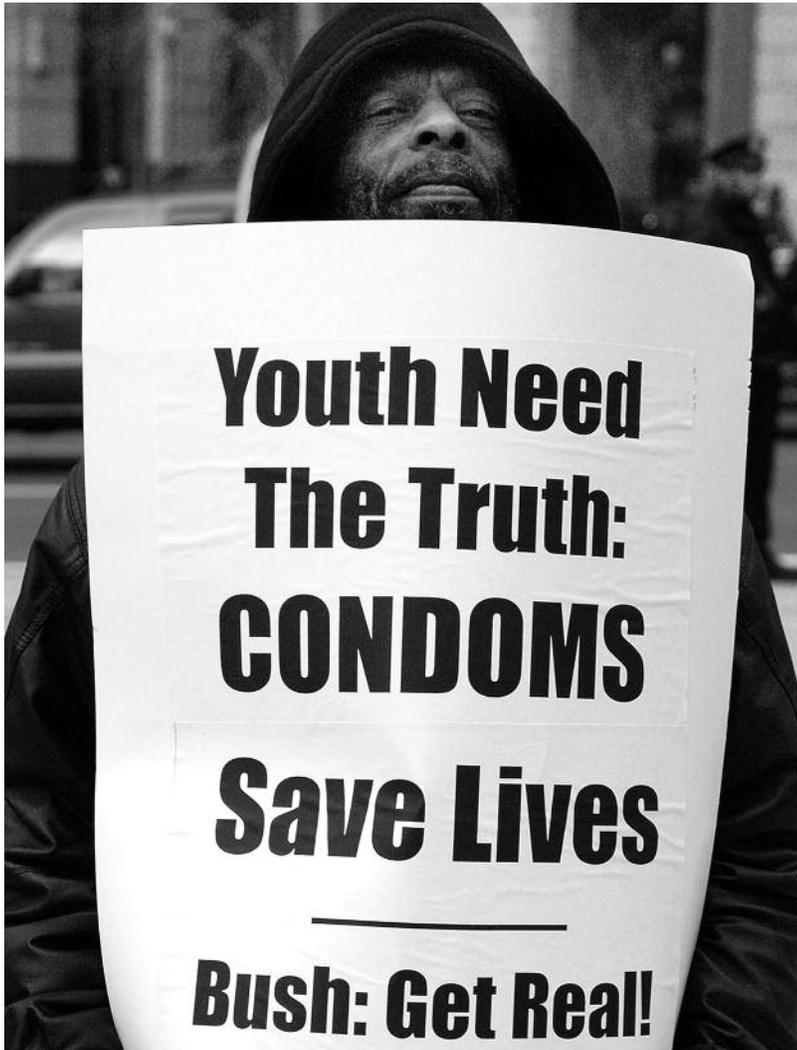


# The Public Eye

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Jeff Fusco/Cerity Images

Nate Baker was among 250 demonstrators at a 2004 rally in Philadelphia who protested President George W. Bush's plan to expand abstinence-only education in the fight against sexually transmitted diseases.

## Leaderless Counterterrorism Strategy

### The "War on Terror," Civil Liberties, and Flawed Scholarship

By Chip Berlet

The effectiveness of counterterrorism efforts by the Bush Administration is compromised by flawed analyses based on sloppy scholarship by Marc Sageman and Bruce Hoffman—two leading experts heavily relied on by policymakers. The resulting programs of government surveillance and computerized data-collection are unnecessarily undermining the civil liberties of millions of Muslims and Arabs living in this country, as well as the rights of all Americans.

Accurate descriptions of targeted terrorist formations and potential terrorists, especially their ideology and methods, are crucial for effective government efforts to understand, predict, and prevent acts of domestic terrorism while abiding by Constitutional safeguards. This is because police and intelligence agencies embrace

Counterterrorism Strategy continues on page 6

## Abstaining From the Truth

### Sex Education as Ideology

By Pam Chamberlain

The Osseo Public School District is in most ways a typical Minnesota suburban system: three high schools, scores of athletic teams, and a graduation rate of 94

percent. But for the past ten years, it has run a dual-track curriculum in sexuality education. Students can choose between an abstinence-only health class and a comprehensive sexuality education class—the result of a pro-

Abstaining From the Truth continues on page 21

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— GUEST COMMENTARY —

**Becoming a Christian Citizen: Electoral Lessons from the Religious Right for the Religious Left**

By Frederick Clarkson

The main reason why the Religious Right became powerful is not what most people may think. Some would undoubtedly point to the powerful communications media. Others might identify charismatic leaders, the development of “wedge issues,” or even changes in evangelical theology in the latter part of the twentieth century that supported, and even demanded, political action. All of these and more, especially taken together, were important factors. But the main reason for the Religious Right’s rise to power has been its capacity for political action, particularly electoral politics.

Meanwhile, over on the Religious Left, many of the ingredients are present for a more dynamic movement. But the ingredient that is most remarkably lacking on the Religious Left is the one that made the Religious Right powerful: a capacity for electoral politics. Indeed, there has never been anything on the Religious Left on the scale of say, Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority or Pat Robertson’s Christian Coalition—or even any of dozens of significant Religious Right groups—including the 35 state political affiliates of Focus on the Family—that have had any significant national or regional electoral muscle.

Conservative evangelicals have figured out what it means to be a Christian and a citizen. This new identity easily integrates Christian nationalist ideology and notions of Christian citizens’ place in history, which in turn helps to inform and to animate their politics. It is in this sense that the ideology of Christian nationalism—America as a Christian Nation—mixes with theology. It appeals to those invested in the idea that they are living in the end times (à la writer Tim LaHaye and Pastor John Hagee) and nonapocalyptic, long term theocratic political activists.

While many fine organizations on the Religious Left, broadly defined, register voters and even mobilize them when elections roll around, I know of none for whom build-

*Commentary continues on page 14*



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 ISSUE 61

# American Life League's Pill Kills Day Links Birth Control and Abortion

By Eleanor J. Bader

Thirty-seven-year-old Erik Martin says he got involved in the American Life League shortly after his eight and 10-year-old children came home from their Blacksburg, Virginia, public school several years ago with an illustrated comic book entitled, *It's Perfectly Normal*.

Martin, a big, affable guy with a big smile, blasts the book—as The American Library Association's list of frequently challenged books—as “Planned Parenthood pornography” and gets increasingly agitated as he talks. “The comic had cartoons of people masturbating,” he says, “and others saying that it's perfectly normal to have sex as a minor. This angered me because I wanted to be the one to teach my kids about sex and reproduction and they handed this out without my permission. You send your kids to school to learn reading, writing and arithmetic, not masturbation.”

While a quick check with the school health coordinator and local papers shows no sign that Blacksburg actually distributed the controversial book to elementary school students, this fact may be less important than the very existence of the publication in the Commonwealth. Incensed, Martin says, “When I found out what Planned Parenthood really is, a group that poisons the minds of the young, I got involved in the prolife movement.”

That involvement brought Martin to a

*Eleanor J. Bader is a teacher and writer whose reporting frequently appears in The Brooklyn Rail, Library Journal and The New York Law Journal.*



*These American Life League activists walked from Maine to Washington, DC three years ago protesting at pro-choice health clinics along the way.*

Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images

demonstration outside of Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. on June 7th, the 43rd anniversary of *Griswold v. Connecticut*. The 1965 case involved Estelle Griswold, head of the Planned Parenthood League of Connecticut, and Dr. Lee Buxton, a professor of medicine at Yale, who were arrested in 1961 for dispensing contraceptives. Their conviction was upheld by several Connecticut courts and eventually wound up before the Supreme Court of the United States; four years later, the Court found that Connecticut's law violated the right to privacy. In short order, state laws that prohibited the distribution of birth control to married couples were overturned. This right to privacy was extended to single adults in 1972 and to those seeking abortions in 1973.

Since its founding by Roman Catholic activists in 1979, the American Life League has sought to link opposition to birth control—including condoms, barrier methods, the Pill, and Emergency Contraception (EC), the so-called Morning After Pill—to opposition to abortion. Judie Brown, a disgruntled former staffer of the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), created the group with her husband, Paul Brown, because she felt that organizations like NRLC were insufficiently hard-line on family planning.

An extremely conservative Roman Catholic, Judie Brown told the *New York Times* in May 2006 that “we see a direct connection between the practice of contraception and the practice of abortion. The mindset that invites a couple to use contraception is an anti-child mindset.”

At the heart of Brown's claim—and at the heart of League doctrine—is the belief that life begins at fertilization, not implantation. For League activists, this means that the fertilized egg is a person—they describe it as already having eye color, hair color, and a personality. If the egg fails to implant, they argue, a life has been terminated.

They promote a faulty understanding of the science of the pill that suggests it works in part by transforming the lining of the uterus to prevent the egg from implanting after it is fertilized. Even pro-life ob/gyns have said this claim has no scientific basis.<sup>1</sup> Synthetic hormones in birth control pills are so effective because they prevent ovulation and thicken cervical mucus creating a barrier for sperm. “With no egg there can be no pregnancy,” says Sex Etc., a reputable sexuality information website directed at youth.

Life League activists target emergency contraception, which can disrupt the egg dropping, sperm movement, fertilization, or implantation, for similar reasons.

But in their wholehearted embrace of conservative Roman Catholic doctrine that links sex to procreation, not pleasure, Life League members reject interventions that prevent fertilization not just implantation.

What's more, the Browns say this is exactly what God wants for heterosexual couples. According to their website, “Married couples should be open to God's amazing gift of life. By contracepting you are saying ‘No’ to God's plan and selfishly taking part in sexual relations without fulfilling the entire act or purpose of the act. The reason God designed sex was for a married man and woman to become one and procreate.”

Equally disturbing, the website claims that contraception makes infidelity easier. As for abortion, well, you get the picture.

Despite the Life League's wholly God-focused webpage, there was no mention of God or God's plan in the group's publicity for the June 7th protests against the court case that legalized access to contraception for married couples. Perhaps its leaders were trying to reach beyond the most doctrinaire strands of the anti-choice community. In fact, the Life League simply announced that protests in eight states and District of Columbia would coincide with the *Griswold* anniversary. Along with Pro-Life Wisconsin and Pharmacists for Life International, they dubbed June 7th “The Pill Kills Day”—no doubt because it rhymed—but were upfront about their

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### The American Life League links opposition to birth control—including condoms—to opposition to abortion.

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opposition to all birth control and abortion methods.

Peggy Hamill of Pro-Life Wisconsin, a group whose website includes such titles as *Abortaholic Barrie Hussein*, *Osama Obama*, and *Klanned Parenthood*, spoke at a sparsely attended press conference on June 6th. According to Hamill, “The right to privacy is a court-ordered right. It is a pure invention and has less to do with protecting privacy than it has to do with setting a political agenda.” She labels that agenda as an attack on the family.

Jodi Wagner, a speaker from Pharmacists for Life International, is a Life League heroine because she has refused to fill prescriptions for contraceptives in her home state of Washington. In addition to labeling the Pill as abortion-inducing, she told the press that she is furious at the profit mar-

gin on oral contraceptives.

Other speakers at the press conference included Jim Sedlak, an American Life League Vice President and longtime staffer at Stop Planned Parenthood, the League-sponsored group that initially drew Erik Martin into activism, and Dr. Marie Anderson, an ob-gyn at the nonprofit, Christian, Tepeyac Family Center in Fairfax, Virginia. Together, they laid out an anticontraceptive agenda that zeroed in on the Pill as the most menacing birth control product.

“Planned Parenthood tells women that they won't get pregnant if they take the Pill,” Sedlak began. “They don't tell them that a human being is being created that will die five to seven days later when it can't implant. They don't tell them that the Pill is a deadly poison.” Sedlak calls what happens a “chemical abortion.”

“The pill thins the uterine lining and depletes it of essential nutrients so that it cannot nourish a new baby,” Anderson adds. “This hurts mothers and babies alike. It breaks hearts.” The only fertility control that Anderson endorses, she said, is the type supported by the Roman Catholic Church: natural family planning. This requires the continuous monitoring of cervical mucus and body temperature and charting other cyclical physical changes to predict ovulation; it is a notoriously unreliable as a means of preventing unplanned pregnancies.

Neither Anderson nor Sedlak mind that this position puts them up against such foes as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, The American Medical Association, and the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, (NFPRHA), all of which support the notion that pregnancy begins when the egg implants, not when it is fertilized. Nor are they bothered about being marginal within the larger pro-life movement: a 2005 NFPRHA report found that 80 percent of those who consider themselves “prolife” want to control their fertility. “Almost all of the 11 million women who use the Pill in the U.S. are unaware of its mechanism of action,” Anderson says. “If

#### RIGHT WEB

Visit Right Web for profiles of the individuals and organizations promoting a militarist U.S. foreign policy, especially in the Middle East.

<http://rightweb.irc-online.org>

they knew what it did and how it worked they would stop using it. We have to educate them.”

Jon O'Brien, President of Catholics for Choice, couldn't disagree more. O'Brien sees the Life League as out of touch and believes that it will never win the hearts and minds of Americans. “Catholics, whether they be in Poland or Portland, use contraceptives, even if they have a problem with abortion,” he says. “Furthermore, League members are extremists. They are so far out that even mainstream proliferators stay away from them.”

The numbers bear him out. The League's June 7th protest in D.C. drew about 15 anti-choicers and a dozen pro-choice counter demonstrators. It might have been the weather—it was 97 degrees with a heat index of 110. Or it might have been the slim support for the League's cause. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, 98 percent of heterosexually active women between the ages of 15 and 44 rely on birth control to avoid unwanted pregnancies. What's more, Catholics for Choice estimates that 96 percent of Roman Catholic women use contraception at some point in their lives. This, despite constant Papal and priestly denunciations of the practice.

Still by promoting such wildly unpopular positions, the activists pull the broader prolife movement to the right, and make contraception-friendly parts of the movement seem downright moderate. By repeating over and over the fake science about the Pill inducing abortions, they also win converts within the larger movement against the most popular birth control method in the country.

And they win victories in an administration eager to show easy bona fides to its Religious Right supporters. In the dead heat of July, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services proposed allowing health clinics to refuse dispensing the pill and emergency contraception to women on moral grounds by redefining these methods as possibly abortion inducing.<sup>2</sup> Since the 1970s, Congress has allowed staff in clinics receiving federal grants to refuse to

offer abortions or refer women to abortion services.

The junk science woven around the methods is also woven in the HHS statement, as Cristina Page of RH Reality Check showed. It quotes a diversity of medical authorities about when a pregnancy begins to highlight the need to allow conscience-plagued medical personnel to refuse to prescribe hormone-based birth control.<sup>3</sup>

For Erik Martin and his American Life League colleagues, Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest purveyor of birth control, is public enemy number one. While

Martin, who says he is not religious, stood in front of the clinic with a Pill Kills sign, many of his comrades were on their knees, with eyes closed, praying the rosary. For them, the truth is that contraception undermines God's plan for our lives. An oft-repeated Psalm underscores their position: “Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord and the fruit of the womb is His reward. Happy is the man [sic] that hath his quiver full of them.”

Given the virtual universality of their birth control use, it seems women's happiness rests in a more mindful procreation. ■

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**American Life League  
activists pull the broader  
prolife movement  
to the right, and make  
contraception-friendly parts  
of the movement seem  
downright moderate.**

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### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cristina Page, “HHS Moves to Define Contraception as Abortion,” RH Reality Check, July 15, 2008 <http://www.rhrealitycheck.org/blog/2008/07/15/hhs-moves-define-contraception-abortion>; “Prolife Ob/gyn statement,” January, 1998, accessed at <http://web.archive.org/web/20070814095925/http://www.epm.org/articles/doctors.html>.

