Defending Democracy

AN ACTIVIST RESOURCE KIT
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Introduction

Welcome, Dear Reader & Colleague,

We are glad you have chosen Defending Democracy, Political Research Associates’ Activist Resource Kit. What a time of challenge in which we are living! Adrienne Rich, poet extraordinaire, paints a vivid picture with her words: the United States is becoming “a pyramidal society of the omnivorously acquisitive few.” I think of Rich’s insight as I welcome you as a reader of this catalyzing resource.

Think back. Some of us were socialized into very confusing notions of patriotism and democracy. For me, the rosy belief in democracy was instilled in kindergarten and the early years of schooling by the teachers’ practice of rewarding us for good penmanship or accuracy by pasting a red, white, and blue flag on our paper or hand. I was so proud when this happened to me! And it is to this rooted patriotism—and U.S. propaganda—that the orators of the mid-twentieth century freedom and liberation movements initially spoke. Others, born later, experienced another pattern in teacher behavior: nervousness and awkwardness of some teachers as criticism of the government’s ventures around the world became more vocal. U.S. democracy became more questionable. Yet the mythology remained.

Patriotism used and misused: what’s real substance? What’s rhetoric? What’s a recurring pattern? What’s new? Who benefits? Who loses? With hindsight, I can see how deeply embedded are various manifestations of the triumphalist views of this country as No. 1, the natural and superior leader of the world. Is that the view of the Right only, or do residues of this view persist in the way we effectively—and ineffectively—mobilize to co-create an authentic democracy?

Since 1981, Political Research Associates has monitored the Right, and the proliferation of organizations, think tanks, spokespersons and behind-the-scenes influences comprising the spectrum of the Right. The Public Eye, PRA’s periodical, regularly offers substantive and informative analysis of what is, and what might be. PRA’s Activist Resource Kits, Defending Public Education and Defending Reproductive Rights, both have helped to strengthen the work of those on the front lines of struggle for “the soul of America” and strengthen the texture of our activism.

Defending Democracy places a cornucopia of documented information and analyses in our hands that can help us disentangle mixed feelings about the red, white and blue. Researchers, popular educators, advocates, student organizers—we hope that you all will find materials here that help you think more clearly about the ideologies and tactics of the Right and help you craft a progressive response.

Please provide feedback on how this, and future, Activist Resource Kits can be even more helpful to the work you do. PRA is delighted to partner with you in moving forward ever more effectively to counter the rightward drift of public discourse and public policy. As community organizer Ella Baker said, “we who believe in freedom cannot rest, cannot rest…”

In the struggle is the hope,

Loretta J. Williams
Chair, PRA Board of Directors
Acknowledgments

This kit is a publication of Political Research Associates (PRA). Founded in 1981, PRA is an independent nonprofit research center that serves as a national information resource on the U.S. political Right.

This kit is truly the result of a team effort. Present and former PRA staff, consultants, and interns all contributed in one way or another: Francine Almash, Nikhil Aziz, Wendy Beauchamp, Chip Berlet, Pam Chamberlain, Stephanie Clark, Kate Cloud, Judith Glaubman, Jean Hardisty, Anoosh Jorjorian, Surina Khan, Richard Allen Jackson, Jr., Karen O’Brien, Ana Perea, Mark Umi Perkins, Jesse Ward Putnam, Mitra Rastegar, Rebecca Sablo, and Peter Snoad. Everyone lent their hands in some aspect of conceptualizing the project, researching, writing, editing and proofing the various components and promoting the kits. Pam Chamberlain and Mitra Rastegar coordinated the project, as they do all of the Activist Resource Kits. We are pleased to be able to include Frederick Clarkson’s and Matthew Lyons’ excellent pieces in this kit. We are thrilled to be working with Debbie Hird who designed the kit and Brooke Reitveld who pursued and photographed the cover image, a sculpture by William Herrick.

A variety of organizations and individuals graciously offered us permission to reprint materials. We are grateful to the following: the Blue Mountain Working Group; the Center for Democratic Renewal; Western States Center; Sheila O’Donnell; Brian Glick; Timothy Saasta, Iris Rothman, and the Center for Community Change; Kim Klein, Stephanie Roth and Chardon Press; and the fabulous cartoon artists, Kirk Anderson, Barry Deutsch, Ann Telnaes, and Matt Wuerker.

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Because foundation grants have covered most of the research and production costs, the Activist Resource Kit is modestly priced. You can help keep it that way. If you find the kit a valuable resource, please consider making a donation to PRA towards ongoing costs of updating, promoting and distributing the kit.
How to Use This Kit

Over the last twenty years, the Right has successfully eroded many of the hard-won policy changes promoted by progressives towards economic and social justice in the United States. With the installation of a conservative president, we will continue to experience the consequences of the Right’s rigid “family values,” pro-privatization, antigovernment agenda.

To effectively oppose these advances, progressive activists need to be intimately familiar with the Right’s vision and tactics and be persistent in exposing them, while continuing to build our own movement infrastructure to advance the goal of real social justice. PRA has created this Activist Resource Kit, *Defending Democracy*, to assist in this process.

The kit consists of five sections:
- Overview
- Organizing Advice
- Media Tips
- Fundraising Tips
- Resources

In the OVERVIEW are four articles.

- PRA President Jean Hardisty’s “Rights for Some: The Erosion of Democracy,” exposes how the Right uses the language of an expansive democracy to garner popular support for policies and campaigns that in fact only benefit their exclusive constituency.

- In “The Culture Wars Are Not Over,” author Frederick Clarkson examines how the Christian Right, which had appeared to be losing ground, now seeks to reestablish and institutionalize itself at all levels of society with the support of the Bush administration.

- The excerpts from Senior Analyst Chip Berlet and historian and activist Matthew Lyon’s recently-released *Right-Wing Populism In America: Too Close for Comfort* provide analysis of a long-standing current within the U.S. political Right which combines mass grassroots mobilization with anti-elitism and scapegoating of oppressed groups.

- “A Call to Defend Democracy and Pluralism” by the Blue Mountain Working Group is as timely as ever in providing a unifying vision for the progressive movement as it seeks to counter right-wing attacks on democracy and pluralism.

ORGANIZING ADVICE offers practical guidance for activists, including general dos and don’ts in dealing with the Right, how to respond to hate activity in your community, and ways to protect your work and yourself in the face of harassment and political repression.

The MEDIA TIPS section provides nuts and bolts advice on how to use the media to publicize your organization’s work and issues. It also includes a listing of organizations that provide media assistance.
The **FUNDRAISING TIPS** consist of two short articles by renowned fundraising consultants Kim Klein and Stephanie Roth, and a listing of resources to assist you in achieving financial security for your work.

The **RESOURCES** section includes an annotated listing of major right-wing organizations and ideologues and a listing of selected organizations defending democracy and diversity from right-wing attack. In addition, we provide a bibliography of resources to assist you in further researching the Right and other related topics discussed in this kit.

We want this kit to be a way for activists to share resources. We intend future revisions to reflect your contributions. Please complete the evaluation included with the kit or feel free to contact us at any time with comments, additions, or any other advice.

Also, if your organization provides resources about challenging the Right and would like to be included in our list of Groups Defending Democracy and Diversity from Right-Wing Attack, please let us know.
Rights for Some: the Erosion of Democracy
Jean Hardisty

Introduction
Right-wing leaders often appropriate progressive themes by calling for rule by “the people,” equal opportunity, and “equality” feminism. Their rhetoric has convinced many voters that the Right offers a more fair and direct form of democratic representation than that offered by liberals and progressives. But an accurate analysis of the Right’s agenda reveals that, while it embraces the rhetoric of democracy, it promotes a constricted, shrunk version of democracy. This version resembles how the United States was governed before the New Deal reforms of the 1930s and 1940s. By defining democracy in its narrowest sense, the contemporary Right...
claims the mantle of democracy, even though, since the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, its campaigns, policies, and initiatives have attacked democratic principles and undermined democratic practices.

Progressives have a gut-level understanding that the Right is anti-democratic, so when we fight the Right’s agenda, we often say we are “defending democracy.” But what exactly do we mean by that? And what is the Right’s overarching vision, and how does that vision alter democracy as progressives define it?

**What is Democracy?**

Democracy has no single definition. It is a fluid concept that can describe a political system in which very few hold power and each person is responsible for his or her own welfare, or a more egalitarian and inclusive political system in which decision-making is broad-based and the members’ needs are met. Historically the Right has promoted the former version of democracy and progressives the latter. In its most narrow definition, democracy simply offers citizens the right to vote. Unfortunately, this narrow definition is used widely, by political commentators, the State Department and school textbooks.

Despite the United States’ blatant shortcomings—from institutional racism to systematic government violations of civil liberties—certain characteristics are now widely accepted in the consciousness of much of the U.S. public as constituting “our system of democracy.” These characteristics include: the right to vote and have that vote counted; the right to hold and express individual opinions; an independent judiciary; and freedom of religion. Each characteristic has seldom been a reality. Nevertheless, they remain the popular image of U.S. democracy. Progressives often appeal to each of these standards in order to defend individual rights and liberties from governmental abuses.

But in a truly inspiring vision of democracy is a society that provides equal protection under the law, equal access to economic opportunities, and equal access to individual rights. For those less able to compete for a good life, government provides a social safety net, paid for by all the members of the society. Full membership in society is open to all. There is no “fence” around the society to legitimize those within and allow them to forget and ignore those outside. White male property owners are not more deserving than mothers who receive welfare or children with physical disabilities. Government does more than simply represent and carry out the will of the voting public; its role extends to helping people to strive for better lives. Social justice activists consistently work to push U.S. society to reach this democratic potential by efforts to expand rights and protections for everyone—not just the privileged—demanding that government uphold the individual liberties guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, and fighting for a meaningful social safety net.

While the conservative Right (including the New Right, the Christian Right, and the secular right wing of the Republican Party) opposes every assumption and program promoted by liberals and progressives, it supports “democracy”—the most rosy, popular view of U.S. democracy. This version of democracy is a matter of form rather than substance. That is, so long as the vote is in place and representative political bodies are present, it is acceptable for elites to dominate decision-making and for gross inequalities of power and wealth, lack of mass participation, and inadequate protection of minority groups to exist.
The Right, using this version of democracy, declares its ideology and agenda to be “for the average working person.” The Right’s leaders use rhetoric such as “returning power to the people” or “taking our country back” to emphasize their “democratic” credentials. But this is a dodge that intentionally misleads the public. Rightist leaders borrow the language of an expansive, progressive vision of democracy, while pursuing a constricted and reactionary version of democracy. Only occasionally does a marginal figure such as Pat Buchanan confess his doubts about democracy and his suspicions of “the people.”

What Can People Expect From Democracy Today?

The expansive view of democracy grew in popularity during the 1960s and 1970s, as activists pressed demands on the government for services, protections and relief in economic, social, and political areas. Many White voters, educated by the Civil Rights Movement, began to imagine a more inclusive version of democracy in which members of the society were not placed “outside the fence” because of their race. Many people began to see de facto racial segregation, slum housing conditions, unemployment, and widespread hunger and malnutrition as affronts to democracy. All three branches of government—the Congress, the Executive branch, and the Judiciary—responded to popular pressure by taking some responsibility for the poverty and the other forms of oppression in which a large portion of people in this country lived.

Precedent existed for government to assist those living in poverty: President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal of the 1930s and 1940s. In many cases during the Roosevelt Administrations, government acknowledged such needs and then a joint force of government, the non-profit sector, and occasionally business tried to address them. The backlash was immediate and vicious. Roosevelt and his New Deal policies came under sustained and sometimes vicious attacks from the Right of the 1930s and 1940s—the Old Right. Its principal weapon was the accusation that an expanded government was socialistic and that liberal government programs were the work of “domestic communists.”

The Old Right’s opposition to “government interference” remained strong in the 1950s when the National Review played a leading role in critiquing government programs. Wisconsin’s Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy promoted the Old Right’s anticommunist paranoia with his Senate Internal Security Committee Hearings, creating a climate of fear and red-baiting that...
ruined hundreds of lives. But the popular movements of the 1960s and 1970s, which mobilized large numbers of people to exert demands on government, lessened the Old Right’s effectiveness. Liberal reformers who were elected to Congress refined New Deal programs. The Civil Rights and the Anti-Vietnam War Movements mounted serious challenges to the status quo. Liberation movements generated a drumbeat of demands for expanded rights, as they mobilized to bring more people “inside the fence” of democracy, and leave fewer and fewer people disenfranchised, marginalized, and “outside the fence.” The 1960s and 1970s, many people’s expectations of their government were perhaps higher even than during the New Deal.

In the 1970s, young turks of the Right responded by abandoning the Old Right’s identity and fashioning a new style and a new name—the New Right. Continuing its attack on the legitimacy of any federal government program that addressed social justice issues, the New Right dropped the explicit promotion of racial bigotry. It attacked liberalism as a tax-and-spend ideology that created inefficient government programs that were causing, not ameliorating, the country’s problems. Using high-tech methods, simplistic language, and outrageous accusations, it demonstrated its muscle by defeating six of seven sitting liberal Democratic senators in the 1980 election. Under the protection of Ronald Reagan, its charismatic standard-bearer, the New Right took control of the Republican Party while simultaneously courting conservative evangelical Christians with a program of “family values” and minimal government.

How The Right Portrays Itself As Democratic

In the 1970s the New Right set out its ideology with shameless clarity. Calling itself a “revolutionary” movement, its leaders declared that they were going to take the country back from the liberals, feminists, and secular humanists who “controlled” the national agenda. In a book that could serve as the manifesto of the New Right, *The New Right: We’re Ready to Lead!*, Richard Viguerie states, “One of the biggest lies of 20th century American politics is that liberals care about people and conservatives don’t. This is a bum rap put on us by liberals. I suggest it’s conservatives who, by their actions, show real love and compassion for their fellow men.” The New Right repackaged the agenda of the Old Right, while denying that the movement was racist. The New Right’s leaders sought to leave behind the Old Right’s tainted association with the KKK, White Citizens’ Councils, neonazi anti-Semites, and even the less racist John Birch Society, while simultaneously positioning themselves well to the right of traditional Republican conservatives.

To become a mass-based social and political movement, however, the New Right needed to attract a following outside of the Republican Party. Republicans have for decades had a reputation as the party of white country club members and big business, but at various times it has successfully
painted itself as the party of “the common man.” Two constituencies were available for the New Right’s recruitment: voters who had supported the presidential candidacy of George Wallace, the white supremacist Democratic governor of Alabama who is sometimes called the father of the conservative movement, and conservative Christian evangelicals and fundamentalists across the country.

In recruiting these new constituencies, the New Right’s leaders struck an aggressively populist tone, despite an agenda that served the interests of business and the wealthy. As Chip Berlet and Matthew Lyons describe in their book, *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort,*

…[T]he grievances of many White middle- and working-class people—both a legitimate sense of injury and angry scapegoating generated by the erosion of traditional privileges—could be harnessed to benefit wealthy elites and intensify disempowerment and inequality for millions of people.

As is so often true of right-wing populism, rhetoric about “the people” masks the interests of the ruling class. The changes the Right pursued in the tax code throughout the 1980s and 1990s served the standard Republican constituency of corporate leaders, captains of finance, businessmen and venture capitalists. But, by presenting themselves as anti-elite defenders of average people, the leaders of the New Right camouflaged the movement’s actual class inter-
ests. By pursuing strategies such as tax protests, citizen-initiated ballot referenda, and deregulation, which appear to favor “average people” over elites, the Right has cloaked itself in the mantle of populism. It thereby claims to be more democratic than its liberal opposition.

The Realities of Right-wing Populism

Ballot Initiatives

The New Right launched itself as a movement with California’s Proposition 13, an antitax crusade. Tax cutting as an issue has had long political legs. It continues as a central plank in the Right’s agenda. Proposition 13 illustrates how the Right spins its activism to give it a populist appearance while it actually aims to shrink government’s ability to meet people’s needs. A 1978 tax reduction ballot initiative, it capped property tax rates and severely limited the state’s revenues. Its right-wing backers promoted it as “direct democracy” (ballot initiatives) challenging “runaway government” (taxes for government programs).

No U.S. political movement has made greater use of the “populist” political options of state-level ballot initiatives and referenda than has the contemporary Right. If ballot initiatives were indeed a populist means of passing legislation (implying a more direct form of democratic expression), the Right would have a legitimate claim. But ballot initiatives are no more “pure” as an expression of public opinion than the average law passed by a state legislature or by Congress. In both cases, interest groups line up to influence the formulation of the proposed law, to aggressively sell it to the voting public, and to benefit from the outcome. Referenda are formulated by a small number of people who have the opportunity to manipulate language to make their initiative look more broadly appealing than its actual content warrants. They use their political skill and connections to mobilize the “initiative campaign industry”—money, the media, direct mail, negative advertising, paid signature gathering, and PR firms—to reach various like-minded groups and individuals. All this is similar to the process used by legislators.

In the case of initiatives to limit taxes, the Right benefits from the fact that, in the American imagination, tax resistance is often tied to democratic self-governance. It is associated with the Boston Tea Party’s defiance of British “taxation without representation” and captures popular approval because it is always presented as righteous indignation over “tax robbery” and the misuse of public funds.

Howard Jarvis, the architect of Proposition 13, presented his ballot initiative as “a people’s movement.” Nothing could sound more democratic. But the way the Right promoted Proposition 13 and its effect are anything but democratic. Proposition 13 and many similar initiatives in other states have proved to be a power play by the joint interests of small business, large corporations and wealthy individuals.

Proposition 13 was built on widespread dissatisfaction in California in the mid-1970s, when an unresponsive state legislature seemed unwilling to counter a trend of rising property taxes. Most journalists and scholars who studied the success of Proposition 13 concluded that it was an expression of popular will that was not underwritten by special interests. But in his 1998 reassessment, Daniel A. Smith presents convincing evidence that the forces behind Proposition 13 were not grassroots citizens, but right-wing “populist entrepreneur” Howard Jarvis, the business community, and real estate interests.
Proposition 13 is just one example of the many state-level ballot initiatives that the Right has sponsored in the last twenty years. Right-wing referenda that specifically deprive minority group rights include ones that attack prisoners’ rights, bilingual education, lesbian and gay rights, affirmative action, and immigrant rights. Other right-wing referenda, such as those that diminish abortion rights and support the death penalty, reflect long-standing right-wing causes that violate individual rights.

Further, the Right often uses deception to woo the voters to its initiatives. Slogans such as “No Special Rights” used to promote antigay initiatives, or the use of “civil rights” in the title of referenda that overturn affirmative action programs, or the message that “English is the key to opportunity” to promote propositions eliminating bilingual education all illustrate the Right’s co-optation of the language of equality in its campaigns to undo gains minorities have made. Clearly, the Right’s use of deceptive rhetoric violates the spirit of democracy, if not the letter of election laws.

Campaign Finance Reform

When presented with an opportunity to take political action that could actually promote a more accountable and open democracy, the Right abandons its populist rhetoric and digs in its heels. The most common and widely accepted critique of contemporary U.S. democracy is that money and “special interests” play too large a role in influencing elections and legislation. Volumes have been written about how money corrupts the “will of the people.” When it is to the Right’s advantage, such as when Al Gore engaged in questionable fundraising policies during his vice-presidential tenure, the Right’s leadership is vocal in its criticism of the role of money in politics. When it comes to an actual solution, such as campaign finance reform, the Right is firmly opposed.
Because the public is increasingly aware of the role of money in politics, it was heartening, but not surprising, that Senator John McCain (R-AZ) struck a popular chord when he centered his 2000 presidential primary campaign on the theme of campaign finance reform. But McCain hit a brick wall of resistance from the Republican leadership which rejected his message of campaign finance reform. This was not a new rejection. Led by the Party’s right wing, Republicans at the federal and state level have effectively stonewalled on the subject of campaign finance reform for over twenty years and still oppose many of the reforms suggested by its advocates.

Politicians in both parties have long accepted money and worked for the interests of the donors. Democrats and Republicans alike are beholden to individual and corporate donations to finance the campaigns that allow them to stay in office or run for office. But the right wing of the Republican Party has resisted, and blocked, the reform of the system that makes politicians dependent on private money, and, thus, the resulting need for politicians to deliver favorable legislation to those who make major donations. And, although campaign finance reform alone will not ensure an open democratic political system, without it, those with money will certainly continue to exercise disproportionate power.

Clearly the ability of business interests, corporations, and wealthy individuals to obtain special government access and influence is patently antidemocratic. Following the Watergate scandal in the 1970s, Congress passed a clean-elections law, the Federal Election Campaign Act, which covers both candidates and political parties. It limits individual donations to $1,000 for any one candidate and provides matching funds for presidential parties that receive five percent of the popular vote in the previous election.13

Because Republican and Democratic politicians at the federal level thwarted further efforts in the 1980s, activists began to work for clean-elections laws at the state level. If a candidate consents to private fundraising restrictions, public funding of campaign races is now available in Maine (1996), Vermont (1997), Arizona (1998) and Massachusetts (1998), and activists are pursuing this reform in six other states. Thus, campaign finance reform activists have put the issue on the table for public debate and have raised the public’s awareness of the role of money in undermining democratic principles and practices. But campaign finance reform laws can be nullified if the state legislature refuses to grant the funds to underwrite them, as it has in Massachusetts, or are voluntary, as is usually true. Even in their weak forms, nearly all Republicans and many Democrats have fought campaign finance reform laws at every step. For instance, the campaign finance reform bill that passed the Senate in early 2001, with a vote of 59-41, was opposed by 38 of fifty Republican Senators and three of fifty Democrats.

Narrowing Rights for Some of “The People”

At every step, the Right—both the Old Right and the contemporary Right—has opposed across the board democratic guarantees of equal treatment for all, without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. While claiming to speak for “the people,” the Right’s leaders have for decades supported full rights of some people and opposed full rights for others. An early example is the New Right’s opposition to a guarantee of equal legal, political, and economic rights for women when it organized a vicious and effective campaign against the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). This anti-ERA position was characteristic of the Right’s historical opposition to many other civil rights issues.
States’ Rights

For decades, the Right has argued that the Constitution supports “states’ rights”—the idea that the federal government has very limited authority vis-à-vis the states and that most decisions should (constitutionally) stay at the state level. The “states’ rights” slogan has an ignoble history. Southern politicians widely used it as a code for “White rights”, opposing federal civil rights policies. When the New Right realized it could capitalize on many White Americans’ impatience with antiracist programs, it retained the Old Right’s arguments and courted Southern Democrats into the Republican Party.

States’ rights allow states to preserve their “right” to discriminate. For example, the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are unevenly protected across the states, as are the rights of welfare recipients and prisoners. When the protection of the rights of unpopular groups is handed to the states, they are likely to follow more conservative social and political attitudes.

The “Colorblind” Paradigm

The New Right’s leadership crafted a rationale for its “benign neglect” of civil rights enforcement and its trust in the states to police civil rights enforcement. This rationale, adopted and promoted by the Reagan Administration, differed from the Old Right’s White supremacist position and provided a new analysis of race in America. In books and speeches throughout the 1980s, the leaders and ideologues of the New Right “embraced” the Civil Rights Movement, claiming that, thanks to the Civil Rights Movement, legal segregation was now overturned. This was in keeping with a widespread acceptance among Whites that segregation’s time had passed and it should not be restored. Asserting that the Civil Rights Movement had accomplished its goals, the New Right opposed programs developed in the course of that correction as irrelevant and, in most cases, unfair to White people in the present “post-civil rights” period in which there is “no longer racial discrimination.” The only fair current policies, therefore, are “colorblind” ones that do not unfairly discriminate against Whites.

The Right’s claim that racial discrimination is a thing of the past serves as a sleight of hand that masks its attack on civil rights. Republican rightists in the House and Senate resisted the reauthorization of the 1964 Civil Rights Act by claiming that it was no longer needed. Similarly, rightists during the Reagan Administration popularized the argument that affirmative action resulted in the unfair treatment of Whites. Nathan Glazer and other neoconservative rightists argued that, because affirmative action was “discriminatory,” it was contrary to the goals of the Civil Rights Movement. By claiming that racial discrimination was a thing of the past, Glazer turned the civil rights argument for fairness and equality on its head—a common right-wing strategy. To this day, the attack on affirmative action is mounted on the basis of “colorblind fairness.”
Opposing Civil Rights

But the actions and non-actions of the Reagan Administration demonstrate a far deeper anti-civil rights agenda. Reagan was lukewarm to the idea of a Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday; he signed a bill in 1983 only after much public pressure and two major civil rights marches. Reagan’s foreign policy initiatives on South Africa reflected a soft approach to apartheid, pressuring for “constructive engagement” instead of economic sanctions. Even when a sanctions bill finally passed in 1986, he vetoed it, only to have Congress override his veto. These are just some of the negative, stonewalling policies that the Reagan-era New Right pursued in the area of civil rights.

The Right has used the “colorblind” rationale to justify a number of proactive anti-civil rights initiatives. For example, the Republican Right Wing has targeted civil rights and antipoverty programs for annihilation. Often the Right calls the attack a “reform,” such as the Right’s “welfare reform” campaign. New Rightists filled the bureaucracy of the Reagan Administration and gutted the federal government’s bastions of equal protection. Under the leadership of Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds, the Civil Rights Division abandoned its practice of entertaining charges of systemic discrimination. At the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Chairman Clarence Thomas failed to pursue 1,700 complaints of race and gender discrimination and did not pursue class action suits. Reagan appointee Linda Chavez dramatically reversed the gains of the Civil Rights Commission, decreasing its productivity, and marching lockstep with Reagan’s anti-civil rights agenda.

The Right has used the “colorblind” rationale to justify a number of proactive anti-civil rights initiatives. For example, the Republican Right Wing has targeted civil rights and antipoverty programs for annihilation. Often the Right calls the attack a “reform,” such as the Right’s “welfare reform” campaign. In this case, the Right mobilized public anger against the expenditure of (White) taxpayer money to support the poor by stereotyping welfare recipients as “welfare queens” who were described as lazy, sexually promiscuous, immoral, and cheating the taxpayers who fed them.¹⁶ Right-wing welfare opponents nearly always depicted the stereotyped “welfare queen” as a Black woman, although African-American women were only 37% of welfare recipients.¹⁷

Rightist senators and representatives have relied on a number of books to justify cuts that shredded the poverty programs, including: George Gilder’s Wealth and Poverty (1981); Charles Murray’s Losing Ground (1984); Dinesh D’Souza’s The End of Racism (1995); and the late Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray’s The Bell Curve (1994). Funded by conservative backers and aggressively marketed to conservative audiences as scholarly research, these books received wide attention from the mainstream press. Gilder and Murray developed the right-wing argument that poverty programs do more harm than good in poor communities (read “communities of color”) by fostering “dependency” and a sense of victimization. The Bell Curve made the case for the far-right message of White superiority.
The success of these right-wing ideologues is due not to their scholarship, which has been systematically discredited, but to the timeliness of their publications. Theirs are politically expedient, not objectively researched, works that appeared when needed to support and justify the successful campaigns mounted by rightist Republicans and conservative Democrats to dismantle affirmative action, compensatory education and public welfare programs. Their analysis allows Whites to focus on liberal policies and on the poor themselves as the sources of social problems, rather than on racism, redlining, the relocation of jobs to the suburbs, or on substandard housing, poor educational facilities, and other institutional causes of poverty.

**Opposing Immigrant Rights**

In several other areas, the New Right and the Reagan Administration attacked the civil rights gains of people of color while claiming not to be racist. The Right both spawned and supported a number of organizations seeking to severely limit the rights of immigrants, 85% of whom are people of color. Using images of people of color as a code to communicate racist messages, these well-financed organizations have made progress in increasing anti-immigrant prejudices by promoting scapegoating and stereotyping of immigrants of color. Their messages include: immigrants are not assimilating; they are often criminals; and they have too many children, and so harm the environment and disproportionately use social services, paid for by White Americans.
In 1994 Alan Nelson, a former director under Reagan of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), authored California’s Proposition 187. It mandated that teachers, doctors, social workers, and police check the immigration status of all persons seeking access to publicly funded education and health services and deny services to undocumented immigrants. The Proposition passed, with backing from a local organization called Save Our State (SOS). The campaign for Proposition 187 was closely tied to the reelection campaign of conservative Republican Governor Pete Wilson.

The Right’s anti-immigrant sentiment swept into Congress in 1994 with the arrival of a Republican majority headed by Representative Newt Gingrich (R-GA) and his “Contract With America.” In 1996, a “new Republican”-controlled Congress enacted three laws that directly affected immigrants: the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA or the “Welfare Reform” Act), and the Anti-Terrorist and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA). In each case, legal as well as undocumented immigrants were stripped of fundamental individual rights and benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, and due process rights, and many were subject to long-term detention and deportation as a result of any number of past offenses. Immigrants’ rights groups have organized the “Fix ‘96” campaign to reverse some of the three 1996 Acts’ most extreme measures with limited success.

Some other right-wing groups have sought to promote English as the only official language and have been successful in 26 states. They have also opposed bilingual education for which California millionaire activist Ron Unz has provided exceptional leadership and money. His support was crucial in California to the 1998 passage of Proposition 227, which virtually outlawed bilingual education, and provided that children be taught in English, with sheltered immersion to last no longer than one year. In 2000, a second proposition banning bilingual education was passed in Arizona. Titled “English for the Children,” Proposition 203 was 99% funded by Ron Unz.

