Eyes Right!

Challenging the Right Wing Backlash

Edited by Chip Berlet

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A Political Research Associates Book
Acknowledgments

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The original Public Eye network was organized in the 1970s by Eda Gordon, Sheila O'Donnell, Harvey Kahn, Russ Bellant, Tim Butz, Mark Ryter, William Steiner, and other researchers, journalists, activists, and paralegal investigators studying the relationship between reactionary political movements and government repression.

The Public Eye newsletter, now published by Political Research Associates, follows in their footsteps.

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person during the organization’s first six years in Chicago.

The path that led me to this book began in the 1960s in New
Jersey church—basement coffee houses with high school friends in
the civil rights movement, including Curt Koehler, Susan Kaiser,
Mary Eich, “GM”, and Maggie and Terre Roche—all of whom
have remained committed to the principles of peace and social
justice.

Between then and now, I have benefited from the kind and
patient assistance of many friends and colleagues, and this book is
a reflection of that spirit of cooperation and collective effort.

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Some words about style. The current transitional period re-
garding language and identity makes consistency more than a
hobgoblin; it creates small mines for the grammatically-aware.
There is no agreement as to whether Black or White should be
capitalized, or one but not the other, or neither. Similarly, anti-
Semitism and antisemitism both refer to bigotry against Jews.
The capitalization scheme throughout this book reflects individual
preferences and editing decisions rather than an arbitrary at-
tempt to impose consistency. For the same reasons, the terms
hard right, religious right, theocratic right, etc. are preferred by
different authors and left alone.

To the memory of
Margaret Quigley
1958—1993

Margaret brought great energy and joy
to her work with us at Political Research Associates.
When Margaret and her partner of many years,
Susie Chancey—O’Quinn, died in a collision with a car
driven by a drunk driver, it was a personal tragedy for
all of us at PRA, as well as a loss to the movement for
democracy and diversity. Our best tribute is to carry
on their work for human rights and human dignity as
they did: with mettle tempered with mischievousness;
for bread. . .but roses, too.
Thompson's group warns of secret plots by "corrupt leaders" involving "Concentration Camps, Implantable Bio Chips, Mind Control, Laser Weapons," and "neuro-linguistic programming" on behalf of bankers who "control the economy" and created the illegal income tax.

The racial nationalists' ideal oscillates between brutish authoritarianism and vulgar fascism in service of White male supremacy. Unilateral militarism abroad and repression at home are utilized to force compliance. Social problems are caused by uncivilized people of color, lower-class foreigners, and dual-loyalists, who must all be exposed and neutralized.

Samuel Francis, the prototypical racial nationalist, writes columns warning against attempts to "wipe out traditional White, American, Christian, and Western Culture," which he blames on multiculturalism. Francis's solutions: "Americans who want to conserve their civilization need to get rid of elites who want to wreck it, but they also need to kick out the vagrant savages who have wandered across the border, now claim our country as their own, and impose their cultures upon us. If there are any Americans left in San Jose, they might start taking back their country by taking back their own city. You don't find statues to Quetzalcoatl in Vermont."

For the far right, the ideal is White revolution to overthrow the corrupt regime and restore an idealized natural biological order. Social problems are caused by crafty Jews manipulating inferior people of color. They must be exposed and neutralized.

The Truth at Last is a racist far right tabloid that features such headlines as "Jews Demand Black Leaders Ostracize Farrakhan," "Clinton Continues Massive Appointments of Minorities," and "Adopting Blacks into White Families Does Not Raise Their IQ," which concluded that "only the preservation of the White race can save civilization...Racial intermarriage produces a breed of lower-IQ mongrel people." There are constant differences and debates within the right, as well as considerable overlap along the edges. The relationships are complex: the Birchers feud with Perot on trade issues, even though their other basic themes are similar, and the theocratic right has much in common with regressive populism, though the demographics of their respective voting blocs appear to be remarkably distinct. These antidemocratic sectors of the hard right are also distinct from traditional conservatism and political libertarianism, although they share some common roots and branches.

All of these antidemocratic tendencies are trying to build grassroots mass movements to support their agendas which vary in degrees of militancy and zealousness of ideology, yet all of which (consciously or unconsciously) promote varieties of White privilege and Christian dominion. These are activist movements that seek a mass base. Across the full spectrum of the right one hears calls for a new populist revolt.

Many people presume that all populist movements are naturally progressive and want to move society to the left, but history teaches us otherwise. In his book The Populist Persuasion, Michael Kazin explains how populism is a style of organizing. Populism can move to the left or right. It can be tolerant or intolerant. In her book Populism, Margaret Canovan defined two main branches of Populism: agrarian and political.

Agrarian populism worldwide has three categories: movements of commodity farmers, movements of subsistence peasants, and movements of intellectuals who wistfully romanticize the hard-working farmers and peasants. Political populism includes not only populist democracy, championed by progressives from the LaFollettes of Wisconsin to Jesse Jackson, but also politicians' populism, reactionary populism, and populist dictatorship. The latter three antidemocratic forms of populism characterize the movements of Ross Perot, Pat Robertson, and Pat Buchanan, three straight White Christian men trying to ride the same horse.