<sup>2</sup> RH Reality Check posted the leaked document: <http://www.rhrealitycheck.org/emailphotos/pdf/HHS-45-CFR.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.rhrealitycheck.org/blog/2008/07/15/hhs-moves-define-contraception-abortion>

## Defending Immigrant Rights: AN ACTIVIST RESOURCE KIT

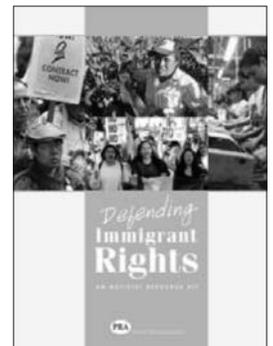
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LEADERLESS COUNTERTERRORISM *cont'd from page 1*  
different investigative techniques with different levels of government intrusiveness depending on how they perceive the configurations of potential terrorist cells and movements.

Sageman and Hoffman are currently embroiled in a well publicized dispute over whether future acts of domestic terrorism by Islamic militants, such as those carried out on September 11th, will be generated by the international Qaeda network (Hoffman) or homegrown terrorism planned by Muslims living in the United States (Sageman).

The dispute gained public attention when Hoffman negatively reviewed Sageman's recent book, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, in the prestigious journal *Foreign Policy*. Hoffman's book *Inside Terrorism* was published in 1998 and revised and expanded in 2006. Hoffman complained that Sageman's book was a "brusque dismissal of much of the existing academic literature on terrorism in general and terrorist networks in particular," and "employs historically groundless parallels." Sageman responded in a following issue. The debate then was covered in the *New York Times* and other publications.

Both Sageman's and Hoffman's books examine how social movements are built, how terrorism is justified within small groups, and how people in activist underground cells can reinforce a decision that violence or terrorism is justified and necessary.

Behind the scenes, Hoffman's analysis is favored by many analysts inside the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies, while the work of Sageman and other researchers affiliated with the New York Police Department is favored by the Senate Committee on

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*Chip Berlet is Senior Analyst at Political Research Associates and a member of the Public Eye editorial board. He is author with Matthew N. Lyons of Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort and a frequent contributor to Talk2Action and Huffington Post.*

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, chaired by Joe Lieberman, the Connecticut Independent. Lieberman is a supporter of Republican Presidential-hopeful John McCain and has launched a campaign to pressure the federal government to adopt a more hard-line policy toward the threat of domestic terrorism. Not coincidentally, this helps McCain and applies pressure on Democratic Presidential hopeful Barack Obama to move to the political right

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### Critical praise for Sageman's *Leaderless Jihad* as groundbreaking and innovative seems to be inversely proportional to the reviewer's knowledge of social movement theories developed over the past thirty years.

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on this and related issues such as U.S. policy in the Mideast. It also feeds a wave of Islamophobia sweeping the country.

A central aspect of the analyses by Sageman and Hoffman involves examining the intersection of religiously motivated violence, insurgent right-wing movements in

the United States, and an underground cell structure called "Leaderless Resistance." Yet their research into this area is woefully inadequate and at times simply not accurate. They also fail to adequately distinguish between radical ideas and violent methods, which raises serious First Amendment issues. In fairness to Hoffman, the flaws in his book are confined to one area of analysis, while Sageman's *Leaderless Jihad* lacks the citations generally considered appropriate in scholarly work, and in two instances constitute intellectual plagiarism.

A growing environment of flawed and superficial research has created a series of problems for public policy analysts studying terrorism, including:

- Pointless polarization of debate into two camps when there are numerous other valid analytical interpretations
- Failure to adequately distinguish radical ideologies from violent methods
- Flawed and sometimes woefully inaccurate information about right-wing violence in the United States
- Misreading of the concept of "Leaderless Resistance"
- Misapplication of contemporary social movement theories, and superficial analysis of the role of religion in political struggles and violence.

*The Public Eye* asked the University of Pennsylvania Press and Marc Sageman to respond to the issue of text lifted from Richard Hofstadter and Simson Garfinkel. This is the response from Sageman we received by press time:

*I did read Garfinkel's online article. It was good, but had some flaws. One of them was the quote he referred to. Garfinkel refers to an idea. Ideas do not have any power by themselves. Ideas did not fly into the twin towers, people did. I refer to behavior, and use the Skinnerian idea that reinforced behavior is likely to flourish, while lack of reward will extinguish it. To continue a behavior forever, one needs a random reinforcement schedule. If this is plagiarism, so is Garfinkel's claim. This is one of the basic ideas of behaviorism, and people are free to use them at will. Each time we see the sun move in the sky, we do not refer to either Ptolemy or Copernicus. —MARC SAGEMAN*

### Marc Sageman

Marc Sageman's first book, *Understanding Terror Networks*, published in 2004, was full of accurate and nuanced analyses of the role of social movement dynamics in the creation of terror cells, especially among Muslim émigrés. Sageman is a sociologist and psychiatrist who in 1984 joined the Central Intelligence Agency, working on the Afghan Task Force for a year before spending 1987 to 1989 in Islamabad coordinating support for the Afghan Mujahedin. Sageman left the CIA in 1991.

Sageman currently is a senior fellow at the Center on Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism, and Homeland Security of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, and a senior associate of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Sageman has guided the anti-terrorism policies of the NYPD for several years, and in July 2008 was named the Police Department's "Scholar-in-Residence."

The Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) are centers of right-wing militarist analysis, with FPRI representing old hardline conservative militarists and CSIS allied with the militarists of the neoconservative movement. Both sectors of the Right are in a coalition backing aggressive U.S. foreign policy in the Mideast by the Bush Administration—a coalition that is sometimes at odds with more pragmatic and diplomacy-oriented forces in the State Department, Central Intelligence Agency, and Department of Homeland Security.

### Bruce Hoffman

Bruce Hoffman has more mainstream credentials. Between 2004 and 2006 Hoffman was the Scholar-in-Residence for Counterterrorism at the Central Intelligence Agency. Hoffman has held the Corporate Chair in Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency at the RAND Corporation, and served in 2004 as Acting Director of RAND's Center for Middle East Public Policy.

During the period Hoffman was at



Karen Bleter/AFP/Getty Images

*A Code Pink activist flashes the V sign behind Marc Sageman, counterterrorism expert, as he appeared before the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. in June 2007.*

RAND, his colleagues John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt originated and developed an analysis of what they called "Netwar," which overlaps with and complements the concept of Leaderless Resistance.

Hoffman is currently a professor at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., affiliated with the Security Studies Program at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service.

### Terrorism, Religion, & Violence

Given the role of religious and secular ideological beliefs in acts of violence and terrorism during the past twenty years, a thorough public debate over scholarly theories and public policy assessments is needed to ensure public safety while protecting civil liberties. A central question in this regard is the role of the concept of Leaderless Resistance in assisting right-wing insurgency, violence, and terrorism, such as the rightist bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995. Does Leaderless Resistance lead to *Leaderless Jihad*?

The terms "Leaderless Resistance" and

"phantom cells" refer to spontaneous, autonomous, unconnected underground cells organized by insurgents seeking to carry out acts of violence, sabotage, or terrorism against a government or occupying military force. As scholar Simson L. Garfinkel points out, the term is sometimes used too loosely "to refer to networked organizations with hub-and-spoke architecture. Such terminology is incorrect."<sup>1</sup> Garfinkel, author of *Database Nation*, wrote one of the first major studies of Leaderless Resistance in 2003, and is now an associate professor at the Naval Postgraduate School. Garfinkel argues that Leaderless Resistance "applies specifically to groups that employ cells and that lack bidirectional vertical command links—that is, groups without leaders."<sup>2</sup>

Leaderless resistance is widely discussed among U.S. right-wing insurgents, many with ties to militant religious ideologies, and this form of underground cell structure is frequently discussed among government analysts and policymakers investigating ways to combat domestic terrorism. Like many other scholars and

journalists, neither Sageman nor Hoffman conveys an accurate picture of the history of Leaderless Resistance.

The concept of Leaderless Resistance as a series of unconnected autonomous underground cells was developed by anticommunist theoretician Ulius Louis Amoss in 1953 to encourage resistance to Soviet repression in Eastern Europe. “Pete” Amoss worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II, which later was reorganized in the postwar period as the Central Intelligence Agency. Amoss, who had established a private group called International Services of Information (INFORM), warned that traditional hierarchical underground cells organized by the CIA in Eastern Europe were being penetrated and liquidated by Soviet and Eastern Bloc counterintelligence operations.

In 1961, anti-Castro Cuban exiles and their allies with close ties to the CIA air-dropped leaflets over Cuba. The leaflets used the concept of Leaderless Resistance and called for the creation of “phantom cells” (*celulas fantasmas*). There is no apparent connection between Amoss and the leaflets, according to Michael Paulding, who is writing a book on an early OSS figure and has studied Amoss and his work. Amoss died in November 1961, a few months after the failed CIA-orchestrated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Amoss’s Leaderless Resistance essay was republished posthumously in 1962 in Amoss’s INFORM newsletter, having been rewritten from the 1953 original by a freelancer, according to Paulding.

The term was repopularized in 1983 by racist organizer Louis Beam in a very different essay that borrowed the title and concept of “Leaderless Resistance.” This essay was reprinted by Beam in 1992.<sup>3</sup> In both versions, Beam credits the original idea to Amoss. Beam is a White supremacist and former Ku Klux Klan leader tied to neonazi and race hate organizing in the United States.

Sageman and Hoffman both mistakenly suggest that White supremacists originated the idea—Sageman blames Beam, and Hoffman traces it to the White

supremacist adventure novel *Hunter*, William Pierce’s sequel to *The Turner Diaries*—before weaving it into claims about the terrorist threat posed by White supremacist insurgents in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Sageman claims that Louis Beam developed the theory of Leaderless Resistance “to continue the right-wing militias fight against the U.S. government.” Beam played a role in the development of the militia movement in the early 1990s, but certainly did not develop the concept of Leaderless Resistance for the militias when he

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### Accurate descriptions of target terrorist formations and potential terrorist cells are crucial for stopping actual acts of terrorism.

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wrote the essay in 1983. The militias overlapped with the organized White supremacist movement, but according to most scholars, was distinct and independent from it.<sup>5</sup>

Hoffman offers no credible evidence that the idea’s “impact on the militia movement has been profound.” Hoffman is wrong when he asserts Beam’s version of Leaderless Resistance (1983) was based on the novel *Hunter*, which was published in 1989. Furthermore, *Hunter* is primarily about a lone wolf terrorist, although small cells are also mentioned.

This is not just semantics. Are acts of violence and terrorism in the United States being carried out by right-wing insurgents engaged in “Leaderless Resistance?” There is little evidence to support this widespread fear.

According to Garfinkel, the clearest examples of Leaderless Resistance in the

United States are in the ecological group Earth First! and several Animal Liberation movements—movements that generally avoid harming people with their acts of vandalism. Small splinter groups have recently engaged in intimidation against people, but while this is evidence of criminal acts, it does not fit traditional definitions of terrorism.

Almost all incidents reported as examples of Leaderless Resistance by White supremacists in the United States actually appear to have involved small groups of persons with previous ties to other groups promoting armed resistance or violent methodology. This is not Leaderless Resistance.

There have been examples of “lone wolf” terrorism, where individuals act on their own, but these incidents mostly appear to involve persons who were at least briefly involved with existing groups advocating armed resistance or violence. This is not Leaderless Resistance.

There are a handful of incidents where a debatable argument can be made for Leaderless Resistance cell structure being used by the White supremacist movement, but even these offer dubious lessons for U.S. counterterrorism policy relating to isolated Muslims and Arabs living in the United States.

For example, Timothy McVeigh, who blew up the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995, was thoroughly embedded in the Armed Citizens Militia movement for years, but had adopted a neonazi ideology before turning to the methodology of terrorism assisted by a small group of cohorts. The most plausible explanation for motive was McVeigh’s anger at the federal government for *domestic* policies involving what he saw as tyranny and government political repression. Antiterrorism “experts” originally wrongly blamed the blast on Middle Eastern terrorists angry at U.S. *foreign* policies.

For counterterrorism, the distinction between connected cells, unconnected cells, and a lone wolf activist unconnected to previous group participation is important because different investigative techniques with different levels of government

## The Public Eye

intrusiveness are required depending on the type of target. Therefore accurate descriptions of target terrorist formations and potential terrorist cells are crucial for stopping actual acts of terrorism.

Sageman writes that:

The leaderless social movement has other limitations. To survive, it requires a constant stream of new violent actions to hold the interest of potential newcomers to the movement, create the impression of visible progress toward a goal, and give potential recruits a vicarious experience before they take the initiative to engage in their own terrorist activities.

If this is true, I should be able to locate a list of terrorist bombings of U.S. steak-houses by vegetarians. The Internet has helped create and extend numerous lead-

erless social movements, the vast majority of which have not engaged in violence of any kind, much less terrorism.

Actually, Sageman has borrowed this idea and plagiarized some specific wording from Garfinkel, who wrote in 2003:

Causes that employ Leaderless Resistance do not have these links because they are not organizations: They are ideologies. To survive, these ideologies require a constant stream of new violent actions to hold the interest of the adherents, create the impression of visible progress towards a goal, and allow individuals to take part in actions vicariously before they have the initiative to engage in their own direct actions.

Garfinkel, however, is defining Leaderless Resistance as specifically referring to “a strategy in which small groups (cells) and

individuals fight an entrenched power through independent acts of violence and mayhem.” This accurately refers to Beam’s thesis, not generally to all social movements that are “leaderless” but not engaged in acts of “resistance” in Sageman’s overbroad derivation.

If we understand domestic terrorist tendencies as more properly modeled as an outside contagion, rather than as something spontaneously generated, then it would be more proper to monitor known terrorists, rather than conducting sweeps of all potential terrorists. Ironically, these techniques are similar to those advocated by Marc Sageman in his first book. Yet government agencies are reportedly analyzing secret intelligence data scanning for networks, patterns of interaction, etc. in a search for different kinds of underground terrorist cells. Tracking an actual “Leaderless Resistance” cell that is truly spontaneous,



autonomous, and unconnected requires an intrusive penetration of a larger community in which these cells achieve some level of anonymity. Everyone in the community would be suspect until their innocence had been proven.

In other words, how police believe terrorists are organizing affects their counterterrorism tactics.

Garfinkel in 2003 observed that:

The U.S. appears to be fighting Leaderless Resistance networks... with an eradication strategy based on crime-fighting: the goal is to create very high penalties for individuals who participate in direct action. The danger of this approach is that the eradication effort itself may inadvertently serve to attract new recruits to a violent ideology, by making the cause appear a just response to an unjust enemy.

### Religious Motivations for Violence

Religiously justified violence is at the core of much terrorism carried out in the name of Islam, but neither Hoffman nor Sageman have a firm grasp on the intricacies and nuances of current social science that studies the phenomenon among the Christian Right in the United States (see sidebar on Hoffman).

Hoffman's inability to detect the factors making the militia movement distinct from neonazi terrorists is especially troubling in terms of civil liberties because Hoffman exaggerates the role of terrorism in the militias. Militias are a subset of the broader Patriot Movement, as are the Christian Patriots, which overlap with both the militias and the White supremacist movement. The White supremacist movement has more of a history of violence and terrorism, but with the exception of those eras when the Ku Klux Klan had a mass following, the violence has been carried out by a tiny armed underground linked to the larger social movement.