Curtailing Voting Rights

Over time, opponents of civil rights legislation have whittled away at attempts to correct voting inequities. The 1982 Voting Rights Act required the creation of new congressional districts to enable more racial minorities to elect candidates of their choice. These “majority-minority” districts made it possible for 17 new Black Representatives to be elected to the U.S. Congress in 1992, mostly from the South. Almost immediately, opponents to the creation of these new districts began to file suits in federal court, and by 1996, the courts had declared many of these district boundaries unconstitutional. When many incumbent Blacks succeeded in getting re-elected in their new, White-majority districts, rightist critics made the spurious claim that this meant “majority-minority” districts were unnecessary. Despite these attempts, a 2001 U.S. Supreme Court decision declared such redistricting was allowable if done for political, not racial, motives, and the redistricting stands.
The Right has also limited voting rights through its campaigns for “law and order” and a “war on drugs.” These dual efforts have resulted in a record number of felony convictions, many for relatively minor drug offenses. Arrest rates for drug offenses are six times higher for African Americans than for Whites even though their drug use rates are virtually the same. In 14 states, a felony conviction deprives the ex-prisoner or parolee of the right to vote during his or her lifetime. As a result, the rate of Black voter disenfranchisement is seven times the national average. Almost three-quarters of felons who have lost the right to vote are either on probation or have completed their sentence. In a recent study conducted jointly by Human Rights Watch and The Sentencing Project, the authors conclude,

[T]he restrictions on voting by ex-felons clash with longstanding notions of justice—that once offenders have paid their debt to society, they are free to resume a normal life in the community. Even denying the right to vote to prisoners is problematic. No other country bars ex-offenders from voting for life or has such a significant percentage of its citizens who cannot vote as a result of felony convictions.22

All of the policies described here disproportionately harm people of color, and yet the Right asserts that they have nothing to do with race. Using the language of equality and concept of colorblindness, the Right has systematically excluded people of color from the benefits of democracy.

Reining in the Independent Judiciary
One of the most insidious of the Right’s campaigns has been its support for the appointment and election of federal and state judges who support its conservative “colorblind” agenda. The Right attacks judges who hand down decisions that it opposes, using the code phrase “judicial activism” to smear judicial opinions it deems too liberal.

It has opposed appointments of candidates on purely political grounds and systematically blocked the confirmation of President Bill Clinton’s judicial appointments, thereby creating a severe shortage of judges. The Right has disproportionately blocked the nomination of White women and people of color to the judiciary. On the other hand, the Right supported the appointment of the same Roy Moore to Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice who also made headlines by displaying a tablet of the Ten Commandments behind his bench.

When narrow political litmus tests are applied in judicial appointments, the judiciary’s decisions begin to reflect the opinions and attitudes of those who hold the power of appointment, rather than reflecting careful and considered judgments of the legal issues at hand. We have recently witnessed the consequence of ultraconservative appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court, when the Court handed down a 5-4 decision in the case of Bush v. Gore (the presidential election vote-count...
decision), a decision that was criticized as politically motivated by many legal scholars and by Justice Stevens in his dissent.

In 1995 the Right led an attack on the independence of the federal courts by successfully shepherding through Congress the Prison Litigation Reform Act, which placed limits on the discretion of the federal courts in their role as overseer of prisoners’ rights. In many prisoners’ rights cases, prisoners are seeking redress for violations involving rape and sexual abuse, physical abuse, squalid conditions, and lack of medical care in prison. Congress also disallowed federal immigration judges from considering deportation cases under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA).

Perhaps the most egregious example of judicial interference is the “three strikes and you’re out” laws now on the books in 26 states. In California, where the law is most indiscriminate, a prison term of 25 years to life is mandatory for any third crime after convictions for two felonies. Many crimes, including petty theft and assault, can be charged as either misdemeanors or felonies, giving prosecutors, not judges, discretion in sentencing in these cases. Trial judges are thus required to impose unjust punishments that violate common sense and their own judicial judgment. As is true of much of the judicial and prison systems, the three strikes laws disproportionately harm people of color. In California, African Americans account for half of all three-strikes sentences, although they represent only about 12 percent of the population.

Redistributing Wealth – Upward

For most Americans, and internationally, “democracy” suggests a large middle class, created and sustained by a system of equal economic opportunity. The middle class dominates the cultural life of U.S. television, radio and newspaper. The media represents middle-class Americans as having relatively stable jobs and owning their own homes, televisions, cars and other symbols of economic security.

In many ways, this snapshot of the middle class has become a myth, as many “middle-class” people must now work two or more jobs to maintain their lifestyle. They may lack health insurance, daycare for their children, or the means to send their children to college. They may live on credit card debt and have little or no savings. But the predominance of the myth of the middle class has given U.S. democracy a somewhat undeserved reputation as a place with, unlike many other countries, a relatively equal distribution of wealth. The U.S. is “democratic” because, though some are poor and some are very wealthy, the vast majority of people are middle class.

Here again, the Right has a consistent record of opposing the relative economic equality associated with democracy by promoting policies that favor the wealthy and business/industrial/corporate interests. The Reagan Administration devoted nearly two of its eight years in office to
restructuring the tax code. It lowered the taxes of the wealthy and drastically reduced most corporate taxes. Breaks for poor people, introduced by Democratic administrations to help moderate the economic gap between the poor and the middle class—such as federally subsidized housing and general relief welfare programs—came under attack from the Right and were, for the most part, eliminated.

The Reagan Administration implemented the famous “trickle-down” theory, which asserted that if businesses, corporations, and upper-income people prosper, the prosperity will “trickle down” to the middle class and the working poor through better jobs and higher wages. The Administration used the theory to justify its tax breaks for the rich and corporations, who allegedly would spend their new-found money in ways that would stimulate the economy and benefit all. The actual result defied the theory. The federal debt nearly tripled, creating a sucker punch aimed at the poor and the working poor. The huge deficits created by the tax cuts made it “necessary” to cut existing social programs intended to address those most in need, and to decrease the economic gap between rich and poor. Instead that gap dramatically increased.

The Right’s leaders argue that its policies created the 1990s economic boom and that, as a movement, it is responsible for freeing the economy from government control and allowing the market to do a far better job of regulating the economy and creating prosperity than any government intervention could do. But privatization and deregulation disproportionately benefit owners and severely curtail the government’s ability to monitor private economic activity for its negative effect on non-owners. The result is to give free rein to private-sector pursuit of corporate profits.

Promoting Privatization and Deregulation
Privatization and deregulation have been among the Right’s most antidemocratic legacies, and have been largely accomplished with the complicity of centrists and even liberal Democrats. An excellent example of the Right’s attack on the federal government’s power to look after the greater public welfare is the 1996 Telecommunications Act, passed by a Republican Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton. The bill’s stated intent was to support competition by suspending government regulation in the telephone and broadcasting industries. It rested on the bogus idea that deregulation is antimonopolistic and benefits the consumer by increasing competition thereby lowering prices. But, as most often results from deregulation, a spate of buyouts and mergers occurred, creating in 2001 less competition and higher telephone and cable rates.

The Right rationalizes its commitment to eliminating any government role in the free market by asserting that the free market is more democratic than democratically elected governments. And, by the early 21st century, this has become centrist economic orthodoxy. Such myths now dominate public consciousness. Most often-repeated is the notion that stock ownership has become so widespread as to be almost universal and that the stock market rise of the 1990s has accomplished a redistribution of wealth far more efficiently than any monetary program the federal government could have implemented. Rightist commentators also assert that unions which “force” workers to contribute to “no-option” pension systems (designed to provide for worker retirements) are, by contrast, antidemocratic. They tout stock options as the “best” employment benefits, noting that, while job security may be shaky, the stock market is trustworthy and will continue to deliver profits.

The facts, however, tell a different tale. The richest ten percent in the United States now own
nearly eighty percent of all stocks, mutual funds and retirement accounts. And since this same
group owns over seventy percent of the net worth in this country, one could hardly argue that
stock ownership has made a dent in the unequal distribution of wealth.\textsuperscript{24} In addition, the
growing economic gap between the haves and have-nots in the United States is indisputable.
Between 1977 and 1999, family after-tax income for the top one percent grew by 115 percent,
while the bottom twenty percent watched their incomes decline by nine percent. Between 1990
and 1998, the average weekly earnings of production workers in the United States rose six
percent above inflation, while the pay for CEOs rose 420 percent.\textsuperscript{25}
An economy with such multiple indicators of vast inequality does not resemble the myth of
American democracy as a system that fosters economic equality. The Right favors the notion
of “equal opportunity” within a free market system, asserting that the free market is the great
economic equalizer. But when there is no safety net and human service programs are cut to the
bone, “equal opportunity” becomes a sham. The economic system becomes one in which only
the most able, well-connected, and ruthless prosper.

**Current Strains on Democracy**

The resurgence of a powerful Right Wing has had an enormous impact on what government
does for people and what people can rightfully expect from our government. But other factors
are also stressing U.S. democracy and its ability to serve all of us. Struggling with old and new prejudices, our culture continues to suffer from persistent racism, sexism and homophobia. The increasing
globalization of our economic system and the technologies that support it put strains on how we think about doing business, and, indeed, challenge the very notion of a sovereign state. As we move towards a monopoly media, we lose the benefits of lively, accessible debate that are so essential to a successful democracy. The inability of centrist, liberal, and progressive forces to command widespread support and to state clearly their core values and vision also contribute to a lack of real alternatives for the voting public. While the Right did not invent these phenomena, it has certainly learned how to capitalize on them.

**Conclusion**

Looking at these instances of the Right’s recent choices of issues and tactics we have seen
irrefutably that the Right is antidemocratic. Its agenda is to shrink democracy by severely
limiting government’s ability to provide social services, by allowing big-monied interests to
control elections and influence our representatives, by rolling back the gains of a range of
human rights movements, and by undermining judicial independence. As the George W. Bush
Administration completes and surpasses the agenda of the Reagan Administration, we will
see a further contraction of democracy and more and more people placed “outside the fence.”
This should come as no surprise. The Right's leadership has openly advertised its vision for the future of the country for over twenty years. The examples listed here are only some of the ways in which the Right is challenging democratic principles and practice. There are, unfortunately, many more. The Right is simultaneously moving ahead on many fronts, and this assault affects us everywhere—in our city halls, schools, courts, homes, and wallets. While it is valuable to acknowledge our separate situations, it is also useful to recognize the connections across the issues that concern us, remembering the adage that an attack on one is an attack on all. The Right strategically connects its campaigns addressing race, gender and sexual orientation under the umbrella of promoting “traditional family values.” This strategy allows for an attack on one group to spill over and affect other groups.

Today’s Right Wing is firmly embedded in the center of the Republican Party, welcomed in by the language of a better future for the average person and wrapped in the colors of the flag. If we continue to uncover the antidemocratic trends of the Right, we can see that although the rhetoric and tactics of the Old Right have changed, much of their legacy remains, and not just in the cries from the Far Right. We need to see the Right’s agenda very clearly, identify its antidemocratic core, and challenge its campaigns as they appear. Only then, we will be able to reassert the vision of an expanded democracy that reflects a commitment to meet the needs of us all.

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End Notes
1 Because the Right has demonized these terms, we need to define them for ourselves again. Here we use the term “liberal” to refer to those who favor the reform of social and economic inequities and “progressive” to describe those who once called themselves leftists, those who seek more radical change. Using these definitions, a progressive perspective informs this article.
2 In the United States, the understanding of the theory of democracy stems from the writings of Benedict de Spinoza, a 17th century Dutch theorist of democracy; John Locke, a British philosopher who wrote about democratic self-government as a political ideal; and John Stuart Mill, 19th century English economist and political theorist who expanded Locke’s ideas to include individual freedoms. See: Benedict de Spinoza, A Political Treatise (1677); John Locke, Two Treatises on Government (1690); and John Stuart Mill, On Liberty (1859). Modern democratic theorists have updated the work of these thinkers and have identified race and gender as illegitimate criteria for excluding a person from his or her democratic rights.
4 This view of democracy was described in detail (and approvingly) by Robert Dahl in his book, Polyarchy. The working definition of polyarchy is: officials, chosen fairly through elections, make policy decisions on behalf of citizens they represent. This view of democracy is widely accepted throughout academia and in the State Department’s classification of third world countries as “democracies.”
5 “If the people are corrupt, the more democracy, the worse the government.” Patrick Buchanan, Washington Inquirer, January 18, 1991.
6 Though most of the New Right’s leaders were young Republicans who had been burned by the failed candidacy of Barry Goldwater, old-timer William F. Buckley, Jr. played a central role in crafting a “fusion” politics that united several conservative ideologies.
8 Paul Weyrich, one of the most prominent New Right leaders, wrote in March, 1984, “Conservative in the black community means racist and that is understandable. The leadership on the right, however, bears no resemblance to the reactionary Southern icons of the past....I am sure there are people who call themselves conservatives who are prejudiced. But the lead-
ers are far from it.” Paul Weyrich, “It Would Help If They Really Knew Us.” Conservative Digest, vol. 10, no. 3 (March, 1984), p. 44.


13 Primaries and final elections differ. Individual candidates receive matching funds in federal primary elections if they raise $5000 in each of twenty states. Political parties receive matching funds if they make a showing of five percent or better in the previous presidential election.


15 In 1998 Glazer entered the public debate again, with his book We Are All Multiculturalists Now (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), defending affirmative action with the very arguments he had rejected and disdained in Affirmative Discrimination.


19 The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act greatly expanded the list of crimes leading to deportation and permanently barred the re-entry of non-citizen immigrants convicted of aggravated felonies, without any right to apply for a waiver. The law allows for the use of secret evidence in any deportation cases where the government asserts that the immigrant has engaged in terrorist activity. These cases overwhelmingly have targeted Arab-Americans. Deportees from countries with which the United States has no diplomatic ties have been held in detention centers indefinitely. The Act also calls for the mandatory detention of asylum seekers arriving in the United States without valid documentation until they establish a “credible fear of persecution.”

19 The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) tied eligibility for a range of federal means-tested benefits to citizenship. With few exceptions, non-citizens, including legal permanent residents, were excluded from Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and food stamps unless they had proof of working for at least forty quarters in the United States. Immigrants entering after the passage of the law were ineligible for these benefits for five years. PRWORA authorized states to discriminate against non-citizen immigrants in administration of federal benefits, including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Medicaid. It greatly limited states’ ability to provide many services to undocumented immigrants, requiring reporting of the immigration status of those receiving such services.

20 The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) dramatically increased the number of Border Patrol officers, their support personnel and INS investigators. It tightened security on the borders and at ports of entry and increased penalties for smuggling immigrants, using fraudulent documents or overstaying visas. Those in the country without proper documentation for over a year were barred from re-entry for ten years. IIRIRA increased the earning requirements of new immigrants sponsors, requiring them to sign Affidavits of Support. These sponsors’ income is counted towards calculating the immigrants’ eligibility for federal means-tested benefits, even after such immigrants have passed the five-year bar. Receiving any public benefits puts immigrants at risk of being considered “public charges” and losing the right to re-enter the country or become a legal permanent resident.


25 Collins et.al., op cit., p. 8.
The Culture Wars Are Not Over:  
The Institutionalization of the Christian Right
Frederick Clarkson

Editor’s Note
During the 2000 presidential campaign, the Christian Right’s leadership kept a markedly low profile, leading many observers to conclude that the movement was weak and that George W. Bush had successfully placed it under the discipline of the Republican Party. The Christian Right seemed united in its support for Bush’s campaign, yet seemed to demand no public promise that he would support its policies in return. When Bush was declared the winner of the election and the vote was analyzed, researchers could see that the Christian Right vote had been crucial in electing Bush. When Bush appointed Christian rightist John Ashcroft and Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, the “father” of welfare reform, to his Cabinet and established the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the quid pro quo was obvious. At that point, it looked to observers as if the Christian Right were strong and flourishing within the Bush Administration.

Weak and shaky or clever and victorious—which view was the accurate one? Frederick Clarkson walks us through the paradoxes that now characterize the Christian Right, demonstrating that there is truth in each view. Although before the election the movement faced problems and challenges that made it vulnerable to serious decline should Al Gore win, in a George W. Bush administration it enjoys the support it needs to rebuild and reassert its authority as the moral rudder and strategic ballast of the GOP. For the Christian Right, its public silence and private voter mobilization in the 2000 election was a strategic investment that will pay off with double-digit returns for years to come.

Introduction
Ralph Reed could not have predicted that the seat at the table of American politics he sought for so many years as Executive Director of the Christian Coalition would become an endowed chair. In the early 1990s the Christian Right, epitomized by the Christian Coalition, was ambitious but not quite fully legitimate. In this sense the nomination and confirmation of former Senator John Ashcroft as Attorney General and the Bush administration’s creation of a White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives is a measure of their success.

Several main trends are evident in the current fortunes of the Christian Right. First, the major institutions of the Christian Right, once bastions of fire and brimstone rhetoric and a transcendent vision of the once and future Christian Nation, have become practitioners of political compromise and coalition building. This is especially true in the case of national electoral poli...the Christian Right has been largely incorporated into the Republican Party apparatus...and...is now largely institutionalized throughout society.
tics. Second, the Christian Right has been largely incorporated into the Republican Party apparatus. Finally, and perhaps most important, the Christian Right is now largely institutionalized throughout society. The movement has come a long way in a short time. This is not to say that one of the most dynamic social/political movements of the latter part of the 20th century has necessarily lost its energy and edginess. Nor is it without fractures and schisms. In many respects it is still growing and finding new and distinctive forms and expressions. But the quiet institutionalization of the Christian Right is a far more dramatic, if less visible, trend than any single clash in the Culture War.

**Persistent Success**

Conservative evangelicalism spent much of the 20th century on the political sidelines and at the margins of religious respectability. Now the movement is contending for power within the mainstream of American culture and political life. A generation has come of age that has no memory of what life was like before there was a Christian Right. Over the past 25 years, the Christian Right has matured, built durable institutions, and demonstrated both staying power and capacity for growth. It has also generated a large class of Christian Right professionals who serve as managers, public policy strategists, lobbyists, and campaign managers, among other movement jobs. The Christian Right has nurtured politicians who have been elected to office at all levels of government, especially at the state level. These politicians in turn have groomed a stable of specialists in policy and administration. Once largely taken for granted by GOP leaders, the Christian Right now controls the party apparatus in a number of states—including George Bush’s home state of Texas—and routinely vies for control in others. Its leaders now are rarely labeled as “extremist” in mainstream discourse. The Christian Right is now able to expect and compel the appointment of key leaders to major governmental posts.

Further evidence of the Christian Right’s success is the prominence in the Bush Administration’s social policy of the theme of “compassionate conservatism,” a slogan that embodies Bush’s ostensible commitment to conservative Christianity. This notion, generally credited to Christian Right theorist Marvin Olasky, represents a shift in conservative doctrine. Secular rightists have supported defunding of social programs—a laissez faire approach to social problems in which the free market is seen as the key to meeting social needs. Reflecting the growing influence and clout of the Christian Right, the Bush Administration’s “compassionate conservatism” directly acknowledges and supports the role of “faith-based” organizations in providing government services, directing government funds to these organizations.

As Governor of Texas, Bush had an alliance, albeit a sometimes-uneasy one, with the Christian Right. For example, on the Texas State Board of Education in the late 1990s, Bush-allied Republicans coalesced with Democrats on most issues, while the Christian Right functioned as the de facto opposition party. Beginning in 1994, Christian Right candidates, largely bankrolled by business advocates of school privatization schemes, mounted primary challenges to more moderate Republicans in an ultimately unsuccessful effort to gain control of the state board. While Bush won his races for governor with the support of the Christian Right, he did not attend the Christian Right-dominated 2000 GOP Texas convention. Bush did extend an olive branch, among other things, by backing state charters for religious schools and by establishing the first-ever state-sponsored Christian prison ministry in a Texas prison.
Paradoxes on the Christian Right

As recently as the fall of 2000, some commentators were still predicting or declaring the demise of the Christian Right—as is usual with any and every dip and downturn in the fortunes of the movement or its constituent parts. But the pundits notwithstanding, the movement has consolidated, stabilized, and is prepared to wage fresh battles. “Not only are the culture wars not over, and not only have we not lost,” declared Florida televangelist D. James Kennedy in 1998, “but the fact is we are winning!”

Financial data of most of the major organizations highlight the scale and stability of the movement, and in most cases organizational incomes have risen steadily from 1997 to 1999. Running counter to this trend, the Christian Coalition has been faced with a steady turnover in senior staff and a dramatic drop in its budget. At the same time, it has sustained a significant and high profile niche in public consciousness. Similarly, Promise Keepers (PK), which at its peak filled dozens of football stadiums in spectacular expressions of the new conservative Christian culture, has declined in popularity and budget, but nevertheless sustains a $50 million a year budget while staging smaller scale events.

Additional paradoxes confound simple conclusions about the state of the Christian Right. In 2000, the Christian Right substantially subsumed itself to the electoral fortunes of George W. Bush (his sketchy record on the litmus test issues of the Christian Right notwithstanding) as their best hope of ending the Clinton/Gore era. In the wake of this pragmatic decision, some Christian rightists are becoming radicalized. Also, the rise of conservative Catholicism may profoundly, if slowly, alter the dynamics of the contemporary Christian Right, resulting in an era of increasing political aggressiveness in electoral politics on the part of church-backed rightist initiatives, particularly on the issue of abortion.
Christian Right leaders, followers and even organizations have come and gone as the movement has evolved, but its religious and public policy agenda remains essentially unchanged. Pat Robertson, still the most visible and vocal Christian Right leader, declared during the 2000 election campaign, “I want to see a future where a religious public servant occupies the White House and fills federal positions of power with men and women committed to godly principles.” Such a government would at minimum seek to roll back liberal gains in such areas as reproductive rights and gay and lesbian civil rights, and lower, if not smash, the wall of separation between church and state. The debates among the factions of the Christian Right are more over means than ends.

The Christian Coalition

No discussion of the Christian Right is complete without the Christian Coalition, which has so dominated media coverage of the Christian Right—thanks in part to the telegenic qualities of its executive director from 1989 until 1997, Ralph Reed. However, coverage of the Christian Coalition to the exclusion of other major organizations has distorted the picture of the wider movement. Though significant, the Christian Coalition has never provided an accurate reading of the condition of the movement as a whole. For example, just prior to the 2000 elections, some prominent commentators pronounced the Religious Right dead as a “social movement,” and blamed it on the decline of the Christian Coalition.

Recent attendance at the Coalition’s annual Road to Victory conferences has dropped dramatically, and its budget has reportedly halved from a high of about $25 million in the mid 1990s. In 1992 and 1996, GOP Presidential candidates invariably attended the conference, but in 2000 it took pressure from Pat Robertson on his 700 Club before George W. Bush sent Lynn Cheney, the wife of his vice presidential candidate, and a video of his personal greetings. Part of the strategy of the Bush campaign appeared to be to keep the Christian Right at arms length in public, even though the movement was fairly uniformly supporting the GOP ticket. Apparently Bush campaign strategists calculated that the appearance of a close relationship between Bush and the Christian Right would be a liability for Bush’s candidacy. Such an assumption is a measure of the shaky standing of the Christian Right in U.S. public opinion.

There is mythology about Reed that distorts the history
and therefore the present and future of the Christian Right. Reed is often credited with inventing stealth tactics and voter guides, but he invented neither. The mechanics of the conservative movement electoral politics had been honed over several decades and had reached maturity at a time when another long-term trend had come to fruition—the raising of political consciousness and the articulation of a theological justification for the political engagement of evangelicals who had been largely on the political sidelines since the Scopes trial. The Reed-led Christian Coalition developed a mastery of computer-generated, church-based voter lists to carry out effective voter ID campaigns. But the real secret of the Christian Right’s success has been the forging of a disciplined voting bloc that fields and backs candidates through the GOP primaries and the general elections, and capitalizes on the long-term decline in American voter participation by maximizing voter participation among Christian conservatives. The Christian Coalition’s voter guides were an important factor contributing to this discipline.

More recently, the effectiveness of the Christian Coalition’s voter guides has diminished, while many of the 35 state-level “family policy councils” affiliated with Focus on the Family also issue voter guides. In some states these organizations have been more politically significant than the Christian Coalition.

**To Bolt or Not to Bolt? A Perennial Question for Purists**

As many of the major organizations of the Christian Right have solidified their position within the GOP, they have learned habits of compromise and political pragmatism. The more purist Christian Right factions have become increasingly marginalized. Though it was the most radical and purist leaders and organizations that were largely responsible for the growth of the Christian Right, often they are now spun off to the margins.

In the 1996 presidential primaries, the Christian Right in the GOP was divided between Pat Buchanan and Bob Dole. While the Christian Coalition backed Bob Dole, four top Christian Right leaders cochaired the Buchanan campaign: Phyllis Schlafly of the Eagle Forum, Don Wildmon of the American Family Association, Michael Farris of the Home School Legal Defense Association, and Larry Pratt of Gun Owners of America.

James Dobson of Focus on the Family, unhappy with Dole’s prolife credentials, threatened to bolt the GOP and take his followers with him. He didn’t, but said later that he personally voted for far-right candidate Howard Phillips. Dobson periodically threatens to desert the GOP, and in this role follows in the footsteps of Robert Grant and Gary Jarmin of Christian Voice, and an earlier Pat Robertson, before he became a go-with-the-winner GOP loyalist. In 1998, when Dobson addressed the annual meeting of the secretive Council for National Policy, he stated that if the GOP abandoned or watered down its anti-abortion position, he would leave the Party and take as many with him as possible.
In the 2000 GOP primaries, the Christian Right vote was still deeply divided among Dan Quayle, Gary Bauer, Steve Forbes, Pat Buchanan, and Alan Keyes. Not one of these was able to match the vote-getting capacity of conventional politicians like George W. Bush (who had Ralph Reed as a campaign consultant) and Senator John McCain, and Bush ultimately won the votes of conservative Christians who opted for someone who seemed both acceptable and able to win the election. Interestingly, after the election, Morton Blackwell told *U.S. News and World Report* that in the Fall of 1999, a group of conservative leaders met with then-candidate Bush seeking a promise that if elected, he would appoint movement conservatives to his cabinet. Blackwell said, “He is keeping that promise” and that “John Ashcroft is an example of that.”

The Christian Right’s rally to Bush throws into sharp relief the divisions within the movement, not only among candidates but also among parties. Pat Buchanan, after failing to break out of the pack in the GOP primaries, bolted the party and seized the presidential nomination of the weak and disorganized Reform Party. Buchanan’s strident “Culture Wars” style and views were opposed by an eclectic group aligned with party founder Ross Perot, who generally supported libertarian John Hagelin. Hagelin was also the candidate of the Natural Law Party, dominated by devotees of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi the leader of Transcendental Meditation or TM. In the wake of these odd developments, some longtime Reform Party leaders endorsed Green Party candidate Ralph Nader whose anticorporate, clean elections, and good government messages resonated with many Perot voters.

Buchanan spent most of the Reform Party’s $12.5 million in federal matching campaign funds advertising on conservative Christian radio stations, in hopes of attracting voters who found the GOP ticket’s public stands on abortion, civil unions, and immigration too mushy. But the vast majority of Christian Right voters seemed more determined to end the Clinton/Gore era than to quibble about the conservative and prolife bona fides of George W. Bush. Buchanan and fellow Christian rightist Howard Phillips, the presidential candidate of the Constitution Party (formerly the U.S. Taxpayers Party), received only about one percent of the vote.

The Constitution Party, which was on the ballot in 41 states in 2000, draws a fiercely loyal but tiny constituency of Christian Patriots, Christian Reconstructionists, right-wing home schoolers, and militant anti-abortion activists. Party founder Howard Phillips ran as the party-building standard bearer in each race, speaking mostly to small groups and home-schooling conventions and drawing little media attention. After the 2000 vote, party chairman James Clymer of Pennsylvania wrote that he believed that “for every vote that Howard Phillips received in this election there are many times that number of people who support our efforts, yet could not bring themselves to vote for our candidate due to fear of Al Gore.”

Others in the Christian Right also were unwilling to sublimate purity of principle to pragmatism. During the campaign, Judy Brown of the American Life League declared “George W. Bush is NOT pro-life!” and denounced the Christian Coalition, National Right to Life Committee, and the Republicans for Life PAC for supporting Bush. Syndicated conservative columnist Kathleen Parker argued simply “abortion is here to stay—even if the Republicans take the White House.” She noted that Bush de-emphasized the issue in the campaign, saying he would not make abortion a litmus test for Supreme Court candidates. The “debate” about abortion, Parker concluded, “is over.” While the “debate” shows no signs of such a conclusion, Brown and Parker may be correct that, given Bush’s mixed record on abortion, it is conceivable that he might appoint moderate justices in the mold of Justice David Souter, despite...
his declared admiration of the reactionary Justice Clarence Thomas. Early in the Bush administration, there are contradictory messages about abortion, just as the GOP itself remains a house divided on the issue. For example, while Attorney General John Ashcroft is fiercely anti-abortion, he claimed in his confirmation hearings that he would make no effort to overturn Roe v. Wade and would enforce the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE).

