fact voted against access to birth control, including a March budget amendment for family planning services.

# Eye LASHES

“Muslim persecution of Christians has continued for 13 centuries—and still goes on.”

Robert Spencer

—*The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam, cover*

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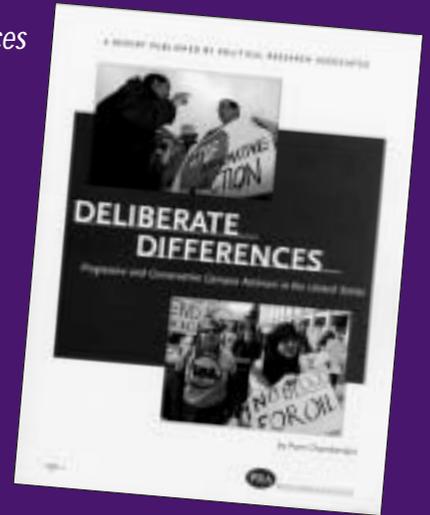
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