Sageman tends to dismiss the role of religion in motivating political violence

because the terrorists he studied are in his appraisal not religious scholars nor devout.<sup>6</sup> But neither factor is needed for religious belief to be a powerful motivator for a social movement activist to turn to violence in the name of religion. Among the scholars who have discussed the role of religion in terrorism are Jessica Stern (*Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*)

and Mark Juergensmeyer (*Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*). Sageman's claims are a refutation of these works without a detailed discussion of them.

### Not so Sage Scholarship

Sageman cites few scholars, which could lead the reader to believe he is a kind of

#### HOFFMAN'S SLIPS

Given Hoffman's harsh criticism of Sageman, one would hope that Hoffman's own work would stand up to careful scrutiny. It most areas it does, but not in terms of Hoffman's research into the concept of Leaderless Resistance, the history of right-wing insurgent violence in the United States, or Christian apocalyptic beliefs. It is this last area where Hoffman seems most confused.

According to Hoffman:

Beliefs involving the inevitability of Armageddon are actively encouraged by proselytizers of Dominion theology, the most recent reinterpretation of Christian Identity doctrine circulating among the Christian Patriots.

This statement is just plain wrong.

1. Beliefs about the "inevitability of Armageddon" are spread across Christian evangelicalism and are embraced by tens of millions of Americans, most of whom have never been part of the Christian Patriot movement.
2. Christian Identity, a White racist antisemitic theology, predates Dominion Theology, a term used to refer to either:
  - the doctrinaire form of Christian theocracy promoted by the Christian Reconstructionist movement, or
  - a tendency among conservative Christian political activists to dominate the electoral system (usually dubbed Dominionism).

In neither case is Dominion Theology a "recent reinterpretation of Christian Identity doctrine."

The rest of the paragraph is a similar mélange of ahistorical data and misused terminology. While Christian Identity and Reconstructionist Dominion Theology are both apocalyptic in the sense of contemplating the arrival of the prophetic millennial End Times, Identity is premillennial (which has Christ returning prior to a 1000-year millennial reign by believers) while Reconstructionism is postmillennial (which has Christ returning at the end of a millennium of rule by the Godly). These are important distinctions in Christian theology—and also in predicting how violence or terrorism might emerge from these different theological beliefs.

Premillennial apocalyptic expectation is the core of the White supremacist theology of Christian Identity, but it is also central to the religious beliefs of millions of Protestant evangelicals who would be horrified by Christian Identity claims that Blacks are subhuman and Jews are either agents of Satan or his direct descendants.

Hoffman writes that "in addition to anti-Semitism and racism, Dominionists believe that it is incumbent upon each individual to hasten redemption by actively working to ensure the return of the Messiah," Here Hoffman is lumping together millions of politically active evangelicals with racists and antisemites. In addition, most premillennialist evangelicals are not accurately characterized as Dominionists.

Although Hoffman's section on U.S. right-wing terrorism and the role of Christian theology is weak and confused, the other material in Hoffman's chapter on "Religion and Terrorism" on Islam and other belief systems and cults is more persuasive and well cited, as is the rest of his book.

“leaderless scholar” whose work in unconnected to that of other social scientists. As with Sageman’s exaggeration of Leaderless Resistance as a mode of terrorist organization, the truth is much less spectacular.

Much of *Leaderless Jihad* draws from sociologists and anthropologists and other scholars who study collective behavior, social movements, organized supremacist groups, religious theology, millenarianism, apocalypticism, and political violence. Almost none of this work over the past twenty years is cited by Sageman. Yet Sageman was recently featured in a major profile in the newsletter of the American Sociological Association... which he wrote himself.

Sageman’s lack of citations is more than a problem of attribution because it does not allow other researchers to trace the documentation for his numerous uncited claims nor make his readers confident that he is engaging with whole swatches of recent social science research. This is a serious problem for someone whose work is influencing government policies. Critical praise for Sageman’s *Leaderless Jihad* as groundbreaking and innovative seems to be inversely proportional to the reviewer’s knowledge of social movement theories developed over the past thirty years.

For instance, Sageman’s discussion of conspiracism is underdeveloped.<sup>7</sup> He provides no cites to the standard works in the field, which in recent years has explored the role of conspiracy theories in generating narrative stories that can justify the use of scapegoating and violence. Most egregious is the following:

A global conspiracy theory is different. It is comprehensive in nature and points to the existence of a vast, insidious, and effective international network designed to perpetrate acts of the most evil sort.

This seems quite perceptive, as it should, since the sentence is lifted virtually intact from an early passage and central thesis of Richard Hofstadter’s classic work, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*.

Hoffman notes that in Sageman’s book

“the reader is told that ‘until recently, a large part of the literature on terrorism concentrated on definitions of terrorism’—with the citation justifying this fatuous assertion referencing a book published in 1984.”

Sageman’s explanation of how individuals are recruited into dissident social networks and social movements is well-rounded, yet fails to cite the standard sociological works in which those concepts were developed.<sup>8</sup>

Sageman discusses “heroic sacrifice,” “martyrdom,” “absolute evil,” and the creation of a “personified villain.”<sup>9</sup> Yet readers might be interested in knowing the underlying scholarly studies that look at

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### Is this just scholarly semantic duels and pointless academic nitpicking?

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dualism, scapegoating, demonization, apocalypticism, millenarianism, and the sacralization of politics.\*

Sageman dismisses scholarship on totalitarianism and totalist groups as the “myth” of “brainwashing,” ignoring the scholarly work of Robert J. Lifton, Charles Strozier, and others on the role of totalist systems in shaping a belief justifying violence and terrorism.<sup>10</sup> Since the 1990s there has been a resurgence of scholarly interest in totalitarian groups, and there is even a scholarly journal of *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* with articles detailing the relationship to terrorism.<sup>11</sup>

In his scathing review of Sageman’s *Leaderless Jihad*, Hoffman offers a list of authors who have done significant work in computerized analysis of terrorist groups, and then notes that “No references to any of these authors of standard studies are found

in *Leaderless Jihad*’s citations.”<sup>12</sup> Hoffman puts it bluntly: “Sageman’s historical ignorance is surpassed only by his cursory treatment of social networking theory.”

Sageman describes social movements as not being affiliated with institutions, but there are numerous different types of social movements, many of which interact with institutions or create their own. Sageman contradicts much social movement scholarship when he claims that social movements “do not have a formal structure...[and] do not have members but participants.”<sup>13</sup> Most sociologists recognize that some social movements have no membership requirements, but many have formal members who often pay dues or agree to at least “principles of unity.”

Understanding the ideology, frames, narratives, and recruitment methods of a social movement is important for law enforcement officers concerned about potentially illegal acts yet attempting to work within the legal boundaries set by the First Amendment. By blurring the distinction between ordinary social movements, gangs, and violent terrorist cells, Sageman provides a justification for federal policymakers who want to loosen restrictions of the surveillance of political dissidents.

### Policy and Civil Liberties

Sageman’s views have been popularized and distorted, most recently by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. It has been holding hearings on Islamic Terrorism for the past year. In Sageman’s June 2007 testimony, he declared:

“...we must analyze the process transforming normal young Muslims into people willing to use violence for political ends. The understanding of this process of ‘radicalization’ is critical to assessing the threat facing the West and should be the basis guiding our interventions to counter it. ... [T]hese new groups are physically isolated but connected through Internet forums, inspired by the extremist ideology and hoping that they will be accepted as members

\*I’ve posted a remedial bibliography online at <http://www.publiceye.org/jump/leaderless.html>.

of al Qaeda through their terrorist operations.

On May 8, 2008 a report emerged from the Committee's office. Titled *Violent Islamist Extremism, the Internet, and the Homegrown Terrorism Threat*, the report did not represent the views of the entire committee, many of whom were not even aware of the report until after it was issued. It was primarily prepared by Lieberman's staff, and published under his name and that of Republican Susan Collins of Maine, the ranking minority member of the committee. The Lieberman/Collins report picked up on Sageman's concerns about the Internet, but amplified them into a set of hyperbolic warnings that stereotyped Muslims and fed Islamophobia.

According to the Muslim Advocates, Muslim Public Affairs Council, Council on American Islamic Relations, and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee:

The report heavily relied upon a widely criticized and deeply flawed New York Police Department study on domestic radicalization that

claimed that typical "signatures" of radicalization include wearing traditional clothing, growing a beard, or giving up cigarettes, drinking, and gambling. The advocacy groups also expressed dismay with the fact that the Committee, while citing the value of increasing outreach to American Muslim and Arab-American communities, heard testimony from only one witness from the American Muslim community.<sup>14</sup>

A letter signed by over 20 groups warned that:

Focusing the discussion of homegrown terrorism on Muslims may actually increase the potential for violent radicalization in the United States. Many witnesses before the Committee spoke of the growth of Islamophobia and the polarization of the Muslim community as risk factors that raise the potential for extremist violence. Unfairly focusing suspicion on a community tends to create the very alienation these witnesses said could lead to homegrown

terrorism.<sup>15</sup>

Ironically, while the Senate committee channeled a distorted version of Sageman's work on the Internet in its report, it overlooked some worthwhile recommendations at the end of his recent book. They include:

- The United States should reduce the sense of "moral outrage" among Muslims by "withdrawing from Iraq," and on the local level showing "restraint in the aftermath of terrorism operations."
- Western countries "should regain the moral high ground and condemn any atrocity or persecution committed by any government, including some of our staunchest allies in the Middle East, often in the name of the 'war on terror.'"
- Individuals arrested on suspicion of being terrorists "are entitled to due process and the impartial application of justice in order to win over the worldwide Muslim community and refute claims that Muslims are treated unfairly."

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## Conclusions

Public attention to the dispute between Hoffman and Sageman has focused on who is right or whether they're both partially right—but this is the wrong lesson to take from the debate. The problem is that they're both substantially wrong in ways that jeopardize our safety and our civil liberties.

Flaws and errors in both Sageman's and Hoffman's analyses are making suspects out of millions of U.S. citizens and noncitizen residents, and justifying increased domestic surveillance on a scale that could dwarf the now million-name-long "watch list" for airline passengers. Furthermore, in some cases there are other antiterrorism policy advisors who are using a superficial reading of *Leaderless Resistance*, while ignoring some of Sageman's more sensible recommendations in his final chapter. This is what is feeding Senator Lieberman's recent overwrought efforts.

The public dispute between Hoffman and Sageman needs to be widened to include a broader discussion of the U.S. "War on Terror." While public policy attention over the past few years has focused on the polarized positions of Sageman and Hoffman, a broad range of differing (and often more complex and nuanced) analyses from a number of scholars is being overlooked by the White House and Congress. Here I'm thinking of Jessica Stern, and Fawaz A. Gerges, author of *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, to name only two.

The work of Hoffman and Sageman also must be closely analyzed and critiqued by social scientists who study religion, violence, state repression, social movements, and collective behavior. And Sageman needs to be held accountable for his lack of citations.

Is this just scholarly semantic duels and pointless academic nitpicking? No. By failing to fully explore a range of social sci-

ence research, policymakers are doomed to commit analytical or conceptual errors. An accurate understanding of social movement boundaries helps predict potential violence within some social movements, while accurately assessing others as simply exercising First Amendment rights. The level of surveillance and infiltration by government agencies is supposed to be regulated by these considerations. Drawing distinctions between radical ideology and violent methodology is at the heart of the First Amendment. In the United States, stopping ideological radicalization is not a job for government agencies.

Anti-terrorism policy and civil liberties deeply affects us all—we deserve better. ■

*A collection of supporting text, documents, images, and bibliographic citations is online at <http://www.publiceye.org/jump/leaderless.html>.*

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Garfinkel and I discussed *Leaderless Resistance* in 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Simson L. Garfinkel, "Leaderless Resistance Today," *First Monday*, online journal, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *Inter-Klan Newsletter & Survival Alert*, undated, circa May 1983, pages not numbered. On file at Political Research Associates; Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditonist*, 12 (February 1992); at <http://www.louisbeam.com/leaderless.htm>, 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-first Century*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 143; Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 114, 115.

<sup>5</sup> This differentiation has been covered in detail by Mark S. Hamm, Joel Dyer, Martin Durham, Steven M. Chermak, Lane Crothers, Carolyn Gallaher, Lorna L. Mason, Matthew N. Lyons, and me.

<sup>6</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 59-60, 80.

<sup>7</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 81-82.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald., "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 82, no. 6, May 1977: 1212-1241; Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 82.

<sup>10</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 50-51.

<sup>11</sup> I am on the editorial advisory board of the journal.

<sup>12</sup> Hoffman mentions "the pathbreaking work of Stephen Borgatti, Kathleen Carley, David Krackhardt, and Jeffrey Reminga on covert social networks; Aparna Basu, Valdis Krebs, Ami Pedahzur, and Arie Perliger on the structural and sociological characteristics of terrorist social networks; and David Jones, Shaul Mishal, and Michael Smith on how terrorist networks operate."

<sup>13</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 31.

<sup>14</sup> "American Muslim & Arab Organizations Issue Statement on Homeland Security Committee Report," *The American Muslim*, May 14, 2008, [http://www.theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/american\\_muslim\\_arab\\_organizations\\_issue\\_statement\\_on\\_homeland\\_security\\_com/0016232](http://www.theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/american_muslim_arab_organizations_issue_statement_on_homeland_security_com/0016232).

<sup>15</sup> "Memorandum to Members of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs," Defending Dissent Foundation, May 30, 2008, <http://www.defendingdissent.org/alerts.html#memo>.

Archival documents obtained through the Wisconsin Historical Society periodicals archive, Burlington (MA) Public Library, interlibrary loan, Michael Paulding, and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

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GUEST COMMENTARY *continued from page 2*

ing electoral power and changing elections is a central activity. Even worse, some see electoral politics as a waste of time and even a tacit endorsement of the excesses of the power structure. I do not agree with such dour assessments, nor do I think that electoral politics is a panacea.

Here is what I do think:

I think that anyone who is serious about the distribution of power in this constitutional democracy, and who wants to accomplish anything much, needs a broad electoral strategy that is central, not peripheral to their activities. This also means developing the capacity to carry it out in practice and not just on paper. That is why I think that the Religious Left, in order to create a more just society, is going to need to take electoral politics more seriously—and not just as a happy religious auxiliary of the Democratic or any other party.

Getting a few religious leaders to stand up and say, “We are Christians, too,” as a counter to the Religious Right in the media is fine, as far as it goes. But electoral politics is a defining activity of constitutional democracy in America. With unions on the wane, it is the principal avenue for gaining sufficient popular power to improve the lives of the poor and the marginalized via government and public policy—as well as to address the entire constellation of progressive concerns. And by electoral politics, I do not mean merely voting or encouraging others to do so. I mean actually mastering the mechanics of electoral politics and sustaining a permanent activist presence in our communities, unconnected to the fortunes of one or another candidate. And not just a shell group (or group of shells) to be revved-up only in the run-up to an election.

Part of the genius of the Religious Right, particularly the once-formidable Christian Coalition, is the way they work across

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*Frederick Clarkson is the editor of Dispatches from the Religious Left: The Future of Faith and Politics in America (Ig Publishing), from which this commentary is adapted. He is a member of the editorial board of The Public Eye.*

election cycles to build their capacity to affect electoral outcomes—recruiting, training and organizing support for candidates—particularly in party primaries for offices at all levels. They also systematically register like minded-voters and developed the capacity to turn them out on Election Day. And they keep good databases instead of having to start from scratch from existing voter lists in the run up to each election. In other words, they mastered the contemporary tools and mechanics of electoral democracy.