Factional squabbling surfaced early in the life of the Bush administration. The Republican National Coalition for Life denounced Bush’s first ten major appointments, declaring that “with just one exception” Bush senior advisors and cabinet nominations were “either publicly supportive of a mother’s right to kill her unborn baby or [that] we have found no evidence that they are in any way pro life.” Although this was before the nomination of John Ashcroft for Attorney General and Tommy Thompson for Health & Human Services, it underscores the nature of the GOP as a necessarily uneasy coalition. Similarly, Pat Robertson and other Christian Right leaders expressed outrage and opposition to federal funding of some religious groups of which they did not approve, such as the Church of Scientology, the Hare Krishnas, and the Nation of Islam, and concern that enforcement of federal civil right laws would be tied to receipt of federal funds.

**Battling It Out in the States**

For three decades the Christian conservative movement has seen its work at the local level as its greatest strength. Wedge issues such as abortion and gay rights animate political conflict at the state and local level more powerfully than they do at the federal level, in part because it is easier to mobilize militant activism on issues that are closer to home than on more abstract and remote federal policies. Also, the pockets of strength of the Christian Right tend to be regional and local. Further, issues are increasingly resolved state by state in the ongoing devolution of federal policy to the states—the result of the “Reagan revolution” and Republican appointments to the Supreme Court. This local focus has played out over many years as the movement has recruited members, built institutions, and gained political experience. In one notable local victory in the 2000 elections, Judge Roy Moore, best known for hand carving a wood plaque of the Ten Commandments and defiantly hanging it in his Etowah County, Alabama courtroom, was elected Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court.

Even as a divisive “Culture War” political style characterizes much of the Christian Right’s local-level organizing, one important feature of the maturation of the Christian Right is the effort to put a friendlier face on some of the most retrograde of conservative positions on such matters as race, gender, the environment, and the condition of the poor. The movement has shifted in order to counter the image of conservatives as lacking moral credibility, common decency and common sense on a range of issues. George W. Bush’s presidential campaign grouped these issues under the rubric of “compassionate conservatism” and, during the campaign, heavily promoted the message of moderation implied by that title. In addition to abortion, four other issues have been fundamental for the Christian Right at the state level in the past several years. In each case, the Christian Right has moderated its rhetoric and adopted a friendlier face in promoting its agenda.
Homosexuality

Reaction to the growing and multifaceted acceptance of homosexuality in U.S. society continues to be an animating feature of Christian Right activism. Like abortion, homosexuality is a permanent, defining issue for the movement. In the 2000 elections, several antigay referenda were put to the voters. In Vermont, punishing legislators who had voted to pass a bill allowing civil unions for gay men and lesbians was pivotal in many races for the state legislature. This antigay campaign went by the coded, nativist-style slogan “Take back Vermont.” In Oregon, an antigay initiative that would have prohibited positive discussion of homosexuality in public schools was narrowly defeated, while initiatives in Nevada and Nebraska banning gay marriage and civil unions passed. An initiative in Maine that would have banned discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing and public accommodations, narrowly failed.

One notable aspect in these campaigns is a shift away from the sharp, homophobic rhetoric so characteristic of Christian Right leaders in the past. Perhaps weary of being described as hate mongers and as responsible for creating a cultural climate that fosters violence and hate crimes or simply acting strategically in response to the public’s increasing tolerance, even some radical Christian Right leaders, notably John Whitehead of the Rutherford Institute, have backed away from strident antigay rhetoric. There is, however, no evidence of any significant change in their underlying views. Similarly, the emergence of “exgay” ministries such as Exodus International have sought to put a friendlier face on religious opposition to homosexuality and gay civil rights. These groups promote supposedly curative therapies, which actually involve little more than efforts to convert people to evangelical Christianity.

Education

The Christian Right has campaigned for home schooling, religious charter schools and vouchers for religious schools for the past two decades. The Christian Right advanced this agenda at state, local and national levels in the 2000 elections. On the Kansas State Board of Education, a seesaw contest for control has pitted Christian rightists against moderates. When under the control of Christian rightists, the Board caused a national controversy when it removed evolution from standardized tests in 1999. The rightists lost their majority to Democrats and GOP moderates in 2000. The new majority has revised the standards to reincorporate evolution.

That this battle had to be fought at all demonstrates the continuing strength of the Christian Right. A few years ago, the focus of the Culture War in curriculum was over control of individual, local school boards. Now many education struggles are waged at the state level as well—Texas and Kansas are the most famous examples.

Despite Christian Right strength at the state level, two major referenda in California and Michigan that would have provided state-funded public school vouchers for any private school, including religious schools, were both defeated by margins of more than 2-1. The Roman Catholic Church and the Christian Right backed both referenda, and organizers promise to try again. Also in 2000, the Florida legislature passed, and Gov. Jeb Bush signed, a bill that would have provided state-funded vouchers for private schools, including religious schools. The bill has been ruled unconstitutional by a state judge.
Race

Within conservative evangelicalism, the cutting edge approach to race today is the theme of “racial reconciliation.” Ralph Reed seized on this approach when he was executive director of the Christian Coalition. Racial reconciliation later became a hallmark of the Promise Keepers (PK), which says it seeks to eliminate race as a “barrier” to Christian brotherhood. Racial reconciliation has been criticized as a superficial analysis of racism, rooted in both religious and gender supremacy and used to deflect historic and contemporary injustices to African Americans and Native Americans, among others.25 Dr. Loretta Williams, Director, the Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Awards in the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights, told a conference at Hampshire College in 1997 that the Promise Keepers are treating men of color as “trophy friends.” “People of color are there [at PK rallies] to be hugged” she said, “to be there for the White male who is afraid of being labeled racist. The Black male is there to serve, once again.” While people are talking about race, she observed, “They are not talking about racial justice.”26

The notion of racial reconciliation was the brainchild of the late Rev. John Perkins, an African American whose work was substantially bankrolled by Christian Reconstructionist philanthropist, Howard Ahmanson.27 This is significant in part because a central argument in Christian Reconstructionist theory is that change comes through evangelization and conversion, and that the government of the converted would be a biblical theocracy, for which the blueprint has already been drafted.28 Reconstructionists, like many on the Christian Right, oppose governmental intervention in significant part because the government is not yet theocratic, and therefore is illegitimate.

In one of the strangest alliances in recent American politics, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan and Unification Church head Sun Myung Moon joined as the principal sponsors of
the Million Family March on Washington, DC in October 2000. The two aging demagogues adapted the rubric of racial reconciliation in staging the event. Like the overwhelmingly White Christian Right, the Black Nationalist Nation of Islam and the Moon organization have sought to soften their notorious reputations. Both have seized on images of racial and religious inclusion in an effort to inoculate themselves against charges of racial and religious bigotry that have defined each for decades. Echoing PK, Rev. Chang Shik Yang, cochairman of the march and a top official of Moon’s World Family Federation for Peace and Unification (formerly known as the Unification Church), called for “all the walls” of race and religion to be torn down. “Color is meaningless,” he said. “All human beings are brothers and sisters in front of God.” At the rally, Farrakhan denounced abortion and implied that it was a White plot. Despite these efforts by Moon and Farrakhan to divide the African-American and other people of color electorates with the “family values” rhetoric of the Christian Right, in the 2000 elections even most socially conservative African Americans and Hispanics stuck with the Democratic Party, where their perceived economic and civil rights interests lay.

Environment

The friendly religious face of anti-environmentalism is the Washington, DC-based Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship (ICES). The Council was founded in 1999 at the initiative of Fr. Robert Sirico, CSP, a Catholic priest, former gay activist, and head of the Grand Rapids, Michigan-based Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty. Fr. Sirico was instrumental in forging the 1999 anti-environmentalist Cornwall Declaration that sought to counter established faith-based environmental initiatives by Catholic, Jewish, evangelical, and especially mainline Protestant bodies. This manifesto essentially repackages conservative ideology under the rubric of environmental stewardship in the style of Marvin Olasky’s “compassionate conservatism” approach to poverty and social welfare. Olasky is a member of the ICES advisory board.

According to journalist Bill Berkowitz, the Christian Right hopes to do for environmental issues what “free-market think tanks have done for the debate on social and political issues.” To do this they seek to “harness scripture in the service of free-market environmentalism.” ICES describes itself as “building a network of religious, academic and community leaders who can offer sound theological, scientific and economic perspectives on these issues. Soon they will provide a credible alternative to liberal environmental advocacy for people in congregations, schools, government, and the religious and secular media.”

The Growth of the Christian Counterculture

As the Christian Right has become significant in mainstream politics and government, it both stimulates and benefits from a growing conservative Christian counterculture. This counterculture takes many forms and its growth contributes to the institutionalization of the Christian Right. Christian schools and colleges are experiencing unprecedented growth. Membership in conservative evangelical churches is growing, partly at the expense of mainline Protestant churches, and Christian publishing, epitomized by the best selling apocalyptic novels of Tim LaHaye, is experiencing explosive growth.

The rise of the Christian counterculture may be seen most dramatically in the separatist
Christian home-schooling movement. The “right” to home school children, part of the Republican Party platform since the 1980s, provides support for Christian Right legislative efforts to allow home schooling at the state level. Estimates of the number of home-schooling families vary wildly, but may be a million. Thousands of children are being raised to be Christian theocratic revolutionaries. While there is no guarantee that these children will turn out as their parents may hope, there is no question about the intentions of their parents.

The home-schooling movement (like the rise of private White Christian academies as a backlash to the integration of public schools) is quietly led and informed by the Christian Reconstructionist movement. For example, one large purveyor of home-schooling materials and services is the Christian Reconstructionist-oriented Christian Liberty Academy, headed by Rev. Paul Lindstrom in Arlington, Illinois. Reconstructionism is a politically oriented theological movement that played a central role in politicizing conservative evangelicals, in part by arguing that the apolitical views of most of evangelicalism in the 20th century was a betrayal of what has been called the cultural mandate, or the dominion mandate found in the book of Genesis. Christians are obligated to build the kingdom of God insofar as that is possible, uniting over a general political mandate to “Christianize” government and public life along conservative lines.

The doctrine of “compassionate conservatism” popularized by Marvin Olasky epitomizes the percolating influence of this theocratic strain. Olasky is an elder in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a conservative splinter denomination and home to a number of Reconstructionist leaders. While some scholars continue to dismiss Reconstructionism as a “fringe” element within conservative evangelicalism, in fact, the movement has been consistently, albeit quietly, integral to the genesis, ideological formation and maturation of the Christian Right.

The home-schooling movement made a significant advance in the Fall of 2000, when Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Virginia opened as a four-year college with the explicit purpose of training home-schooled children in politics and government. There are plans for a law school, and possibly undergraduate programs in journalism, computer science and business. Located just outside Washington, DC, the school emphasizes hands-on experience as interns in government and advocacy organizations so students can jump-start their careers in the Christian Right. The college is a “ministry” of the Home School Legal Defense Association headed by Michael Farris. Farris follows in the footsteps of fellow Virginians Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell who established and still lead their own and much larger institutions of higher learning, Regent University and Liberty University.

The growth of home schooling reflects the increased popularity of separatism among conservative evangelicals. In 1999, Paul Weyrich, President of the rightist Free Congress Foundation, argued that conservative Christians have essentially lost the Culture War and issued a provocative call for Christians to separate from secular institutions. The separatist nature of the home-schooling movement is consistent with, and predates his view. Weyrich called for “building our own schools, media, entertainment, universities, every institution that people need in order to lead good lives.”
order to lead good lives. 37 In many respects, Weyrich was actually issuing a call for support for a well-established trend—the institutionalization of the Christian Right in all of its manifestations, with politics as a secondary aspect of the movement. 38

Driving Wedges in Mainline Protestantism

One of the emerging areas of influence of the Christian Right is in the mainline Protestant denominations affiliated with the National Council of Churches (NCC). Conservative factions in the Presbyterian Church (USA) for decades have systematically undermined the social justice orientation of the denomination. Unable, so far, to prevail outright over Presbyterian moderates and progressives, Presbyterian rightists are campaigning to take over the denomination, even as some openly threaten to leave the church altogether, much as some of the GOP’s conservatives threaten to bolt the party. In fact, a number of conservative churches have left over the years to join the rightist schism, Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

For much of the twentieth century, the liberal Protestant churches served as the moral center of the culture, for example, playing a leading role in the Civil Rights Movement, while conservative evangelicals were generally either silent or on the other side. Conservatives have waged an ever-widening guerrilla war on the mainline churches, creating gridlock within the ecumenical National Council of Churches and its member denominations while simultaneously seeking institutional influence and control. These struggles echo the conservative takeover of the formerly moderate Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and its subsequent alignment with the Christian Right. SBC has, among other things, purged its seminaries of liberals, reversed its historic advocacy of separation of church and state, banned the ordination of women as pastors, and declared that women should be in submission to men. The erosion of the mainline Protestant churches has created openings for both the Christian Right and the Catholic Church to contend for dominance as the “moral center” of American political life.

An Emerging New Catholic Right

The Catholic Church is building on its own history and also benefiting from the Christian Right’s recent efforts to create wider space for public expressions of religiosity in civil discourse. The success of these efforts was evident in the election year debates over expressions of religiosity by candidates for public office, sparked by the religious statements of Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), Al Gore’s running mate. This could hardly have happened even a few years ago, but a shift in the political culture suggests that personal and unedited expressions of religious belief for political purposes are no longer considered unseemly. Indeed, the suggestion is that they are beyond reproach.
Historically, the Catholic Church in the United States has played a role in public life, but has been circumspect about that role for two reasons. First, the Catholic Church sought to avoid arousing nativist anti-Catholic bigotry, and second, it has sought to avoid the appearance of serving as a monolithic and authoritarian voting bloc in a pluralist society. John F. Kennedy, while a candidate for president, emphasized that he did not take orders from the Vatican, and thus reassured voters that his loyalties would not be divided between church and state.

Catholic politicians no longer feel obliged to distance themselves from church teachings in this way and would not dare to do so for fear of a harsh church response. Conservative appointees of Pope John Paul II now dominate the American Catholic leadership. Their influence is reflected in the National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ pronouncement in 1998 urging Catholics to give primary consideration to a politician’s stances on abortion and euthanasia when voting, over the many other, sometimes progressive public policy views of the church.39 Another dimension of the conservative trend in Catholicism is, according to The New York Times, that the social activist priests of the 1960s and 70s are retiring, and are being replaced by younger priests who are far more conservative.40 The escalation of political intervention in the 2000 election reflects the new assertiveness of the Catholic Church hierarchy. But exit polls indicated that Catholics favored Gore over Bush by 50-47 percent. Archbishop Elden Curtiss of Omaha, Nebraska complained, “the majority of Catholic people still do not make abortion a priority.”41

Meanwhile, Priests for Life, an action arm of the Pontifical Council on the Family, has emerged as a force in the anti-abortion movement advocating a broad political agenda with abortion as its wedge, according to a study by the Institute for Democracy Studies. PFL and its leader Fr. Frank Pavone waged a media campaign during the Summer of 2000 calling on Catholics to mobilize politically,43 but ultimately acknowledging the role of pragmatism in politics. Pavone told the conservative newsmagazine Human Events: “Because voting is not a canonization, we may morally vote for a less perfect candidate who is actually electable at the present moment, rather than a better candidate who does not have the base of support to actually get into office…. If both candidates support some abortion, it is not wrong to vote for the one who is less supportive of abortion.”44 Pavone met with candidate George W. Bush and declared him to be “pro-life,” while attacking candidate Al Gore as “an apostle for abortion.”45

These trends suggest that the church hierarchy will increasingly direct resources into political activism that will further the Catholic wing of the Christian Right. However, even as Catholic leaders escalate their engagement in public life their efforts may be undermined by trends in conservative Catholic theology. Theological tensions between Protestant fundamentalist factions and conservative Catholics inevitably surface when the alliance moves beyond a fairly narrow band of issues, notably abortion, homosexuality, and ending public education as we know it. In 2000, the Vatican highlighted this tension when it issued a proclamation called Dominus Jesus. It declared that Jesus and the Catholic Church were the only possible means of spiritual salvation, and that other Christian churches “are not ‘churches’ in the proper sense.”46 The reaction ranged from disappointment to outrage among Protestants—including evangelicals.

While the Catholic and Protestant wings of the Christian Right are united in many areas of public policy, it remains to be seen whether competing versions of the true religion will eventually undermine their collaboration. Indeed, the public debacle in which Christian Right leaders and White House officials denounced one another over the role of the White House Office of
Faith-Based Initiatives is an excellent example of how religious supremacism interferes in any effort for equitable treatment for federal grant recipients and federal contractors.47

Conclusion

The Bush Administration will provide numerous opportunities for advancing the religious and political agenda of the Christian Right. The free market schemes that were pioneered in the past two decades—such as “outsourcing” government services to private businesses, deregulation, and privatization—are being replicated in the form of redirecting government social welfare resources to “faith-based charities,” proposals to finance religious charter schools, and vouchers for private religious education and even home schooling. These redistributive Republican policies are also part of the GOP’s political payoff to the Christian Right. The assignment of Cabinet and sub-Cabinet posts to Christian rightists is but the tip of the iceberg of the political patronage a major Republican constituency may reasonably expect. As a major power within the Bush Administration, the Christian Right will enjoy exactly the benefits it needs to assure its further institutionalization at all levels.

Frederick Clarkson is the author of Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy (1997), and of the forthcoming Profiles In Terrorism: Twenty Years of Anti-Abortion Violence, both from Common Courage Press.

End Notes


5 Evangelical Council on Financial Accountability, “ECFA Member Directory,” http://www.ecfa.org/Search.asp. A sampling of rounded income figures for 1999 shows: Concerned Women for America, $12 million; Family Research Council, $14 million; American Family Association, $15 million; Promise Keepers, $51 million; Regent University, $32 million; Focus on the Family, $121 million; Pat Robertson’s Christian Broadcasting Network, $196 million; Campus Crusade for Christ, $360 million. The combined income of D. James Kennedy’s Coral Ridge Ministries, and his television and radio operation totaled $66 million.


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20 See Frederick Clarkson, “Christian Reconstructionism: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence,” The Public Eye, vol. 8, no. 1, March 1994, pp. 1-7, and vol. 8, no. 2, June 1994, pp. 1-6. Christian Reconstructionist political strategy for a generation in California has been to build a local movement in which conservatives might be able to maximize their influence by being able to prevail in local GOP primaries for state legislature. In the 1990s this strategy nearly led to a Christian Right take over of both houses of the California legislature. A resurgent Democratic Party has since taken back the legislature.
26 Cornell, p. 4.
28 Reconstructionists argue that the Bible provides governmental “blueprints.” Initial efforts to clarify the notion of “biblical law” were made by R.J. Rushdoony in his two-volume Institutes of Biblical Law (Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., January 1980).
32 Ibid.
34 Clarkson, Eternal Hostility, passim.
39 See Frederick Clarkson, “Christian Reconstructionism: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence,” The Public Eye, vol. 8, no. 1, March 1994, pp. 1-7, and vol. 8, no. 2, June 1994, pp. 1-6. Christian Reconstructionist political strategy for a generation in California has been to build a local movement in which conservatives might be able to maximize their influence by being able to prevail in local GOP primaries for state legislature. In the 1990s this strategy nearly led to a Christian Right take over of both houses of the California legislature. A resurgent Democratic Party has since taken back the legislature.


Excerpts from Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close For Comfort by Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons

Introduction

Right-wing politics in the United States has taken many forms since the end of the Cold War. The rise of the armed citizen’s militias accompanied electoral support for Pat Buchanan’s xenophobic economic nationalism. Christian evangelical groups at times dominated the Republican Party while the Promise Keepers filled stadiums with praying men. Major politicians denounced undocumented immigrants and poor single mothers while libertarian antigovernment attitudes flourished. On talk radio, discussions of black helicopters, secret teams, and sinister elites envisioned a massive global conspiracy. Some boldly asserted that President Clinton assisted drug smugglers, ran a hit squad that killed his political enemies, and covered up the assassination of his aide Vincent Foster. In 1995 a powerful homemade bomb—delivered in a rental truck driven by a fresh-faced American neonazi named Timothy McVeigh—destroyed the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City. The blast killed 167 persons (including 19 children in an onsite day care center), and injured over 650 more. More far-right violence followed, targeting abortion providers, people of color, gay men and lesbians, and Jews.

All of these phenomena involve some form of right-wing populism—a concept crucial to understanding not just the U.S. political Right, but our history as a nation. Right-wing populist movements often defy conventional explanations because they combine attacks on socially-oppressed groups with grassroots mass mobilization and distorted forms of anti-elitism based on scapegoating.

Recent right-wing populist movements often spoke or acted in ways that challenged outsiders’ expectations. Despite a history of close collaboration between law enforcement agencies and paramilitary rightists, sections of the Nazi-Klan movement undertook armed combat against the U.S. government beginning in the 1980s. Although the Right has regularly championed private enterprise and business interests, ultraconservative leader Patrick Buchanan denounced multinational corporations and “unfettered capitalism.” Despite its traditional super-patriotism, large sections of the Right opposed the U.S.-led war on Iraq in 1990-91, and the U.S.-led bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999. Although the Christian Right was virulently antifeminist and staunchly Eurocentric, major sections of the movement urged women to become politically active and to develop leadership skills, or made concerted efforts to build alliances with conservative Black, Latino, and Asian organizations.

This type of political complexity is not new. We place the militias, the Buchananites, and the Christian Right in a long line of right-wing populist movements such as the Ku Klux Klan, the anti-Chinese crusade of the 1880s, and the followers of Father Coughlin in the 1930s. Right-wing populist movements often borrow political slogans, tactics, and forms of organization from the Left, but harness them to rightist goals. They attract people who often have genuine grievances against elites, but channel such resentments in ways that reinforce social, cultural, political, or economic power and privilege.
Right-wing populist movements are subject to the same basic dynamics as other social movements, and their members are, for the most part, average people motivated by a combination of material and ideological grievances and aspirations. Despite widespread popular rhetoric, it is neither accurate nor useful to portray right-wing populists as a “lunatic fringe” of marginal “extremists.” Right-wing populists are dangerous not because they are crazy irrational zealots—but because they are not. These people may be our neighbors, our coworkers, and our relatives.

**Right-wing Populism: A Definition**

Right-wing populists develop narratives about themselves and their society: who’s good and who’s bad; who has power and who doesn’t; who is one of us and who isn’t. These narratives may be wrong, but they are important, and they reflect real conflicts, fears, and longings. They are a means by which millions of people make sense of their world and decide how to act on it. But most people in right-wing populist movements don’t get up in the morning and say to themselves, “I’m going to victimize some oppressed groups today to get more power and privilege.” What they are more likely to say is, “I want to get my fair share.” They embrace narratives that portray themselves as victims, and that depict the people they target as either more powerful than they are, being given an unfair advantage, or acting in immoral ways. Claims such as “racial discrimination against white people” and “no special rights for homosexuals” are a form of scapegoating in defense of social inequality.

Populism is a rhetorical style. Organizers use populist slogans to mobilize “the people” as a social or political force around some form of anti-elitism. Exactly who is seen as “the people” can be inclusive or exclusive. Populism can move politics to the left or right. It can be tolerant or intolerant. It can promote civil discourse and political participation, or promote scapegoating, demagoguery, and conspiracism. Populism can oppose the status quo by challenging powerful elites to promote change, or support the status quo to defend “the people” against a perceived threat by subversive outsiders or even other elite players who are out of power.

We use the term *repressive populist movement* to describe a populist movement that combines anti-elite scapegoating with efforts to maintain or intensify unfair systems of social privilege and oppression. Repressive populist movements are fueled in large part by peoples’ grievances. These are people angered by their own sense of oppression. However, the popular discontent is deflected away from positive and effective social change through scapegoating that targets only small sections of the elite (such as the Federal Reserve Board or the Central Intelligence Agency) or groups falsely identified with elite power (such as Jews or Korean shop owners). This shifts attention away from systems and institutions of power onto individuals or groups...
portrayed as an evil, alien force distorting the normal workings of society. Most anger is actually channeled away from elites and focused on targets lower on the socioeconomic ladder. Oppressed or marginalized groups offer more vulnerable targets than the powerful and wealthy.

Right-wing populist movements are a subset of repressive populist movements. A *right-wing populist movement*, as we use the term, is a repressive populist movement motivated or defined centrally by a backlash against liberation movements, social reform, or revolution. This does not mean that right-wing populism’s goals are only defensive or reactive, but rather that its growth is fueled in a central way by fears of the Left and its political gains. The first U.S. populist movement we would unequivocally describe as right-wing was the Reconstruction-era Ku Klux Klan, which was a counterrevolutionary backlash against the overthrow of slavery and Black people’s mass mobilization and empowerment in the post-Civil War South. Earlier repressive populist movements paved the way for right-wing populism, but did not have this same backlash quality as a central feature.

We do not accept the conventional definition of right-wing as meaning “conservative or reactionary,” because many of the movements we consider right-wing populist have advocated some form of social change, not simply preserving or restoring old institutions and relations. Conventional classifications of populist movements on a right-left spectrum are often misleading as well. Sara Diamond has offered a simple but nuanced definition: “To be right-wing means to support the state in its capacity as enforcer of order and to oppose the state as distributor of wealth and power downward and more equitably in society.” This accurately describes many movements generally regarded as rightist, and has the advantage of cutting through claims that the Right consistently opposes “big government.” But Diamond’s definition does not cover all cases. Some rightist movements, such as Father Coughlin’s Social Justice movement in the 1930s and George Wallace’s American Independent Party in the 1960s, have advocated downward redistribution of wealth and power—not to everyone, but to certain groups below the elite. And some right-wing movements, such as the Ku Klux Klan of the late 1860s or various Patriot/militia groups in the 1990s, have rejected the state altogether and have sought to overthrow it, in the process rejecting and disrupting the state’s order-enforcement role. Terms such as “Left” and “Right” are difficult to define, in part, because they are relative rather than absolute: they take on meaning in relation to the range of political actors in a particular historical situation.

**How Right-Wing Populists Think about the World**

*Producerism* is one of the most basic frameworks for right-wing populist narratives in the United States. Producerism envisions a noble hard-working middle group battling “unproductive,” lazy, malevolent, or sinful parasites at the top and bottom of the social order. The characters and details in this story have changed repeatedly, but its main outlines have remained the same for two hundred years. Producerism reflects a national culture that has long glorified individual hard work as the key to success and upward mobility. But U.S. producerism also reflects the rigidities of a racial caste system and the interests of middle- and working class Whites, concerned to defend their privileges over people of color yet resenting the powerful elites above them. The Jacksonians were the first major U.S. movement to rely on producerism. Their vision of the producing classes included White farmers, laborers, artisans, slaveowning planters, and “productive” entrepreneurs; it excluded bankers, speculators, monopolists—and
people of color. In this way, producerism bolstered White supremacy, blurred actual class divisions, and embraced some elite groups while scapegoating others.

Producerism, with its baggage of prejudice, remains today the most common populist narrative on the Right, and it facilitates the use of demonization and scapegoating as political tools. Producerism has been interwoven with other narratives in the right-wing populist storybook, such as apocalyptic themes about an End Times battle between good and evil. Apocalypticism reflects the power of evangelical Christianity—not only within the Right, but also as a major force shaping U.S. politics and culture since the colonial period. In recent decades, the theme of defending the traditional family against immoral, elitist feminists and homosexuals has also taken on a new centrality. Far from being irrational, this reflects a predictable effort to bolster heterosexual male power and privilege in the face of major movements demanding equality.

Problems with Centrist/Extremist Analysis

We see two common pitfalls in contemporary discussions of right-wing populist movements. On one side, many liberals and moderate conservatives routinely portray such movements as paranoid fringe phenomena fundamentally at odds with the political mainstream. A standard premise is that the U.S. political system has an essence of democracy and freedom—a vital cen-
ter of pragmatism, rationality, and tolerance—but that this essence is threatened by extremists from the Left and Right. This centrist/extremist model, as we call it, obscures the rational choices and partially-legitimate grievances that help to fuel right-wing populist movements, and hides the fact that right-wing bigotry and scapegoating are firmly rooted in the mainstream social and political order. Centrist/extremist theory is the dominant model used by government agencies, mass media, and major human relations groups to portray right-wing movements.

Centrist/extremist theory does not stand up to field work by social scientists who have studied members of right-wing (and left-wing) movements and groups and found them no more or less mentally unbalanced, politically dysfunctional or “fringe” than their neighbors. Nor does centrist/extremist theory allow us to recognize the frequent direct linkages—ideological, organizational, and economic—between right-wing and mainstream political forces. Centrist/extremist theory fosters a dangerous complacency about mainstream politics and institutions. It has often been used to rally support for moderate versions of oppressive politics—for example, to attack Republicans and bolster the Democratic Party, even as Democratic leaders embrace traditionally right-wing positions. As Holly Sklar notes, “Views once considered extremist far right are now considered ordinary, views once considered centrist are now considered ultraliberal, and views genuinely to the left are largely absent in the mass media.” In addition, because it logically relies on government crackdowns to protect us from the “irrational zealots,” centrist/extremist theory fuels the growth of state repression, and can serve as a rationale for aiding repressive government surveillance operations.