Of the hundreds of hard right groups, the most influential is the Christian Coalition led by televangelist and corporate mogul Pat Robertson. Because of Robertson's smooth style and easy access to power, most mainstream journalists routinely ignore his authoritarianism, bigotry, and paranoid dabbling in conspiracy theories.

Robertson's gallery of conspirators parallels the roster of the John Birch Society, including the Freemasons, the Bavarian Illuminati, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Trilateral Commission. In Robertson's book The New World Order, he trumpets the Birchers (their founder called Dwight Eisenhower a communist agent) by alluding to an anti-Christian conspiracy that supposedly began in ancient Babylon—a theory that evokes historic anti-Jewish bigotry and resembles the notions of the fascist demagogue Lyndon LaRouche, who is routinely dismissed by the corporate media as a crackpot. Robertson's homophobia is profound. He is also a religious bigot who has repeatedly said that Hindus and Muslims are not morally qualified to hold government posts. "If anybody understood what Hindus really believe," says Robertson, "there would be no doubt that they have no business administering government policies in a country that favors freedom and equality."

Robertson's embrace of authoritarian theocracy is equally robust:
Homophobia: Eyes Right!

Zations active in this campaign are represented on the executive and advisory boards of CFV: Focus on the Family, Summit Ministries, Concerned Women for America, Eagle Forum, and Traditional Values. Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition is not officially represented on the board of CFV, but has a strong presence in Colorado and is ubiquitous in anti-homosexual organizing nationally. Many other New Right and "old right" organizations are climbing on the anti-homosexual bandwagon as the issue becomes more prominent.

Colorado for Family Values has maintained adamantly that its strategy was not coordinated by national religious or political groups. However, according to People for the American Way, a Washington, DC, organization that monitors the right wing, "the Religious Right's anti-gay vendetta is not, as its leaders often claim, a spontaneous outpouring of concern about gay issues. Theirs is a carefully orchestrated political effort, with a unified set of messages and tactics, that is deliberately designed to foster division and intolerance." A review of the national organizations involved with Colorado's Amendment 2 will support this analysis.

Key Homophobic Groups Active in Colorado

Rev. Louis Sheldon's Traditional Values

Traditional Values (often called the Traditional Values Coalition) is headed by Rev. Louis Sheldon and is based in Anaheim, California. Rev. Sheldon and his organization have taken leadership within the Religious Right's anti-homosexual campaign. In October 1989, Rev. Sheldon led the "West Coast Symposium on Homosexuality and Public Policy Implications" in Orange County, California. Two of the featured speakers were Roger Magnuson, Esq., author of Are Gay Rights Right?, and Congressman William Dannemeyer, author of Shadow in the Land: Homosexuality in America.

Building on the success of the west coast symposium, Rev. Sheldon convened a January 1990 conference in Washington, DC, that was billed as a "national summit meeting on homosexuality." One of the two dominant themes of the conference was that homosexuals have, since the 1960s, been seeking "special protection over and above the equal rights already given to all Americans." This theme would later appear in Colorado as the central theme of the Colorado for Family Values' promotion of Amendment 2.

Rev. Louis Sheldon was an aide to Pat Robertson in 1987, and he shares much of Robertson's interest in the legal codification of moral issues. In 1988, Sheldon led the opposition to Project 10, a counseling program for gay adolescents in the Los Angeles school system. In 1986 and 1988, his zeal against homosexuals led him to endorse the California anti-homosexual initiatives sponsored by far right extremist Lyndon LaRouche. The initiatives sought, in effect, to require quarantine for people with AIDS. Sheldon himself has advocated establishing "cities of refuge" for people with the HIV infection. In 1991, Sheldon submitted to the California attorney general a constitutional amendment that would bar civil rights laws from protecting homosexuals, unless approved by a two-thirds vote of the California voters. Sheldon has recently announced his intention to pursue in California an initiative modeled on Colorado's Amendment 2.

Barbara Sheldon, chairwoman of the Traditional Values Coalition of Colorado, is on the executive board of Colorado for Family Values. She is not related to Rev. Sheldon.

Focus on the Family

It is widely agreed that the 1991 arrival in Colorado Springs of Dr. James Dobson and his organization, Focus on the Family, was an important catalyst for Colorado Springs' local anti-homosexual organization, Colorado for Family Values. CFV had already led a successful campaign against a local gay rights ordinance. Focus on the Family, however, brought to Colorado Springs a tremendous influx of resources and sophisticated political experience: it arrived with 750 employees (and has since added another 300) and an annual budget of nearly $70 million, including a $4 million grant from the El Pomar Foundation to buy 50 acres in Colorado Springs. Focus on the Family is indeed a national organization. While it has no official ties to CFV, it has offered "advice" to CFV, and several Focus on the Family employees, such as public policy representative Randy Hicks, sit on CFV advisory boards. Focus on the Family has given an in-kind donation worth $8,000 to Colorado for Family Values.