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**Getting a few religious leaders to stand up and say, “We are Christians too” as a counter to the Religious Right in the media is fine, as far as it goes.**

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People can write letters, and organize phone banks, lobby days, protest marches, and prayer vigils—but what if those who hold elected office are not interested in listening? Obviously, it is far better to have people in office with whom we agree (or mostly agree) than people who don't. So the answer is to elect better public officials.

But how would a more politically dynamic Religious Left go about this? Many contemporary progressive electoral efforts have adopted the organizing methods popularized by Marshall Ganz, a former organizer for the United Farm Workers who now teaches organizing at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

Ganz found that successful organizers and organizations focus on one-on-one recruiting, the development of personal

political relationships, and leadership training, all aimed at expanding the pool of progressive voters and activists. This method builds on the cumulative experiences and best practices of social justice organizing from the labor, women's, and civil rights movements, among many others.

I describe some useful models taken from the liberal/left in my essay in *Dispatches from the Religious Left: the Future of Faith and Politics in America* (from which this commentary is partly adapted). These organizations recognize that building for power takes time, patience and hard work—regardless of town or constituency. People's personal and group political behavior changes only slowly, as a general rule. But it can, and it does. One of them is the Boston-based Neighbor-to-Neighbor, which focuses on the long term political empowerment of low income communities of color.

### Neighbor-to-Neighbor

Neighbor-to-Neighbor began in 1996 after an analysis showed that 47 House districts ought to have more progressive representatives than they had. Using grassroots organizing, leadership development, electoral campaigns, legislative lobbying, and voter registration and education, the group “built power” in low-income and working-class communities.

Neighbor-to-Neighbor has a remarkable record of turning around the problem of low levels of voter participation in lower-income urban communities. For example, in 2002 the group dramatically increased voter turnout in low-income precincts of several cities. These included increases of 185 percent in Salem, 900 percent in Lynn, 210 percent in Leominster, 589 percent in Fitchburg, and 131 percent in Worcester. This contributed to the election of progressive candidates in several cities as well as two progressive Democratic members of Congress, James McGovern of Worcester and John Tierney of Gloucester. Sustained organizing in Worcester, Salem, and Holyoke was a deciding factor in the 2003 election of progressive, Latino city councilors in those cities.

The group's success is based on "targeted organizing" around what it calls "The Working Family Agenda." This agenda comprises "good jobs, education and training, affordable child care, health care and housing, and a welfare safety net." Their methods include year-round intensive voter contact and issue mobilization across the election cycle, followed by personal, telephone, and mail contact during electoral campaigns. "With year-round voter engagement," its director Harris Gruman said, "you change the equation dramatically. Most people don't pay much attention to politics until the presidential campaign comes around."

### Navigating the Non-Profit Tax Code

Even with such hopeful models, many on the Religious Left still fear the stumbling block of the federal tax-code. It is also controversial, not least because the Religious Right consciously bends and breaks the rules to advance their political and electoral interests (and they largely get away with it). While the Internal Revenue Service, aided by several watchdog organizations, has been better enforcing the laws in recent years, the question of abuse of the tax code and fear of the tax man has many progressive organizations understandably wary.

Fortunately, there is also a lot of experience in integrating citizen education and engagement that are well within the perfectly reasonable and understandable IRS rules governing tax-exempt organizations such as churches and service providers.

An excellent example was pioneered by Boston Vote, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization founded in 1999 to encourage social service and other nonprofit agencies in low-income urban areas to register their clients to vote, and help to turn them out on Election Day. Boston Vote offers a model that allows progressive social service agencies and religious organizations to integrate nonpartisan voter registration and mobilization into their existing programs. Boston Vote has since gone statewide and is called Mass Vote. The organization has developed basic materi-

als and low-to-no-cost training to help nonprofits register and educate people to vote, and to mobilize others, as well as to eliminate barriers to participation to a variety of disadvantaged groups.

A critical distinction helpful for anyone trying to navigate all this is between citizenship and partisanship. Learning about and practicing voter registration and electoral mobilization are functions of citi-

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**The Religious Right was able to advance as far and as fast as they did because other constituencies never really engaged on the playing field of electoral politics.**

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zenship, not unlike obtaining a drivers license or filing tax returns. Applying that knowledge to a particular candidate or

political party is partisanship. Naturally, applied citizenship inevitably means making choices of whom to vote or advocate for or what party to join. Or whether to exercise those options at all.

The Religious Right was able to advance as far and as fast as they did because other constituencies did not keep up, or never really engaged on the playing field of electoral politics altogether. All that has happened over the past few decades in the wake of the rise of the Religious Right is one of the consequences of the series of choices that were made not to keep up or to seriously engage.

There is no reason why religious progressives cannot band together within broader progressive coalitions, to fully engage as citizens, allowing them to live up to the promise of their most prophetic and pragmatic leaders. This is the stuff of basic empowerment in electoral democracy, as the much-honored but too often forgotten African-American civil rights movement taught us.

We can learn and master the tools handed to us by the generations that have brought our constitutional democracy this far. If we do, a vibrant and politically dynamic Religious Left can be a powerful part of the coalition necessary to bend the arc of history towards what Martin Luther King Jr. called justice. ■

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# Right-wing Ballot Initiatives Target Unions, Women, Immigrants, and Gays This Fall

By Kristina Wilfore

In 2008, ballot initiatives could impact races up and down the ballot, including the Presidential campaign, by elevating an issue and shaping the debate. Dissatisfied voters in particular may see ballot initiatives as a means to fill the leadership vacuum by allowing citizens to take issues into their own hands.

On the Right this year, initiatives would ban equal opportunity programs for women and minorities, challenge a woman's right to choose her own health care, discriminate against gays and lesbians on marriage and adoption, and cut vital services like education and health care for those that need it most.

Is this the sort of change dissatisfied voters are looking for?

We here at the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center conducted public opinion research with independent, "swing" voters who may be swayed by the initiatives, and here is what we have learned:

- Voters head into this election season with serious concerns about the country and a strong feeling that the country is a rudderless boat, lacking leadership and drifting without direction.
- Voters feel America is falling behind and that it is no longer likely that we will pass on a better future to the next generation.

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*As Executive Director of the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center (BISC), Kristina Wilfore works with state and national progressive organizations, providing guidance on strategy and message to key initiative campaigns, coordinating ballot language research and drafting efforts, polling, training activists and placing them on targeted initiatives nationwide, and directing funders to critical campaigns.*

- Voters are ready to respond to big challenges in their lives.
- They know there are problems and want to address them.

Matthew Dowd, who was chief strategist for President Bush's campaign in 2004, warned when speaking about the California marriage discrimination initiative that the Right's approach might backfire this year: "At best, it doesn't move voters, and at worst for Republicans, it moves them against them. Not so much on the issue, but it becomes, 'Why are we having a discussion on this issue when we should be talking about things that matter, like the economy, or health care, or the war?'"

If people are looking for solutions that advance the common good, rather than more division, then progressives should feel good about some of the other ballot initiatives around the country—clean energy and home health care in Missouri; paid sick leave in Ohio and Milwaukee; children's health care in Montana; and stem cell research in Michigan, among others.

These initiatives tend to be driven locally at the grassroots level, while the Right traditionally takes a two-pronged approach, with national organizations driving the process working in alliance with paid signature mills, state-based front groups, and other local organizations.

Unlike in previous years, where there were large, multistate efforts pushing a particular issue with ballot initiatives at the state level (marriage discrimination in 2004, so-called Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) and minimum wage increase in 2006), this year there is more of a grab bag of ballot initiatives attempting to advance individual issues.

Here is a look at a handful of conservative initiatives that will likely face voters on the ballot this year. (For more on progressive initiatives, I invite you to check out Ballot Initiative Strategy Center's website at [www.ballot.org](http://www.ballot.org).)

## Ban Equal Opportunity

Ward Connerly, a right-wing race activist from California, proposes to rewrite state constitutions with a ban on equal opportunity programs. Connerly refuses to disclose out-of-state donors and has hired political operatives and companies with a long history of facing election fraud and ethics accusations.<sup>1</sup> In Colorado, his efforts face a legal challenge to half the signatures he turned in to the state. In Arizona, he faces charges by a local coalition of opponents to the measure, including the Arizona Chamber of Commerce, that those hired to gather signatures have misled voters by not informing them that the initiative would eliminate equal opportunity programs.<sup>2</sup> In Nebraska, opponents of the initiative have claimed petition collectors are getting signatures illegally—filling out information for people signing petitions, misleading voters by not reading a required statement, and leaving signature sheets unattended.<sup>3</sup> In Missouri, similar tactics failed to get his initiative on the ballot. And in Oklahoma, after the Secretary of State raised questions of fraud, duplicate signatures, and other irregularities on the petitions, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court began looking into the issue, Connerly requested to have his initiative withdrawn.

## Threatening Women's Health Choices

This is an issue that continues to be at the forefront of the right-wing agenda despite years of losses at the ballot box on antichoice ballot measures. In fact, advocates of reproductive justice have beaten back nearly 90 percent of all antichoice initiatives over the past two decades, capitalizing on the fact that most Americans are pro-choice in some form, and the initiatives have tended to be quite radical intrusions on women's reproductive decision making.

This year we see antichoice ballot ini-

tiatives in three states: California, Colorado, and South Dakota. California's parental notification initiative has failed in two previous attempts. South Dakotans can once again vote on whether to ban abortion, although they resoundingly rejected a similar ban in 2006. In Colorado, right-wing activists would redefine personhood in the state constitution as the moment of fertilization, an initiative that has divided conservatives even though it seeks to overturn *Roe v Wade*.

The Colorado initiative could lead to a ban on several of the most medically safe forms of birth control and could also ban or restrict common fertility treatments, such as in vitro fertilization. A supporter of a similar measure in Montana, where it failed to make the ballot, warned women could be

investigated to see what they might have done to *cause* their miscarriages.

## Marriage and Adoption Discrimination

The marriage discrimination strategies of 2004 lost their base-rallying potential when they reappeared in 2006, as voters began to see them as gimmicks.

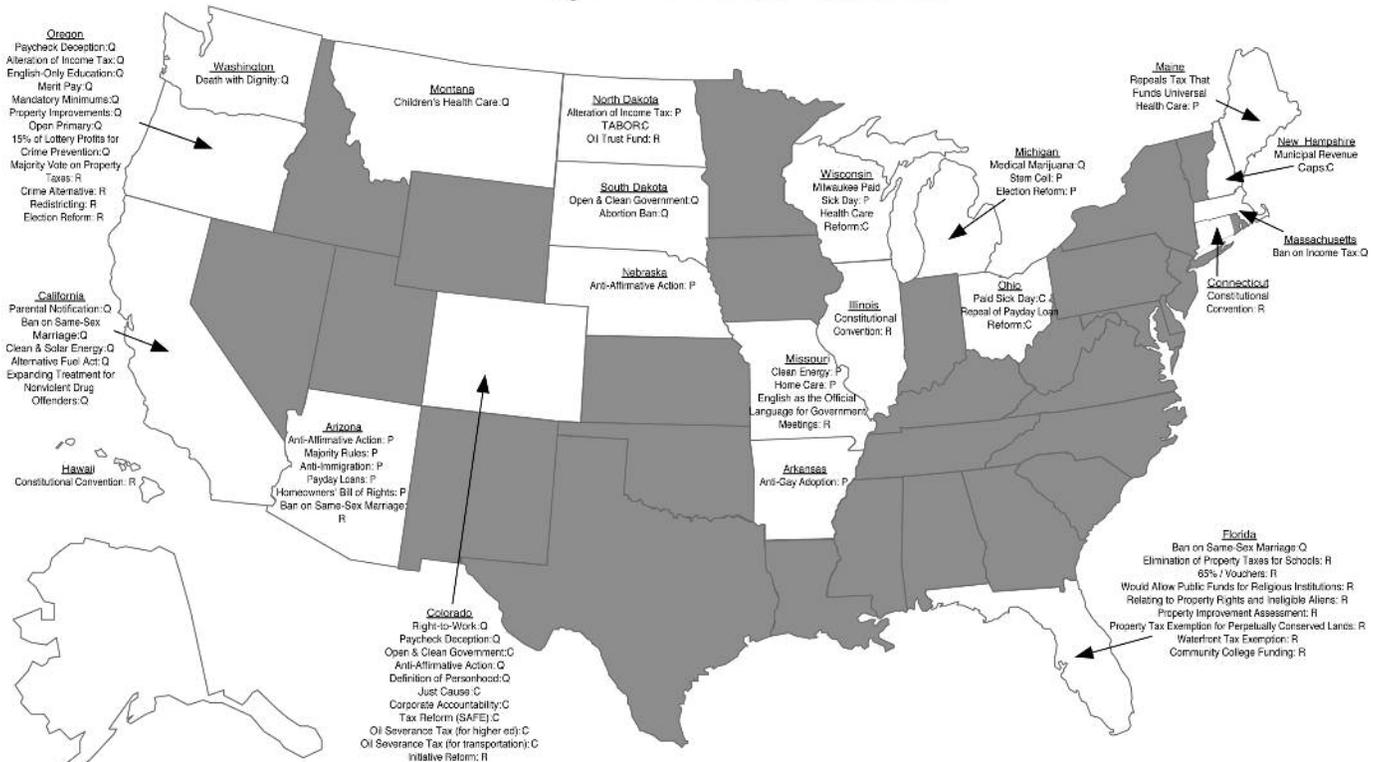
Nevertheless, a California marriage discrimination initiative has qualified for ballot, and if passed would likely overturn a recent California Supreme Court decision that ruled that gay marriage was protected by the state constitution. Florida will vote on a marriage discrimination measure that would outlaw recognition of all same-sex partnerships. And in Arizona, a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage has been

approved by the Arizona legislature and referred to the ballot. In Arkansas, an initiative to take away adoption rights from "all unmarried couples" failed to collect enough qualified signatures in its first attempt and is now in the process of collecting more in order to get on the ballot.

## Anti-Immigrant

In Arizona, four ballot initiatives were circulated but only one achieved enough viable signatures to make it on the ballot – a crack down on businesses which hire illegal immigrants. In Oregon, an "English only" initiative is on the ballot. This comprehensive initiative would prohibit teaching public school students in a language other than English for more than two years, regardless of their English profi-

## Key 2008 Ballot Measures



**Ballot Initiative STRATEGY CENTER**  
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Q: Initiative Has Qualified for the Ballot  
 P: Initiative is Pending Signature Verification  
 C: Initiative is Circulating  
 R: Initiative Was Referred by the Legislature

Please note: This map reflects how the ballot initiative landscape looks as of 7.28.2008. While initiatives marked as 'qualified' and as 'referred' will be on the ballot, any initiatives marked as 'pending verification' or as 'circulating' may or may be on the ballot.

ciency. It does not allow for parents to choose programs for their children and it requires learning within specific timetables without providing tools for achieving goals.

### Cutting Education and Health Care

One might imagine that antitax ideologues would have learned an expensive lesson after the defeat of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) in all of the states where it was attempted in 2006. They didn't. A property tax revenue limit initiative that could threaten vital services like education, health care, and police and fire protection is on the ballot in Florida.

Florida voters will also weigh in on two stealth amendments whose central purpose is to authorize state funding for vouchers to religious schools. Yet the word "vouchers" does not appear in either amendment. One amendment, 7, would repeal a 140-year-old state constitutional prohibition against spending public funds on religious institutions. The other, 9, would overturn a Florida Supreme Court ruling that declared unconstitutional a voucher program approved while Jeb Bush was governor.