The growth of state repression is not simply a function of right-wing initiatives. It is fundamentally a mechanism for political and economic elites to protect their own power. The Cold War produced a consensus among liberals, conservatives, reactionaries, and fascists on the need for a national security state to crush threats from the Left both inside and outside the United States. This consensus was challenged in the 1960s and 1970s, as many liberals, under pressure from the Left, criticized and sought to limit the most glaring abusive and illegal practices by government agencies. In following years, right-wing organizations played a pivotal role in helping the security establishment circumvent such limits by shifting certain operations into private channels. Since the 1970s, well-publicized, rightist-backed initiatives—the Drug War, crackdowns against “illegal aliens,” and campaigns against “terrorism”—have been used to promote massive expansions of the security establishment and serious attacks on civil liberties, especially against people of color. At the same time, the repressive apparatus has also grown through quieter measures such as expanded identification systems, increased ties between police and community organizations, and greater coordination between local, state, federal, and international police bodies. In the 1990s, government forces also used the growth of right-wing paramilitarism—such as the armed militias—as a rationale for further expanding state repression, which in turn fueled greater right-wing insurgency.

This is a vicious cycle in which each side scapegoats the other. To an alarming extent, liberal and even leftist antiracists and antifascists—following centrist/extremist theory—have contributed to this vicious cycle by denouncing only right-wing paramilitarism while ignoring the...
much more powerful repressive forces of the state itself, or worse, by directly urging a government crackdown as the way to fight the Right. As has been shown repeatedly, while the state’s repressive apparatus will sometimes go after right-wing insurgents, in the long run its main targets are oppressed groups and the Left.

On the other side of the coin, some left-leaning people have portrayed sections of the insurgent Right, especially the militias, as positive expressions of grassroots discontent, and as legitimate allies against the state and the elite. In addition, some liberals and leftists have echoed right-wing conspiracy theories about the U.S. government and big business. These positions romanticize populist activism and overlook the immediate and long-term dangers posed by right-wing movements. They also help blur the dividing line between an analysis of systemic and institutionalized oppression and conspiracist scapegoating, which is often rooted in and facilitates ethnic bigotry.

In contrast to both centrist/extremist doctrine and the left-romanticist view, we see right-wing populist movements as having a complex relationship with the established power structure: both rooted in it and distinct from it, opposing it in some ways yet bolstering it in others. Right-wing populist movements often help to strengthen social oppression, yet they are themselves fueled by popular discontent at elite privilege and power.

The contradictions within right-wing populism point to tensions and complexities within the larger social order. In our view, class hierarchy, racial and national oppression, male dominance, and other systems of social control have always been central to U.S. society. At the same time, the social power structure is not divided neatly between oppressors and oppressed. Because there are many different intersecting lines of power, the majority of people occupy contradictory positions in society: they are oppressed in some ways but hold varying degrees of relative privilege in other ways. Even elite forces, while sharing basic interests, are internally divided. In some situations, both intra-elite conflict and people’s contradictory status can foster a kind of double-edged politics: a dissatisfaction with the people in charge, coupled with a desire to preserve or strengthen certain social inequalities. This double-edged politics often finds expression in repressive populist movements.

The danger associated with right-wing populism comes not only from its real or potential bids for power, or even from its day-to-day violence, bigotry and scapegoating, but also from its interactions with other political forces and with the government. The 1990s saw a dangerous interplay, for example, between right-wing paramilitarism and state repression. The government’s response to the militias following the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing made it clear that antidemocratic initiatives do not only come from hard right political movements. President Bill Clinton exploited fears of the Right to promote sweeping “counter-terrorism” legislation that represented a serious attack on civil liberties. This in turn bolstered widespread fears of state repression, some of which militia groups were able to exploit. Here and in many other
instances, we see a dynamic tension between right-wing populist movements, including the insurrectionist Far Right, and mainstream electoral politics. Such movements help pull the entire political spectrum to the right and make mainstream forms of brutality and injustice look more acceptable by comparison.

Why do people join right-wing populist movements?

- fears of social, cultural, and political change
- the loss of privilege as traditional social hierarchies have been challenged and become more fragmented
- a sense of disempowerment in the face of massive bureaucratic institutions, both public and private, over which ordinary people have little influence
- economic hardships and dislocations connected to globalization and other factors
- disillusionment with mainstream political choices
- the weakness or nonexistence of leftist radical alternatives that speak effectively to many people’s concerns.

Michael Omi and Howard Wynant have discussed “the collapse of the ‘American Dream,’” under pressure from social liberation movements, economic disruptions and upheavals, and the apparent decline of U.S. global power in the wake of setbacks such as the Vietnam War. For many people drawn to right-wing populist movements, this sense of a many-sided national crisis persists today. Holly Sklar, too, has written of “The Dying of the American Dream.” Her analysis highlights soaring economic inequality, growing poverty, plummeting real wages, the disappearance of union jobs, global corporate restructuring, the shredding of social programs and the growth of prisons, and the shift toward “a cheaper, more disposable workforce of temporary workers, part-timers, and other ‘contingent workers.’” These trends disproportionately hurt people of color, but they also affect large numbers of White people, who form the vast majority of right-wing populism’s supporters. As Sklar underscores, “As the American Dream has become more impossible for more people, scapegoating is being used to deflect blame from the economic system and channel anger to support reactionary political causes.” Democrats as well as Republicans, liberals as well as conservatives have been complicit in this process.

The damaging effect of globalization is hardly an analysis limited to the Left. Consider this quote from Business Week:

The Darwinian demands of global competition have led to waves of corporate downsizing. Real median incomes haven’t moved much for two decades, while the earnings gap between the richest and the poorest Americans has widened. This has heightened workers’ economic insecurity and sown doubts about the future.

Other writers have noted the bankruptcy of conventional politics for addressing social problems. Conservative analyst Kevin Phillips wrote: “The sad truth is that frustration politics has built to a possibly scary level precisely because of the unnerving weakness of the major parties and their prevailing philosophies.” Phillips cited both Republicans and Democrats for “ineptness and miscalculation.” For a growing portion of the population in the 1990s, neither the
Democrats nor the Republicans offered hope for redress of grievances. This in part explains the Perot phenomenon and the Reform Party. Most major populist movements in the 1980s and 1990s were on the political right, as opposed to the 1960s and early 1970s when most were on the political left, such as the Civil Rights Movement and the movement to end the war in Vietnam.

**Strategies for combating Right-wing Populism**

We see a need for a dual strategy in combating right-wing populism. On one hand, there is a need for broad antirightist alliances to defend and strengthen progressive gains such as access to abortion, affirmative action, gay rights, and immigration. Confronting rightist groups involves rationally refuting their scapegoating, addressing legitimate grievances, and exposing the lies and prejudices their most fanatical members spew. Such a strategy was used, with partial success, to confront the Posse Comitatus in the early 1980s. At that time, the Posse blamed the collapsing farm economy on a conspiracy of Jewish bankers manipulating subhuman people of color. In response, a coalition led by the Center for Democratic Renewal in Atlanta organized against scapegoating, offered assistance to groups voicing legitimate economic grievances, and assisted people in reintegrating into the economy. Teams went county-by-county through Posse strongholds. Black Baptist ministers talked about antisemitism; Jews talked about racism; Lutherans talked about healing; farm organizers gave economic advice. The American Jewish Committee hosted a conference in Chicago to call national attention to both antisemitism in the farm belt and social and economic injustice in rural America. This coalition had more to do with beating back the Posse than armed law enforcement attacks, criminal
trials, or civil litigation. What the coalition’s educational work could not do, however, was uproot the underlying social and economic problems that made the Posse, and later the Patriot movement, attractive.

Along with such coalitions, we also see a need for radical initiatives to highlight the links between right-wing populism and institutionalized oppression, and to address centrist and liberalism’s inadequate plans for resolving society’s problems. This approach means exploring new political options when Republican and Democratic politicians are both representing narrow wealthy interests. It means opposing both anti-abortion terrorism and FBI repression. It means defending social welfare programs against rightist attack, while also pointing out the paternalistic, abusive, and inadequate nature of many such programs. It means combating the fake radicalism and scapegoating of conspiracy theories by articulating systemic analyses of elite power. It means joining and supporting movements for social change based on equality and social justice, not scapegoating and supremacy.

The Dangers of Left-Right Coalitions in the anti-Globalization struggle

Patrick Buchanan in a 1998 speech to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations took a stridently economic nationalist position:

The day is not too distant when economic nationalism will triumph. Several events will hasten that day. The first is the tidal wave of imports from Asia about to hit these shores. When all those manufactured goods pour in, taking down industries and killing jobs, there will arise a clamor from industry and labor for protection. If that cry goes unheeded, those who turn a stone face to the American workers will be turned out of power. In the Democratic Party or the Republican Party or the Reform Party or some new party, economic nationalism will find its vehicle and its voice. Rely upon it.

In his previous campaign rhetoric Buchanan had juggled demonization, scapegoating, conspiracism, apocalyptic and millenialist metaphors, and a crude populist anti-elitism. In the year 2000, Buchanan sought to broaden his base by reaching out to self-described leftist Lenora Fulani, who ran for president as an independent in 1988 and 1992 and was the first African-American woman to gain ballot status in all 50 states. Fulani, along with her mentor Fred Newman, led a small national group that has been widely denounced for manipulative organizing tactics, the use of therapy to recruit and discipline members, and a dictatorial philosophy. As early as 1996, Fulani praised Buchanan as an unfairly demonized populist who “has tapped into the anti-government, anti-big business, pro-people sentiments of a significant portion of the American people.” Buchanan may have hoped that Fulani’s support would provide a screen for his own racism, but the only noticeable supporters of the alliance were some right-wing populists and a handful of White social democrats.

Business nationalism, promoted by industrialists who benefit from restrictive regulatory policies, and xenophobia have been part of organizing against corporate multinationalist globalization since the first campaigns against the alphabet soup of international treaties such as NAFTA, GATT, WTO, and MAI. Conspiracist analysis of globalization even reached into the U.S. Congress where Congresswoman Helen Chenoweth-Hage (R-ID) worked openly with the John Birch Society. Senator Bob Smith (R-NH) briefly quit the Republican Party to run for
president on the U.S. Taxpayers Party ticket, but later returned to the fold. Some ultraconservatives even cultivated ties with liberal antiglobalists such as Public Citizen founder Ralph Nader. Doug Henwood noted that Nader’s “twin themes, the hypertrophy of corporate power and the monetary perversion of democracy,” are the “core themes of any broad ‘progressive’ mobilization,” but they largely had been appropriated by the “populist right.” Consider the statement of John Talbott, the Reform Party spokesperson in New Hampshire:

If you close your eyes, it is difficult to hear much of a difference between Ralph Nader on the left and Pat Buchanan on the right when they talk about corruption in government, the excesses of corporate welfare, the devastating effect of free international trade on the American worker and a desire to clean big money and special-interests out of Washington. There’s a reason for this; 91 percent of the American people consider themselves middle class or working class. The time is now for a new political party that is neither right nor left, neither conservative nor liberal, but created and built to represent the hard-working average American in reforming our government.

If we all pull together, put our prejudices behind us, and ignore traditional labeling such as liberal or conservative, we can join together to fight the battle of our lives against the collaboration of big business and big government, break the two-party monopoly, and return control of our government to the true owners of this country—the American people.

This is an example of repressive populism in service to business nationalism since it is a call for “the people” in the middle to attack the internationalist elites while ignoring the racist and xenophobic policies of Buchanan. Nader and his colleagues worked closely with a business nationalist brain trust financed by right-wing textile magnate Roger Milliken. The strategists included Milliken’s lobbyist, Jock Nash, Alan Tonelson of the ultraconservative U.S. Business and Industrial Council, and Pat Choate of the Manufacturing Policy Project. According to Ryan Lizza, it was Choate, the 1996 Reform Party vice presidential candidate, who “orchestrated Buchanan’s flight from the Republican Party.” The Naderites and other antiglobalization forces frequently cited books and reports by authors such as Charles Derber, David C. Korten, Jerry Mander, Edward Goldsmith, and William Greider. In thousands of pages the authors denounced large multinational corporations, global finance capital, international banking interests, powerful elites, and betrayal by corrupt politicians. Only in Greider was there a serious (albeit brief) discussion of how these historic themes have been woven into right-wing populist conspiracy theories.

By the mid-1990s, a few activists in alternative, green, and left subcultures defended the militias or spread conspiracy theories about the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. In The New Yorker, applying a centrist/extremist model, Michael Kelly argued that “both the far right and
the far left” have long posited “that sinister, antidemocratic forces have wormed their way into the inner workings of the government and have subverted it to serve not the interests of the nation but those of a powerful few.” But this conspiracist idea assumes that the government used to be democratic and did serve “the interests of the nation” before—which is a conventional mainstream view, not a radical one. A truly radical critique sees the U.S. political system as inherently undemocratic from the beginning. As one report from a progressive watchdog group argued: “There is a vast gulf between the simplistic yet dangerous rhetoric of elite cabals, Jewish conspiracies and the omnipotence of ‘international finance’ and a thoughtful analysis of the deep divisions and inequities in our society.”

A handful of right-wing activists took part in the large and dramatic Seattle protests against globalization in early December 1999. As a result, the Southern Poverty Law Center used the Seattle protests to anchor a report titled “‘Neither Left Nor Right:’ The Spreading Battle Against the Forces of Economic Globalism is Shaping the Extremism of the New Millennium.” The report contained a detailed discussion of the rise of third position fascist movements and their call for Left/Right unity to smash capitalism. But since the report relied heavily on centrist-extremist analysis, it was read by some as implying that fascist forces played a major role in Seattle, which was false. In addition, the report appears to have played a role in law enforcement circles where countersubversive hardliners lumped “extremists” of the Right and Left together and falsely asserted that antiglobalist protests were a cover for neonazis and anarchists to engage in terrorism.

When the Washington, D.C. protests against the World Bank were staged in mid-April 2000, police engaged in a number of repressive pre-emptive maneuvers and there were numerous reports of excessive use of force. At the same time, mainstream “Free Trade” supporters opportunistically pointed out the xenophobia in Buchanan’s antiglobalization rhetoric as a way to tarnish the larger movement. For example New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman wrote:

...during the recent anti-I.M.F. protests in Washington...that hate-mongering isolationist Pat Buchanan joined forces with the Teamsters and their boss James Hoffa. Mr. Buchanan told cheering Teamsters that as president he would tell the Chinese to either shape up or “you guys have sold your last pair of chopsticks in any mall in the United States,” and that he would appoint Mr. Hoffa as America’s top trade negotiator.

Progressive antiglobalists were susceptible to this type of attack because the liberal, labor, and consumerist groups framing the issues on behalf of middle-class constituents were reluctant to criticize the right-wing populists in their coalition.

Progressive groups, however, have begun to object to uncritical coalitions of left and right
populists. In June 1999 the Dutch antifascist group De Fabel van de Illegaal (The Myth of Illegality) quit a coalition of European groups organizing against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), warning that the reigning political analysis encouraged unprincipled coalitions with right-wing nationalists and bigots. Also in 1999 an “anti-free-trade group called Peoples Global Action amended its manifesto to specifically reject any alliances with right-wing WTO opponents. That was partly out of fear that far-right groups in India and in Europe were infiltrating liberal anti-WTO groups.” In early 2000, Pressebüro Savanne in Zurich set up a website “Right-Left—A Dangerous Flirt,” to prompt an international discussion of the problem.

It is the dynamic and creative side of right-wing populism that many on the left have failed to grasp. Valerie Scatamburlo points out that while the Right has successfully understood the interrelationships between culture and sociopolitical and economic relations, many on the Left have failed to successfully articulate cultural issues in relation to political, economic and material considerations, and some have fallen prey to an ahistorical and apolitical form of culturalism. This has put the political Left at a great disadvantage in public discussions.

*Adapted from Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons, Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort (New York: Guilford Press, 2000).*
A Call to Defend Democracy and Pluralism
The Blue Mountain Working Group
November, 1994

We are a group of individuals interested in joining with others to rebuild a multi-issue movement for progressive social change that can assist in informing and organizing broad coalitions to reverse the ominous rightwing backlash currently sweeping the United States. In May, 1993 we came from across the nation to the conference center in Blue Mountain, NY to share our concerns about the growing prejudice and scapegoating being provoked by intolerant and anti-democratic religious and secular movements of the hard right.

A wide range of individuals participated in the three-day meeting, including organizers, activists, journalists, academics, and researchers. Some had institutional affiliations, others did not. All the participants had been involved in educating about or organizing against right-wing campaigns at the local or national level, and had shown a commitment to respecting diversity and valuing cooperation. The goal of the gathering was to meet and discuss our experiences and ideas, develop a national perspective, and begin to outline a strategic response that reflected the diverse communities where we work and live. We carried out our discussions with a sense of purpose, a knowledge of history, a commitment to thoughtful and thorough discussion, a desire to learn from each other, and a humility born of painful experience heightened by an apprehension of peril. This statement is one result of our ongoing discussions during the past eighteen months.

We see the current general right-wing backlash as one of the most significant political developments of the decade, combining well-funded national institutions with highly-motivated grassroots activists. To effectively counter this movement, we believe it is essential to understand the specific and complicated components of the political right wing across its many forms, and the often conflicting and competing aspects of right-wing theory and practice.

While the political right in the US can be bewildering in its complexity and shifting identities and allegiances, its players historically have assembled their core tenets and shared agendas from the same set of beliefs. They include conscious or unconscious support for white privilege; male supremacy; subservience of women and people of color; hierarchical religious and family structures; the protection of property rights over human rights; preservation of individual wealth; a rapacious form of unregulated free market capitalism; aggressive and unilateral military and foreign policies; and authoritarian and punitive means of social control. They also include opposition to the feminist movement and abortion rights; democratic pluralism and cultural diversity; gay rights; government regulations concerning health, safety, and the environment; and minimum wage laws and union rights.
The most activist segments of the US political right working within the electoral system are distinct from traditional conservatism, with its support for the status quo, as well as distinct from the far right or ultra right, with its overt theories of racist biological determinism and open support for individual and collective violence. We see some overlap among these tendencies, especially in local campaigns, but contend the current coalition effort uniting diverse rightwing activist groups around specific common themes represents a historic phenomenon that has appeared before in US history during times of economic and social stress. Various activist right-wing movements have historically been called the hard right, intolerant right, authoritarian right, regressive right, reactionary right, nativist right, populist right, radical right, extremist right, moralistic right, orthodox right, traditionalist right, nationalist right, exclusivist right, self-righteous right, elitist right, zealous right, theocentric right, theonomic right, and theocratic right.

We feel the phrase that best describes the essence of the contemporary activist right-wing movement is “anti-democratic right.” The main goal of the antidemocratic right is to craft a reactionary backlash movement to co-opt and reverse the gains of the progressive social movements of the 1960’s and 1970’s which sparked the ongoing civil rights, student rights, antiwar, feminist, ecology, and gay rights movements.

To achieve this goal the anti-democratic right works in many arenas—cultural, social, artistic, electoral, legislative, legal, political, academic, journalistic, religious, and theological. It has an infrastructure that engages in research, strategic analysis, media outreach, fundraising, education, community organizing, and direct action. The specific segment of the anti-democratic right that most concerns us is a growing coalition of well-funded reactionary political activists working with authoritarian religious zealots to define what it means to be an American in narrow, spiteful, and exclusionary terms.

The leaders of the anti-democratic right recognize that many persons have real grievances over various social and economic problems in our society, but these leaders cynically divert attention away from a serious discussion of these complex issues toward targeted scapegoats such as African-Americans, Asians, Arabs, and other people of color, Spanish-speaking residents, feminists, lesbians, gay men, immigrants, welfare recipients, Jews, Muslims, the disabled, and other persons, many of whom are still seeking equal access to the promised benefits of our society.

In a country confronting complex problems, the anti-democratic right offers simple slogans. In a society of many cultures, the anti-democratic right offers a monocultural vision of citizenship. In a society struggling for participatory democracy, the antidemocratic right offers elitism, exclusivity, and submission to authority.

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The leaders of the anti-democratic right are deeply troubled by critical thinking, cultural diversity, and dissent; and they warn about the chaos of mass democracy and pluralism, and the evils of liberalism and secular humanism. When they speak of traditional family values, they often speak only of those values which traditionally have reinforced disproportionate access to power and privilege for certain segments of our society—the upper class, males, whites, heterosexuals, northern Europeans, and Christians.

Many leaders of the anti-democratic right depend on fundraising through direct mail and televangelism, where using divisive and polarizing scare tactics to raise money has become commonplace. We have seen some leaders of the anti-democratic right use deception, false or unreliable statistics, pseudo-science, and pseudoacademic research. They opportunistically promote stereotypes, scapegoating, objectification, and irrational conspiratorial analyses alleging secular humanist treachery. They gracelessly exploit divisiveness, dehumanization, demonization, and demagoguery. They smugly act in a moralistic, self-righteous, even sanctimonious manner. They seek to impose their rigid and uncharitable views on every American. The danger they pose to democratic pluralism is real.

The anti-democratic right seeks to control what we read, the music we hear, the images we see, how we learn, what happens to our bodies, how we worship, and whom we love.

The rise of the anti-democratic right in our country occurs at a time when racial nationalism is sweeping Europe. We have witnessed the murders of immigrants, people of color, and religious minorities in Germany, and the spread of anti-Jewish bigotry across the continent. Who could have predicted the brutal ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia or the election victories of neo-fascists in Italy? In our own country, hate crimes and physical assaults on persons in targeted groups are on the increase. We have seen the shootings of abortion providers and bombings of clinics. We should not be complacent and dismiss the possibility that an economic or social crisis in the US could serve as a trigger for some hard-right religious zealots or reactionary racial nationalists to engage in paramilitary activity or unleash a campaign of intimidation and violence that could destabilize our own country.

It may seem a remote possibility, but it can happen here. We know from history that authoritarianism, theocracy, demagoguery, and scapegoating are building blocks for fascist political movements; and that people mobilized by the cynical, regressive, populist-sounding sentiments sown by a Ross Perot can be harvested by the angry, divisive, racial nationalist rhetoric of a David Duke or Pat Buchanan. We also know the paradox of fascism is that when most people finally are asking whether or not it is too late to stop it...it is. Better that resistance be early and preventative rather than late and unsuccessful.

Because we believe the anti-democratic right is a growing social movement, we see three immediate tasks to protect democratic values: 1) defending diversity within a pluralistic society, 2) maintaining the separation of church and state, 3) protecting the right to privacy for all people.

We share a sense of urgency. Time is of the essence. We must stop the hard right anti-democratic backlash movement before it inflicts more damage on our society. In defending democracy and pluralism we must refrain from using the same polarizing techniques of scapegoating, demonization, and demagoguery that have been so successful for the antidemocratic right.
As we fight intolerance we will consciously strive to resist using the same intolerant tactics we oppose. We will respect diversity while defending democracy. We recognize that many of the individual grassroots activists being mobilized by the leadership of the antidemocratic right are sincere and honest people with real fears concerning jobs, family, schools, and personal safety. They are not our enemies, they are our neighbors—and potentially our allies.

We defend the right of all persons to hold religious beliefs and moral codes without government restriction or interference. But we insist that in a constitutional democracy the arguments for legislation and regulation be based on rational debate and factual evidence that demonstrate a useful purpose and a compelling government interest.

The leaders of the anti-democratic right wave the flag, wrap themselves in the cloak of religion and claim they speak for God and country. We are not attacking God when we confront those who pridefully presume to speak for God. We are not attacking religion when we challenge those who imply that only persons who share their specific narrow theological viewpoint can claim religious or moral values. We are not attacking our country when we rebuke those who peddle a message of fear, prejudice, and division.

To stop the right-wing backlash we must help to build broad popular coalitions that include at the core all the communities under attack by the antidemocratic right in its many incarnations; and we must also include in these coalitions all persons of good conscience willing to defend democratic pluralism. Our allies are all persons who oppose theocracy and control by an authoritarian elite, and all persons who are willing to stand up for a real, dynamic, and vibrant democracy.

As progressives we believe there are many values we must uphold in building any principled coalition. Our method of work as a progressive coalition must reflect diverse styles, perspectives, and goals. We must speak with many different voices representing the many different threads that weave the social fabric of our nation. We see progressive social change as an ongoing process involving persons from many constituencies and issues working together whenever possible in an alliance for democracy and pluralism.

Our alliance embraces the struggles for racial and ethnic justice especially for persons who trace their identity to Africa, South America, Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean, Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific Islands. Our alliance embraces the struggles for fairness and tribal rights for the native peoples of this continent.

Our alliance embraces the movements seeking equal rights and safety for women. Our alliance embraces groups promoting a woman’s right to control her own body, defending abortion rights, advocating comprehensive sexuality education and family planning, and seeking implementation of gay-positive curricula and AIDS awareness education. Our alliance embraces the equal rights movements defending the lesbian, gay male, bisexual, and transgender communities.

Our alliance embraces those seeking social and economic justice for African Americans and the eradication of the vestiges of slavery and second-class citizenship. Our alliance embraces the struggles against scapegoating of immigrants, people of color, and welfare recipients. Our alliance embraces groups challenging racism, sexism, homophobia and anti-Jewish prejudice.

Our alliance embraces the impoverished seeking dignified work and a living wage. Our alliance embraces residents of the inner city seeking control and revitalization of their communities.
Our alliance embraces those in rural areas seeking to preserve the family farm and fighting for fair agricultural and land use policies. Our alliance embraces persons opposing the anti-regulatory Wise Use, Sovereignty, Counties, and States Rights movements. Our alliance embraces groups fighting for a decent minimum wage, accessible child care, compassionate welfare regulations, and meaningful job training. Our alliance embraces alienated youth and the isolated homeless.

Our alliance embraces persons learning to overcome physical, emotional, and psychological challenges to independence. Our alliance embraces movements for a sound environment, better schools, bilingual education, and universal health care. Our alliance embraces persons decrying religious bigotry against Jews, Muslims, Catholics, and other belief systems. Our alliance embraces groups resisting militarism, ultra-nationalism, fascism, and genocide.

We come from churches, synagogues, mosques, and other places of spiritual worship and secular reflection. We come from labor unions, non-profit agencies, progressive businesses, foundations, membership organizations, and social clubs. We come from farms and ranches, industrial worksites, office buildings, schools, colleges, factories, and the streets. We come from cities, suburbs, and rural areas. We are organized and unorganized, and work inside and outside the home. And we yearn to build a true alliance that unites all of us on the basis of mutual respect as we defend democracy and pluralism.

We see a synergistic interactive relationship among activists, organizers, researchers, journalists, and academics from these various movements and constituencies as resulting in the most informed and useful analyses, strategies, and tactics to bring about effective action for social change. We believe there must be two-way interaction between the national and local levels. The needs and specific issues of local partners must inform and shape national strategies, and at the same time, the resources developed by national groups must be made available to grassroots organizers to stimulate informed discussion of various strategies and tactics. At the leadership level, there has not yet been sufficient cooperation of potential progressive allies, and many people in national organizations still need to be educated about the serious nature of the threat posed by the anti-democratic right.

Hard experiences have taught us that short term tactics that divide communities for the sake of individual electoral victories are short-sighted, frequently backfire, and even when successful, weaken the type of long-term coalition building that is necessary for eventual victory. It is essential to develop an analysis that bridges issues, helps communities understand the threat to them, and pulls together diverse constituencies and issues. The antidemocratic right has been successful in reframing the public debate over key issues such as family, morality, and children. We must participate in and reclaim this debate.
We believe in full equality for everyone—nothing more, but nothing less.

Ours is a vision of democracy where all have an equal voice. Of a democracy where progressive populism encourages active participation by all residents in open, full, and honest debates over legislation and government policies. Where we elect our government representatives on the basis of ideas, not images. Where the consent of the governed is informed consent, not manipulated consent. Where the wealth of wisdom possessed by a political candidate is more important than the reach of their wallet. Where elections offer real choices rather than rotating elites. Where the majority sets policies while consciously respecting the rights of the minority; and both the majority and the minority have their grievances carefully considered, and have access to representation. This is the promise of our nation. We must work to see this promise achieved, rather than see it eroded by the regressive populist-sounding demagoguery of the antidemocratic right. Our goal is twofold: we must stop the hard right; and we must pursue the unfulfilled promises of a healthy pluralistic democracy: justice, equality, security, and fairness—the real American Dream.

Many of us who met at Blue Mountain have continued working together as an informal network, and this has helped us gain the perspective we need to be more effective in our individual tasks fighting the right in cities and states across the country. It is vital that we all share information, advice, criticisms, and assistance as we learn to work together. The anti-democratic right has a multi-issue strategic agenda, but its tactic is to focus its attacks on one high-visibility target constituency at a time. No single segment of our society has demonstrated an ability to resist these attacks alone. We must learn to work together. We urge everyone who desires to defend and extend democracy to join together in forming broad and diverse locally-based coalitions to resist the rollback of rights; to block the backlash; to fight the right.

The leaders of the anti-democratic right say their movement is waging a battle for the soul of America. They call it a culture war. We believe the soul of America should not be a battleground but a birthright, and that culture should be celebrated not censored. We believe America is defined by ideas and values, but not those limited by religious beliefs, biology, bloodlines, or birthplace of ancestors.

The time has come to stand up and vigorously defend democracy and pluralism against the attacks orchestrated by cynical leaders of the anti-democratic right. History teaches us that there can be no freedom without liberty, no liberty without justice, and no justice without equality; and we look forward to success because we know it is through the never-ending struggle for equality, justice, liberty and freedom that democracy is nourished.
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Journalist/Researcher
Author: *The Coors Connection*
Detroit, Michigan

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Organizations, when listed, are for identification only. Drafts of earlier versions were circulated among selected activists and researchers for their comments. This final version reflects the substantial and thoughtful input of many persons other than those whose names appear on this page.
Notes:
ORGANIZING ADVICE

What Can I Do?