Dr. Dobson's background is in pediatrics and he is best known as an advocate of traditional discipline and corporal punishment for children. However, his organization has also been heavily involved in anti-homosexual organizing. In 1988, Focus on the Family merged with the Washington, DC–based Family Research Council, headed by Gary L. Bauer. The Family Research Council distributed a "homosexual packet," available through Focus on the Family, which contained the lengthy document, The Homosexual Agenda: Changing Your Community and Nation. This detailed guide includes a section titled "Starting An Initiative." In October 1992, the Family Research Council separated from Focus on the Family after warnings from the Internal Revenue Service that the Council's lobbying activities were endangering Focus on the Family's tax-exempt status.
A Christian organization, the Berean League states in its promotional literature that “the League’s authority is Scripture.” Recently, it has issued a “Back—grounder” report titled Some Things You May Not Know About Homosexuality. An inflammatory three-page document, it was circulated in Oregon as a tool to organize support for Oregon’s 1992 anti—homosexual Measure 9, the Abnormal Behavior Initiative.

The American Family Association

Headed by Rev. Donald Wildmon and based in Tupelo, Mississippi, the American Family Association has an annual budget of $5 million, and focuses primarily on profanity, adultery, homosexuality, and other forms of anti—Christian behavior and language on television. An earlier Wildmon organization was called CLeaR—TV (Christian Leaders for Responsible Television) and was based in Wheaton, Illinois. Wildmon has specialized in boycotting the corporate sponsors of shows which he dislikes. He called for a boycott of American Express because it sponsored the television program “L. A. Law,” which ran an episode featuring a bisexual woman kissing another woman. Wildmon opposes even the depiction of homosexuality. One of his “top goals” for 1989 was to force the air three TV shows (“Heartbeat,” “Hooperman,” and “thirtysomething”) that, he said, “promote the homosexual lifestyle and portray practicing homosexuals in a positive light.” Wildmon was accused of anti—Semitism for inflammatory comments he made during his campaign against the film The Last Temptation of Christ.

The Rutherford Institute

The Rutherford Institute, based in Manassas, Virginia, and founded and headed by John W. Whitehead, is a non—profit, legal defense organization associated with the far—right fringe of the Religious Right. Speakers listed in its Speakers Bureau include R. J. Rushdoony, a prominent Christian Reconstructionist. Reconstructionists believe that the text of the Bible provides the only legitimate basis for civil law. The most zealous wing of Reconstructionism has called for the death penalty for homosexuals, adulterers, and recalcitrant children. In 1992, the Rutherford Institute spearheaded a suit in Hawaii to block implementation of that state’s new gay rights law.

The John Birch Society

The John Birch Society is another national organization with a prominent anti—homosexual agenda. JBS is not properly categorized as a New Right organization, but is best seen as “old right.” Historically, the John Birch Society has existed as an isolationist, anti—communist organization. It was founded near the end of the McCarthy era, and expanded on Senator Joseph McCarthy’s conspiracy theory of communist penetration of the United States. Since the death of its founder, Robert Welch, the JBS has moved from Belmont, Massachusetts, to Appleton, Wisconsin. Its recent concerns have been family issues, AIDS, US internationalist foreign policy, opposition to government regulations, and the right to bear arms. High on its list of concerns within family issues is homosexuality. The September and October 1992 issues of its publication, New American (published immediately before the November votes on anti—gay initiatives in Colorado and Oregon), carried anti—homosexual stories. The October story was a two—page article supporting Oregon’s Abnormal Behavior Initiative.

Lyndon LaRouche: A Special Case

Lyndon LaRouche is a far—right political extremist who is now serving a 15—year sentence in federal prison for mail fraud and tax evasion. LaRouche runs a vast empire of organizations with ideological positions that exactly mimic his bizarre conspiracy theories. His followers are seen in airports and on street corners, often campaigning to free LaRouche from jail or attacking the organization’s mortal enemy—Henry Kissinger. LaRouche’s many organizations have always incorporated sexual themes into their analysis and have been obsessed with AIDS since the pandemic began. LaRouche has conducted a long—running and fanatical campaign against homosexuality. Most recently, LaRouche spearheaded Proposition 64 in California, which would have established restrictive public health policies regarding AIDS. Proposition 64 was opposed by virtually all public health officials and elected officials (one exception was legislator William Dannemeyer). A public health specialist for the California Medical Association described Proposition 64 as “absolute hysteria and calculated deception.” LaRouche organizers continue to peddle hysteria over AIDS and homosexuality. Their embrace of anti—Jewish and other scapegoating conspiracy theories and use of demagoguery add a firm base to the claim that the LaRouchians are a neo—fascist movement. Many New Right groups avoid any official alliance with the LaRouchians.