To fool voters even more, commissioners added to Amendment 9 a politically appealing, but practically meaningless, provision "Requiring 65 percent of school funding for classroom instruction." The implication is that more school funds will be directly targeted at teachers and classroom activities. But that's a ruse to sell an amendment that is otherwise intended to clear the way for more state spending on private, not public, schools.

In Oregon, an income tax cut is on the ballot that would cut state revenues by \$3.4 billion. The average tax cut for the richest one percent would be \$15,048, while the average tax cut for the middle 20 percent would be \$1.

In North Dakota, signatures have been submitted for an initiative that would cut the income tax rate by 50 percent and cut the corporate income tax by 15 percent.

In Massachusetts, an initiative that would repeal the income tax altogether is on the ballot. The initiative would elimi-

nate 40 percent of the state's budget and lead to teacher layoffs, school closings, and cuts to higher education and worker training programs. It would also delay and eliminate road and bridge repairs, force cuts to health care services for those that need it most, and threaten neighborhood safety.

Maine's step towards a public/private partnership to provide universal access to health insurance, known as Dirigo Health, had its funding mechanism revamped in the recently concluded legislative session. The state approved new funding sources, including a tax on beer, wine, and the syrup used in soft drinks. Maine has a provision in statute that allows anyone who disagrees with action taken by the leg-

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## Don't underestimate the Right's power to divide and distract voters.

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islature to initiate a "People's Veto." In this case, special interests from the big beverage industry have submitted petitions to place on the ballot an initiative that would strip the funding for the health care reform plan and derail universal health care.

In New Hampshire, voters in eight municipalities are deliberating on a revenue cap requiring local officials to restrict spending on vital services like snow removal, and police and fire protection. The initiative doesn't take into account the rising health care costs and skyrocketing gas and energy costs that are burdening community budgets.

### Attacking Working Families

On the ballot in Oregon is a "Paycheck Deception" initiative that would deprive workers of their voice in the political process. Banning the use of payroll deductions for political purposes unfairly singles out unions, leaving corporations and right-

wing associations unaffected. In Colorado, signatures have been submitted to place an initiative on the ballot.

In South Dakota, "Paycheck Deception" has been combined with a ballot measure called "Open and Clean Government." In Montana, an "Open and Clean Government" initiative failed to make the ballot, but signatures have been submitted in Colorado. The initiative would prohibit political contributions by persons and organizations with certain state or local government contracts. It also prohibits political contributions by labor unions that have collective bargaining agreements with state or local governments. The initiative attempts to silence the voice of working families in legislation and in politics by banning the use of union dues for legislative and political advocacy.

Colorado voters will also vote on a "right to work" ballot initiative in November. "Right to work" actually has nothing to do with a right to a job or employment. The initiative would allow nonmember workers to get all the benefits of union membership and pay nothing, while forcing unions and their members to foot the bill for those not willing to pay their share.

### Conclusion

Ballot initiatives that are out of touch with mainstream values like fairness, opportunity and freedom will be a tough sell, but don't underestimate the Right's power to divide and distract voters.

### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.stopballotfraud.org/merchant/national\\_ballot\\_access](http://www.stopballotfraud.org/merchant/national_ballot_access)

<sup>2</sup> Howard Fischer, "Foes say petition circulators use illegal means," *East Valley Tribune*, June 10, 2008, <http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/story/118254>

<sup>3</sup> Scott Lea, "Group Claims Illegal Petitioning," KPTM-News, [http://www.kptm.com/Globallstory.asp?S=8554960&nav=menu606\\_2](http://www.kptm.com/Globallstory.asp?S=8554960&nav=menu606_2)

PROFILE FROM PRA'S RIGHT WEB

Regnery Publishing: Home of Books Fanning Fear of Islam



Outing itself as the “the nation’s leading conservative publisher,” Regnery Publishing was founded by Henry Regnery in 1947 in Chicago. Initially affiliated with the University of Chicago’s “Great Books” series, Regnery eventually became a leading publisher of old-guard, conservative writers such as Russell Kirk, James Burnham, and William F. Buckley, Jr.

In 1993, conservative Eagle Publishing bought Regnery, which now specializes in mass-market, right-wing attack journalism, with its books frequently targeting Democratic Party figures like the Clintons<sup>2</sup> and lambasting the influence of liberals on American culture and politics—and frequently becoming bestsellers.<sup>3</sup> Its authors include Newt Gingrich, William Bennett, Ann Coulter, Dinesh D’Souza, David Horowitz, Laura Ingraham, Dennis Hastert, Dore Gold, and Mitt Romney. Journalist Nicholas Confessore characterized Regnery as the “lifestyle press for conservatives, preferred printer of presidential hopefuls, and venerable publisher of books for the culture wars.”<sup>4</sup>

Regnery has been an important publisher of books promoting the George W. Bush administration’s “war on terror” policies, publishing everything from apologies for Donald Rumsfeld to fear-mongering about the activities of “jihadi warriors” in the United States.<sup>5</sup> Titles have included Michelle Malkin’s *In Defense of Internment* (2004), which argues that criticism of the Bush administration’s detention of terror suspects is based in part on flawed arguments that the internment of Japanese during World War II was racist<sup>6</sup>; *Endgame: The Blueprint for Victory in the War On Terror* by Thomas McInerney and Paul Vallely (2004), which according to

Regnery argues that “a bloodthirsty foe” like radical Islam cannot be “confined to particular nations—and thus cannot be defeated solely through conventional warfare against enemy states”<sup>7</sup>; and Iran-Contra veteran Oliver North’s *War Stories: Operation Iraqi Freedom* (2003), which defends the Bush administration’s decision to invade Iraq.<sup>8</sup>

In 2008 Regnery published two books that fanned fears of Islam and justified the U.S. invasion of Iraq and war on terror using the clash of civilizations language of Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington: Mark Steyn’s *America Alone: The End of the World as We Know It*, and Mark Sieff’s *The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Middle East*. According to Regnery, in *America Alone*, Steyn, a writer for the right-wing *Washington Times* and the *National Review*, “proclaims the unspeakable, yet undeniable truth: the Western world is falling prey to the unrelenting tide of radical Islam, demographically and ideologically. And if we don’t do something soon, one day we’ll wake up to the end of the world as we know it: the end of church bells, replaced by the muezzin’s call to prayer. The end of free speech, replaced by strict, religious-based censorship. The end of liberty and justice for all, replaced by Sharia law.”<sup>9</sup>

In *The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Middle East*, according to Regnery, Sieff “navigates every politically correct roadway, busting myth after myth as he leads us on a journey through one of the world’s roughest neighborhoods.” Sieff argues that “Bush Sr.—not Bush Jr.—should have invaded Iraq”; “Islamic fundamentalism isn’t ancient—which is why it’s so dangerous”;

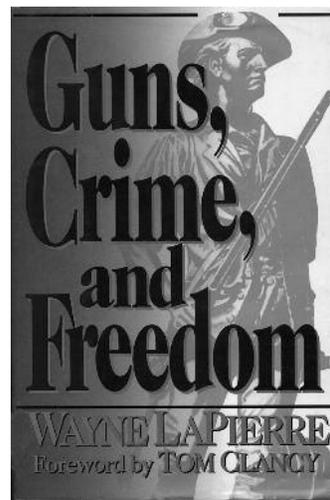
and “President Bush’s quest for Israeli-Palestinian peace is misguided.”<sup>10</sup>

Earlier, in 2005, Regnery published *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* by Robert Spencer, who directs JihadWatch.org. According to the publisher, Spencer argues that “Muhammad did not teach ‘peace and tolerance’—he led armies and ordered the assassination of his enemies”; “the Crusades were not acts of unprovoked aggression by Europe against the Islamic world, but a delayed response to centuries of Muslim aggression”; and “jihad continues today: Europe could be Islamic by the end of the twenty-first century.”<sup>11</sup>

In 2004 Regnery published *Unfit for Command: Swift Boat Veterans Speak Out against John Kerry*, by John O’Neill and Jerome Corsi, both members of Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, a group set up to attack Democratic presidential candidate Kerry’s Vietnam War record. The book took aim not only at Kerry’s military service (despite lacking access to his service records), but also at his antiwar activism after returning from his tours of duty. Despite being heavily

criticized for distorting Kerry’s military service, *Unfit for Command* became a *New York Times* bestseller and helped derail Kerry’s campaign.<sup>12</sup>

In mid-2008, Regnery announced that it intended to publish *The Case against Barack Obama*, by *National Review* writer David Freddoso, in August 2008.<sup>13</sup> Regnery president Marjory Ross told Politico reporter Jonathan Martin, “I think it’s critically important that the country gets a clear and honest view of who is running and what they stand for—warts and all... With *Unfit for Command*, like *The Case*



against Barack Obama, we believe the media has whitewashed the candidate.”<sup>14</sup>

Regnery announced in February 2008 that it had signed a contract with Erik Prince, CEO of the controversial military contractor Blackwater Worldwide, to publish a book tentatively titled *We Are Blackwater* in late 2008.<sup>15</sup> A news release about the contract stated that the book is to be “the only insider’s account of the controversial company that has supplied bodyguards and support-and-rescue personnel to hot spots around the world, including the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq. Prince, a former Navy SEAL, will reveal how he created Blackwater, refute criticisms of the company, and take the reader on thrilling Blackwater missions into hostile territory, from rescuing teenage missionaries in Africa, to helicoptering wounded Marines to safety, to inventing, testing, and manufacturing armored vehicles to better protect our troops in the field.”<sup>16</sup>

Other high-profile Regnery authors include businessman and former presidential candidate Steve Forbes, and Kenneth Timmerman, executive director of the Foundation for Democracy in Iran.<sup>17</sup> In 2002 Regnery published Timmerman’s *Shakedown: Exposing the Real Jesse Jackson*, which was well received by many on the Right and panned on the Left. In a review of the book for the *Nation*, Patricia Williams wrote: “In Timmerman’s rendition, [Jackson] is a bloated monster of evil impulses and global appetites, a ‘dangerous fool,’ ‘a David Duke in black skin’ who ‘drifts off into mumbo-jumbo’ ‘like a Halloween ghoul’ while ‘mau-mauing’ corporations that ‘think it is cheaper to buy protection’ from the ‘race industry’ he has purportedly milked dry.”<sup>18</sup>

Regnery’s parent company, Eagle Publishing, says it is “dedicated to conservative and pro-American ideals.”<sup>19</sup> Eagle was founded in 1993 (the same year it bought Regnery) by Thomas L. Phillips, the founder and president of the multimedia firm Phillips International. Phillips has served on the board of advisors of the conservative Claremont Institute, has been a sponsor for the Ronald Reagan Leader-

ship Program, and is a member of the Republican National Committee’s Regents Program.<sup>20</sup>

Eagle Publishing board members include Alfred Regnery, son of the founder of Regnery Publishing and a board member of the American Foreign Policy Council; Thomas Fuentes, a director of the Claremont Institute and chairman of the Republican Party of Orange County, California; and Pat Sajak, host of the TV show *Wheel of Fortune*.<sup>21</sup>

In late 2007, several Regnery authors sued Eagle Publishing, charging that the company’s business practices, including selling discounted books to clubs, depleted the authors’ royalties. In their lawsuit, the authors—Jerome R. Corsi, Bill Gertz, Lt. Col. Robert (Buzz) Patterson, Joel Mowbray, and Richard Minter—claimed that by selling discounted books and giving titles away to book clubs, Eagle was attempting “to avoid or substantially reduce royalty payments to authors.”<sup>22</sup>

Although the lawsuit was eventually dismissed,<sup>23</sup> it shed light on what some observers claim has been a technique by right-wing publishing houses to artificially boost their sales figures and thereby get books placed on best-seller lists. In an interview with the *New York Observer*, former Bill Clinton aide Sydney Blumenthal said, “What I think the key question is for Ann Coulter and all these other right-wing writers is, why is there a dagger in the *New York Times* best-seller list next to their books?” That symbol, which appears next to some books on the list, means “that some bookstores report receiving bulk orders.” In other words, explained Blumenthal, “someone is buying their books in bulk to put them on the best-seller list. These are bogus best-sellers.... I want to know why [Ms. Coulter] won’t come clean and explain which rich right-wing sugar daddies are putting her on the best-seller list.”<sup>24</sup>

Website: <http://www.regnery.com>  
For more profiles from *Political Research Associate’s Right Web* project, visit <http://rightweb.irc-online.org/>

## End Notes

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- <sup>2</sup> See Chip Berlet, “What is Past is Prologue: Regnery Publishing and Clinton,” Political Research Associates, September 30, 1999, [http://www.publiceye.org/conspire/clinton/Clintonculwar8-38.html#P714\\_189875](http://www.publiceye.org/conspire/clinton/Clintonculwar8-38.html#P714_189875).
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- <sup>6</sup> “Book Details: *In Defense of Internment*,” Regnery Publishing, [http://www.regnery.com/regnery/040802\\_defense.html](http://www.regnery.com/regnery/040802_defense.html).
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- <sup>9</sup> “Book Details: *America Alone*,” Regnery Publishing, <http://www.regnery.com/books/americaalonepb.html>.
- <sup>10</sup> “Book Details: *The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Middle East*,” Regnery Publishing, <http://www.regnery.com/books/pigmiddleeast.html>.
- <sup>11</sup> “Book Details: *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam*,” Regnery Publishing, <http://www.regnery.com/books/pigislam.html>.
- <sup>12</sup> “Will Conservative Media Swift Boat Apologists Now Apologize?” Media Matters, August 20, 2004, <http://mediamatters.org/items/200408200008>.
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ABSTAINING FROM TRUTH *continued from page 1*

longed, and expensive, debate among community members of the district's human sexuality curriculum advisory committee.

While ending in a “compromise” of maintaining two separate classes that cost over \$100,000 for abstinence textbooks and curriculum planning, the debate resulted in a school board decision that defined sex as something that happens between a husband and wife.<sup>1</sup> The split in Osseo is emblematic of the national stand-off on how the subject should be taught.

Sexuality education has become a skirmish in the culture wars, and the minefield is public education. It is no coincidence that the struggle happens in schools. Public education has long been recognized as a major tool in imparting more or less universally accepted societal values such as hard work and civic engagement, but it also sparks debates over the value of competition, individualism, and unquestioned patriotism. Because schools define what knowledge is useful for the populace, the arena of schools is the locale for “ideological management,” according to educational philosopher Joel Spring.<sup>2</sup>

Struggles over what should be taught and who gets to learn it are as old as public schools. Teaching the German language was prohibited in schools during World War I. Conservative activists Mel and Norma Gabler were famous for five decades beginning in the 1960s as their home-grown Education Research Analysts group deeply influenced the content of Texas textbooks. Controversy over the constitutionality of school prayer was heightened in the 1950s and early '60s as proponents sought to protect the country from godless communism. Recent debates over evolution, bilingual education, the celebration of multiculturalism, the teaching of Arabic, and LGBT rights all reflect controversies about appropriate topics, activities, and services in public schools.

With the emergence of HIV/AIDS,

concerns about teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), health and family life education classes have been scrutinized by forces wanting to insert their perspectives into the curriculum. The battle over sexuality education has settled into two polarized camps, much like Osseo's classes. Sexuality education is just one link in a long line of power struggles over who determines what is taught; the opposing frames in this case are public health and conservative values.

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### Sexuality education has become a skirmish in the culture wars, and the minefield is public education.