Recognize the Assault

The Right’s many groups organize on a wide variety of specific issues, from education, the environment, civil and human rights, immigration, and criminal justice to developing new constituencies such as fathers and conservative people of color. Often they will link one issue with another under a broad umbrella campaign, such as “traditional family values,” “fiscal responsibility” or “compassionate conservatism.” Look for connections across their issues, and observe patterns and trends in how specific topics are addressed. For instance, projects in one state are often duplicated in others such as attempts to roll back gay rights or bilingual education. Find out as much as you can about the right-wing groups and spokespeople that work nationally and in your area and what influences them. Realize that the Right has influenced the “center” of U.S. politics to be more conservative. Learn to recognize that moderate public statements often mask deep conservatism, especially in areas where race plays a big part, such as criminal justice and education.

Defend the Basics

Defending democracy means reclaiming as progressive ideals the basic values and practices of the democratic process such as fair elections, a vibrant free press, liberty, human rights for all people, social and economic justice and the chance for everyone to lead dignified lives. Counter to these values, the Right seeks to attract the allegiance of some by limiting the rights of others and by sanctioning benefits for its supporters. At the same time it claims to do this in the name of freedom and democracy. Recognize and expose this hypocrisy and contradiction, such as the claim that a tax cut for the rich will benefit everyone. Work to extend basic rights and seek social and economic justice for all people. This work will pose a significant challenge to the conservative vision of the United States.

Get Involved

If activism is new to you, channel your insight and motivation into action. Notice the issues that strike a chord for you and seek out like-minded individuals and groups interested in the same things. Recognize that working for an issue that defends basic democratic values can be as valuable as working with a group that specifically organizes against the Right. Consider your circumstances, your comfort level, and your skills, and do what’s comfortable for you. There are as many ways to participate as there are issues and perspectives, and activism includes much more than electoral politics.

If you have been involved and focused on a single issue, be open to its possible connections to other topics. Sometimes single issue organizing can miss opportunities for bringing on more supporters. Consider acting on those connections. The Right successfully makes such connec-
tions across issues all the time, and they have used this strategy successfully to build their influence. A good place to start is Political Research Associates’ website, http://www.publiceye.org. Look under “Building Equality” for a list of organizations on a range of issues. If you have experience with political groups, reflect how your understanding of the Right can help inform their goals and planning. Share these insights with others, and keep informed about new developments.

Maintain Momentum

Progress towards reclaiming democracy depends upon sustained effort. Luckily there are many ways of participating in the democratic process. Support those who organize such tactics as voting campaigns, educational projects, demonstrations, boycotts, letter writing, phone chains, lobbying and internet activity. Continue to participate yourself, including with financial assistance if you are able. Finally, recognize that understanding and challenging the Right takes time. Be determined, outraged, committed, but also patient.
Ground Rules & Tips for Challenging the Right

Do Your Homework

Recognize that the Right is a complex movement.
No one organization “controls” the Right. No single funder is “behind” the Right. Some large organizations are important, but many others appear to be more influential than they really are. Recognize that there are multiple networks of organizations and funders with differing and sometimes competing agendas. Find out as much as you can about the groups you see. Incorporate this information in your educational work. It is helpful in organizing to know a great deal about your opponents. Be alert to evidence of the Right’s “new racism.” The Right has replaced simple racist rhetoric with a more complex, “colorblind” political agenda which actually attacks the rights of people of color. See the Resources sections of this kit for some assistance in your research.

Decode the Right’s agenda on your issue.
The Right often attempts to pass laws that take rights away from groups or individuals. Under the guise of addressing some compelling societal need, they often frame the issue by appealing to prejudice, myth, irrational belief, inaccurate information, pseudo-science, or sometimes even by using outright lies. Further, Right-wing organizers often appropriate the rhetoric of the Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Movement to portray themselves as victims of discrimination. Actually, they most often are seeking to undermine the existing protection of individual rights, increase their freedom to accumulate profit, and undermine the wall of separation between church and state.

Be careful to respect people’s right to hold opinions and religious beliefs that you may find offensive.
Everyone has an absolute right to seek redress of their grievances. This is equally true when those grievances are based on religious beliefs. In an open and democratic society, it is important to listen to the grievances of all members of society and take them seriously, even when we might be vehemently opposed to them. They do not, however, have a right to impose those beliefs on others.

Distinguish between leaders and followers in right-wing organizations.
Leaders are often “professional” right-wingers. They’ve made a career of promoting a rightist agenda and attacking progressives and progressive issues. Followers, on the other hand, may not be well-informed. They are often mobilized by fears about family and future based on information that, if true, would indeed be frightening. This so-called “education” is often skillful, deceitful, and convincing. These followers may take positions that are more extreme than those of the leaders, but on the other hand, they may not know exactly what they are supporting by attending a certain organization’s rally or conference. To critique and expose the leaders of right-wing organizations is the work of a good progressive organizer, writer or activist. In the case of the followers, however, it is important to reserve judgment and listen to their grievances. Do not assume that they are all sophisticated political agents or have access to a variety of information sources.
Rebut, Rebuке, Reаffirm.

It's important to remember that while the tactics of the Right may be obvious to you, they are not necessarily obvious to others, even though they might be part of the political process. The ways in which the Right distorts and misleads the public must be carefully explained. Use a 3-step process. Rebut false and inaccurate claims. Rebuке those who use scapegoating or demagoguery. Reаffirm what a progressive goal or agenda would accomplish for the betterment of society.

Stay Cool in Public

Use the opportunity of public forums to present your position.

Approach any public event as a chance to state your case. Come fully prepared to explain why you are right. Although your audience may be unfriendly, remember that you are often an invited guest at such events. Audience members are expecting you to represent your group, even though they may not expect to agree with you. Your task is to convince these listeners, not the representatives of the Right who may be your debating opponents or fellow panelists. Do so using short, clear sentences, not long, abstract paragraphs. Many audience members are your potential supporters, available to join your ranks. Provide them with reasons and ways to do so.

Demand documentation.

Common tactics of the Right include distorting the truth and manipulating facts and figures in order to deceive the public. You can often expose false charges and baseless claims by demanding that their sources be cited. The leadership of an organization can and must be held fully responsible for every spoken or written word that comes from him or her or the organization they represent. If you are thoroughly prepared, you will know the weaknesses of these sources and be able to refute them publicly. At the same time be prepared to document your sources in order to maintain your credibility.

Address the issues, not just the actors.

Try to avoid personalizing the debate or focusing entirely on the presentation by the Right’s representative. Take time to clarify what the real issues are, what tactics are being used, why these issues are important to the Right and what the implications of the debate might be.

Criticize the outcomes, not the intent, of the Right’s agenda.

If you focus only on exposing the purpose of a particular campaign, you may find yourself locked in a circular argument about who knows better what the Right seeks to accomplish. It may be more productive to look at the implications of the issues at hand and to explain that the logical outcome of adopting your opponent’s position will be a serious threat to the goals of your group.

Avoid slogans, namecalling, and demonizing members of the Right.

Slogans and sound bites have their place, but they are not sufficient as an organizing strategy. Simple anti-Right slogans do not help people understand why the Right sounds convincing but is wrong. And responding in kind to being called names weakens your position with some of
the listeners you are trying to convince. Phrases like “religious political extremists” are labels, not arguments and often will backfire on the neighborhood and community level.

**Expose who benefits from Right-wing campaigns.**

One of the most common ways the Right advances its policies is to argue that they will benefit the “average” person, though most often that is not the case. It helps in exposing this deception to point out who actually stands to benefit and who stands to lose from the policy being proposed. Exploring whose self-interest is served can help organizers as they seek a clearer picture of the forces behind a particular campaign. Sometimes, the greatest beneficiaries of a right-wing campaign are the organizations conducting it. Campaigns are recruitment tools. So if potential new members can be reached by a certain position, that is sometimes in and of itself the reason the campaign is mounted.

**Keep Organizing**

**Keep your supporters informed.**

Signing up supporters is a good start, but your job includes keeping your supporters well informed. Often the Right will switch tactics or redirect its energy. If you are in the middle of an attack, these changes may be puzzling. Keep in mind that the deep agenda of the Right remains unchanged despite these apparent shifts. Persist in explaining this to your colleagues.

**Involv[e]e clergy and other respected community members in your organizing.**

Since so much of the Right’s rhetoric has been influenced by the Religious Right, progressive faith-based organizations and their representatives have great potential for increasing your chances for successful organizing. Sympathetic clergy can present an alternative interpretation of scripture and often have access to large congregations who may be interested in your work.

**Be patient.**

Change takes time. Your organizing today is laying the groundwork for tomorrow’s successes. Patience, optimism and a sense of humor are key ingredients in opposing the Right.
Responding to Hate Groups

Ten Points to Remember

1. Document the problem and stay informed. Your first step should be to conduct thorough research about hate group activity and bigoted violence in your community. Develop a chronology of incidents drawing on newspaper accounts, victim reports, and other sources. Stay informed about developments by clipping your local newspaper, subscribing to other publications, and networking with other individuals and agencies.

2. Speak out and create a moral barrier to hate activity. Communities that ignore the problem of hate group activity and bigoted violence can sometimes create the impression that they don’t care. This silence is often interpreted by hate groups as an invitation to step up their activities. Through press conferences, rallies, community meetings, and public hearings, you can create a climate of public opinion that condemns racism and bigotry right from the start.

3. Match the solution to the problem. Whatever strategy you use to respond should be tailored to the specific situation you are dealing with; don’t rely on rigid, formula-type solutions.

4. Build coalitions. Hate violence and bigotry against one targeted group helps to legitimize activities against other groups. If you involve a wide spectrum of people representing diverse constituencies, you will have a better chance of achieving a unified, effective response.

5. Assist victims. Providing support and aid to hate violence victims is central to any response strategy. Don’t get so busy organizing press conferences and issuing proclamations that you forget to make a housecall and express your personal support.

6. Work with constituencies targeted for recruitment. People who join hate groups usually do so out of frustration, fear, and anger; they might even be your neighbors next door. By offering meaningful social, economic, spiritual, and political alternatives you can discourage participation in hate groups by the very people most vulnerable to recruitment.
7. Target your own community as well as the hate group. Organizations like the Ku Klux Klan don’t create social conflict out of thin air; they have to feed off existing community tensions in order to exist. The enemy of community harmony is not always the hate group itself, but the existing bigotry and division the group can exploit. For these and other reasons it is also essential to conduct anti-bigotry education programs on an ongoing basis, after the hate group has left your community.

8. Encourage peer-based responses among youth. Young people respond best to leadership that comes from within their peer group. While adults can provide valuable resources and insight, it is essential that youth groups develop and cultivate their own leaders and implement programs of their own design to combat bigotry.

9. Remember that hate groups are not a fringe phenomenon and their followers don’t always wear white sheets. Although the number of active white supremacists and neo-Nazis probably totals no more than 25,000 in the United States, as many as 500,000 Americans read their literature. This movement is complex and made up of numerous sometimes competing and sometimes cooperating organizations. Hate groups impact the mainstream of society in a variety of ways, including: running candidates for public office; publishing sophisticated propaganda; buying radio time and media outlets; distributing cable television programs; manipulating the media; and building alliances with more respectable conservative groups, including some fundamentalist and evangelical Christian organizations.

10. Broaden your agenda. The problem is more than criminal. Hate activity is a political and social problem requiring a range of responses beyond those initiated by police. Citizen advocacy groups, religious agencies, and others should develop a public policy agenda that addresses a wide range of issues, including appropriate legislation, mandatory school curricula, expanded victim services, etc.

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Encountering and Countering Political Repression
by Chip Berlet

“If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation...want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.... Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

—Frederick Douglass, 1857

When you’re trying to wash the tear gas out of your eyes with a bottle of spring water, it’s the wrong time to learn about political repression. So reading this section now has a practical value.

Surveillance, infiltration, harassment, media demonization, disruption, police misconduct, excessive use of force, and other repressive techniques have been used to stifle dissent in the United States since it was founded. Repression appears whenever social and political movements threaten the status quo and challenge the unequal distribution of power and wealth. Every progressive movement has faced political repression, and every progressive movement has swept it aside and will continue to do so. The sooner activists learn the basics...the faster political repression can be successfully countered.

Brian Glick has outlined the four main repressive techniques used during the FBI’s illegal Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO): Infiltration, Psychological Warfare from the Outside, Harassment Through the Legal System, and Extralegal Force and Violence. [see box]. After activists exposed COINTELPRO and it was terminated, many of the surveillance and disruption activities previously employed by the FBI were shifted into a network of right-wing “countersubversive” institutions and groups in the private sector. Ross Gelbspan showed how clandestine right-wing groups coordinated attacks on the movement against U.S. intervention in Central America while law enforcement and intelligence agencies looked the other way.

At the same time the FBI and other public law enforcement agencies sought to regain authority for spying on dissent by reframing it as leading to criminal activity or as a cover for terrorist violence. In Philadelphia the public and private countersubversion networks worked together. The search warrant used to justify a police raid on the headquarters for the protestors planning demonstrations against the Republican Party convention in the summer of 2000 included false allegations from the Maldon Institute, part of a right-wing intelligence network dating back to the 1960s. [for more on Maldon, see: http://www.publiceye.org/liberty/Maldon.htm]
Demonstrations

Most activists will face political repression in the streets in the form of police using excessive force such as kicking and beating demonstrators, indiscriminate and dangerous use of tear gas, mass arrests, and roughing up those arrested. Street Law 101 starts with the idea that it is pointless to argue Constitutional rights with someone about to hit you with a heavy wooden baton. The National Lawyers Guild has written several guides on the law and exercising your rights of political protest. Read these guides before taking to the streets.

[See: http://www.publiceye.org/liberty/Security_for_Activists.htm]

The Four Main Techniques of Political Repression

Used during the 1960s and 1970s

by Brian Glick, *The War at Home*

[excerpt used by permission of author]

1. **Infiltration:** Agents and informers did not merely spy on political activists. Their main purpose was to discredit and disrupt. Their very presence served to undermine trust and scare off potential supporters. The FBI and police exploited this fear to smear genuine activists as agents.

2. **Psychological Warfare From the Outside:** The FBI and police used myriad other “dirty tricks” to undermine progressive movements. They planted false media stories and published bogus leaflets and other publications in the name of targeted groups. They forged correspondence, sent anonymous letters, and made anonymous telephone calls. They spread misinformation about meetings and events, set up pseudo movement groups run by government agents, and manipulated or strong-armed parents, employers, landlords, school officials and others to cause trouble for activists.

3. **Harassment Through the Legal System:** The FBI and police abused the legal system to harass dissidents and make them appear to be criminals. Officers of the law gave perjured testimony and presented fabricated evidence as a pretext for false arrests and wrongful imprisonment. They discriminatorily enforced tax laws and other government regulations and used conspicuous surveillance, “investigative” interviews, and grand jury subpoenas in an effort to intimidate activists and silence their supporters.

4. **Extralegal Force and Violence:** The FBI and police threatened, instigated, and themselves conducted break-ins, vandalism, assaults, and beatings. The object was to frighten dissidents and disrupt their movements. In the case of radical Black and Puerto Rican activists (and later Native Americans), these attacks—including political assassinations—were so extensive, vicious, and calculated that they can accurately be termed a form of official “terrorism.”

A longer overview is at: http://www.publiceye.org/liberty/War_at_Home/Glick_Overview.html

Order the book *War at Home: Covert Action Against U.S. Activists and What We Can Do About It* from a local bookstore or contact South End Press at http://www.southendpress.org/

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Arrests

Legal repression can include indiscriminate arrests, bogus charges, high bails, long detention before arraignment, abuse in jail, and punitive sentencing. Consider these factors seriously in making your plans.

Choose your leaders wisely and democratically, and then defend and protect them. Train others to step forward if leaders are arrested, and arrange beforehand for legal support for all those who are detained.

Be aware that some people, especially those with family care taking responsibility or medical issues, need to avoid arrest. Find ways for them to participate in your demonstrations with a reduced level of risk. Hand out poems and song sheets to those who plan to engage in nonviolent civil disobedience, and sing in jail to keep spirits high. What are they going to do? Arrest you?

Divide and Conquer

Don’t let your critics or establishment figures divide your coalition by targeting people or groups with unpopular ideas. The following familiar refrain is old and tired: “If only your group didn’t include [fill in the blank: anarchists, communists, feminists, gays and lesbians, vegans, witches, atheists] you would be more effective. Baloney. It’s a trick. Allow one slice and the blade of division keeps cutting. Set your group’s principles of unity in a democratic fashion, and then welcome as participants all who abide by those rules.

Disruptive Behavior

It really doesn’t matter why someone becomes disruptive or acts like a provocateur, the point is that every group has a right to establish principles of unity that include acceptable limits on behavior. If your group is devoted to non-violence, then a person who continuously suggests trashing store windows probably is in the wrong group. Spend time struggling with them over the principles your group has established. If they are still unwilling to change their behavior, ask them to leave. Don’t accuse people who are disruptive or who act suspiciously of being government agents (a habit called agent-baiting). Scurrilous rumors weaken a group’s sense of trust and loyalty. Deal with behavior, not intent—because intent often is not easy to ascertain.

Paranoia

OK Sometimes THEY are out to get YOU. Obsessing over the details is pointless. Repression happens. Take reasonable precautions and move on. [See article in this section, “Common Sense Security.”] Don’t let bogus “experts” divert you from your goals with scary talk about wiretaps and infiltrators. This is a form of self-aggrandizing disruptive behavior. Clicks, buzzing, and electrical fluctuations on a phone line are symptoms of either bad phone service or a bug, and the most experienced and honest experts with thousands of dollars worth of equipment will tell you they can’t really tell the difference unless they physically find a bug. [For more information, see http://www.publiceye.org/liberty/Whatbugs.html]
Bottom Line

The goal of political repression is to stop you from being an effective activist. By educating yourself and working in a team with others as part of a larger movement, these schemes to protect power and privilege and preserve the status quo will be overcome.

Chip Berlet, senior analyst at Political Research Associates, spent 20 years as a political organizer from 1967-1987, working with civil rights, anti-Vietnam War, labor union, antifascist, and other groups. He specialized in demonstration and rally logistics, media, and security. He has written extensively on political repression, worked as a paralegal on lawsuits against government intelligence abuse, and was a cofounder of Police Misconduct and Civil Rights Law Report.
Common Sense Security
by Sheila O'Donnell

Around the world people are rising up in anger over the restructuring of the global economy to benefit faceless multinational corporations and greedy wealthy elites. Organizations challenging this process have been placed under surveillance by infiltrators, photographic recording equipment, and electronic listening devices. Demonstrators have been beaten, maced, and tear-gassed. A pattern is emerging in these incidents which is similar to past attacks on labor, civil rights, anti-war, Central America, and environmental activists. Just a few years ago, people organizing or speaking out against environmental degradation in this country and abroad faced an escalating pattern of harassment. There were arsons, robberies, burglaries, and attacks on environmental activists—especially on women—who are often on the front lines in isolated rural areas. Investigators learned of more than 100 cases during the 1990s.

As our movements have become stronger and more sophisticated, the techniques of the state, corporations, and right-wing groups have also become more sophisticated. We have seen government agents, corporate security and right-wing intelligence networks share information as well as an ideology. For instance, the FBI's COINTELPRO operations targeted dissidents in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. Caution and common sense security measures in the face of the concerted efforts to stop us are therefore both prudent and necessary.

Spend a few minutes to assess your work from a security point of view: understand your vulnerabilities; assess your allies and your adversaries as objectively as possible; do not underestimate the opposition. Try to assess your organizational and personal strengths and weaknesses. Do not take chances. Plan for the worst; work and hope for the best. Here are some specific suggestions for protecting yourself and your projects:

Office

■ Never leave the only copy of a document or list behind; take a minute to duplicate an important document and keep the duplicate in a safe place off-site.

■ Keep mailing and donor lists and personal phone books out of sight. Always maintain a duplicate at a different location; update it frequently.

■ Know your printer if you are about to publish and know your mailing house if you contract for distribution. The loss of camera-ready copy or a change in text could feel like a disaster.

■ Back up and store important computer disks off-site. Sensitive data and membership lists should be kept under lock and key. Do not leave sensitive files on the hard disk; use floppies, back them up, and store the disks in secure spots. Use an encryption program to protect your data.

■ Know the background of anyone you are trusting to work on any part of a project that is sensitive. Projects have been bungled because an untrustworthy person has purposefully intervened or inadvertently screwed up.
Don’t hire a stranger as a messenger. Your message might not arrive or could arrive after being duplicated for an unintended party.

Sweeps for electronic surveillance are only effective for the time they are being done, and are only effective as they are being done if you are sure of the person(s) doing the sweep. Sweeps tend to be expensive because one must sweep a large area to be effective. Many experts contend that the most sophisticated federal government and private agency taps cannot be detected.

Keep a camera handy at all times.

Trash

What you consider trash could be a real treasure to someone looking for information about you or your projects. Don’t throw information out in your trash. Garbology has become a tactic because it is so useful.

Keep a “Burn file” in a secure place and occasionally burn it or use a shredder. Make sure your shredder creates confetti because strips can easily be reconstructed with a little patience.

Telephone

Do not list your address with your phone number in the directories. Consider having yourself unlisted.

If you receive threatening calls on your answering machine, immediately remove and save the tape.

Never respond to a query over the telephone from an unknown person—lottery tickets, fabulous prizes, jury questionnaires, etc. notwithstanding. Ask for a telephone number and call the party back considerably later or the following day. Check the phone book to see if the phone number they gave you is legitimate. Check it out. Do the same if a reporter calls.

Never say anything you don’t want to hear repeated where there is any possibility of being recorded or overheard. Don’t say anything on the phone you don’t want to hear in open court.

Don’t talk in code on the telephone. If you are being tapped and the transcript is used against you in court, the coded conversation can be alleged to mean anything by government code “experts.”

Don’t gossip about sensitive people or projects on the telephone. All information that can make an outsider “in the know” about you and your projects is valuable and makes everyone vulnerable.

Keep a pad and pen next to the telephone. Jot down details of threatening or suspicious calls immediately. Note the time, date and keep a file.
Don’t waste time worrying about phone taps or imagining that strange clicks or hums or other noises indicate a phone tap. Many taps are virtually impossible to detect. Trust your instincts. If you think your phone is tapped, act accordingly.

Mail

- Get a mail box through the United States Post Office or a private concern. Be aware that the Post Office will give your street address to inquirers under certain circumstances.

- If you receive a threatening letter, handle it as little as possible. Put both the letter and the envelope in a plastic bag or file folder. Give the original to the police only if they agree to fingerprint it. If not, give them a copy because you may wish to have your own expert examine it.

Automobiles

- Keep your automobile clean so you can see if there is an addition or loss.

- Put no bumper stickers on your car which identify you as an organizer. Make your car look ordinary.

- Put your literature in the trunk or in a closed box.

- Keep your car locked at all times.

Police

- Report any incidents to the local police and ask for protection if you feel it is warranted.

- Report threats or harassment to your local police. Demand that they take a report and protect you if that is necessary. Talk to the press and report the police response as well as the incident(s).

- Report thefts of materials from your office or home to the police; these are criminal acts.

Under Surveillance?

- Brief your membership on known or suspected surveillance. Be scrupulous with documentation. Do not dismiss complaints as paranoia without careful investigation. The opposition can and frequently does have informants join organizations to learn about methods and strategy.

- Discuss incidents with colleagues, family, and membership. Call the press if you have information about surveillance or harassment. Discussion makes the secret dirty work of the intelligence agencies and private spies easier to spot.
If you wish to have a private conversation, leave your home or office and take a walk or go somewhere very public and notice who can hear you.

If you know a secret, keep it to yourself. As the World War II poster warned: loose lips sink ships.

Photograph the person(s) following you or have a friend do so. Use caution. If someone is overtly following you or surveilling you, she or he is trying to frighten you. Openly photographing them makes them uncomfortable. If you are covertly being followed, have a friend covertly photograph them.

If you are being followed, get the license plate number and state. Try to get a description of the driver and the car as well as passengers. Notice anything different about the car.

If you are followed or feel threatened, call a friend; don’t “tough it out” alone. “They” are trying to frighten you. It is frightening to have someone threatening your freedom.

Debrief yourself immediately after each incident. Write details down: time, date, occasion, incident, characteristics of the person(s), impressions, anything odd about the situation.

Keep a “Weirdo” file with detailed notes about unsettling situations and see if a pattern emerges.

Break-Ins

Check with knowledgeable people in your area about alarm systems, dogs, surveillance cameras, motion sensitive lights, dead bolt locks, and traditional security measures to protect against break-ins.

Visits From the FBI

Don’t talk to the FBI or any government investigator without your attorney present. Get the names and addresses of the agents and tell them you will have your attorney contact them to set up a meeting. If you have an attorney, give her or him the name and phone number. Under any circumstance, get the agents’ names and addresses. Information gleaned from a conversation can be used against you and your co-workers. The agents’ report of even an innocuous conversation could “put words in your mouth” that you never uttered or your words could be distorted or made up if you don’t have your attorney present.

Call the National Lawyers Guild, American Civil Liberties Union, or other sympathetic legal organizations if you need assistance locating a reliable attorney in your area.

The FBI rarely sets up interviews with counsel present. Often when the demand is made to have the interview with counsel, the FBI loses overt interest.
■ Don’t invite agents into your home. Speak with the agents outside. Once inside, they glean information about your perspective and lifestyle.

■ Don’t let agents threaten you or talk you into having a short, personal conversation without your lawyer. Don’t let them intimidate or trick you into talking. If the FBI wants to empanel a Grand Jury, a private talk with you will not change the strategy of the FBI. Don’t try to outwit the FBI; your arrogance could get you or others in serious trouble.

■ FBI agents sometimes try to trick you into giving information “to help a friend.” Don’t fall for it; meet with the agents in the presence of your attorney and then you can help your friend.

■ Lying to the FBI is a criminal act. The best way to avoid criminal charges is to say nothing.

■ Any information you give the FBI can and will be used against you.

■ Write for your government files under the Freedom of Information Act and keep writing to the agencies until they give you all the documents filed under your name.

■ Don’t let the agents intimidate you. What if they do know where you live or work and what you do? We have a constitutional right to lawful dissent. You are not required to speak with the FBI. They intend to frighten you; don’t let them.

■ Do not overlook the fact that government agencies sometimes share information within the government and with the private sector, particularly right-wing organizations. This has been documented.

Remember

If you feel you are being surveilled, your phones tapped, or that you are being followed, the best overall advice is to trust your instincts. If you feel something is wrong, trust the feeling. Your instincts are usually right. Most of us recall the times when we “felt something was wrong” or we “knew better but did it anyway.”

Talk to colleagues and make yourself as secure as you can. Experts claim that people who resist get away from attackers more often than those who do not. The same logic applies to keeping outsiders out of your business; it is a more subtle form of attack.

Trust your instincts and resist when possible. One of the biggest blocks to resistance is the failure to recognize that we are under attack. None of this advice is intended to frighten but to create an awareness of the problems. A knowledge of the strategies and tactics of your adversaries will strengthen your movement. Cover yourself; it’s a tough world out there.

Sheila O’Donnell, a licensed private investigator and partner at Ace Investigations in California, was a founder of the Public Eye network. This article may be copied in its entirety without permission. Any adaptation must be approved in writing by the author.

Suggested Readings


Some Useful Websites


MEDIA TIPS

This section is heavily culled from How to Tell and Sell Your Story: A Guide to Media for Community Groups and Other Nonprofits, written by Timothy Saasta and published by the Center for Community Change. To order the guide contact: Publications, Center for Community Change, 1000 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington DC 20007, 202/342-0567. They are $7 each with discounts for bulk orders.

How to Bring Attention to Your Group’s Work or Issue

Make communications part of your overall work plan.

The first step is not to write a press release or develop a press list, but to integrate media work into your overall work and strategies. Make media part of your long-term planning and budget; look for communication abilities and media experience when hiring.

Study the media.

The number one rule in doing media is to study the media! Note the name of the reporter or columnist who wrote an article on a related topic. Listen to a variety of radio stations and talk shows. Think about why a certain story was covered. What made it newsworthy? Could a similar story be written about your programs, leaders or community? Talk about reporters and media with your colleagues. Note what topics are being covered and think about how to relate the issues you are working on to those topics.

Plan a string of “hooks” or “pegs.”

Offer reporters various hooks to make your news story timely and new. Linking your story to a holiday or anniversary, to a hot topic in the news, or to a well-known person can all be ways of making your story timely. After creating that link, you can focus on the message you have consistently carried in the past.

Don’t invest all your resources in one press event.

No matter how well you plan a media event, it can be upstaged by another unexpected news story. Don’t put all your eggs in one basket. Think carefully before deciding to do a press conference; they demand a tremendous amount of time and anxiety. By doing a series of smaller events, sending out frequent press releases or writing a number of letters-to-the-editor you can better keep your story alive.
Know your options: alternatives to the press conference.