Analyzing the Anti—Homosexual Campaign’s Coordination & Networking

Since its earliest days in the late 1970s, the New Right has been a political and religious movement that has self—consciously networked among its members. The Religious Roundtable, the
timber left in the United States so that these forests can be replanted with young trees that will absorb more carbon dioxide.

Although the science cited by Wise Use sources is suspect, and their arguments are mostly retreats of corporate press releases, today nearly everyone on the right wants a piece of the Wise Use movement. Rush Limbaugh, Lyndon LaRouche, the National Farm Bureau Federation, and dozens of other organizations and public figures are adopting their own versions of Wise Use rhetoric.

Much of this popularity can be explained by the lingering economic recession of the early 1980s, which provided a receptive grassroots audience for the Wise Use claim that it is easier to force nature to adapt to current corporate policies than to encourage the growth of more environmentally sound ways of doing business. Wise Use pamphlets argue that extinction is a natural process; some species weren't meant to survive. The movement's signature public relations tactic is to frame complex environmental and economic issues in simple, scapegoating terms that benefit its corporate backers. In the movement's Pacific Northwest birthplace, Wise Users harp on a supposed battle for survival between spotted owls and the families of the men and women who make their livings harvesting and milling the old growth timber that is the owl's habitat. In preparation for President Clinton's forest summit in Portland, Oregon, Wise Use public relations experts ran seminars to teach loggers how to speak in sound bites. Messages such as "jobs versus owls" have been adapted to a variety of environmental issues and have helped spark an anti-green backlash that has defeated river protection efforts and threatens to open millions of acres of wilderness to resource extraction.

While attacking environmentalists, Wise Use statements borrow heavily from environmental rhetoric; this borrowed rhetoric often cloaks a self-serving economic agenda. The Oregon Lands Coalition in effect supports the timber industry by arguing that only people who cut down trees really love the wilderness. At the same time, the Wise Use movement opposes environmentalist efforts to find new careers for unemployed loggers who could be hired to begin restoring the stream beds ravaged by clear-cutting of forests.

Similarly, National Farm Bureau Federation publications repeatedly argue that farmers are the true stewards of the land. But the Farm Bureau lobbies for fewer restrictions on pesticide use and for the clearing of wetlands—not for government support for the alternative farming practices that the National Research Council's 1989 book, Alternative Agriculture, showed can reduce farming's impact on the environment while improving farmers' net incomes.

Both the National Farm Bureau Federation and the Oregon Lands Coalition later disavowed any association with Alan Gottlieb's Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise and the term Wise Use. Groups that portray themselves as moderate Wise Users, like the Farm Bureau and Alliance for America, now describe their approach with substitute terms like "multiple use," while still employing Ron Arnold's tactics and inviting him to speak at Wise Use conferences. This distancing is apparently due to Arnold's willingness to make extreme statements to the press and the baggage of his association with Rev. Moon's Unification Church.

"It shouldn't be surprising that there are these terminology wars, given that so much of this movement is about manipulating language and manipulating people's understanding of concepts like environmentalism," according to Tarso Ramos, who monitors Wise Use activity for the Western States Center in Portland, Oregon.

In fact, the Wise Use movement resorts to a bewildering range of subterfuges to mask its agenda. For instance, the developer–funded Environmental Conservation Organization and its member organization, the National Wetlands Coalition, want to make it easier for their funders to drain wetlands to build malls. To that end, Champion Paper and MCI fund the Evergreen Foundation, which spreads the word that forests need only clear-cutting and healthy doses of pesticides to become places of "beauty, peace and mystery."

In a similar example, the Sea Lion Defense Fund is the Alaska fishing industry's legal arm in its fight against government limits on harvests of pollock, one of the endangered sea lion's favorite foods. Oregonians for Food and Shelter and Vermont's Citizens for Property Rights cultivate a folksy grassroots image while promoting the agendas of developers or extractive industries. This was a tactic first advocated by Ron Arnold in a series of articles he wrote for Timber Management magazine in the early 1980s.

Alliance for America

Since the first corporate check arrived, the Wise Use movement has been split by debates over who will control organizing strategy and funds. "[Wise Use] is not a disciplined ideological coalition. It is a multifaceted movement. There are factions within it. They fight. The objectives of various players are very different. Coalitions can be tenuous, but they are very effective," says Tarso Ramos. The Oregon Lands Coalition (OLC) is dominated by timber interests but also includes the National Farm Bureau Fed-
Falls—a project that would be prohibited if wild and scenic status were secured. As a result of the defeat of the wild and scenic plan, the state of New Hampshire will lose $450,000 in federal aid to develop a park at Livermore Falls.

**Free Market Environmentalism**

Environmentalists are conditioned by decades of using legislative processes to battle industry over the scale of development and resource exploitation in natural areas. But Wise Users don’t contest the scope of environmental protection; they wage war on the notion that any ecological problems exist that cannot be solved by reliance on the free market. David Gurnsey, Maine Conservation Rights Institute’s representative to the Northern Forest Lands Advisory Committee, did not criticize the conclusions of the Committee’s biodiversity study—he claimed the whole concept of preserving biodiversity was a veiled effort to take land from private owners.