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There is widespread agreement that teaching adolescents, especially younger teens, to postpone sexual intercourse is a good idea, but what that teaching entails is controversial. Abstinence-only education advises students to abstain from all pre- or extra-marital sex and deliberately omits factual information on such topics as contraception, abortion, and homosexuality. A favorite theme is the unreliability, and resulting danger, of condoms. Comprehensive sexuality education, on the other hand, includes education on abstinence but emphasizes that if a person is sexually active, they need knowledge and skills about a wide range of topics, including contraception and abortion, to make informed decisions and stay healthy. Many abstinence-only education supporters occasionally call their approach “abstinence-until-marriage” education and brand comprehensive sexuality education as “condom-based” or “pro-sex.”

Although there is scant evidence showing the effectiveness of abstinence-only education over time, the federal government has spent over \$1.5 billion on the

strategy.<sup>3</sup> This sum supports three annual multi-million-dollar federal grant programs, grantees, and a lobbying infrastructure that works hard on Capitol Hill. Although a majority of states refuse to accept what has come to be called “abstinence-only money” and have opted out of the state-based grant program, this development has apparently only served to stir the resolve of abstinence-only supporters and their backlash campaigns.<sup>4</sup>

Responding to the demands of abstinence-only lobbyists, the federal government enacted its own eight-point definition of abstinence education which mandates the design for all federally funded abstinence-only programs. One point defines abstinence as a program that “teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school age children.”<sup>5</sup> Yet in an era when 95 percent of Americans engage in pre-marital sex,<sup>6</sup> promoting abstinence as an educational goal seems unrealistic. Further, abstinence-only ideology ignores the reality of LGBT sexuality, including the estimated three-to-five percent of high schools students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.<sup>7</sup> Materials advance gender stereotypes of men's rampant, uncontrollable sex drive, which purportedly must be kept in check by women's adherence to their natural chastity and purity.<sup>8</sup> A disturbing amount of “blame the victim” mentality appears in abstinence-only curricula, which relieves men of the responsibility for acting upon their “natural urges,” even violently, and puts the onus on women and girls to “wear modest clothing that doesn't invite lustful thoughts.”

Nevertheless, abstinence education supporters are on a mission to reduce sexual activity not only for school-aged students but for unmarried adults as well. In 2006, they successfully lobbied to extend the target age range of funded programs beyond adolescents to age 29. In hearing the news of the revised guidelines, James Wagoner, president of Advocates for Youth, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that supports comprehensive sexuality education, said,

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*Pam Chamberlain is senior researcher at Political Research Associates and a member of the Public Eye editorial board.*

They've stepped over the line of common sense. . . . To be preaching abstinence when 90 percent of people are having sex is in essence to lose touch with reality. It's an ideological campaign. It has nothing to do with public health.<sup>9</sup>

### Why Do They Think That Way?

The spokespeople for abstinence-only education represent a core constituency that sees sexuality through a very conservative religious lens. Reacting against what they see as the degradation of culture by modern values, conservative Protestant evangelicals seek the codification of strictly traditional values as they read them in scripture. To these fundamentalists, a literal reading of the Bible is sufficient to learn how to act responsibly in all areas of life.

They are joined by conservative Roman Catholics in the belief that sexual behavior is defined as fidelity in heterosexual marriage, and any veering from that path is considered sinful. Such sin results in the ultimate punishment, separating the believer from God, or damnation. So for fundamentalist Protestants, it is not only necessary to avoid such a fate oneself; preventing others, especially children, from committing sexual sins is an act of compassion and responsibility that will save them, too, from eternal hell. This is for them the essence of evangelizing the Good News. Hence the belief that it is not only acceptable, but necessary, to set standards in public education that conform to these beliefs. Add to this the idea that parents have a special obligation to protect their own children from eternal harm, and you have a style that is recognizable in its stridency and self-righteousness.

These fundamentalists and others who are mobilized to political action, the Christian Right, are about 15 percent of voting public. This group of Christians wields greater power than its size might suggest. It can make or break elections in certain key districts by getting out the vote. But in the case of abstinence-only education, strategists have made certain key choices that

have extended the appeal of their message far beyond their core.

Abstinence-only framers talk in coded language that appeals to their conservative base plus resonates with a wider swath of evangelical Christians. When churches sponsor an alternative to the school prom called the "Purity Ball," they can trigger a reaction to how American culture has sexualized the rituals of adolescence. Social conservatives who are uncomfortable with the fast pace of modern life can be attracted to the concept. A spokesperson recommending *True Love Waits*, the Southern Baptist Convention's abstinence education program, reminds parents, "The world is coming after our middle schoolers like

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### Although there is scant evidence of the effectiveness of abstinence-only education over time, the federal government has spent over \$1.5 billion on the strategy.

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never before. As parents we must equip them to become lights in a dark world."<sup>10</sup> A real coup is getting the President to use coded words like "culture of life" and references to abstinence in the same sentence, as Bush did in 2007, speaking before the Southern Baptist Convention:

I believe building a culture of life in our country also means promoting adoption and teaching teen abstinence, funding crisis pregnancy programs and supporting the work of faith-based groups.<sup>11</sup>

This approach to sexuality education can have appeal among an even larger group of people, those who may base their political opinions on nonreligious principles. They might harbor a mild distrust of how government spends their money. After all,

public education is the largest program financed mainly by local taxation. They may be disappointed with reports about the state of public schools and the lackluster results of the latest federal push for educational reform, the No Child Left Behind Act. And they would be persuaded by secular arguments based on reason and scientific evidence of the need to intervene in a public health crisis such as high rates of teen pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. Abstinence-only education advocates have deployed this scientific sounding approach for over twenty years.

### Borrowing a Public Health Frame

Despite the fact that abstinence-only education is rooted in conservative religious principles, many of the arguments abstinence-only educators use with the general public are secular ones that appear to use logic and scientific principles. Mary Beth Bonacci, chastity educator and founder of an abstinence promotion website Real Love Incorporated, refers to a flawed study by Dr. Susan Weller rejected by the Department of Health and Human Services in 1993 when she states,

The *AMA Journal* did a study using condoms—30 percent failure rate in preventing AIDS transmission. You'd say, "70 percent were safe, that's not bad." But is it safe when death is the option? Would you fly an airline that had only a 30 percent failure rate?<sup>12</sup>

*Choosing the Best* is a set of abstinence education curricula for grades seven through twelve that meets federal guidelines for abstinence-only funding. *Choosing the Best PATH*, for grade seven, also focuses on alleged condom unreliability:

Couples who use condoms for birth control experience a first-year failure rate of about 15 percent in preventing pregnancies. This means that over a period of five years, there could be a 50 percent chance or higher of getting pregnant with condoms used as birth control.<sup>13</sup>

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Jimmy Margulies/politicalcartoons.com

Of course the “failure” rate is due to inconsistent condom use, a common result of inadequate training, rather than to the average two percent condom breakage rate. In addition, the statement calculates probability incorrectly, resulting in a highly misleading—but scientific sounding—message.

Some programs use fear to motivate students to promote abstinence. A middle school student handbook from the FACTS program reads:

There are always risks associated with it [premarital sex], even dangerous, life-threatening risks such as HIV/AIDS. Using contraceptives does not change this for teenagers.<sup>14</sup>

Comprehensive sexuality education has successfully used the public health

approach, which defines a health problem, identifies risk, and designs interventions based on the science of epidemiology. Since abstinence-only education often attempts to hide its ideological perspective, abstinence-only spokespeople will co-opt public health vocabulary in their rebuttals in order to sound “scientific.” In answering the question, “Is *Choosing the Best* medically accurate?” its promotional materials state,

*Choosing the Best* curricula contain facts gathered from the most reliable and current sources of information available, such as peer-reviewed, published journals and government agency publications.<sup>15</sup>

The Medical Institute for Sexual Health tries to legitimize the abstinence-only mes-

sage in a medical framework. This organization was founded in 1992 by Joe McIlhane, a gynecologist and social conservative who jumped on the early (and since disproven<sup>16</sup>) test results that condoms do not protect against HPV, human papillomavirus. A section of its website on HPV includes minimally accurate medical information but adds an abstinence message:

**Am I safe if I always use a condom?**

If you always use condoms for vaginal sex, you can cut your chance of getting HPV by about half. [Actually, it’s about a 70 percent reduction in risk compared to non-condom users. (author)] To date, there is no evidence that condoms reduce your chance of getting HPV during oral or anal sex.

### What can I do to avoid getting infected?

Avoid sexual activity if you are single. *Be faithful to one uninfected partner for the rest of your life* [emphasis added]. Already had sex? See a doctor and get checked out.<sup>17</sup>

As with other Christian Right campaigns, abstinence-only educators repeat unsubstantiated or misleading claims until they not only become a substitute for reality for the speakers but are accepted as facts by their audience. For instance, the condom industry and the government use scientific testing such as inflating and stretching condoms until they break. Those who oppose condom use on the grounds it would encourage sexual activity and act as a contraceptive argue that condoms are not reliable, using these tests or altered statistics as evidence. For over twenty years, abstinence-only educators have repeated the misleading claims that condoms are undependable, refining the basic message to respond to counterarguments from scientists and proponents of condom use. If sex can't be "safe," it must be dangerous, goes the argument.

### The Measure of Success

Proponents of abstinence-only education would like to tout their success using the same methods that other public health prevention programs do, and they have tried their best to do so by promoting their own studies. But public health researchers have disputed the claims made in support of abstinence-only programs. Those claims of success have been generated mostly by a single evaluation company, The Institute for Research and Evaluation, run by Stan Weed, a Mormon researcher, out of his home. Weed has over 20 years experience working with faith-based interventions and abstinence education and has evaluated over 100 abstinence-only programs in thirty states. He is the major scholarly defender of abstinence-only education, so it is important to note that critics such as William Smith of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)

have already debunked his studies:

Stan Weed...interviewed more than 500,000 teens, and studied more than 100 abstinence-only programs. Okay, it sounds impressive...until you learn that Weed has just one peer reviewed and published study in a refereed journal showing abstinence-only-until-marriage programs can have a modest impact among seventh graders in delaying sex.<sup>18</sup>

Contradicting Weed's findings, a federally sponsored multiyear evaluation by Mathematica Policy Research demonstrated that abstinence-only programs did not have an effect on sexual abstinence of

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**Abstinence education is a tool of ideological management that is now well established in American culture and social policy.**

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youth.<sup>19</sup> Comprehensive sexuality education advocates see this report, released in April 2007, as a vindication of their efforts.

The scientific studies have not stopped the wave. Abstinence education is a tool of ideological management that is now well established in American culture and social policy. We can identify those elements that have helped to institutionalize the campaign. What began as isolated projects by individuals in the 1980s has grown into an elaborate network of people, places, and paraphernalia. Over 900 federally funded programs now exist,<sup>20</sup> generating new and revised curricula, videos, and training materials, as well as supporting instructors, administrators and the organ-

izations to house them.

The federally funded infrastructure includes parachurch ministries like Focus on the Family, crisis pregnancy centers, advocacy organizations like the Abstinence Clearinghouse, technical assistance centers for dealing with federal grants, and even a trade organization with a lobbying presence in Washington, the National Abstinence Education Association. While the level of federal funding for abstinence education has not reached that of another school-based prevention program, Drug Abuse Resistance Education or DARE, which hit the \$1 billion per year mark in 2001,<sup>21</sup> it has come a long way toward being institutionalized.

Federal funding for abstinence programs began with the passage of the American Family Life Act (AFLA) in 1981 granting a modest \$4 million for "chastity" programs for teens, a response to family planning efforts to prevent teen pregnancies. With annual increases since 1997 and the establishment of two other grants programs, including sizable sums for community-based programs (\$113 million in 2007), federal funding has totaled over \$1.5 billion, financing a well-heeled abstinence education industry.<sup>22</sup> Without this support, abstinence-only programs would not be as commonly used as they are today (in about 25 percent of schools, according to their supporters).

### A Small Circle of Friends

The use of abstinence education has indeed increased over the past 25 years, not only as a direct consequence of federal funding but due also to friends in high places. When George W. Bush was running for President in 1999, he stated, "My administration will elevate abstinence education from an afterthought to an urgent goal."<sup>23</sup> He and others in Congress and in federal government positions have made good on that promise.

In 2007, *The Nation* ran an exposé of a small circle of friends and their sizable harvest of federal dollars through the abstinence-only funding streams at the federal level.<sup>24</sup> In it, author Michael Reynolds

## Christian Right Pushes Abstinence-only Education Internationally

In 2003, the Christian Right shifted the foreign aid policy of the United States so that it promotes abstinence-only education abroad through HIV/AIDS relief grants channeled to the Christian Right base of the George W. Bush Administration. An Institute of Medicine report confirms that these programs are one of the biggest obstacles to challenging the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, which sees five million new cases of HIV each year.<sup>1</sup>

Even so, in July both Houses of Congress renewed the legislation, called President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Rather than reversing its mandate that one-third of prevention spending go to abstinence only (before marriage) education, the new law signed by President Bush in July, instead requires groups to explain in writing why they are not spending half of their grants on abstinence or faithfulness programs.

The rest of prevention funding follows the "ABC" format: abstinence, be faithful, and use condoms, with emphasis on the first two—even in populations of sex workers or drug users who contract the disease through shared needles.<sup>2</sup>

While David Bryden of the Global AIDS Alliance is optimistic that the new legislation will be less restrictive than the original, particularly if a Democratic Congress and president view the reporting requirement as a mere formality, other groups are more upset.

"There was a lack of political will among the Democratic leadership to actually fight the Bush administration, and its supporters in Congress, to get rid of the inappropriate and dysfunctional emphasis on abstinence and marriage prevention," says William Smith, vice president for public policy at the Sexuality Education and Information Council of the U.S.

Ellen Marshall, International Women's Health Coalition consultant on U.S. foreign policy issues, says the conscience clause allows organizations to "pick and choose who they serve based on any type of moral judgment they might have... we're stuck with that for five years; we've written into law discrimination."

The original law created an industry of

Christian Right groups which provide literature on abstinence tied to their religious views, and support biased radio and TV programs that say that condoms are unsafe in the fight against AIDS.<sup>3</sup> School programs funded by the grants push sexually active young people to "return to abstinence" and are banned from providing condoms.<sup>4</sup> This poses immense danger to the 19 million adolescents already engaging in sex in countries under PEPFAR's purview. James Wagoner, president of the HIV peer-education organization Advocates for Youth, told a *Boston Globe* reporter, "It is a public health disgrace when we are creating a climate of fear around the most effective prevention tool for sexually active young people."<sup>5</sup>

In somewhat milder terms, the Institute of Medicine found that the focus on abstinence education should be rethought as insufficient due to the "early average age of sexual debut (and sometimes marriage) in many countries."<sup>6</sup> Women also suffer disproportionately from the restrictions on condom education and distribution, since even getting married does not protect them from their husband's extramarital affairs, which they are not empowered to stop, nor can they to choose whether or not to have sex.<sup>7</sup>

"Generally, African societies are conservative on issues of sex," says Kapya Kaoma, a Political Research Associates researcher and Anglican priest who saw the programs in action while promoting condom use in Africa. "Sex education was not something that was discussed in public. By avoiding discussing sex, 'abstinence-only' enforces male dominated African cultural norms."

While some groups have refused to adhere to PEPFAR restrictions and thus lost funding, others have been refused contracts simply due to their secular nature or inclusion of accurate condom information in their ABC-education. Instead, a *Boston Globe* exposé two years ago showed money is funneled to predominantly Christian organizations,



Australians send a message about the value of condoms during a visit by the Pope in July.