Although a press conference can be a useful way to get a compelling story to a wide variety of media, some believe that it has become an over-used tool. There are effective and less time-consuming ways of reaching the media. Often the best alternative is writing a good press release and calling media contacts. Or you can have a press briefing, a less formal meeting where you invite a few reporters, columnists and editorial writers to come learn about a specific aspect of your work. News availability, another option, means designating a day and place when an expert or members of your community are available to discuss a certain issue and be interviewed. Alternately you can invite the press to an event or demonstration—a mock funeral procession, a small protest march, or even a blood pressure screening will generate more interesting TV images than a press conference. Finally, organizing a letter-to-the-editor writing campaign or submitting op-eds can also significantly increase your media exposure.

Find ways to sell your story to a wide variety of journalists.

Think about new angles on your story that can attract different types of reporters. Can you think of some way to bring out the business angle of your issue or the legal angle? Other reporters you might try to target are labor reporters, Congressional reporters, or reporters covering minority issues, women’s issues, religion or even sports.

Find ways to sell your story to a wide variety of media.

There is usually a wide variety of media in every town. There may be only one daily newspaper, but that paper has many sections, reporters and editors. There may be only three TV stations with news departments, but those departments often put on many news and public affairs shows. Radio stations similarly offer various formats including news and talk shows. In addition to the daily regional and national newspapers, there are local weeklies and monthlies, racially or ethnically-focused papers, local business papers, women’s and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender papers, and college papers. Although some of these papers reach smaller audiences, they are closely read by the communities they do reach, and can offer you a means of connecting with communities that might not otherwise know about your work.

Have lots of stories to sell.

Think about why the average person should care about your issue and how you can make it concrete to her. Stories will make your issue real and will also help you strike a chord with a reporter. Having lots of stories will also allow you the flexibility of targeting your message to different audiences.

Think locally.

When you are trying to generate media attention outside your region, the competition can be fierce. One of the best ways to gain an edge is to find a way to localize your story. You can do this through information or data specific to certain regions or by providing contacts in other
areas. The idea is to provide reporters a means of covering a national story by showing how it directly impacts on their local communities.

**Timing, timing, timing.**

Timing can make or break a story. Although you usually can’t predict if some other breaking news will upstage your event, there are ways to increase your chances of getting coverage. Sometimes the media will be more likely to pick up your story if it relates to another story they are already covering. Another tactic is to release your story during slow times, such as the end of August (when members of Congress leave Washington), the stretch between Christmas and New Years, or the day after Thanksgiving. You can also take advantage of the “news holes” on Monday or Sunday (get your release to reporters the week before with a later release date, or time your release to be picked up by the weekend wires).

**Piggyback off an event or an issue.**

You can also use someone else’s event to generate coverage for your work or issue. For example you could plan a media event or protest to coincide with a presidential debate or a national convention.

**Know deadlines.**

All news media operate on deadlines. Your news won’t get out if you miss these deadlines. For dailies, send press releases in the mornings or early afternoon. Call weeklies and monthlies to find out their deadlines.

**Call, call, call.**

If you want to get into a major newspaper or TV news shows, simply sending out press releases is an environmental waste. Press releases provide a frame for your issue and highlight certain points you want to see reported—they don’t sell your story. You do that in person or over the phone. A follow up call to see if they received your release and to answer any questions will greatly increase the chances your news item will be considered.

**Repeat, repeat, repeat.**

Keep repeating the key point you want to see in a story. Often a point that is obvious to you will not become clear to someone else unless it is repeated many times and in many ways.

**Follow up.**

Celebrate the coverage you got and then go right back to calling those who didn’t cover your story. If a reporter or editor seemed to express genuine interest in the topic but didn’t write a story or editorial, keep calling. Also, call and praise reporters who did cover your story (be positive, even if you need to correct any “minor” errors). Write letters-to-the-editor about the
story to add or emphasize certain points. Then call a local columnist and your contact on the editorial board to urge them to write editorials or columns based on the news story.

**Keep the reporter's needs in mind.**

As with any decent relationship it’s got to be a two-way street, which is why it’s so important to understand journalists and their needs. When you call, always ask first if the reporter is “on deadline,” and if so, ask when to call back. If a reporter does not want to speak with you, make your points quickly and politely and offer to send him material instead. When reporters do call, talk to them as soon as you can, and if you offer to fax them material make sure it gets to them by the time they need it.

**Stay in touch!**

Call even when you don’t have a specific story, just to keep in touch. Personal contacts are crucial in media work. Call reporters to give them a little feedback about an article they wrote, to suggest a story idea or to ask for advice. Ask what they are working on to see if you can offer them names of useful contacts. Invite them to a public meeting or send them background materials. Many reporters, especially for small newspapers, may see a lot of press releases but few reports or articles that provide some depth. Reporters new to a topic area may especially appreciate background material.

**Become a credible source.**

A reporter needs to think of you and your organization as reliable and credible. Never fake an answer or stretch the truth. Offer to call back or have someone else call them. Reporters understand that most sources have a perspective about a topic, but if they learn you are giving them misleading or grossly incomplete information, your role as a source will be history.

**Plain talk for plain people.**

Persuadable people come from all walks of life. Many don’t understand partisan or culturally-based rhetoric. Plain talk is always best.

**“No Comment” is the worst comment.**

It implies you’re hiding something. Instead, use those times when you can’t comment any further as opportunities to restate your most important point.
But How Will I Find the Time?

Form a committee.

Given the importance of personal contacts, most media contacts should be made by one or two people within an organization. But a committee focused on media and communications can still be invaluable. The committee could be made up of staff, board and volunteers. Ideally it will include people with personal contacts with journalists, or previous media work experience.

Recruit volunteers.

Writers, photographers and artists can all bring invaluable skills to your organization as can mid-level public relations and advertising people from big charities and local companies. Have them join your committee or work on specific projects.

Involve your members or volunteers in specific media-related tasks.

Committee members and volunteers with relevant experience can assist in many ways, such as writing or designing brochures or newsletters, drafting press releases, developing a simple public service announcement campaign, photographing your annual meeting, or helping you build a media contact list. Other tasks that members can do include monitoring the local talk radio station, clipping relevant articles, updating contact names and numbers, and getting out event announcements.

When you need help, ask for it.

Even if someone is unable or unwilling to join your committee, he may be willing to help by sharing his list of press contacts, or by advising you on your press release, your strategy for releasing a study or which stories to present to journalists. Who should you ask? Try the media, communications or advertising people in big local companies or charities. See if there is a local chapter of the Public Relations Society of America that can identify PR people in your area. If you have good contacts with reporters, ask them who the best PR people in town are.

Involve local universities or colleges.

Many schools have journalism, communications, graphic design, advertising or writing departments or classes. Contact the teachers and see if you can get interns or a group of students who will work with your organization on a particular project. Keep in mind students’ schedules when planning appropriate projects and contacting people.

Use the resources you do have efficiently.

Try not to get bogged down in big projects. Often working on less time-consuming tasks can produce nearly as much. Rather than writing one big column, write several short letters-to-the-
editor. Rather than spending time producing an event specifically for the media, call a few journalists every time you have an organizational event you think might be newsworthy—a march, an exciting fundraiser, an impressive annual meeting, a groundbreaking ceremony. Come up with a list of possible articles about your organization and send it to journalists rather than invest a lot of time trying to sell the one story you think is your best.

**Work together with other organizations.**

Consider working with other groups on doing a joint media event to bring attention to your community. Think about sharing some of the day-to-day tasks, such as developing and maintaining a media contact list. Look into getting a local funding source to support a media person to work with several community organizations in your region.

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**How to Stage a Press Conference**

Putting together a successful press conference is a lot of work. So before you decide to go ahead, think hard about whether what you will be announcing is newsworthy enough—and your organization well known enough—to bring out the media. There are many good alternatives to a press conference. But if you are in small or medium-size media markets and follow a few simple rules, a press conference can be an effective way to generate attention.

**Find a good location.**

A press conference that is held in a place that is visually interesting and symbolic is ideal. The obvious problem is that you have to get everything there, and have a rain location if it is outdoors.

If you go the more traditional route of reserving a meeting room, the number one consideration is convenience for reporters. They are always pressed for time, so a press conference that is near their offices or studios and in a place they know will be a plus. Always check out the room before you decide to use it. The main consideration is size. It should be large enough to accommodate a podium, speakers’ table, about four rows of chairs, TV cameras and a table for press materials, but not so large as to make your turn out look puny. Pack the room by inviting colleagues and members to attend, asking them to stand to the back if need be.

**Pick a good time.**

Most newspapers and TV news departments have late afternoon deadlines, so the best time is usually in the morning between 10 a.m. and noon. When picking the day, avoid Monday and Friday. Also, try to find out what else is scheduled by calling a friendly reporter, or by checking the “daybook” listing media events for each day (it is usually put out by the local Associated Press office).
Get the word out.

This is the most important factor in staging a successful press conference. Send all your press contacts an advisory announcing the conference about a week in advance. Start calling about two days before the event to confirm that they received the release. Make a note of who seemed interested in the event so that you can follow up appropriately.

Also try to get your conference in the “daybook.” Fax them a release a few days in advance and follow up with a phone call. In competitive media markets, events that will appeal to a wide audience or with a speaker who is widely known are more likely to be included.

Pick good spokespeople, and work on what they will say.

Remember diversity. Feature speakers that represent the diversity of your group, community and allies. Pick articulate spokespeople who are well qualified to speak on your issue. Also, work on each person’s statement to ensure that your messages are communicated and that your speakers don’t speak too long. The opening speaker should present news and key messages and all speakers should give lots of concise, quotable “soundbites,” repeating the key messages over and over. Try to keep opening statements to 10-15 minutes total, with as few spokespeople as possible. People who need to be recognized can sit at the front table and be introduced, and have their written media statements available on the press table. Ask reporters to hold questions for the end.

Have interesting visuals.

There are many things you can do to add visual interest to attract the TV cameras and communicate your message with images. For example you can have charts or graphs, making sure that they are extremely simple and bold so people can look at them quickly and get the point. Large photographs or drawings of your community can also be effective. Signs and drawings that are hung on the walls or held by your supporters can be good. Having a large group of your members or supporters stand behind the speaker can visually communicate your strength, diversity and commitment. If they all wear large colorful buttons or shirts, so much the better. Simply having one person available to tell his or her story can also be effective. Make sure you have signs with your organization’s name or logo in front of or directly behind the podium so the TV cameras catch it.

Attend to the details.

Get to the room well ahead of time. Someone should greet everyone who attends to find out if they are from the media and have them sign in. Have background material available on a table or in a press kit, including a press release, information about your speakers, and a brochure about your organization (see below for more details on the press kit). Someone should also nurture your speakers, making sure they know the time and place and what is expected of them.
Follow up.

Compare the sign-up sheet with your call sheet and call those who expressed interest over the phone but did not attend. Ask if they would like a press release and other materials. If someone came but did not write an article, call to find out why.

What’s In A Press Kit?

Make press kits available at press conferences and other events. Provide them to journalists who have expressed interest in your issue. The following are materials you should consider including in a press kit:

- The press release;
- Fact sheets including impact (legal, political, etc.) of your issue;
- Fact sheet on your organization, its purpose and programs;
- Background sheet on your opposition with documentation;
- Contact names, numbers and bios of your spokespeople;
- Press clips from previous newspaper stories and editorials; and
- Statements of support from other organizations and/or leaders.

How To Write A Good Press Release

*The most basic tool of media work is the press release.* It is probably also the most over relied-upon tool. A press release serves many functions. It announces the development you would like covered and why you think it is newsworthy. It provides your “frame” or perspective about the development. It offers a chance to give your leaders visibility by quoting them. It gives you a chance to remind people what your group does as well as communicate how active you are in the community.

But despite all the functions a press release can serve, by itself, it isn’t going to get you a lot of media attention. A release needs to be seen for what it is: one part of your media work. Unfortunately, for many groups, writing and sending a press release adds up to most of their media work, which is no doubt one reason many groups feel frustrated at their inability to get much coverage. All but the most humdrum releases should be accompanied by a series of calls to key media contacts. This said, here are some guidelines for writing and using press releases:
**Make them read like news articles.**

The best way to write good releases is to study news articles in your local paper. The press release must first tackle the five W’s (who, what, why, where and when) then provide background on the issue and succinct quotes. It should be written using simple words in short sentences. The quotes should be strong statements that sound like they were said, not written.

**Emphasize what makes your development newsworthy.**

Think about what it is that would make people outside your community read the article and emphasize those one or two basic points.

**Be as provocative as you can.**

To make your press release stand out, find ways to be provocative. For example, you may want to emphasize that your coalition includes strange bedfellows or that your study has unearthed surprising findings. At the very least, state your points strongly using direct sentences and active words, but avoid sensationalism or glibness. Though you want to write strongly, you don’t want to write rhetorically or dramatically, with too many adjectives or adverbs.

**Concentrate on making the headline and “lead” as clear and lively as possible.**

You’ve got to hook the reader quickly. The headline is crucial. It needs to be both provocative and to the point. The same goes for the “lead.” Your first paragraph should be short and simple, quickly communicating the basics and making the newsworthiness of your story jump out. Spend most of your time on these elements of a release and have someone who knows little about your work react to it.

**Make your release look professional.**

Your credibility is another key factor in a reporter or editor’s decision to read or toss your release. The release should look right—it should be easy to read and follow a clear format. The location and date should be in the lead of the press release and, following standard press release format, a “-30-” centered, on the last line should indicate the end of the text. It should be made up of short paragraphs with simple sentences. There should be ample margins on all sides (at least an inch) so the copy doesn’t look overwhelming. Avoid “justifying” releases which creates a blocky look, with irregular spaces between words.

A release should be relatively short, two or three pages at most. But don’t try to cram your information into one page by lengthening your lines or paragraphs or decreasing the size of your type. The key is readability, not length. A couple of subheads can also help by pulling a reader to other sections, or at least communicating key messages. Finally, let there be no typos! Double and triple-check the most critical information: the day and date of your conference or event, the address, the spelling of names.
Consider including other materials with your release.

Most releases to most reporters should be sent out by themselves. But another approach for certain stories and/or a few key reporters may be to send your release with a very short cover note. The point is to personalize the release so that a reporter or editor takes note of it. It can be more effective to send out 10 releases with personal notes and follow-up calls than 100 releases by themselves.

Be selective in sending out full-fledged press kits.

Press kits should only be used with reporters who have expressed interest in your story or at press conferences. Otherwise, they may raise questions about how your organization is spending money.

Find other uses for your releases.

Even if a release generates little coverage, it can still be a very useful document for you. Consider sending the release (by email) to funders, board, members and other contacts to keep them informed and involved and posting them on your website.

What about “press advisories?”

A “press advisory” or “press alert” is often used instead of a release to announce an upcoming press conference or event. It should be kept to one page, with bulleted key information that is easy to read, in a straightforward who, what, when, where format.

How To Write An Effective “Op-Ed”

Although op-eds (commentary pieces, short for “opinion-editorial”) are not widely read by the general public, they are read closely by community leaders and public policy makers, and so can be crucial in shaping debates. An op-ed can provide you with an opportunity to educate these influential players. The following guidelines will increase your chances of landing an op-ed:

Make it timely.

Editors search for op-eds that offer perspectives about what is currently in the news. Try to be proactive and anticipate what will take place over the next 2-4 weeks (such as a hearing, a vote, the release of a study or an anniversary) so that you can link your issue to that event. You can also write in response to another column or editorial, though you should contact the op-ed page editor to make sure she would consider it first.
Make it local.

This is the biggest edge a local organization has. Even if the issue you are working on is a national one, use examples or statistics from your community to make it local. If you represent a national organization, work with local organizations that can co-author and localize a standard op-ed piece.

Make it lively!

Most uninvited op-eds don’t get printed because they are deadly dull. You’re not writing a report or proposal. You’re writing an opinion column. State your points and opinions directly, strongly and, if possible, provocatively. Limit yourself to one or two points and if possible start with a story.

Make it come from an interesting “voice.”

For the most competitive op-ed pages, it is almost imperative to have your op-ed “signed” by a well-known person or at least someone who heads a well-known organization. An unusual “voice” (such as the cop on the beat, or the school teacher in the classroom) or someone with an unexpected point of view can also help to make your op-ed stand out.

Make it readable.

An op-ed is a way to reach policymakers and opinion leaders, but you want to do it in a way that they will understand and that they think their average constituent will understand. Make your ideas as concrete as possible. Make your sentences direct and active and cross out all rhetoric.

Make it quick!

Usually if your op-ed is accepted, you’ll have a chance to refine it. Don’t spend too much time trying to write the perfect piece. Instead of laboring over one op-ed, spend your time turning whatever you have—speeches, position papers, reports, newsletter articles—into many op-eds. Keep your op-ed to about 700 words, and send it in with a suggestion for a lively headline, a paragraph on the author and a cover note explaining its timeliness and relevance to the newspaper’s readers.

Writing Effective Letters-to-the-Editor

One of the simplest, least costly and most effective ways to communicate your organization’s message is by organizing a letters-to-the-editor campaign. While the big national newspapers and magazines receive far more letters than they can print, you have an excellent chance of getting your letter into a smaller city or community newspapers.
Keep it timely and responsive.
Submit your letter as soon after an article appears as possible. With email, this can be the day the article appears. Certainly don’t wait more than a week to submit your letter. Also, ask members to write in and tell their stories.

Keep it short and lively.
If you don’t make it short, someone else will. Your letter might sound very different after some editing. Save yourself the frustration by simply choosing one point and hammering it home. Start your letter with a short and compelling sentence and stay directed.

Don’t be a bore!
Even if you are writing to praise an article, focus on what wasn’t covered. If you disagree with the article, don’t make it seem like you have an ax to grind. Write from a personal perspective or present a fresh idea.

How To Influence Editorials
Because they are unsigned, editorials almost seem to be the voice of God—otherwise known in the media world as the editor or publisher. But most large newspapers have several people who make up the “editorial board” and actually write the editorials. These anonymous journalists are good people to get to know.

Make contact and request a meeting.
The formal way to meet these people is to request a meeting with the editorial board. The meeting needs to be focused on an issue that is already in the news and thus the possible topic of an editorial. You need to convince the board that you represent a legitimate position on this issue, and that you will bring expertise, experience and a perspective that they don’t already understand. Your first step is to contact the editor of the editorial page, preferably by sending a one-page letter explaining the issue and what you bring to it. Follow up with a call in a few days.

A less formal approach is to try to get to know the person on the editorial board who writes editorials related to your issues. To identify this person, ask colleagues, friendly reporters or media relations professionals. Also, sometimes, editorial board members write op-eds, identifying them as a member of the board.

Once you have made contact with this person and offered to provide her with information and contacts, see if she will set up a meeting with the editorial board or simply meet with you. Or you may decide to hold off the meeting until there is an urgent related issue in the news. You might also ask that a reporter sit in on the meeting, so that if you fail to gain editorial support, you might gain a regular news story on your issue.
Be prepared for the meeting.

Before the meeting, make sure you have a thorough knowledge of the newspaper’s stand on the issue and what related stories and op-eds it has printed. Don’t forget to read the newspaper the day of your meeting—you don’t want to be caught by surprise if the paper has just mentioned your issue or your group. Be prepared to state your case completely but succinctly. Consider ahead of time what questions you might be asked or what criticism you might face. Bring supporting evidence and be prepared to refer the board to other experts in your area for further information. If the editorial board is unsympathetic, offer to write an op-ed piece or a letter-to-the-editor.

Keep in touch.

Whether or not you have a meeting, keep in touch with editorial board members. Send them press releases, interesting articles or studies, as well as editorial ideas. Even if you mostly disagree with the editorials related to your topic, keeping in touch can be useful. If you are persistent in trying to provide the editorial board with your information, they may shift their perspective or provide you an opportunity (in the form of an op-ed) to have your say.

What about editorial memos?

“Editorial memos” or “news memos” are usually used for complex, long-term issues and are usually sent to reporters who cover a particular issue, editorial board members and columnists. Such a format gives you space (2-5 pages) to lay out the issue, discuss its background and importance, summarize relevant facts and hammer home your messages. They usually don’t generate immediate coverage, but can help establish your group as a source when news breaks on your issue. Normally you will follow them up with a call, often to ask for a meeting with the editorial board or a columnist.

The key is making them clear and lively. Break up the memo with subheadings and a series of bold-face points, both of which make it easier for the reader to glance through the memo and catch the key points. Don’t use technical terms or acronyms and ask a nonexpert to read it and react.
Help is on the Way!

Organizations that Provide Media Assistance

There are many organizations that provide a wide variety of help on media and communications, including in-depth workshops, placement of op-eds and feature articles, issue and message analysis, advocacy and development, media campaign management and more.

Only a few listed below have a local or regional focus, but in many cities there are individuals or small organizations that have experience working on media with smaller nonprofits. Ask around to find out who they are. Then talk with as many of their clients as possible.

Find out if they have worked with organizations or issues similar to yours and if they know the journalists in your community who would cover your work. Most importantly, you will want to find out what their approach to the media is. Do they want to tell you the messages you should use, or work with you in developing the messages? Do they write the releases and other materials and make all the calls, or do they work with you so that you’re left with contacts and skills long after they are gone? There is a huge difference between traditional “public relations” and what is being called “media advocacy,” which is more grassroots-based and long-term focused. Be sure you know what you want and what a consultant can offer.

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Alliance for Community Media (formerly, National Federation of Local Cable Programmers)

The Alliance was founded to help meet the communication needs of local communities and now represents the interests of over 1,000 public, educational and governmental (“PEG”) access organizations (generally known as “public access”) and public access internet centers throughout the country, in addition to 1.5 million individuals who utilize PEG access television centers and Internet providers. It publishes materials for local cable programmers and sponsors workshops and conferences on grassroots and community programming. It offers groups assistance in setting up new programs and training for those already involved in cable.

Alternative Radio
PO Box 551, Boulder, CO 80306, 800/444-1977, www.alternativeradio.org

Supplies interviews and other public affairs and documentary programs to over 120 noncommercial radio stations across the United States and Canada. Resources include a catalog of tapes, including many relevant to challenging the Right.

American Forum
840 National Press Building, Washington, DC 20045, 202/638-1431

Through its network of state citizen editorial boards, the American Forum assists the progressive community in developing op-ed pieces and related materials for distribution to state and local print and broadcast media, mostly in the South.

It works with progressive, nonprofit groups on almost every social issue, particularly local and state groups that don’t have a media expert on staff or the resources to saturate the media as some national organizations can. Almost all of its services are free.
Association of Alternative Newsweeklies
This is the trade association for 119 alternative nondaily publications with a combined circulation of more than 5.9 million and 14 million readers each week. Members are looking for stories about “what is really going on in the area in which [their readers] live.” Upon request, AAN will fax a list of member papers, with addresses, phone and fax numbers, circulation and names of publishers and editors (some of this information is also available on their website). AAN also publishes a monthly newsletter, which covers the alternative newspaper business.

The Benton Foundation
The Benton Foundation wants to help progressive nonprofits learn to use such communication tools as opinion research, video production and radio “to make their case, engage their constituencies, build coalitions and share...information.” It created and edited Strategic Communications for Nonprofits, which the Public Media Center called “the best set of public relations training handbooks available for community organizers.”

Berkeley Media Studies Group
2140 Shattuck Ave., #804, Berkeley, CA 94704, 510/204-9700
This group consults with and trains community groups and public interest organizations “who want to claim the power of mass media for social change.” It believes that “media advocacy works best when linked to community advocacy. Community support provides the clout and legitimacy that propel media advocacy initiatives.”

It focuses on public health and social justice issues, working with groups who want to make a change and have a specific policy goal. It teaches them to use the news media to attract public attention and pressure policymakers to act. Costs are worked out individually with each organization.

Boston College Media Research &
Action Project
Department of Sociology, McGuinn Hall, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167, 617/552-8708, www.bc.edu/depts/cas/soemrap/default.html
With a background in organizing, MRAP strongly emphasizes the need for media skills to be integrated into an organization. MRAP offers occasional workshops but primarily enters long-term ‘partnering’ relations with groups ready to build media systems. One such project is the Community Media Resource Network whose goal is to improve news coverage of communities historically under-represented or misrepresented in mass media.

In addition, MRAP does academic media research. It has worked with Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) on studies of Nightline, MacNeil-Lehrer and National Public Radio. It also holds conferences on media activism. Its publications include Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing by Charlotte Ryan and two training curriculums, Train the Trainers and Media Strategies for Labor.

Cause Communications
1836 Blake Street, #100A, Denver, CO 80202, 303/292-1594, www.causecommunication.com
This consulting firm was begun by Jason Salzman, co-founder of the Rocky Mountain Media Watch and author of Making the News: A Guide for Nonprofits and Activists. The firm helps nonprofits communicate effectively by running workshops and offering advice on media relations, marketing and advertising. Its work is focused in Colorado and nearby states.

Center for Media and Democracy
520 University Ave., #310, WI 53703, 608/260-9713, www.prwatch.org
Nonprofit, public interest organization dedicated to investigative reporting on the public relations industry. Serves journalists, researchers and others seeking to recognize and combat manipulative and misleading PR practices. Publishes an excellent newsletter, PRWatch.

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
Communications Team
University Research Corporation, 7200 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 500, Bethesda, MD 20814, 301/941-8505, www.urc-chs.com
This is a federally-funded training course on media advocacy around substance abuse issues. Designed for groups that want to use the media to change public policy, it trains them how to strategically use the media to draw attention to their issue. The training and materials were developed around substance abuse issues and examples, but CSAP sees links between substance abuse and deteriorating housing and pover-
ty. As a result, the training is also available to community groups for whom drugs and alcohol is only one of several issues.

**Center on Blacks in the Media**

770/322-6653, www.afrikan.net/hype

CBM is an independent research and information center offering tools and techniques to understand media issues, to correct imbalances in the media, and to empower the Black community in relation to the media. CBM’s HYPE website, in the form of a magazine, monitors the Black image in the media and includes sections with features, news, commentary, images and how-to’s.

**CommonDreams.org**

PO Box 443, Portland, Maine, 04112-0443, 207/799-2185, www.commondreams.org

A wonderful online resource, CommonDreams.org includes the NewsCenter, which is a news service providing breaking news and views for the progressive community; and the Progressive NewsWire, which provides the press releases of progressive organizations around the country, in real time and without editing.

**Communications Consortium Media Center**


The Consortium provides media assistance for progressive public interest organizations working in coalitions on issues “emerging on the national policy agenda.” It helps groups use communications to “build bridges from inside to outside the Beltway.” It emphasizes strategic communications planning: how to use the media and telecommunications technology to promote policy and social change.

The Consortium helps groups focus their message, identify their target audience, develop speaking points and write, edit and place op-eds, as well as produce materials such as press kits and public service advertising. It also gives groups in its coalitions access to a computerized database of reporters, as well as training in new telecommunications services. The Consortium works on a range of issues from social policy to biodiversity to women’s health.

**Community Media Workshop**

c/o Columbia College, 600 S. Michigan, Chicago, IL 60605-1996, 312/663-3225, www.mcs.net/~commnews

The Workshop helps Chicago neighborhood associations working on urban problems get more and better media coverage. Staff provide hands-on training and coaching. Workshop sessions include strategic planning, story-telling, how to phone reporters and write press releases, how to “pitch” reporters, how to plan a media event and how to tell your story on camera with a talk show host.

**Democracy Now**

Email: mail@democracynow.org, www.democracynow.org

Syndicated radio program “chronicling a domestic pro-democracy movement that is not hitting the corporate-media radar screen.” Developed by Pacifica Radio. See website for local programming information.

**FAIR—Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting**


FAIR is “the leading progressive news watchdog organization,” according to Jason Salzman, author of Making the News. For anyone interested in the media as an issue, particularly its increasingly concentrated ownership, FAIR’s magazine, *Extra!*, is a must read. Over the years it has demonstrated that the real bias of most media is far from liberal, documenting the conservative bias of most media coverage of welfare, crime, health care and youth. A subscription is $19 a year ($10 more for institutions).

FAIR’s website is also useful. It has a helpful guide on media activism, a list of local media activism groups, an online forum for activists, and a list of articles related to media bias towards minorities, women, labor and other groups.

**Independent Media Institute**

77 Federal Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94107, 415/284-1420, www.independentmedia.org

An electronic news service and information clearinghouse for editors, journalists, and activists on the myriad aspects of the Culture War, particularly attacks on freedom of expression. Hosts *AlterNet* (at www.alternet.org) which is an online magazine, national news and feature service and information clearinghouse for the alternative press.

**Institute for Health Advocacy**

(of the Institute for Public Strategies)

148 E. 30th Street, Suite B, National City, CA 91950,
This Institute provides training and technical assistance on policy-based, community-driven media advocacy to organizations across the United States.

**Institute for Public Accuracy**

65 Ninth Street, Suite 3, San Francisco, CA 94103, 415/552-5378, www.accuracy.org

IPA attempts to challenge the assertions of right-wing think tanks like the Heritage Foundation which have enormous impact on news coverage and political discourse in the United States. A nationwide consortium, IPA has a roster of 200 researchers and analysts, serves as a resource for media professionals, and helps bring other voices to the mass-media table by building communication with alternative media outlets and grassroots activists.

**McKinney & McDowell Associates**


McKinney & McDowell is a for-profit African-American and woman-owned public relations firm formed to gain media attention for developing nations and domestic social change. Its clients are “nations, organizations and causes that promote peace, social and economic justice, preservation of the environment and other democratic values.”

Services include general media relations, including communication plans, press kits, op-eds and targeted outreach to specialized media; creative advertising campaigns, including radio spots and newspaper ad copy; video production; media training workshops to help clients integrate media into their organizational strategies; and image enhancement (brochure production, presentation training).