Wise Users often call environmentalists “watermelons”: green on the outside, but red to the core. This association of environmentalists with the specter of communism is not mere grassroots name-calling. Corporate-funded, rightist libertarian think tanks like the Cato Institute and the Reason Foundation publish analysis and research supporting the Wise Use claim that green politics are the last vestige of communism’s collectivist, One World Government plot to subjugate the planet. In its most extreme forms, this logic surfaces in the claim of Lyndon LaRouche’s followers that Greenpeace’s activists are eco-terrorists and pawns of the KGB. The Greenpeace–KGB connection, first trumpeted in LaRouche publications, resurfaced in the writings of Kathleen Marquardt, founder of Putting People First and winner of the Best Newcomer Award at the June 1992 Wise Use Leadership Conference.

In some respects, however, free market environmentalism as advocated by Cato’s director of Natural Resource Studies, Jerry Taylor, or Reason Magazine editor, Virginia I. Postrel, has more merit than many environmentalists want to admit. For example, the biggest source of water pollution in America today is municipal wastewater facilities built with federal assistance. It was only after the end of federal subsidies for wastewater treatment that alternative clean-up methods like engineered wetlands were able to win out over traditional wastewater plants in many areas. But the Wise Use movement is not seeking to open opportunities for small businesses to profit while healing the planet. They want to dismantle government environmental protection while removing restrictions on industrial exploitation.

At the grassroots level, the Wise Use movement has taken many of the typical characteristics of demagogic, paranoid right-wing movements, portraying environmentalists as in league with the federal government to destroy families. In Vermont, Citizens for Property Rights decorated a rally with effigies of their opponents dangling from nooses. Massachusetts’ Friends of the Rivers claimed that environmental groups had paid off legislators to support wild and scenic designation of the Farmington River. In New Hampshire, opponents of grassroots Wise Users along the Pemigewassett River received threatening phone calls.

**Wise Use & the Right Wing**

By 1993, the Wise Use movement had begun forming its first links with anti-gay activists and the Religious Right. In his report, *God, Land and Politics*, Dave Mazza of the Western States Center traced the growing association of two grassroots movements in Oregon. “Oregon’s electoral process has seen the Wise Use Movement and the Religious Right movement coming together in a number of ways, intentionally or unintentionally pushing forward a much broader conservative social or economic agenda,” Mazza concluded.

The Oregon Citizens’ Alliance, which achieved a small measure of national fame by its advocacy of a state referendum effectively legalizing discrimination against gays and lesbians (Measure 9), is trying to climb on the state’s crowded Wise Use bandwagon by sponsoring an initiative undermining Oregon’s land-use planning laws. As the Wise Use movement continues to spread, it is becoming both more vociferous and sophisticated. The leaders of the Wise Use movement have demonstrated that they would rather intimidate environmentalists than negotiate compromises between economic and environmental interests. In practice, Wise Use is proving to be a slick new name for some of democracy’s oldest enemies.
The most recent piece of major legislation on the issue, the Immigration Act of 1990, reaffirmed the centrality of family reunification, which has been the touchstone of US immigration policy since 1965. However, the concept of family reunification is now under attack.

Rightists Fund Anti-Immigrant Groups

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) is directly tied to more virulent racists by the funding it has received from the Pioneer Fund. Between 1985 and 1989, the Pioneer Fund provided eight grants totaling $295,000 to FAIR, and three grants totaling $80,000 to the American Immigration Control Foundation.

Pioneer Fund documents indicate that FAIR received another $150,000 in 1992, making it the largest recipient of Pioneer grants that year. And FAIR clearly has no qualms about receiving such funding. The Pioneer Fund also funded The Bell Curve.*

It is also of note that heiress Cordelia Scaiffe May supports FAIR, US English, the Center for Immigration Studies, and others to the tune of $2.5 million. May’s political agenda is made clearer by her foundation’s underwriting in 1983 of the distribution of The Camp of the Saints by Jean Raspail, a book in which immigrants from the Third World invade Europe and destroy its civilization.

Raspail’s novel was the emotional touchstone for a recent article in the Atlantic Monthly titled “Must It Be the Rest Against the West?” in which the authors ultimately propose rather pragmatic solutions in response to the global division between rich and poor that they perceive as “dwarf[ing] every other issue in global affairs.”

The Atlantic Monthly article quotes directly from The Camp of the Saints, a copy of which they obtained from the American Immigration Control Foundation. It is instructive to read even a short passage from that book. It describes the masses threatening the white, and naturally civilized world as:

All the kinky-haired, swarthy-skinned, long-despised phantoms; all the teeming ants toiling for the white man’s comfort; all the swill men and sweepers, the troglodytes, the swivel-hipped menials, the womenless wretches, the lung-spewing hackers...

These “five billion growling human beings” are threatening the “seven hundred million whites.”

* The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) should not be confused with Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) through guilt by acronym.