Sergio Dionisio/Getty Images

even those with skills sets deemed "nonsuitable," motivating Democratic Congressman Henry Waxman of California to say it "raises questions of political cronyism." Kristin Kalla, who manages the AIDS contract for CARE, an organization that has worked with the U.S. government to aid the poor for decades, was compelled to fund religious aid groups in order to secure its government contact. Kalla then was told that they had to be the "right types" of faith-based organizations – not the Jewish and Muslim ones she had offered grants, but Christian groups such as Samaritan's Purse, whose CEO and president, Rev. Franklin Graham, is a close friend of Bush.<sup>8</sup>

—Alex DiBranco

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Donald G. McNeil, "Bush's Global AIDS Efforts Limited by Restrictions," *The New York Times*, March 31, 2007, [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/31/washington/31aids.html?\\_r=2&sq=Macklin&st=nyt&adxnml=1&oref=slogin&scp=10&adxnml=1213700552-c5Kk6Sxlgw5h4PlCujzOpw&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/31/washington/31aids.html?_r=2&sq=Macklin&st=nyt&adxnml=1&oref=slogin&scp=10&adxnml=1213700552-c5Kk6Sxlgw5h4PlCujzOpw&oref=slogin).

<sup>2</sup> Julie F. Kay with Ashley Jackson, "Sex, Lies & Stereotypes: How Abstinence-Only Programs Hurt Women and Girls," (New York: Legal Momentum, 2008), 30-31.

<sup>3</sup> Planned Parenthood <http://www.ppaca.org/site/pp.asp?c=kuJYJeO4F&b=139536>.

<sup>4</sup> McNeil.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Kranish, "Religious Right Wield Clout: Secular Groups Losing Funding Amid Pressure," *The Boston Globe*, October 9, 2006, [http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2006/10/09/religious\\_right\\_wields\\_clout/](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2006/10/09/religious_right_wields_clout/).

<sup>6</sup> McNeil.

<sup>7</sup> Kay, 34-37.

<sup>8</sup> Kranish

chronicles how a single abstinence advocate, Raymond Ruddy, has spent millions of dollars supporting his favorite abstinence-only programs, crisis pregnancy centers, and other parachurch ministries, while simultaneously lobbying Washington to increase its flow of federal dollars to these same groups. His colleagues include Wade Horn, the influential marriage promotion advocate with the National Fatherhood Initiative and the Department of Health and Human Services. Their appointments in both the federal government and organizations close to Ruddy help keep what Reynolds calls the “faith-based feeding trough.”

A recipient of AFLA funds has been the Best Friends Foundation, a character and abstinence education program founded in 1987 by Elayne Bennett, wife of William Bennett, who was Secretary of Education at the time. Ms. Bennett’s success in fundraising in both the private and public domains is evidenced by Best Friends’ ability to continue to raise over \$1 million a year in government grants and private help from individuals and the conservative Richard DeVos, William Simon, and Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundations.<sup>25</sup> The founder of the Medical Institute for Sexual Health, Joe McIlhane, Jr., an evangelical gynecologist and board member of Best Friends, was appointed to key posts with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as advisor to the Director and a member of the President’s Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS. The Institute received \$250,000 as a special federal earmark grant in 2004 for its abstinence education research.

### What Next?

Abstinence-only education will remain a cultural force, no matter what level of funding its programs receive because there are enough anxious parents, monied investors, and conservative evangelicals to continue to make grassroots demands on the schools. But support for abstinence-only programs will continue to be a viable *political* campaign only if its followers continue to be mobilized, and there are plenty

of reasons why conservative strategists might want to do so.

Supporters tend to be more than single-issue voters, and clusters of followers are also anti-abortion, pro-marriage, or anti-gay, making them potentially responsive to one or more of these culture war issues. Socially conservative organizing is alive and well around these issues, with groups like the Family Research Council, the American Family Association, and other energetic faith-based organizations maintaining their influence and energizing their base.

In a recent move, The National Abstinence Education Association launched a new “parents” initiative, *Parents For Truth*, with a \$1 million campaign in June 2008. It is the trade association’s public service

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## Keeping a conservative campaign on the defensive is not the same as a decisive victory over it.

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announcement and signature-gathering campaign to discredit comprehensive sexuality education. Misusing information from an HIV/AIDS prevention curriculum about the relative risk of various behaviors for HIV transmission, designed for African-American males 12-16, the group’s first video depicts a suburban mother of what looks to be a ten-year-old girl horrified at the content of her daughter’s health class.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, the policymaking infrastructure is in place. Members of the Pro-Life Caucus in Congress remain powerful enough to influence their Democratic colleagues on key legislative votes, even to influence liberals to support programs they disagree with. Abstinence-only’s infrastructure was further strengthened when curriculum designer and executive direc-

tor of the Abstinence and Marriage Partnership, Scott Phelps, founded a D.C. lobbying group and trade association, the National Abstinence Education Association in 2006 with Valerie Huber as its Executive Director. This group has become the centralized voice of abstinence-only education: state-level coalitions of community-based groups, most of which are crisis pregnancy centers with abstinence-only programs, feed into the national organization and depend upon it for marketing the message of abstinence.

On the other side, groups like the 140-member National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education and its leadership at SIECUS have worked hard for years to counter the misleading claims of abstinence-only spokespeople, and their level-headed influence must be acknowledged.

And in opposition to pro-abstinence education lobbyists, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), Christopher Shays (R-CT), and Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) have sponsored the Responsible Education for Life Act (REAL), which is intended to counter the Bush administration’s success in establishing abstinence-only education as the only federally sanctioned sexuality education. This would reflect the results of a 2004 poll that showed parents supporting comprehensive sexuality education, including 94 percent supporting teaching about contraception and pregnancy prevention.<sup>27</sup> Hopes for passage of this bill remain high, although the current legislation has gone nowhere since March of 2007.

Other members of Congress, like the California Democrat Henry Waxman, have been leaders in criticizing federal support for abstinence-only education,<sup>28</sup> and the first Congressional hearing on federal funding for such programs took place in April 2008. Abstinence advocate Stan Weed was the only witness identified by the Republican minority to defend the science of abstinence-only education. His testimony focused not on the success of abstinence-only programs but on the methodological limitations of evaluations of comprehensive sexuality education curricula. When he was accompanied by

a lobbyist, Valerie Huber from the National Abstinence Education Association, rather than another researcher, he looked especially vulnerable.<sup>29</sup>

Along with a counteroffensive from a Democratic Congress, the campaign faces a loss of its federal leaders. Wade Horn, former assistant secretary at the federal Department of Health and Human Services, best known as the Bush administration's architect of marriage promotion as a solution to poverty, was the administration's chief supporter of abstinence-only education. He now works in the private sector for Deloitte.

In 2005, Karl Rove brought to HHS a fierce welfare reformer and anti-abortion and pro-abstinence official, Claude Allen, who targeted comprehensive sexuality education groups and arranged for Advocates for Youth, a premier progressive sexuality education organization, to be audited multiple times.<sup>30</sup> Allen lasted just over a year, before being arrested for theft related to a petty fake refund scam of retailers.<sup>31</sup>

Leslee Unruh, head of the Abstinence Clearinghouse, was a teen mother herself and the founder of Alpha crisis pregnancy center in South Dakota. She spearheaded the 2006 campaign to ban all abortions in that state. However, according to William Smith, her shrill TV presence may have made her a liability for the abstinence-only cause.<sup>32</sup>

Despite these promising changes at the national level, abstinence-only education continues to be powered through strong support at the state level from state and local politicians, and abstinence-only coalitions marketing their perspective to parents and school personnel. Liberal strategies promoting state versions of the REAL Act, supporting well-informed, responsible teens through comprehensive sexuality education, are thus as vital as vigilance in the nation's Capitol.

Keeping a conservative campaign on the defensive is not the same as a decisive victory over it. Every tactic used to support comprehensive sexuality education has so

far been met with corresponding counter-tactics. Winning a battle in the culture wars takes more energy and resources than merely being in the right. ■

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sharon Lerner, "The Sex Ed Divide," *American Prospect*, September 23, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Joel Spring, *The American School: 1642-2004* (6th ed.) (New York: McGraw Hill, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> "Abstinence Education: Efforts to Assess the Accuracy and Effectiveness of Federally Funded Programs," Report to Congressional Requesters (Washington, D.C.: Government Accountability Office) October 2006; Christopher Trenholm, Barbara Devaney, Ken Forston, Lisa Quay, Justin Wheeler, and Melissa Clark, *Impacts of Four Title V, Section 510 Abstinence Education Programs* (Princeton, N.J.: Mathematica Policy Research) April 2007; see National Abstinence Education Association at <http://www.abstinenceassociation.org>.

<sup>4</sup> Kevin Freking, "States Turn Down U.S. Abstinence Education Grants," *Boston Globe*, June 24, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Social Security Act §510 (b)(2) (codified at 42 U.S.C. §710 (b)(2)).

<sup>6</sup> Lawrence B. Finer, "Trends in Premarital Sex in the United States, 1954-2003," *Public Health Reports*, 55 (January-February 2007), 73-78.

<sup>7</sup> Most states do not keep records on adolescent sexual identity, but the CDC's biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is a reliable source of information. The pre-published results for the 2007 Massachusetts YRBS provides us with this estimate.

<sup>8</sup> Julie Kay, with Ashley Jackson, *Sex, Lies & Stereotypes: How Abstinence-Only Programs Harm Women and Girls* (New York: Legal Momentum), January 2008

<sup>9</sup> Sharon Jayson, "Abstinence Message Goes Beyond Teens," *USA Today*, October 31, 2006, at [http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2006-10-30-abstinence-message\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2006-10-30-abstinence-message_x.htm).

<sup>10</sup> Rachel Lovingood, "Something to Talk About," *True Love Waits*, Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.lifeway.com/tlw/parents/lwt.asp>.

<sup>11</sup> Tim Ellsworth, "Bush Thanks Southern Baptists," *Baptist Press*, June 13, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Mary Beth Bonacci, "Exerpts from Vital Sign Ministries Chastity Events": <http://www.vitalsignsministries.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=1>. The CDC has stated, "Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS." <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/od/condoms.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Choosing the Best PATH Leader Guide, p. 18, as quoted in "Abstinence-Only-until-Marriage Programs in Alabama," (SIECUS: New York, 2008) 10.

<sup>14</sup> Family Accountability Communicating Teen Sexuality (FACTS), *Middle School Handbook* (Portland, OR: Northwest Family Services, 2000) 50.

<sup>15</sup> "Setting the Record Straight: About Abstinence Education and Choosing the Best," [http://www.choosingthebest.org/why\\_abstinence/index.html](http://www.choosingthebest.org/why_abstinence/index.html)

<sup>16</sup> King K. Holmes, et al. "Effectiveness of Condoms in Preventing Sexually Transmitted Diseases," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, (82) 6, June 2004.

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<sup>18</sup> William Smith, "Hearing Highlights Ab-Only Industry in Peril," RH Reality Check Blog [Internet], April 30, 2008, at <http://www.rhrealitycheck.org/node/7225>.

<sup>19</sup> Christopher Trenholm et al, "Impacts of Four Title V, Section 510 Abstinence Education Programs," Mathematica Policy Research, April 2007, <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/impactabstinence.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> This is a claim on an abstinence-only website for Project Reality: <http://www.projectreality.org/news/index.php?newsid=53>.

<sup>21</sup> Edward M. Shepard III, "The Economic Costs of D.A.R.E.," Institute of Industrial Relations, Research paper #22, at [http://www.reconsider.org/issues/education/economic\\_costs\\_of\\_d.htm](http://www.reconsider.org/issues/education/economic_costs_of_d.htm).

<sup>22</sup> Marcela Howell and Marilyn Keefe, "The History of Abstinence-Only Funding," (Washington, D.C.: Advocates for Youth, 2007) <http://www.advocatesfor youth.org/publications/factsheet/fshistoryabonly.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> George W. Bush. *The True Goal of Education*. [Speech at Gorham, NH, Tuesday, November 2, 1999]. [http://www.georgewbush.com/news/speeches/1102.99\\_education.html](http://www.georgewbush.com/news/speeches/1102.99_education.html).

<sup>24</sup> Michael Reynolds, "The Abstinence Gluttons," *The Nation*, June 18, 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Best Friends Foundation 990 form, 2006; Media Transparency, "William E. Simon Foundation," <http://www.mediatransparency.org/recipientsoffunder.php?funderID=30>; Jeff Sklansky, "D.C. Students Learn To Say 'No' to Sex; 75 Girls Graduate From Pilot Program," the Washington Post, June 4, 1988, G3.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.parentsfortruth.org/video/index.php?code=OHENL>

<sup>27</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, National Public Radio, and Harvard University. *Sex Education in America: General Public/Parents Survey*. Menlo Park, CA: The Foundation, 2004.

<sup>28</sup> "The Content of Federally-Funded Abstinence-Only Educational Programs," report prepared for Rep. Henry Waxman and the United States House of representatives, Committee on Government Reform, December 2004, <http://www.oversight.house.gov/documents/20041201102153-50247.pdf>;

<sup>29</sup> William Smith, "Hearing Highlights Ab-Only Industry in Peril," RH Reality Check, April 30, 2008, <http://www.rhrealitycheck.org/node/7225>.

<sup>30</sup> Doug Ireland, "The Bush Theocracy," *LA Weekly*, January 13, 2005, <http://www.laweekly.com/news/news/the-bush-theocracy/1059/>.

<sup>31</sup> Ernesto Londoño and Michael A. Fletcher, "Former Top Bush Aide Accused of Md. Thefts," *Washington Post*, March 11, 2006, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/10/AR2006031002328\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/10/AR2006031002328_pf.html).

<sup>32</sup> Telephone conversation with the author, May 22, 2008.

# Book Review

## Racist Fundamentals on the Right

*From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism*

By Joseph Lowndes

Yale University Press, 2008, 224pp, \$35 cloth

Reviewed by Abby Scher

The modern Right was built on the “foundational violence” of racism, argues Joseph Lowndes in this exciting new book. A University of Oregon political science professor, Lowndes takes on the popular “backlash thesis” which suggests the “GOP reclaimed the political field by asserting basic American values of patriotism, family, hard work, fiscal responsibility against the excesses of the 1960s.” (p. 3)

“White voters were pushed too far,” this thesis suggests, but Lowndes in turn asks “why should white voters have seen black equality claims as detrimental to their interests?” He documents the decade by decade shifts that marginalized the moderates in the party of Lincoln who tended to accommodate to the New Deal and avoid racist appeals, even as the Democrats struggled over the racist policies built into the New Deal and the coalition holding their party together.

From the Dixiecrat revolt of the 1940s through President Richard Nixon’s embrace of a coded racist populism designed to win working class Whites to his party, Lowndes tracks the way the Right convinced some White Americans to abandon the New Deal in order to defend their White privilege. “The racial politics that animated the Southern system were translated into a national political idiom,” he argues. “As opposed to the Republican capture of the white South, we may better speak of the southern capture of the Republican Party.” (p. 5)

Building on the work of such scholars as Dan T. Carter (*From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich: Race in the Conservative Counterrevolution*), Mary Dudziak (*Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*), and Rick Perlstein (*Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of an American Consensus*), Lowndes’ contribution is to analyze the entire post-war era.

He starts with Charles Wallace Collins, author of the 1947 book *Whither Solid South? A Study in Politics and Race Relations*. Collins was the spokesman for a small group of elite White Southerners who opposed the New Deal and linked the “struggle for black rights to a tyrannical nation state.” World War II gave power to the fight for black rights, and Collins correctly predicted the political divisions would shake up the parties. Yet his vision bringing together racism, “states rights,” and free market conservatism was not widely popular, even as he guided South Carolina Democrat Strom Thurmond during the Dixiecrat rebellion of the 1948 election.