**Media Rights.org**

104 W. 14th Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10011, 646/230-6288, www.mediarights.org

Works to make social issue documentaries and advocacy videos easy to find via a community site for media makers, activists, educators and librarians. Links activists with journalists and filmmakers through a variety of web-based services.

**Media Alliance**


Trains hundreds of community organizations and activists every year in media and computer skills and media advocacy techniques. Publishes MediaFile, the Bay Area’s media review, and People Behind the News, a comprehensive guide to media outlets and journalists throughout the Bay Area. Has also conducted and published analyses of media coverage of welfare legislation, affirmative action, and bilingual education.

**Media Education Foundation**

26 Center Street, Northampton, MA 01060, 800/897-0089, www.mediaed.org

A nonprofit educational organization devoted to media research and the production of videos, study guides and other resources to aid educators and others in fostering analytical media literacy. MEF believes that a media literate citizenry is essential to a vibrant democracy in a diverse and complex society.

**National Congress for Community Economic Development**


NCCED assists Community Development Corporations with the media by publishing and distributing Visions, Tips and Tools for Effective CDC Communications. A typical issue includes advice on how to do press kits, stories on CDCs that illustrate some aspect of communications, such as developing a strategic plan, and suggestions for ways to frame community development.

**National Radio Project**

1714 Franklin St. Suite 311, Oakland, California 94612, 510/251-1332, www.radioproject.org

A nonprofit media organization that seeks to heighten public consciousness, broaden debate on critical social issues and encourages civic participation by giving voice to diverse perspectives and opinions not typically heard in the mass media. NRP produces and distributes public affairs and news programs and trains independent journalists and local organizers in radio skills to improve popular access to the media.

**The Progressive Media Project**

409 East Main St., Madison, WI 53703, 608/257-4626, www.progressive.org/mediaprod.htm

The Project solicits, edits, and distributes commentary (or “op-ed”) pieces to daily newspapers in the United States on a full range of domestic issues, as well as on issues of foreign policy, peace, and international cooperation. “Voices of Diversity” project sends out
commentaries by people of color and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.

Public Interest GRFX
1334 Walnut Street, 6th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, 215/985-1113
Nonprofit, graphic design for nonprofit, public interest advocacy organizations. Sliding scale of fees.

Public Interest Video Network
641 5th Street NE, Washington, DC 20002, 202/544-6040, www.publicinterestvideo.com
PIVN produces, distributes and promotes public interest videos, including organizational, membership, educational and fundraising videos; video news releases; and public service announcements. Specific services include researching, writing, directing, editing and shooting videos; consulting and campaign planning; occasional workshops on how to produce a video; help using video to document major events, cover conferences, record training sessions and highlight work; and help recruiting “high profile” talent.
PIVN has expertise in distributing public interest organizations’ public service announcements and video news releases. Its charges are based on the extent of distribution.

Public Media Center
466 Green Street, San Francisco, CA 94133, 415/434-1403, www.publicmediacenter.org
PMC’s director Herb Gunther has been called “the most influential progressive advertising strategist in the nation” by the San Francisco Examiner. For over 20 years, PMC has specialized in advocacy advertising on political and social issues—“social justice, fairness, equity for people of color, for women, for all groups historically disenfranchised in America.”
PMC tries to give progressive groups an opportunity to be heard and understood. Campaigns have included “Governor Wilson’s Welfare Fraud” for the Campaign for a Fair Share, and “Let Them Eat Lace” for Asian Immigrant Women Advocates, which attacked a dress manufacturer that failed to pay its workers. Other clients include Planned Parenthood, Handgun Control, Greenpeace and the United Farmworkers.
PMC has a sliding scale of fees, but clients fund the actual placement of the ads. There is a long waiting list for PMC’s services. Its publications include Handbook on Free Access to the Media for Public Service Advertising.

Public Relations Society of America
33 Irving Place, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10003-2376, 212/995-2230, www.prsa.org
An association of public relations agencies. It has a free directory of members, which may be useful in identifying local public relations firms. Unfortunately, it isn’t organized geographically. A few firms will do pro-bono work, though none advertise this fact. Staff of some public relations agencies may be a source of volunteers for communications committees.

Radio For Peace International
PO Box 1094, Eugene, OR 97440;
PO Box 88-6150, Santa Ana, Costa Rica,
506/249-1821, www.rfpi.org
A short–wave radio program covering peace and social justice, with a weekly mediawatch radio program discussing far-right radio programs and an online Far Right Web Review.

United for a Fair Economy
A national organization that draws attention to the growth of income and wealth inequality in the United States—and the implications for the country’s democracy, economy, and society. Programs include the Fair Economy News Service designed to increase media coverage of economic inequality issues. Editorial writers and journalists are provided with timely, reliable information from the perspective of the average citizen. Topics have included executive compensation, corporate welfare, and tax policy issues.

Vanguard Communications
Vanguard is a for-profit organization established to provide media services for nonprofits. Clients now include the federal government and private corporations. “We work only on socially responsible issues and with clients who believe in those issues.” Most of its campaigns are national in scope. Many focus on environmental issues. Its founder, Diane MacEachern, has written a book called Enough is Enough: The Hell Raiser’s Guide to Community Activism that profiles many local, mostly environmental campaigns.
Vanguard’s areas of expertise include strategic communications planning, including issue positioning and resource allocations; public relations, including media
placement and media relations; media training, including campaign planning and interview techniques; video and film production and distribution, including public service announcements and annual reports; and materials development and production, including news releases, op-eds and letters-to-the-editor.

We Interrupt This Message
Builds capacity in public interest and community-based organizations to generate positive news coverage and challenge racist, anti-poor and anti-youth media portrayals. Through trainings, technical assistance, and collaborative campaigns with Interrupt, advocates establish a public voice and reframe the media debate on their issues.

YO! (Youth Outlook)
YO! is a monthly newspaper by and about young people, which also syndicates articles to newspapers across the United States. YO! connects young people with each other and gives adults a window into constantly changing cultures of youth. It is a project of the Pacific News Service, an international network of writers, scholars and journalists. YO! also runs a radio show, a speakers’ bureau, and training workshops.

Z Magazine
An independent political magazine of critical thinking on political, cultural, social, and economic life in the United States. Publishes monthly. Sponsors Znet an interactive, online community of people concerned about social change.
Media “How to” Resources

The Center for Community Change’s media guide is one of a number of resources describing how to do effective media work. Here are some others we think are worth checking out:


FUNDRAISING TIPS

The following article is reprinted with permission from Chardon Press which published it in Fundraising for Social Change by Kim Klein, Fourth Edition, © Chardon Press, 2000. For information on how to order please see the Fundraising Resources at the end of this section.

Principles of Fundraising
by Kim Klein

If one were to ask, “What is the purpose of fundraising?” many people would think, “What a stupid question,” and would answer, “To raise money.” But, in fact, the only way you can raise money year after year is by developing a broad base of individual donors who feel very loyal to your organization. The purpose of fundraising, then, is to build relationships—or more simply put, instead of raising money, the purpose of fundraising is to raise donors.

Focusing on building a donor base rather than on simply raising money means that sometimes you will undertake a fundraising strategy that does not raise money in the first year, such as direct mail, or for several years, such as planned giving. It means that you will relate to your donors as individual human beings rather than as ATM machines that you engage when you want money but ignore otherwise. It means you will plan for both the short term and the long term and look at the results of any fundraising strategy for both the next month and the next few years.

Diversifying Sources

Focusing on raising donors means that an organization systematically diversifies its sources of funding, builds the number of people helping raise money, and diversifies their skills. The need for diversity is not a new lesson. People with only one skill have a more difficult time finding employment than those with a variety of skills. Investors put their money in a variety of financial instruments rather than in just one kind of stock. In the 1980s and early 1990s, thousands of nonprofits were forced to severely curtail their services or close their doors because the government funding they were so heavily reliant on ceased to be available.

Yet many organizations continue to look for the ideal special event that will fund their entire budget, or they search for one person, foundation, or corporation to give most of the money they need, or they try to hire the perfect fundraiser who will bring in all their income without anyone's help. These groups reason that if they could use one fundraising strategy that was absolutely certain and tried-and-true, their money worries would be over. Unfortunately, no fundraising strategy or person fits that description. In fact, only if it maintains a diversity of sources will an organization survive for the long term.

An organization could lose 30% of its funding and probably survive, though it would be difficult, but the loss of more than 30% of funding would be catastrophic for all but the biggest organizations. That’s why organizations should not receive more than 30% of their funding from any one source for more than one or two years. This guideline means that while you
could have more than 30% of income coming from membership (and many groups do), you cannot have one member providing 30% of this money. (The IRS recognizes this principle with its “one-third rule,” which states that an organization with one-third or more of its total income from one person, foundation, or corporation for more than three years does not meet the test of a public charity and risks losing its 501(c)(3) status. This rule underscores that public charities are to be supported by a broad spectrum of the public and that tax exemption is not appropriate for hobbies or forums for any one person or corporate entity.)

There is no set number of sources that constitutes healthy diversity. Much will depend on the size of your budget, your location, and your work. However, the more people who give you money, and the more ways you have of raising money, the better.

**Why People Give**

Approximately seven out of ten adults regularly make donations to nonprofits. Of those, most support between five and eleven organizations, giving away a little more than 2% of their personal income. All fundraising efforts should go toward trying to become one of the groups that these givers give to, rather than trying to become the recipient of the first charitable donation of a previous non-giver. People who give money are not denying themselves food or shoes for their children; these people are dedicated givers, and your group’s job is to become one of those they give to. To do that you must carefully examine what makes a person a giver.

**Appealing to Self-Interest**

There are many reasons that people give to nonprofit organizations. The most common reasons vary from consumerism to tradition to deeply held beliefs. Some people give because they like the newsletter or because they receive a free tote bag, bumper sticker, or some other tangible item. Some give to a certain group because everyone in their social circle gives to that group or because it is a family tradition. Some give because it is the only way to get something the organization offers (classes, theater seats, access to a swimming pool).

At a more altruistic level, there are more reasons for giving. People give because they care about the issue, they believe in the group, and they think the group’s analysis of a problem and vision of a solution are correct. Often people give because they or someone they know was once in the position of the people the group serves (alcoholics, abused women or children, unemployed, homeless) or because they are thankful that neither they nor anyone they know is in that position.

Sometimes people give because they feel guilty about how much they have or what they have done in their own life, or to feel more assured of salvation and eternal life.

People give because the group expresses their own ideals and enables them to reinforce their image of themselves as a principled person—for example, feminist, environmentalist, pacifist, equal rights advocate, good parents, concerned citizen, or whatever image is important to them. Through their giving, they can say in truth, “I am a caring person,” “I want to make a difference,” “I am helping others.”

Most often people give because they are asked, and being asked reminds them what they care about. When they are asked personally by a friend or someone they admire, in addition to feel-
ing good about giving to the organization, they get to show themselves as principled and generous people to someone whose opinion they value.

Although these motivations for giving are what impel most people to give, most nonprofit organizations appeal to two other motives that are not very persuasive. These are “We need the money” and “Your gift is tax deductible.” Neither of these reasons distinguishes your organization from all the others. All nonprofit organizations claim to need money, and most of them do. The fact that the gift is tax deductible is a nice touch, but gifts to several hundred thousand other nonprofits are tax deductible too. Neither need nor tax advantage makes your organization special.

The 70% of Americans who give away money pay nonprofits to do work that can only be accomplished by group effort. There is very little one person can do about racism or gay bashing or sexual assault. Only as part of an organization can an individual make a difference in these or any other pressing social problems. Certainly one person cannot be a theater or a museum or an alternative school. Donors need the organization as much as the organization needs them, and the money is given in exchange for work performed. In a very important way, donations are really fees for service.

Anyone Can Do It

Finally, and most important for small organizations, it is critical to understand that fundraising is easy to learn. In the past 20 years, there has been an increasing emphasis on fundraising as a “discipline.” Colleges and universities now offer courses on various aspects of fundraising, sometimes as part of degree programs in nonprofit management, and professional organizations offer certification programs in fundraising. There are more and more people who are professional fundraisers. All of these things are important and contribute to the health and well-being of the nonprofit sector. But a course, a degree, or certification is not required for a person to be good at fundraising and they will never take the place of the only three things you really need to be a fundraiser: simple common sense, a commitment to a cause, and a basic affection for people.

No one says at the age of 12, “When I grow up, I want to be in fundraising.” Instead, a person is drawn to an idea or cause and an organization working on that issue. The organization needs money in order to pursue the cause, so they decide to help with fundraising even though it is not their first choice of how to be involved and even though they have at first found the idea slightly distasteful or a little frightening. With time and experience, many people find that fundraising is not as difficult as they had imagined and they may even begin to like it. They realize that people feel good about themselves when they give money to a cause they believe in, and that to ask someone for money actually means to give that person an opportunity to express traditions or beliefs that are important to them.

People asked to raise money often confuse the process of giving money and the process of asking for it. In fact, there is a significant difference between the two. People feel good about giving money, but rarely do people feel good when they ask for money until they get used to it. People asking for money for their cause tend to project their own feelings of discomfort in asking onto the potential donor, and then describe the donor in words such as these: “I really embarrassed that person when I asked him,” or, “I could tell she wanted to leave the room.
when I asked her,” or, “They were so upset that they just looked at each other and finally said yes, but I know they wanted to say no.” These descriptions of what supposedly happened to the donor (embarrassed, humiliated, upset) are more likely to be descriptions of what was happening to the asker. The potential donor was more than likely flattered, pleased to be included, thinking about what amount he or she could give, or wondering if the asker was feeling all right.

The feelings of discomfort in asking for money are normal…[but] asking and giving are two very different experiences, even when they happen in the same conversation. When people are recruited to ask for money, they must reflect on what they like about giving, not on what they hate about asking.

When an organization has a diversity of ways to raise money, it can use the talents and abilities of all the people in the group to help with fundraising. As volunteers and board members learn more about fundraising and experience success, they will be willing to learn new strategies and they will begin to like asking for money. Further, an organization that has only one or two people raising its money is not much better off than an organization that has only one or two sources of money. Many small organizations have suffered more from having too few people doing the fundraising than from having too few sources of funds.
Choosing the Right Fundraising Strategy
by Kim Klein and Stephanie Roth

The steering committee of the Coalition to Save our Jobs is having a meeting. They have been trying to persuade a corporation to stay in town rather than take their jobs elsewhere, as they are threatening to do. On the Coalition’s agenda is how to counter a high-profile ad campaign the corporation is using to show that the labor union’s demands are forcing them to move out of the community. The Coalition has tried to publicize their side of the story, but without much luck. They need more money, both for more publicity and to hire more organizers.

Each member of the steering committee has an idea of what fundraising strategy will be best. Joe says that they should put all their efforts into a golf tournament. They will get sponsorships from local businesses, churches, and sympathetic politicians, which will bring a lot of publicity. A golf tournament can raise a lot of money, he says, and, more important, will show that the religious and small business community is behind the Coalition.

Anne thinks a direct mail campaign will reach more people with one message and carry much less risk than a golf tournament. Once people read the Coalition’s viewpoint, she says, they will want to join and help.

Barry thinks that a few people should simply ask a few of the donors who can give bigger gifts to do so, and keep their publicity efforts separate from their fundraising.

Who is right? The firmest answer we can provide is, “It depends.” It depends on what else the Coalition wants besides money for the time it will put in, how fast they need money, how many people can help with fundraising, and so on. Once the Coalition has answered these questions, it should then review the strategies that are available, discuss what each strategy can and can’t do well, and choose the one that works best for their situation.

Match the Strategy to Your Goals

There are thousands of groups like this coalition. Some are large and well established, and some are brand new, fresh from the grassroots. Many, unfortunately, have this in common: they tend to choose fundraising strategies badly and then to be disappointed with the results.

Fundraising strategies vary in what they can accomplish. Every fundraising strategy is good for some things and bad for others. For your fundraising activities to have successful outcomes, you need to know which strategies to use in which circumstances.

The following is a brief description of the most common strategies and what they are best used for, beyond or in addition to raising money, along with what response you can expect from each. In every case, we assume the organization knows how to identify donor prospects.
appropriate to the strategy. (For more on identifying prospects, see Kim Klein's articles in the "Grassroots Fundraising Journal," “Identifying Prospects,” Vol. 10, Nos. 1 and 2, February and April 1991, and “You Already Know All the People You Need to Know to Raise All the Money You Want to Raise,” Vol. 16, No. 2, April 1997.)

As you consider which fundraising strategies to use, keep in mind how you are approaching your donors or prospects:

- are you trying to bring in new donors (acquisition)?
- do you want to keep current donors giving regularly (retention)?
- is your goal to get current donors to give larger amounts of money (upgrading)?

A healthy fundraising program will use a range of different strategies over the course of a year to accomplish all three of these objectives.

We have divided the range of strategies into those that require some personal knowledge of the prospect and those that can be used with people not known to the organization. Keep in mind that the closer someone is to your organization, the greater likelihood of them giving repeated and larger gifts, so we recommend concentrating first on those strategies that capitalize on donors or prospects who have an existing relationship with your group or someone in it.

**Strategies requiring some personal knowledge of the prospect by the solicitor**

*Personal Face-To-Face Solicitation*

What it is: This strategy, often associated with raising money from major donors, involves meeting with a prospective donor by pre-arranged appointment and asking them for a contribution to your organization. A prospect is defined as someone who 1) has the ability to give a gift of the size you’re asking for, 2) believes in the work you are doing, and 3) knows either the organization or the person who is asking them for money.

Percent of response: 50% of prospects will say yes. Of that group, however, half will give less than the amount you asked for.

Best use: To upgrade donors, to bring in large gifts from qualified prospects, and raise large amounts of money quickly.

Comments: Many grassroots organizations feel intimidated by this strategy, claiming they don’t know anyone with enough money to justify setting up a face-to-face meeting, their board members are hesitant to ask, and other stumbling blocks. The important thing to remember with personal solicitations is to start with people you know, at whatever level of giving is appropriate for them.

Example: In 1992, the Center for Anti-Violence Education in Brooklyn decided to raise money from major donors (defined as gifts of $100 and up). Unable to reach their rather modest goal of $5,000 that first year, they were discouraged. They felt they didn’t know enough people to ask and that the board members and volunteers who had agreed to participate in the campaign...
did not follow through in a consistent way. Nevertheless, the staff decided to keep trying. They arranged for more training for the board in asking for money, recruited board members more experienced in solicitation, and continued to ask their most loyal donors (numbering fewer than 50) to give larger and larger gifts and to suggest names of other people who might be interested in their work. Now, seven years after embarking on their first major donor campaign, they have 250 donors giving $100 or more, and expect to raise $45,000 in 1999 from individual contributions.

**Personal Phone Call**

*What it is:* “Personal” is what distinguishes this strategy from phone-a-thons and telemarketing. Someone who knows a prospective donor calls them. Because the caller knows the prospect, they are more likely to get through than someone making a cold call, and because this is someone they have reason to believe would be supportive of the cause, they are more likely to get a gift.

*Percent of response:* 15-20%.

*Best use:* To upgrade donors, particularly moving people at the $50-250 level to a higher gift; to work with thoughtful donors who live at a distance from the group and cannot reasonably be visited; to raise large amounts of money quickly.

*Comments:* Many groups have complained to us that it is difficult to get donors to agree to a face-to-face meeting. People are busy, they don’t want to spend the little free time they do have in meetings about their contributions, etc. While sometimes it is the solicitor who is not comfortable asking for a meeting, it does seem that more and more money is being raised without face-to-face meetings. This makes the phone call even more crucial as a way to continue to have contact with donors. Some groups have begun using e-mail in place of or addition to the personal phone call.

**Personal Letter**

*What it is:* While we usually recommend more personal contact with donors, either by phone or in a meeting following a personal letter, it is possible to generate large amounts of money from a well-written and personalized letter. It is the relationship between the person writing (or signing) the letter and the prospect that is key to the success of this strategy.

*Percent of response:* 10-20%.

*Best use:* A low-key way for board members, staff, or volunteers to ask friends and colleagues for gifts; useful for getting donors known to someone in the organization to renew their gift; occasionally useful for upgrading donors.

*Example:* The National Center for Youth Law in San Francisco increases its giving from individual donors every year through personalized letters. In 1992, they raised only $2,000 from individuals. Last year, they raised $200,000, with one gift of $75,000 leading the way. One clue to this success is that the executive director attaches a personal note to every solicitation that goes to a donor who has given before—currently 500 donors—as well as to other people, not yet donors, whom he knows personally. The real key is the fact that this director is on first-name basis with at least half of his organization’s donors. Though he spends little time in
direct fundraising with these donors, he is in contact with them throughout the year on the work of the organization. His note on their annual appeal is a reminder of this personal relationship, and they respond.

**Strategies not requiring personal knowledge of the prospect**

**Door-To-Door Canvass**

What it is: Volunteers or paid canvassers go door-to-door in designated neighborhoods, asking people to become members of an organization or to simply give a contribution. The solicitors don’t usually know the people whose doors they are knocking on, which makes the rate of response relatively low. However, because a certain percentage of people will answer the door, the solicitors have an opportunity to engage people face-to-face in a way that is not possible with writing or phoning the same group of people.

Percent of response: 15%.

Best use: In combination with an organizing drive, so that people are asked to sign a petition or express an opinion as well as give money. Although you may get more gifts than from a phone-a-thon the gifts received are often very small and usually not repeated.

**Phone-A-Thon**

What it is: A group of people are recruited (or hired) to come together over several evenings to work through a list of prospective donors. The prospects are people who have not given before, but can be expected to be interested in the work your organization does. (These names are often gotten by exchanging mailing lists with groups doing similar, though not directly competing, work as yours, or by renting lists of people who, because of their affiliations or other giving history, would be expected to be interested in your work.) Usually an office with a large number of phones donates their space for these evenings, so that anywhere from 8 to 20 people can be calling at one time. The point of the calling is to reach people (not answering machines) who are willing to speak to you for a few minutes so that you can elicit their interest in your cause and ask them to make a pledge. (See “Revisiting the Phone-a-thon,” by Kim Klein in the Journal, Vol. 18, No. 2, April 1999.)

Percent of response: 5%.

Best use: Reaching large numbers of people with a message they can respond to immediately; good training in how to ask for money more personally; can raise a large number of small and medium-sized gifts quickly. Works best when the organization is set up to take gifts made with credit cards.

**Direct Mail**

What it is: This is an acquisition mailing, whose purpose is to get new people to become donors to your organization. People are targeted who have not given before but, as with the phone-a-thon, can be expected to be interested in the work your organization does. The same letter (that is, it is not personalized) is sent to a list of 200 or more people by bulk mail (200 is the minimum number of pieces you can send to qualify for bulk discount from the postal service).
Percent of response: 1%.

**Best use:** Acquisition of donors. Because direct mail often costs more or as much as it brings in, it is used as a way to reach hundreds or thousands of people with a consistent message, and to convert some of those people into donors.

**Comments:** Because of the expense and risk of direct mail, we recommend that it be used after you have asked everyone you possibly can through the more personal strategies. When you have asked staff members, board members, volunteers, members, and current donors for names of people they think may be interested in giving, and have asked all of them for money, you may indeed run out of prospects. Direct mail is a way to reach people you have no other way to contact.

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**Special Event**

**What it is:** A special event gathers a group of people to do something fun, entertaining, and/or educational, with the goal of building and strengthening your donor base. This is probably the best known, and most poorly used, of all grassroots fundraising strategies.

Special events are an important strategy for meeting goals other than fundraising, including gaining publicity for your organization, getting people together to build a sense of community in the organization, introducing new people to your work, and raising money from sources you might not otherwise have access to.

**Percent of response:** Varies by event.

**Best Use:** To generate publicity and visibility for your organization. In addition, depending on the event, it can be used for acquisition, retention or upgrading of donors. (See “The Correct Use of Special Events,” by Kim Klein in the *Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1, February 1999.)

**Comments:** The most successful events actually combine strategies described above. Personal solicitation and personal phone calls are made to current and new donors and to local businesses to ask them to help sponsor the event with a donation. An invitation is mailed and follow-up calls are made to get the highest turnout possible. Because of the huge amount of time needed to produce an event, and the risks involved of committing resources before money is raised, special events are not always the best strategy to choose, especially for organizations with small numbers of staff or volunteers.

**Example:** One kind of special event that requires a lot less time and people-power is the tried-and-true house party. At a house party, the host invites friends, neighbors, and colleagues to their home to learn about the organization, have something to eat and drink, and be asked to make a contribution. There is generally no obligation to give, but people know in advance that they will be asked for money.

Asian Immigrant Women’s Advocates often asks its supporters to host house parties as a way to expand their donor base beyond their membership of low-income immigrant workers. In 1997, 35 people attending a house party in Berkeley in honor of the host’s birthday contributed $1,200 in donations to AIWA in lieu of birthday gifts. The host sent all the invitations, got all the food (and paid for it) and wrote all the thank-you notes for the donations. The staff of AIWA merely had to show up and give a short talk about their work. Now, almost
three years later, one-third of those donors are still giving to AIWA in response to annual mail appeals. In this case, the house party was used as a way to acquire donors, who were then retained through a personalized mail appeal each year.

**Making the Impersonal More Personal**

All of the impersonal strategies yield a higher percent of response and get larger gifts when they are used with people who have given to your organization before. Rates of response vary, but generally a phone-a-thon to people who are current givers will yield upwards of 15% response; direct mail to current donors will yield 10% response on any one mailing, and over the course of a year, about 66% of your donors who give one year will give the next year.

The important thing to remember is this: No fundraising strategy will work if used exclusively. All fundraising strategies should be used together. The purpose of acquiring donors is to be able to ask them again, and get them to give year after year, and the purpose of doing that is both to have a large number of loyal donors, and to identify a group of those loyal donors who will be asked for very large gifts in person.

*Kim Klein and Stephanie Roth are publishers of the Grassroots Fundraising Journal.*
Fundraising Resources

There are countless books, periodicals, and other resources on the subject of nonprofit fundraising. We’ve selected a few we think are key—especially for potential users of this kit. Suggestions for additions are welcome!

General

Fundraising for Social Change

The Grassroots Fundraising Book: How to Raise Money in Your Community
by Joan Flanagan, revised and updated 1995.
NTC Contemporary Publishing Company, 4255 West Touhy, Lincolnwood, IL 60646, 312/540-4500. $16.95.
Another long-time classic in the field.

If you’re looking for a complete, in-depth tutorial on the whole business of fundraising, this book could be it. The writing style is pedantic, but there’s a wealth of well-organized and helpful information here.

Grassroots Fundraising Journal
Chardon Press, 3781 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611, 510/596-8160 or 888/458-8588, www.chardonpress.com. Subscription is $32 per year, $58 for two years, $84 for three years. Six issues per year.
Invaluable resource. Plenty of pithy advice on everything from the importance of coffee cans to how to start an endowment.

Grassroots Fundraising Series
by Kim Klein.
Headwaters Fund, 112 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 518, Minneapolis, MN 55404, 612/879-0602, www.headwatersfund.org. Purchase cost for single set: 0.1% of your organization’s annual budget (minimum $25, maximum $499), plus S+H. Loaner set of five sets of tapes and five booklets, costing $500, available for coalitions and other large groups.
Seven-part video series plus study booklet covering: Basics of Fundraising; The Role of the Board; Asking for Money; Major Gifts; Direct Mail; Special Events; and Donor Loyalty.

Direct Mail

Raising Money By Mail
by Mal Warwick, 1996.
Strathmore Press, 2550 9th Street, Suite 103, Berkeley, CA 94710, 800/217-7377. $19.95 plus $4.50 S+H.
A detailed guide to— and reality check on—direct mail fundraising. From one of the leading exponents of the science who counts many progressive nonprofits among his clients.

Grantseeking

Grant Seekers’ Guide
Profiles more than 250 grantmakers known to support social and economic justice work. Since any guide of this kind quickly dates, the editors sensibly caution that it should be regarded as a “Rolodex of hot leads.” Meaty appendices on the “how to’s” of fundraising and bibliographies.
Grassroots Grants: An Activist's Guide
to Proposal Writing
by Andy Robinson
Chardon Press, 3781 Broadway, Oakland,
CA 94611, 510/596-8160 or 888/458-8588,
www.chardonpress.com. $25 plus S+H (discounts
for orders of five copies or more).
Excellent step-by-step guide to proposal writing by a
longtime activist. Specifically written for activists who
work for social justice groups.

Winning Grants Step by Step
by Mimi Carlson
Jossey Bass, Inc., 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco,

Religious Funding Resource Guide
ResourceWomen, 4527 South Dakota Avenue, NE,
Washington, DC 20017, 202/832-8071. $92.50
(includes S+H).
Compilation of the actual proposal guidelines and
application forms from more than three dozen grant
or loan programs from major Christian denomina-
tions, ecumenical sources, and Jewish sources.

Workplace Giving
Charity in the Workplace, 1997.
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy,
2001 S Street, NW, Suite 620, Washington, DC
for members.

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
(see above for contact information). $5/$2.50 for
members.
All you need to know about fundraising through
alternative workplace giving programs.