Immigration, Today & Yesterday

Today there is a tendency to revise history, to extol the virtues of past immigration, specifically that which includes our ancestors, while saying that now the country is full and can hold no more. But as we have seen, the pattern of resistance to immigration was, if anything, more severe during earlier waves of arrivals. Indeed immigration today does not equal, in absolute numbers, the peak of entries around 1910. And immigration as immigrants per 1,000 residents of the US (the rate) is several times lower than at any time during the period 1850–1930.

Anti-immigrant groups have had to endorse historical immigration because the vast majority of non-native US citizens are descended from immigrants. What they do not state directly, but imply in cleverly constructed arguments, is the one thing that clearly is different today. In 1900, 85 percent of immigrants came from Europe (only 2.5 percent came from Latin America and Asia combined). In 1990, Latin and Asian immigrants accounted for more than two-thirds of all immigrants. Indeed, the population of Hispanics in the US is projected to reach 80 million by the middle of the next century, while the Asian population will rise to about 40 million.

The US has been a majority-white country and immigrant labor in the early part of this century was white, although, as we have seen, ethnic, national, and religious distinctions were critical in that time as the basis for defining immigrants as different, inferior morally and intellectually and, thus, threatening. The current influx from Third World countries faces the added dimension of race, a powerful factor throughout US history. Thus the current sentiment is as much the political twin of the racist history of exclusion of the Chinese as it is the resistance to white immigration.

The recent US military action in Haiti is yet another sign of the depth of impact that race has on immigration policy. Haitian immigrants have been widely and falsely disparaged as bringing AIDS into the US. President Clinton, however, promised fair treatment for Haitian refugees during his campaign, only to renege on that promise once in office. When intense economic sanctions failed to force the Haitian military junta out and the flow of boat people continued, pressure mounted to do something and Clinton sent in the troops. In the process, the issue of halting immigration of poor black people was elevated to the level of national security.
Donald Huddle that shows that immigrants cost the US $44 billion more than they contributed in 1993. Immigrant advocates point to the Urban Institute study that shows that immigrants contributed from $25 to $35 billion more than they took out in 1992. A study by Los Angeles County found that immigrants cost the county almost $1 billion, but give back four times that amount in taxes. The problem, however, for Los Angeles County is that the county almost $1 billion, but give back four times that amount in benefits.

Business Week estimated that immigrants pay $70.3 billion in taxes annually and receive $5 billion in welfare benefits, and another $11.5 billion in primary and secondary education benefits.

The Urban Institute reviewed a number of contemporary studies that "document" the draining effect of immigrants on the US economy in order to find underlying biases. They found that the studies vary in quality, but "the results invariably overstate the negative impact of immigrants for the following reasons: 1) they systematically understate tax collections from immigrants, 2) they systematically overstate service costs for immigrants, 3) none credit immigrants for the impact of immigrant-owned businesses on the full economic benefit generated by consumer spending from immigrants, 4) job displacement impact and costs are overstated, 5) they omit the fact that parallel computations for natives show natives use more in services than they pay in taxes too, and 6) the size of the immigrant population—particularly the undocumented immigrant population—tends to be overstated."

The Immigration Debate & the Issue of Race

It is helpful to take a step back and consider the development of race as a concept. Race is intimately associated with both the development of the US and with immigration policy. This is not surprising since this country was built on dislocation of the indigenous population and the enslavement of Africans. Such deeds are hard to justify against persons that you hold as equals. In the 19th—century, the dominant view was that Africans, Asians, and Native Americans were separate and inferior species. This was based variously on interpretation of the Christian scriptures and on "scientific" comparisons ofcranial capacity. According to Gould:

"Louis Agassiz, the greatest biologist of mid—nineteenth—century America, argued that God had created blacks and whites as separate species." On the other hand, Gould noted that, head measurements "matched every good Yankee's prejudice—whites on top, Indians in the middle, and blacks on the bottom; and, among whites, Teutons and Anglo—Saxons on top, Jews in the middle and Hindus on the bottom." Drawings showing that African's heads appeared half—way between those of whites and chimpanzees were common.

Actually, race is an artificial construct. Andrew Hacker writes, "there is no consensus when it comes to defining 'race,' the term has been applied to a diversity of groups. The Irish have been called a race...as have Jews and Hindus...In the United States, what people mean by 'race' is usually straightforward and clear, given the principal division into black and white. Yet...not all Americans fit into a racial designation." Most obviously, racial designations usually include Hispanic as an option—despite the fact that Hispanic covers many races. On another level, for most Asians and Hispanics, "images of their identities are almost wholly national"—Chinese or Japanese, Puerto Rican or Mexican for example.

In the early part of this century, the terrain of defining racial differences shifted to measurement of IQ, and this was used to justify differential restriction of peoples in immigration. These tests, in particular those by psychologist, "R. M. Yerkes, who persuaded the army to test 1.75 million men in World War I, thus establish(ed) the supposedly objective data that vindicated hereditary claims and led to the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924, with its low ceiling for lands suffering the blight of poor genes," writes Gould.