“Given that American national identity was being recast in the postwar era as racially democratic, white Southerners who



sought to hold onto racist practices required a discourse they believed to be about fundamental American principles.” (p. 41) And that was, according to Collins, the power of individual states to stop police state action of the federal government in defense of liberty.

Lowndes moves on to show how President Eisenhower’s support of Black students in Little Rock cramped the rising power of Southern Republicans, and how the new magazine *National Review* promoted them. William F. Buckley, Jr.’s notorious 1957 editorial “Why the South Must Prevail” supported White supremacy and elitism explicitly against

democracy: “because for the time being it is the advanced race... The claims of civilization supersede those of universal suffrage.” (p. 52)

Barry Goldwater’s presidential campaign in 1964 became the institutional expression of the new alliance between free market conservatives and the White anti-civil rights movement. Goldwater had condemned federal troops in Oxford, Mississippi in 1962 in the name of state’s rights. While sidestepping explicit racism, he spoke a language that southerners (White and Black) understood.

His landslide loss did not defeat the new White Southern Republicans, as people’s partisan commitments were shaking up nationwide. The presidential campaign of Alabama governor George Wallace contributed the vital piece of anti-elite populism to the new configuration that Richard Nixon later embraced and which defines the modern Right. “Squeezed between ghetto and elites, the Right no longer was the defender of privilege but rather as representative of the whole American people (p. 79). His law and order campaign derided the parasitic Blacks and welfare recipients, and decadent liberals and hippie protestors. Wallace presented the south as the most “American” region of the country, marginalizing everyone but racist Whites as un-American. And his view took hold beyond the White south.

Lowndes ends his book with an interesting analysis of this new rightwing populist configuration in the Clint Eastwood film *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. The film was based on a book written by Asa Carter, the Klansman and ex-Wallace speechwriter, under a new identity. It is a bit odd reading a pop cultural analysis in a work of political science, but it reflects Lowndes’ awareness that mass media was a vital place for working out and popularizing the new racial codes and anti-government sentiment playing on New Left and right-wing politics alike. His love of discourse and reading the elite conservative players overlooks, however, the role of the era’s social movements in creating these new configurations. But no one can argue with his conclusion that “The political Right came to dominate the political center by defining common sense—the very horizon of credible politics.” (p. 155) ■

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

## REPORT OF THE MONTH

### Corporations' Hometown News

#### Journalists Give Workers the Business

By David Madland, Center for American Progress, Washington, D.C., June 20, 2008.

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/06/pdf/world\\_without\\_workers.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/06/pdf/world_without_workers.pdf)

Debate about media bias has mainly centered on the left-right political divide, characterized by heated, point/counterpoint about the supposedly liberal media. This report shows the real prejudice of mainstream media is its preference for business sources over workers or unions.

In a study that examines economic news in the five largest national newspapers (*Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*), and the major TV broadcast and cable news networks (ABC News, CBS News, NBC News, CNN, FOX News, and CNBC), David Madland found that journalists quoted business sources over twice as often as either unions or workers themselves.

Across four target areas of economic news coverage—coverage of employment, minimum wage, trade, and credit debt—workers and business were cited in a one-to-one ratio only in reports on credit debt.

While alternative news sources are growing, the mainstream media still has the power to shape people's perspectives on issues and influence their voting. Therefore, quoting corporate perspectives in excess leads audiences to have more favorable views of business, Madland argues. The report neglects to discuss the mainstream media's general failure to run stories on labor organizing and conflict, which creates an even stronger bias in favor of business.

He says the cause of the bias lies in journalism's evolution into an "elite profession," with privileged reporters more likely to be conservative, pro-business, and associate with elite sources rather than working class ones. The solution is for journalists to admit to their bias, and then change their ways.

—Alex DiBranco

### Other Reports in Review

#### Women's Greater Economic Hardship

##### Women at Greater Risk of Economic Insecurity: A Gender Analysis of the Rockefeller Foundation's American Worker Survey

Institute for Women's Policy Research, Washington D.C., May 2008.

<http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/D482AWSReport.pdf>

Using data compiled by the Rockefeller Foundation's American Worker Survey, this report presents the unsurprising news that women, and in particular women of color, are struck hardest by economic downturns.

Much of the report reads as a psychological study: women worry more about their economic security, they're "jittery" about the impact of inflation, and they're anxious about lacking health insurance and pensions. But with reason: "Women's unease about their finances is not simply a greater propensity to worry; it reflects their experiences of material hardship." Women are twice as likely as men to make less than \$19,000, and almost twice as likely to have found themselves unable to pay for food or prescription medication. While more educated women fared better than their less fortunate female counterparts, they

still suffered more in comparison to men of the same education bracket.

In addition, women are twice as likely to be single parents, putting an additional strain on their already limited resources. Motherhood is a precarious economic situation: Mothers have far less job security than men or single women, but have more mouths dependant on their paycheck. Women were twice as likely as men to have passed up taking their child to the doctor because they did not have enough money or insurance.

Women of color are hit hardest. Almost half of African-American women and 40 percent of Hispanics have been unable to pay a bill on time, as compared to 26 percent of White women. Asked about their employment status over the past year, almost twice as many women of color reported having been involuntarily unemployed. —Alex DiBranco

#### Republicans Less Likely to Believe in Global Warming

##### A Deeper Partisan Divide over Global Warming

The Pew Research Center for People and the Press, Washington D.C., May 8, 2008.

<http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/417.pdf>

Republicans are growing increasingly skeptical that global warming is actually happening, even as Americans as a whole are more likely to accept the idea. Six percent more Americans in 2008 believe evidence points toward the existence of global warming compared to last year, bringing the total to 77 percent; 13 percent fewer Republicans believe in global warming since 2007.

This survey report provides a useful overview of the demographics of global warming believers and dissenters without analyzing why the trends are happening. For instance, college-educated Democrats are more likely to accept human causes for global warming, but Republicans with college degrees are less likely to agree that global warming has human causes—an intriguing finding that leaves further questions about the grounds for their beliefs.

The report also notes a generation gap regarding perspectives on global warming, with young people under thirty much more likely to believe it is caused by human activity (54 percent versus 37 percent).

—Alex DiBranco

## Immigration as a Global Agenda

### Border Crossings: Links between Immigration, Debt and Trade

By Sarah Anderson, *Institute for Policy Studies, Washington D.C., June 20, 2008.*  
<http://www.ips-dc.org/reports/#515>

As long as people are suffering from an abysmal quality of life in their home countries, migrants without documents will continue to come to the United States. From this simple insight, Sarah Anderson argues policymaking on immigration must take a global perspective.

Taking Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico as case studies, Anderson argues that debt cancellation by the World Bank and IME, protections of workers rights, reparations for “odious” debts contracted under U.S.-supported dictators, and waivers of NAFTA requirements for these countries would go a long way toward improving economic conditions there. This, in turn, would reduce the root cause of desperate immigration to the United States. —Alex DiBranco

## Immigration Myths

### Fear and Loathing in Prime Time: Immigration Myths and Cable News

*Media Matters Action Network, Washington, D.C., May 21, 2008.*  
<http://mediamattersaction.org/reports/fearandloathing/>

Not only are undocumented immigrants criminals who act as a massive drain upon the United States’ economy, they also are causing an outbreak of leprosy. Well, at least according to cable commentators like Lou Dobbs, who uses his prime time show *Lou Dobbs Tonight* to launch anti-immigration screeds and to propagate myths. Dobbs and other cable hosts, most notably Bill O’Reilly and Glenn Beck, devote an astonishing proportion of their air time (70 percent, in Dobbs’ case, according to a new report) to championing the cause against undocumented immigrants.

Dobbs and his ilk will air coverage of one crime perpetrated by an undocumented immigrant over and over and over again, to give the illusion of rampant crime. Dobbs fabricated the statistic that “just about a third of the prison population in this country is estimated to be illegal aliens”; in fact, noncitizens comprise barely six percent of the overall prison population.

And while Dobbs, O’Reilly, and Beck bemoan the impact of immigrants “leeches,” undocumented immigrants, while not contributing as much on the state and local level, pay into federal programs (like social security) from which they are ineligible to receive benefits. Overall, they’re paying more into the system than they’re getting back.

The report also takes on Dobbs’ & Co.’s conspiracism, most notably the fabricated elite plan to merge the U.S., Mexico, and Canada into one “North American Union.” Depending on their mood, they might also warn that illegal immigrants are committing voter fraud in droves. —Alex DiBranco

## African-American and LGBT Rights

### At the Crossroads: African-American Attitudes, Perceptions, and Beliefs toward Marriage Equality

C. Nichole Mason, Ph.D, *National Black Justice Coalition, Washington D.C. and Freedom to Marry, New York City, May 2008.*  
[http://www.nbjcoalition.org/news/marriage\\_report.pdf](http://www.nbjcoalition.org/news/marriage_report.pdf)

A large proportion of the Black community is annoyed by efforts to equate the LGBT rights movement with the civil rights movement, says author C. Nichole Mason. Nearly 75 percent of African Americans believe that homosexuality is always wrong; 65 percent oppose marriage equality and, in contrast to the trend toward LGBT-sympathy over the past 10 years, these numbers have been climbing. There is significantly more support for LGBT rights among White and Latino communities, and the report asks why, especially since prominent religious leaders such as the Rev. Al Sharpton and civil rights leaders such as Coretta Scott King advocate marriage equality.

Mason suggests the political leaders are less influential than the numerous Black churches that embrace homophobic teachings and view same-sex marriage as unholy. She adds that some Black men harbor concerns that support for LGBT rights will call into question their own sexuality, which they feel has already been degraded by racism.

However, she points out the limitations of her own sources for understanding the problem, since she drew on a mish-mash of state-wide surveys in her analysis.

She also suggests reframing the issue so that it becomes a natural extension of African-Americans’ struggle for civil rights and against discrimination. —Alex DiBranco

## Spying Matters

### Fusion Center Update

By Mike German and Jay Stanley, *American Civil Liberties Union, Washington, D.C., July 2008.*

News is breaking fast and furious about the threat of government “fusion centers,” which collect and distribute “intelligence” from both private data companies and police sources on the local, state and federal levels. So much so that the ACLU published this update to its November 2007 report on the subject, warning the network could lead to a “total surveillance society.”

Among the recent news: in March 2008 the Los Angeles Police Department issued LAPD Special Order #11, which charges its officers to create “suspicious activity reports” (SARs) compiling “information of a criminal or non-criminal nature.” An SAR promotes racial profiling and violation of protected first amendment activity by encouraging beat cops to track those using binoculars, taking pictures or video footage “with no apparent esthetic value,” and those taking notes. While nominally anonymous under federal standards, such SARs contain enough information that individuals can be identified once channeled to fusion centers with access to private data bases. And they violate federal law banning police from collecting information on someone unless there is “reasonable suspicion” of criminal conduct.

Far from being an isolated development, in June the departments of Justice and Homeland Security, and the Major City Chiefs Association, recommended that other U.S. cities take up the LAPD practice.

Commercial databases accessed by fusion center staff allow them to make an end run around privacy laws preventing police from maintaining individual dossiers on people not engaged in wrongdoing. Those prohibited by state law from buying credit reports can simply ask a fusion center in another state to provide the desired information.

Despite their threat to civil liberties, the feds seem to be working to exempt the centers from state Freedom of Information laws as happened in Virginia in April 2008 by action of the state legislature. —Ashley Pandya

# Eyes RIGHT

## CHRISTIAN LEADERS WANT OPRAH TO PUT GOD BACK IN THE BOX

Despite her strict Baptist upbringing, Oprah Winfrey frequently features New Age spirituality on her popular daytime talk show, explaining that she “took God out of the box.” But Christian leaders, such as Cynthia Hale, founder of Ray of Hope Christian Church, and James Robison, cohost of the Christian talk show *Life Today*, voice concerns that she is leading Christians astray. While Hale is a fan of Oprah’s, she wishes she’d return to the rules she grew up with: “If we cannot [admit we sin], how do people recognize the fact that in and of ourselves we are depraved and doomed, except we give our life to Christ and be saved?”

Source: Ken Walker, “Oprah’s Strange New Gospel,” *Charisma*, July 2008.  
<http://charismamag.com/articles/index.php?id=17369>

## POLITICAL ELITES PICK ON SHERIFF ARPAIO; SLASHING IMMIGRATION TASK FORCE FUNDS

In May, Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano signed an executive order cutting \$1.6 million out of Sheriff Joe Arpaio’s human smuggling task force budget. “To the extent that the sheriff is using state money to fund sweeps that were causing trepidation in the immigrant community, that state money will no longer be available,” she told reporters. *Middle American News* says Napolitano cut off the program “because it made illegal aliens fearful of arrest.”

In good populist fashion, the *News* further warns the move only “helps Arizona’s big commercial operations maintain a steady flow of cheap immigrant labor and promises to help swell the membership of radical Hispanic organizations after political power.”

Source: “Arizona Gov. Cuts Immigration Enforcement Funds,” *Middle American News*, June 2008  
<http://www.manews.org/0608arizona.html>

## THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS ON GUN SAFETY

Larry Pratt posits that those critical of private gun ownership are getting their facts wrong: more guns means less crime, not the other way around. Finding research to support his theories, he claims that firearms are used about 2.5 million times a year in self defense—almost always without having to be discharged. He urges victims to resist their attackers, warning that otherwise they are over twice as likely to get seriously injured or killed. In addition, Pratt supports children bringing guns to school since they only use them to “kill a squirrel or rabbit on the way home.” According to him, the real risk at stake is not danger to children, but rather a gun ban proposal that amounts to a subversive plot by the government to create dependence, and to expunge personal responsibility from the debate.

Source: “Making Our Neighborhoods Safe: A Fearful Policy of Zero Tolerance for Firearms Does Not Provide Safety or Security; Only an Emphasis on Personal Responsibility Can Do That,” *The New American*, April 14, 2008  
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0JZS/is\\_8\\_24/ai\\_n25399776/pg\\_1?tag=artBody:col1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JZS/is_8_24/ai_n25399776/pg_1?tag=artBody:col1)

## AMIDST THE BURNING ASH OF THE RAPTURE, A MESSAGE DELIVERED

For those awaiting the Rapture, a new website, Youvebeenleftbehind.com, allows you to store a message (for forty dollars a year) that will be sent to up to 62 loved ones six days after you are taken from the Earth. The message can contain anything from bank account numbers and passwords to a final letter begging family and friends to accept Christ

before it’s too late. The website is perfect for those who are so confident of their own salvation that they expect to be whisked away to heaven while the rest of humanity burns on earth below.

Source: Noreen Herzfeld, “Left Behind or Left in Cyberspace?” Sightings, [http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/sightings/archive\\_2008/0717.shtml](http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/sightings/archive_2008/0717.shtml)

# Eye LASHES

## International Bankers Victimize Women

“Feminism was not a spontaneous grass roots social phenomena. It was top-down elite social engineering...wholly sponsored by the central bankers in order to make women have careers instead of families. A film producer, the late Aaron Russo, was told this by the Rockefellers.”

—Henry Makow, “It’s OK to be a Woman,” *The Nationalist Times*, May 2008,  
[http://www.henrymakow.com/its\\_ok\\_to\\_be\\_a\\_woman.html](http://www.henrymakow.com/its_ok_to_be_a_woman.html)

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