In the 1970s, the Pioneer Fund underwrote research by William Shockley and Arthur Jensen, who set the next stage for the IQ and race issue. They proclaimed that blacks have lower IQs than whites. It is not surprising to note the resurgence once again of this idea in the publication of The Bell Curve in 1994 by conservative social scientist Charles Murray and the late Harvard Professor Richard Herrnstein. The book develops an argument that intelligence is largely hereditary. Since blacks score below whites on such tests, this leads the authors to draw conclusions in favor of, "ending welfare to discourage births among low—IQ women, changing immigration laws to favor the capable and rolling back most job discrimination laws."

It is bitterly ironic that this was published in the same year that the movie "Forest Gump" became a smash hit by showing the basic humanity and common sense wisdom of a low IQ white man. The Bell Curve has been reviewed by sociologist Christopher Jencks as "highly selective in the evidence they present and in their interpretation of ambiguous statistics." And psychologist Richard Nisbett states that their work "wouldn't be accepted by an academic journal—it's that bad."

Indeed, along with the political climate, there already "is a police state that has developed in the southwestern United Stated..."
short-wave radio broadcasts in English and German, with the latter aimed at his ever-increasing right-wing audience in Germany. Although Zundel is reportedly under investigation by Canadian authorities, no admissible evidence of “hate crimes” has been found. A member of the Ontario Provincial Police commented in a 1993 interview that “Mr. Zundel is very knowledgeable about what he can say.”

Keegstra, a former history and shop teacher, as well as Mayor of Eckville, Alberta, lost both jobs after a long struggle by opponents to oust him. Parents, disturbed by the anti-Jewish tone of their children’s notes from Keegstra’s classes, objected and sought to have him dismissed. They eventually succeeded, but encountered a great deal of opposition from his supporters, who ran the gamut from fellow teachers coming to the aid of one of their own to right-wing ideologues whose views were akin to Keegstra’s.

Keegstra, like Zundel, was tried twice on charges related to spreading hatred and violating the “false news” law. Although an earlier conviction was overturned by the Canadian Supreme Court in 1991, after the second trial in July 1992 Keegstra was convicted of “promoting hatred by teaching his high school students that Jews have conspired to gain control of the world.”

According to a 1985 article in the Jewish monthly Midstream, the frightening aspect of the entire affair was not so much that it happened, but that Keegstra poisoned the minds of his students for 14 years, that he induced them to hate Jews, and that this did not bother the high school principal, who said that Keegstra was a “good teacher” and that he would be “happy to see Keegstra reinstated.” It did not stop one of his antagonists from thinking she could work with him in “trying to make Eckville a decent place to live,” and it failed to disturb the equanimity of the school superintendent, who found Keegstra “most convincing” at the hearing where it was decided to keep him on for another year.

That his teachings had somehow been able to muscle aside the standard history found in mass media and school curriculum on the Holocaust and World War II was also alarming to Jigs Gardner, author of the Midstream article. But for Holocaust revisionists and revisionist sympathizers, mainstream media and Hollywood productions are run by special interest groups (usually meaning Jews) and therefore programming is controlled to convey only the message these groups want the public to hear.

Finally, the neo-fascist cult leader Lyndon LaRouche has questioned the Holocaust by claiming that most Jews died of disease and overwork, a stock-in-trade argument of Holocaust revisionists. Followers of LaRouche and Farrakhan have been making joint appearances in recent months.

These are only a few of the many deniers who have received public attention recently. Unfortunately, their message is sparking increased “debate” over the Holocaust, and the numbers of their supporters seem to be increasing.

Why Holocaust Denial?

Moderate Holocaust denial/revisionism generally takes the form of “wanting to hear both sides of the story,” or questioning the extent of the Holocaust, in the spirit of not wanting to believe something on the scale of the Holocaust could happen. Carlos Huerta believes that the reason for this may be simply that people want to be tolerant, even of the most crackpot opinions. Such individuals, he says, have a sense of American fair play and have difficulty in understanding what they perceive as personal, slanderous attacks against revisionists. They ask the obviously simple question that if revisionism is so wrong and absurd, why not simply expose it as such and end the issue.

As mentioned earlier, however, a number of Holocaust scholars and Jews have declined to debate Holocaust deniers/revisionists, based on their fear that to do so would indicate that Holocaust denial is an acceptable theory. Deborah Lipstadt, a noted author and historian specializing in the Holocaust, explains:

The existence of the Holocaust is not a matter for debate. I would analyze and illustrate who they were and what they tried to do, but I would not appear with them. To do so would give them a legitimacy and a stature they in no way deserve. It would elevate their anti-Semitic ideology—which is what Holocaust denial is—to the level of responsible historiography—which it is not.

Lipstadt cites the case of a television program on which she refused to appear but viewed at a later date:

When the show aired, in April 1992, deniers were given the bulk of the time to speak their piece. Then Holocaust survivors were brought on to try to “refute” their comments. Before the commercial break the host, Montel Williams, urged viewers to stay tuned, so that they could learn whether the Holocaust is a myth or is it truth.

Unfortunately, the refusals of experts and survivors to confront the revisionists, while understandable, may allow Holocaust denial a virtually unchallenged forum. This is especially true in the case of call-in talk shows, which pit deniers (who are, ironically, well-prepared and well-read in standard Holocaust history) against well-meaning opponents who may not be well-versed in the subject, but know, through whatever means—experience or reading—the truth of the Holocaust. Such programs can become an exercise in emotionalism, with callers and even talk show hosts losing their
organization, and is a prominent Republican celebrity figure. Other Black conservative media stars include Marva Collins, whose Chicago West-side Preparatory School was the subject of a “60 Minutes” story and a made-for-television movie, and Joe Clark, the baseball-bat-wielding principal of Patterson, New Jersey’s Eastside High School. Clark became a favorite of then-Secretary of Education William Bennett and his exploits provided the storyline for the feature film “Lean on Me.”

African Americans, especially those of us old enough to remember the civil rights era, have been shocked by the conservative turn taken by such former civil rights stalwarts as James Meredith, Roy Innis, the Rev. James Bevel, and the late Rev. Ralph Abernathy. In 1962, James Meredith became the first Black student to integrate the University of Mississippi. In 1989, Meredith became the first Black professional on the staff of North Carolina Republican Senator Jesse Helms. Most recently, he ran unsuccessfully for the Mississippi House seat vacated by President Clinton’s Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Espy. Although most African Americans know that Abernathy, Innis, and Bevel all adopted conservative politics, few are aware of just how far right these former civil rights leaders have turned, or that they have ties to authoritarian, right-wing organizations. Abernathy worked until his death with Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s Unification movement. Innis has worked in alliance with Lyndon LaRouche’s organizations. And Rev. Bevel now works closely with groups controlled by both Moon and LaRouche.

Ties with the Traditional Values Movement

A more narrowly focused group of Black conservatives comes out of the right-wing traditional values movement within the Black community. This group merits special attention. Notwithstanding the occasional secular group, it is primarily made up of Black Christian fundamentalist groups, and its followers differ significantly from Black conservative intellectuals and bureaucrats. Unlike the former, the traditional values people are part of a movement and, as such, engage in constituency-building activities. Whereas conservative Black intellectuals and political officials uniformly scoff at Afrocentrism, some of the Black fundamentalist groups adhere to strongly Afrocentric orientations. Indeed, the combination of hard-core Christian fundamentalism with Afrocentrism contains the potential for schisms within Black Christian fundamentalism and certainly with the notoriously racist elements of the white Christian fundamentalist movement as a whole.

The larger, predominantly white traditional values movement is well placed to receive more attention as the right gears up to fight the Clinton Administration’s policies on abortion, AIDS, and sex education in schools. Indeed, as the right-wing Christian fundamentalist and traditional values movements continue to organize to overtake the Republican Party at the local level, and as their influence on US politics spreads, those Black Americans affiliated with the positions of the traditional values movement are positioned to garner as much attention in the 1990s as the Black conservative intellectuals did in the 1980s. This is particularly true given that the African American community, while traditionally liberal on political issues, is also traditionally conservative on social issues, such as abortion rights and homosexual rights.

Dr. Mildred Jefferson, a physician who was the first Black woman to graduate from Harvard Medical School, has long been a star in the traditional values movement. Dr. Jefferson was a founder and former chairman of the National Right to Life Committee, and served three terms as the organization’s president. She is currently chair of the National Right to Life Crusade. Jefferson is joined by several other lesser lights who are asserting themselves as movement spokespersons: Los Angeles school teacher Ezola Foster, Rev. Cleveland Sparrow in Washington, DC, Greg Keath in Michigan, and Rev. Edward V. Hill in Los Angeles.

Keath is the leader of two groups, Rescue Black America (RBA) and the Alliance for Family, both staunch opponents of abortion. Rescue Black America uses tactics similar to those used by anti-abortion groups such as Operation Rescue. Like Keath, Washington, DC minister Cleveland Sparrow is also adamantly opposed to abortion, but his organization, the National Coalition for Black Traditional Values (NCBTV), increasingly is targeting homosexual civil rights issues and AIDS anti-discrimination laws. Sparrow was formerly head of the Moral Majority chapter in the District of Columbia, and is gathering increasing political clout in the white conservative establishment. Sparrow aligned himself with Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Representative William Dannemeyer (R-CA) in an effort to overturn a Washington, DC, City Council ordinance that bars insurance companies from refusing coverage to people who test positive for the HIV virus.

Ezola Foster’s Los Angeles-based Black Americans for Family Values (BAFV) also opposes homosexual rights and AIDS anti-discrimination laws, as well as a woman’s right to abortion, AIDS education, and sex education in schools. Arguing in 1988 that the issue was whether Republicans want to send voters the message that “it is the party of the family...[or] the party of perverts,” Foster has repeatedly supported efforts by Representative Wil-