News and Developments in
Nonprofit Fundraising
Responsive Philanthropy
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
(see above for contact information). $25 or included
with membership ($15-$300 depending on organiza-
tion’s budget size).
Focuses on fundraising and nonprofit issues from a
progressive perspective. NCRP coordinates efforts to
counter conservative philanthropic forces; helps sup-
port workplace charity drives that are alternatives to
the United Way; and organizes resistance to attempts
to restrict further the rights of nonprofits to advocate.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy
Circulation Dept., 1255 Twenty-Third Street NW,
Washington, DC 20037, 800/728-2819,
The paper-of-record of the nonprofit philanthropic
world in the United States. Useful for keeping up to
date on things like IRS rules on allowable political
advocacy by nonprofits.

Fundraising and Advocacy
All the publications listed below are available from:

Alliance for Justice
11 Dupont Circle NW, Washington, DC 20036,

Being a Player: A Guide to the IRS Lobbying
Regulations for Advocacy Charities, 1995,
$15.00.
Plain English roadmap through IRS lobbying regula-
tions for nonprofits that lobby or want to become
more active.

Myth v. Fact: Foundation Support of Advocacy,
Dispels myths associated with funding advocacy
organizations and lists what activities foundations
can support.

Explains the whys-and-wherefores of nonprofit citi-
zens’ groups working on ballot measures.
Library Resources

The Foundation Center
79 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003, 800/424-9836 (or 212/620-4230 in NY), http://fdncenter.org.

The Foundation Center publishes a wide range of resources, and its website includes a searchable Grantmaker Information directory and an Online Reference Desk staffed by an online librarian. You can get free access to Foundation Center publications—plus lots of books, periodicals, and research documents on all types of fundraising and philanthropy—at one of the 200-plus libraries in all 50 states that cooperate with the Center. For the library nearest you, call either of the numbers listed above.

Progressive Foundations Resources

There are too many progressive funding opportunities to list here. Instead we encourage you to begin searching using a web-based network like one of the ones below.

Funding Exchange

The Funding Exchange is a network of 15 community foundations throughout the United States with a national office in New York City, establishing partnerships of community activists and donors. They fund community-based efforts addressing a wide range of social problems, with an emphasis on grassroots organizing.

National Network of Grantmakers

The National Network of Grantmakers is an organization of individuals involved in funding social and economic justice. Formed nearly 20 years ago, NNG’s 400 members share the belief that a fully functioning democracy depends upon an involved and empowered citizenry sharing in the responsibilities and benefits of society.

ProgressivePubs.com, Inc.

ProgressivePubs.com, Inc. maintains a database of U.S. progressive foundations, accessible to people who have registered and organized by topic. Registration is free. It also is a company that supports progressive organizations by helping sell progressive publications online.

Women’s Funding Network

Women’s Funding Network is a growing association of public and private women’s foundations, federations, funds in community foundations, individual donors and supporting institutions. The Network promotes the development and growth of women’s funds that empower women and girls by fostering strategic alliances among women, donors, communities and institutions. Women’s Funding Network will ensure that women’s funds are recognized as the “investment of choice” for people who value the full participation of women and girls as key to strong, equitable, and sustainable communities and societies.
RESOURCES

Sectors of the US Right—Active in the Year 2001

There is much overlap and sectors are not mutually exclusive. Populist, apocalyptic, and conspiracist styles can be found in several sectors. Methodologies range from cautious moderation, to activism, to insurgency, to violence. Forms of oppression—racism, sexism, homophobia, antisemitism—vary in each sector.

THE CONSERVATIVE RIGHT

Secular Right

Corporate Internationalists—Nations should control the flow of people across borders, but not the flow of goods, capital, and profit. Sometimes called the “Rockefeller Republicans.” Globalists.

Business Nationalists—Multinational corporations erode national sovereignty; nations should enforce borders for people, but also for goods, capital, and profit through trade restrictions. Enlists grassroots allies among Regressive Populists. Anti-Globalists.

Economic Libertarians—The state disrupts the perfect harmony of the free market system. Modern democracy is essentially congruent with capitalism.


Neoconservatives—The egalitarian social liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s undermined the national consensus. Intellectual oligarchies and political institutions preserve democracy from mob rule.

Christian Right

Christian Nationalists—Biblically-defined immorality and sin breed chaos and anarchy. America’s greatness as God’s chosen land has been undermined by liberal secular humanists, feminists, and homosexuals. Purists want litmus tests for issues of abortion, tolerance of gays and lesbians, and prayer in schools. Includes some non-Christian cultural conservatives. Overlaps somewhat with Christian theocracy.

THE HARD RIGHT

Xenophobic Right

**Paleoconservatives**—Ultraconservatives and reactionaries. Natural financial oligarchies preserve the republic against democratic mob rule. Usually nativist (White Racial Nationalist), sometimes antisemitic or Christian nationalist. Elitist emphasis is similar to the intellectual conservative revolutionary wing of the European New Right. Often libertarian.

**Regressive Populist Patriots**—Secret elites control the government and banks. The government plans repression to enforce elite rule or global collectivism. The patriot and armed militia movements are one response from this sector. Americanist. Often supports Business Nationalism due to its isolationist emphasis. Anti-Globalists, yet support noninterventionist national security militarism. Repressive towards scapegoated targets below them on socio-economic ladder.

**White Nationalists**—Alien cultures make democracy impossible. Cultural Supremacists argue different races can adopt the dominant (White) culture; Biological Racists argue the immutable integrity of culture, race, and nation. Segregationists want distinct enclaves, Separatists want distinct nations. Americanist. Tribalist emphasis is similar to the race-is-nation wing of the European New Right.

**Far Right or Ultra Right**—Militant forms of insurgent or revolutionary right ideology. Separatist or genocidal ethnocentric nationalism. Reject pluralist democracy for an organic oligarchy that unites the idealized homogeneic nation. Conspiracist views of power that are overwhelmingly antisemitic. Home to overt fascists, neonazis, Christian Identity, Church of the Creator.
Right-Wing Groups and Ideologues

A BRIEF PREFACE

You must remember this,
A list is just a list,
A file is just a file...

Apologies to the lyricist and to Sam. A list does not imply a conspiracy, a file is not a critique, a database is not an analysis. This annotated list is designed as a reference guide for anyone who may easily be confused by the enormous number of unfamiliar or similar sounding names that surface when one begins to study the U.S. political Right and what has come to be known as the Culture Wars.

There is confusion and honest disagreement over terminology when discussing right-wing movements and the Culture Wars. For instance, Political Research Associates (PRA) does not call the Christian Coalition “Far Right” and avoids the terms “Radical Right” and “religious political extremist” because they reflect a specific school of social science analysis that has been persuasively challenged by more nuanced research. The Institute for First Amendment Studies prefers the term “hard right.” Some look at the Christian Right and divide it into conservatives and theocratic nationalists. Others use many of these terms interchangeably.

At PRA we see the American political Right as divided into three key segments: the traditional conservative Right; the more aggressive Christian Right; and the xenophobic Right ranging from right-wing populists to far-right groups such as the KKK or neonazis that are based on theories of biological determinism or promote right-wing revolution. While there is some ideological and membership overlap at the edges of these three segments, they are viewed here as discrete social/political movements. In addition, we further subdivide the Right into the Hard Right, Old Right, New Right, ultraconservatives, reactionaries, right-wing libertarians, neoconservatives, paleoconservatives, and many more categories.

We have included in this directory both groups and a few individuals we describe as ideologues. By ideologue we mean a leader who shapes policy through their intellectual labor or who create consensus or coalition through networking or serving as movement gatekeepers. They are important even if they are not linked to a particular institution.

It is a mistake to conclude that all the groups or individuals listed below work together. For instance, the conservative Heritage Foundation is a long-standing critic of the far-right LaRouche Network. Some traditional conservatives are offended by the sweeping changes proposed by the more reactionary and ultraconservative activist Right. The Far Right views both the Christian Right and conservatives as weak-willed or active agents of the global conspiracy to “enslave” patriotic White Americans.

It is unfair to conclude that every group or individual listed is primarily identified as right wing. Some groups are listed because their proposals regarding obscenity or depiction of violence have come into conflict with the artistic community. Some moderate conservative groups are listed because a small portion of their agenda includes issues such as opposition to abor-
tion, or stereotyping of gays and lesbians. Not every idea promoted by every group listed here will be found objectionable by a reader concerned about potential infringements on civil rights and civil liberties by hard-right religious and secular groups. Some proposals by the groups listed may appeal to individuals across the political spectrum. Far-right groups such as the LaRouche network, Liberty Lobby, and the Christian Identity movement are listed because they attempt to join more moderate right-wing populist and conservative coalitions. Some groups are listed because some have confused or conflated them with other groups.

Addresses and phone numbers are provided for groups and publications when readily available, but some groups listed will be defunct by the time you read this. Addresses and phone numbers change regularly. It pays to double check to be sure the information is current.

Finally, the First Amendment means what it says, and PRA does not advocate demonizing, censoring, or abridging the rights of any groups or individuals based on their beliefs.

Chip Berlet
Senior Analyst
Political Research Associates

Right-Wing Groups

Accuracy in Academia
Reactionary watchdog group fighting perceived liberal bias in academia. Run by Reed Irvine. Publishes Campus Report. See Accuracy in Media.

Accuracy in Media
Reactionary watchdog group fighting perceived liberal bias in the media. Run by Reed Irvine. Publishes AIM Report. See Accuracy in Academia.

American Center for Law & Justice
PO Box 64429, Virginia Beach, VA 23467, 757/226-2489, www.aclj.org

American Civil Rights Institute
PO Box 188350, Sacramento, CA 95818, 916/444-2778, www.acri.org
Founded by Ward Connerly in 1997, ACRI uses encoded language to oppose affirmative action. Connerly and ACRI led the Proposition 209 effort in California, which dismantled affirmative action programs in the state.

American Conservative Union
1007 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA 22314, 800/ACU-7345, 703/836-8602, www.conservative.org
Central clearinghouse for networking conservatives loyal to the Old Right “Taft Wing” of the Republican Party.

American Council on Science & Health
Challenges strict environmental regulations. Member, Earth Day Alternatives coalition in 1990.

American Family Association
PO Drawer 2440, 107 Parkgate, Tupelo, MS 38803, 662/844-5036, www.afa.net
Specializes in leading corporate boycotts. The AFA’s
main interests are in fighting pornography, depictions of sexuality, and positive portrayals of gays in art and media. Publishes AFA Journal.

**American Immigration Control Foundation**

PO Box 525, Monterey, VA 24465, 540/468-2022, http://personal.cfw.com/~aicfdnm/

Opposes “pro-alien special interest groups” by working “to counter the well-heeled propaganda campaign of anti-American special interests.”

**American Legislative Exchange Council**

910 17th St., NW, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20006, 202/466-3800, www.alec.org

An extremely influential think tank and network that mobilizes and trains conservative state legislators, and provides drafts of proposed state legislation.

**American Life League, Inc.**

PO Box 1350, Stafford, VA 22555, 540/659-4171, www.all.org

Opposes abortion rights. Publishes *communiqué*, a newsletter prepared by Judith A. Brown.

**American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property**

PO Box 341, Hanover, PA 17331, 717/225-7147, www.tfp.org

Global network promotes a return to Catholic patriarchal oligarchy. Promotes the historical period of the Spanish Inquisition. Even some Catholic conservatives have written about TFP’s embrace of elements of fascism. Publishes *Crusade Magazine*.

**American Spectator**


A monthly magazine where neoconservatives and their allies attack liberals with snide broadsides. Edited by R. Emmett Tyrrell.

**Americans for Truth Project**

PO Box 45252, Washington, DC 20026-5252, 703/491-7975, www.americansfortruth.com

Produces many antigay publications including the *Lambda Report* (now an online journal) which is dedicated to “Exposing and Opposing the ‘Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender’ Movement in American Politics & Culture.” Headed by Peter LaBarbera who was previously associated with the Springs of Life Church which produced *The Gay Agenda* video series in the early 1990s. AFTP is a project of Kerusso Ministries which was founded by former homosexual Michael Johnston.

**Americans United for Life**

310 South Peoria St., Ste. 300, Chicago, IL 6067-3534, 312/492-7234, www.unitedforlife.org

Opposes abortion rights.

**Blue Ribbon Coalition**


Off-road vehicle enthusiasts and corporate extractive industry supporters who challenge the environmental movement.

**Campus Crusade for Christ International**

100 Lake Hart Dr., Orlando, FL 32832, 407/826-2000, www.ccci.org

An influential Christian Right ministry on numerous college campuses in the United States and around the world. Dr. Bill Bright runs the Campus Crusade.

**Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation**

PO Box 11321, St. Louis, MO 63105, 314/727-6279, www.mindszenty.org

Established to fight communism, the predominantly Catholic group in recent years has detected the seeds of communism in various feminist and peace movements.

**Catholic League for Religious & Civil Rights**


Dr. William A. Donohue oversees this group that appears to believe that Catholic religious and civil rights are incompatible with full rights and equality for women and homosexuals. Seeks constraints or codes that would affect free expression and the arts.

**Catholics United for the Faith**

827 N. 4th St., Steubenville, OH 43952, 800/693-2484, www.cuf.org

Promotes orthodox Catholicism against liberal inroads.
Cato Institute
Influential libertarian public policy research center. Founded in 1977.

Center for Equal Opportunity
Former Reagan appointee and George W. Bush's initial pick for Secretary of Labor, Linda Chavez is president of the Center. Abigail Thernstrom and Ron Unz (author of the antibilingual Proposition 227 in California) are on the board. Published a Parents Guide to Bilingual Education that educates parents to “learn how to remove their children from harmful [bilingual education] programs.”

Center for Individual Rights
1233 20th St., NW, Ste. 300, Washington, DC 20036, 202/833-8400, www.cir-usa.org
Objects to campus codes attempting to regulate actions based on racist, sexist, or homophobic motivations. Challenges strict environmental regulations. Opposes affirmative action.

Center for Libertarian Studies

Center for Reclaiming America
PO Box 632, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33302, 877/772-8872, www.reclaimamerica.org

Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise
Militant rhetoric opposing the plans of environmental activists. Founded by fundraiser Alan Gottlieb and directed by Ron Arnold, who co-authored the book, Trashing the Economy: How Runaway Environmentalism is Wrecking America.

Center for the Study of Popular Culture
PO Box 67398, Los Angeles, CA 90067, 800/752-6562, www.cspc.org
Former leftists David Horowitz and Peter Collier publish Heterodoxy, a newspaper-format monthly they call “articles and animadversions on political correctness and other follies.” Horowitz frequently appears on TV and radio to denounce the left and attack it for various “falsehoods.” He wrote Hating Whitey and has purchased antireparation ads in college newspapers.

Charisma
Glossy monthly of the Christian Right.

Christian Anti-Communism Crusade
PO Box 129, Manitou Springs, CO 80829, 719/685-9043
For over 45 years this ministry, founded by Fred Schwarz, M.D., has fought communism and internal subversion. Schwarz retired in 1998 and David Noebel of Summit Ministries took the reins. Publishes Schwarz Report and Christian Anti-Communism Crusade newsletter. Promotes conspiracy theories about the origin and spread of AIDS.

Christian Coalition
The largest Christian Right group seeking to mobilize grassroots constituencies. Founded in 1989 by Pat Robertson. Other Robertson groups include the 700 Club, Regent University, and the Christian Broadcast Network.

Christian Identity
Not a single group, but a religious-political movement with a vindictive anti-Jewish and racist theology. Believes that Africans and African-Americans are “subhuman,” and that Jews are the “spawn of Satan.” Not to be confused with Christian Reconstructionism.

Christian Reconstructionism
Not a single group. The theocratic ideology that proposes replacing civil and criminal law with Biblical law. Leading advocates include the late R.J. Rushdoony and Gary North. Not to be confused with Christian Identity.
Christian Voice
One Cathedral Pl., Washington, DC 20069, 703/548-1421
Led by Robert Grant, Christian Voice lobbies against gay rights.

Citizens for Excellence in Education
See National Association of Christian Educators.

Coalition on Revival
PO Box 1139, Murphys, CA 95247, 209/728-2582, www.reformation.net
A modern reformationist movement founded and led by Jay H. Grimstead. COR represents the intersection of Christian Reconstructionism with the more conventional Christian Right.

College Republican National Committee
Sometimes takes positions that are far to the right of the Republican Party leadership.

Colorado for Family Values
3709 Parkmoor Dr., Ste. 103, Colorado Springs, CO 80917, 719/573-4229
Organized the campaign to enact Colorado’s antigay Amendment Two, which was enjoined because it infringed on the constitutional rights of gays and lesbians. Founded and led by Kevin Tebedo and Tony Marco.

Competitive Enterprise Institute
Challenges environmental regulations. Coordinates Earth Day Alternatives coalition.

Concerned Women for America
The nation’s largest conservative Christian women’s organization with chapters in 50 states. Founded by Beverly LaHaye, it considers high levels of defense spending and aggressive anticommunism to be integral to defending traditional family values.

Conservative Caucus
Small but vocal group which opposed “the Clintonista plan to governmentalize U.S. medicine” and sponsors “Hillary Watch” tracking Senator Clinton “and her radical agenda.” Also wants to stop DC statehood, block taxpayer subsidies to homosexuals, abolish the IRS and terminate the income tax. Founded and led by Howard Phillips.

Constitution Party

Coral Ridge Ministries
5554 N. Federal Hwy, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308, 954/772-0404, www.coralridge.org
Major Christian Right ministry led by D. James Kennedy, who was on the founding Board of Directors of Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority. Seeks the “application of biblical principles to all spheres of our culture and to all of life.” Affiliated with the Center for Reclaiming America.

Council for National Policy
3030 Clarendon Blvd., Ste. 340, Arlington, VA 22201, 703/525-8822
Policy and fundraising organization that brings together conservative and right-wing activists from many different groups. Usually refuses public comment about its meetings and other activities. Tim LaHaye was the founder and first president.

Eagle Forum
PO Box 618, Alton, IL 62002, 618/462-5415, www.eagleforum.org
Founded and led by Phyllis Schlafly, its best known campaign was against the ERA. Antifeminist. Opposes comprehensive sexuality education. Publishes The Phyllis Schlafly Report.
Education Research Analysts  
PO Box 7518, Longview, TX 75607, 903/753-5993, [http://members.aol.com/txtbkrevws/](http://members.aol.com/txtbkrevws/)

Reviews Texas school textbooks for signs of liberal permissiveness, antipatriotic sentiments or other ideas that threaten the “American way of life.” Run by Mel and Norma Gabler.

English First  
8001 Forbes Pl., Ste. 102, Springfield, VA 22151, 703/321-8818, [www/englishfirst.org](http://www/englishfirst.org)

Opposes bilingualism. Founded in 1986. Seeks to pass English Only amendments at the state and federal level. Considered politically to the right of U.S. English. Home to Larry Pratt (Gun Owners of America). The organization’s strategy is to move all 50 state legislatures to pass English Only laws in order to ratify an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Exodus International  
PO Box 77652, Seattle, WA 98177, 206/784-7799, [www.exodusintl.org](http://www.exodusintl.org)

The largest “gay reclamation” ministry, Exodus International promotes the conversion of gay men and lesbians to heterosexuals through therapy and submission to Jesus Christ. It describes itself as a “world-wide network of Christian organizations which minister to those overcoming homosexuality and other life-dominating sexual problems.”

Family Research Council  
801 G St., NW, Washington, DC 20001, 202/393-2100, [www.frc.org](http://www.frc.org)

Influential think tank and lobbying group. Led by Gary L. Bauer, FRC was a division of James Dobson’s Focus on the Family from 1988 until October 1992, when IRS concerns about the group’s lobbying led to an amicable administrative separation.

The Federalist Society  
1015 18th St., Washington, DC 20036, 202/822-8138, [www.fed-soc.org](http://www.fed-soc.org)

Conservative institute concerned with the law.

Federation for American Immigration Reform  

Nativism packaged to appeal to a broader political constituency. Typical rhetoric from fundraising appeal: “There is no end to the ingenuity of illegal aliens when it comes to eluding our immigration authorities.” Founded by John Tanton. Not to be confused with the other FAIR, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting.

Focus on the Family  
8605 Explorer Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80995, 719/531-3400, 800/232-6459, [www.fotf.org](http://www.fotf.org)

Influential profamily organization. Seeks to defend family, faith and traditional values. Founded and led by family counselor James Dobson, Ph.D. The organization has grown so large it has its own zip code.

Free Congress Foundation  
717 Second St., NE, Washington, DC 20002, 202/546-3000, [www.freecongress.org](http://www.freecongress.org)

Run by New Right strategist Paul Weyrich, FCF evolved from the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress and Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, and was founded by Colorado beer magnate Joe Coors. Other groups affiliated with FCF include Free Congress Political Action Committee. Publishes Empowerment!

Guns Owners of America  
8001 Forbes Pl., #102, Springfield, VA 22151, 703/321-8585, [www.gunowners.org](http://www.gunowners.org)

Progun ownership group that is to the right of the NRA. Larry Pratt is Executive Director.

Heritage Foundation  
214 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002, 202/546-4400, [www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org)


Hillsdale College  
33 East College, Hillsdale, MI 49242, 517/437-7341, [www.hillsdale.edu](http://www.hillsdale.edu)

Ultraconservative college. See also Shavano Institute.

Human Life International  
4 Family Life Lane, Front Royal, VA 22630, 540/635-7884, [www.hli.org](http://www.hli.org)

Promotes a wide range of right-wing political and economic goals as part of its anti-abortion agenda. Ideologically aligned with an orthodox Catholic perspective.
Independent Women’s Forum
PO Box 3058, Arlington, VA 22203, 800/224-6000, info@iwf.org, www.iwf.org
Antifeminist women’s organization. “Provides a forum for American women who believe in individual freedom and personal responsibility.” Publications include The Women’s Quarterly and Ex-Femina.

Institute for Creation Research
ICR Graduate School, 10946 Woodside Ave., North, Santee, CA 92071, 619/448-0900, www.icr.org
Seeks full integration of science and the Bible to “see science return to its rightful God-glorifying position.” Website includes list of “creation scientists.” Produces periodicals, research papers and videos for pastors, teachers and others.

Institute on Religion and Democracy
Regards the National Council of Churches as manipulated by Marxist ideologues. Condemns liberation theology. Trivializes attempts to deal with sexism, racism, homophobia, and classism within organized religion.

Intercollegiate Studies Institute
PO Box 4431, Wilmington, DE 19807-0431, 800/526-7022, www.isi.org
A mainstay of the Old Right, the Institute publishes the monthly CAMPUS: America’s Student Newspaper; Intercollegiate Review; ISI Update; Political Science Review; and the quarterly journal Modern Age. Opposes multiculturalism and all forms of liberalism.

Jerry Falwell Ministries
Jerry Falwell is one of the most influential Christian Right televangelists who started the Moral Majority, then replaced it after a brief hiatus with the Liberty Alliance. He also founded Liberty University.

John Birch Society
PO Box 8040, Appleton, WI 54913, 920/749-3780, www.jbs.org
Ultraconservative and reactionary membership organization that promotes the theory that the New World Order is the function of centuries-old conspiracy of financial elites networked through the Trilateral Commission, Council on Foreign Relations, and other similar groups. Publishes The New American. Founded and led by Robert Welch until his death.

LaRouche Network
PO Box 889, Leesburg, VA, 20178, 703/777-9451, 888/347-3258
Far-right group run by the neofascist Lyndon LaRouche. LaRouche publications include The New Federalist and Executive Intelligence Review; other LaRouche groups include the Club of Life and the Schiller Institute.

Leadership Institute
Conservative training ground for right-wing youth. Includes an employment placement service and intern program that places institute attendees in prominent right-wing organizations. Founded in 1979 by Morton C. Blackwell to “identify, recruit, train and place conservatives.”

Liberty Lobby
Far-right think tank. While calling itself a populist group defending family values and American patriotism, Liberty Lobby is a major source of bigotry against Jews. Liberty Lobby publishes The Spotlight, a newspaper with a circulation of over 100,000.

Liberty University
Jerry Falwell, former head of the now-defunct Moral Majority, is founder and chancellor of Liberty University. See Jerry Falwell Ministries.

Media Research Center
325 S. Patrick St., Alexandria, VA 22314, 703/683-9733, www.mediaresearch.org
Opposes any traces of liberalism on TV or in films. Publications include MagazineWatch and MediaNomics.
Morality in Media
475 Riverside Dr., Ste. 239, New York, NY 10115, 212/870-3222, www.moralityinmedia.org
Founded in 1962, now headed by Kevin M. Beattie, the group opposes all forms of what it considers pornography and obscenity.

National Association of Christian Educators (NACE)/Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE)
PO Box 3200, Costa Mesa, CA 92628, 949/251-9333, www.nace-cee.org
Both groups are headed by Robert L. Simonds, who is on the Coalition on Revival (COR) Steering Committee. NACE works closely with COR. NACE’s purpose is “to reclaim our Christian heritage in our public schools.” CEE is a division of NACE. Argues that students in public schools are “being taught a socialist global worldview, and being indoctrinated with new age, atheistic and value-free ideologies.” Together, both groups publish the Educational Newsline newsletter.

National Association of Evangelicals
A large and influential group that represents conservative evangelicals in Washington, DC.

National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality
Secular exgay organization comprised of psychoanalysts, psychiatrists and others who advocate for homosexuals to convert to heterosexuality.

National Committee of Catholic Laymen
215 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016, 212/685-5210
Publishes Catholic Eye, a conservative Catholic newsletter. Related to Human Life Foundation, Inc. and connected to the National Review.

One Nation/One California
English for the Children, 555 Bryant St., #371, Palo Alto, CA 943011, 650/853-0360, www.onenation.org
Millionaire Ron Unz’s organization through which he ran the antibilingual education campaign Proposition 227 in California.

Operation Rescue
PO Box 740066, Dallas, TX 75374, 972/494-5316, www.orn.org
Aggressively fights abortion rights with militant clinic actions that cross the line from civil disobedience to assault. Founded in Binghamton, NY. Headed by Philip (Flip) Benham.

Opus Dei
Reactionary fundamentalist Catholic lay society. Extremely influential within the central administration of the Roman Catholic Church.

Oregon Citizen’s Alliance
PO Box 9276, Brooks, OR 97305, 503/463-0653, www.oregoncitizensalliance.org
Started by Lon Mabon, the OCA sponsored the antigay Oregon Abnormal Behavior and Student Protection Act Initiatives. Mabon was briefly head of the Oregon chapter of the Christian Coalition. OCA has been active in nearby states trying to organize similar groups.

Pacific Legal Foundation
10360 Old Placerville Road, Ste. 100, Sacramento, CA 95827, 916/362-2833, www.pacificlegal.org
Conservative legal foundation. Challenges environmental regulations.

Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (P-FOX)
1401 1/2 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314, 703/739-8220, www.pfox.org
Christ-centered network of “parents, friends and family of loved ones struggling with homosexuality.” Advocates for lesbians and gay men to convert to heterosexuality through religious conversion.

Parents’ Music Resource Center
PO Box 815, McLean, VA 22101, 703/748-3130
Seeks constraints or codes that would affect free expression and the arts. Supports parental warning system for music it finds offensive. Some fear this would lead to censorship. Among the founders were: Tipper Gore, wife of former Vice President Albert Gore; Susan Baker, wife of former Secretary of State James Baker; Georgie Packwood, wife of former
Senator Robert Packwood; and Nancy Thurmond, wife of South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond.

**Pioneer Fund**

Funds research in a pattern that suggests a problematic concern with biologically-determinate racial nationalism. Stated goal is to aid “research and study into the problems of human race betterment with special reference to the people of the United States.”

**Pioneer Institute**
85 Devonshire St., 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109, 617/723-2277, www.pioneerinstitute.org


**Plymouth Rock Foundation**

Rus Walton leads a campaign to promote the idea that America was meant to be a Christian nation in an effort to “reclaim America for Jesus Christ.”

**Political Economy Research Center**

Conservative think tank. Challenges strict environmental regulations.

**Populist Party**
Repeated schisms make it difficult to track, but essentially an electoral formation that promotes a hard right-wing version of populism regarding government bureaucracy, mixed with nativism that in some instances embraces theories of racism and fascism.

**Pro-Life Action League**

Director Joseph M. Scheidler is author of Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion. Promotes militant direct action.

**Project Reality**
PO Box 97, Golf, IL 60029, 874/729-3298, www.projectreality.org

Produces the abstinence-only curricula Choosing the Best and Facing Reality. Director is Kathleen M. Sullivan. Original name of Project Reality was Project Respect, which was a subsidiary of the Committee on the Status of Women, run by Sullivan. Project Respect originally promoted Sex Respect, an abstinence-only curriculum now handled by Respect, Inc. (Not to be confused with Respect, Inc., despite earlier ties.)

**Project Respect**
Renamed. See Project Reality.

**Promise Keepers**
PO Box 103001, Denver, CO 80250-3001, 800/888-7595, www.promisekeepers.org

Mass-based Christian men’s movement. Founded by University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney in 1990. While projecting an image of spirituality, leaders of Promise Keepers seem bent on gaining social and political power. Promise Keepers say men should “reclaim” authority from their wives.

**Reason Foundation**

Conservative libertarian think tank. Challenges strict environmental regulations.

**Respect, Inc.**
PO Box 349, Bradley, IL 60915, 815/932-8389, www.sexrespect.com

Produces Sex Respect abstinence-only curriculum designed to replace comprehensive sexuality education courses. Early workbook written by Coleen Kelly Mast.

**Rockford Institute**
928 North Main St., Rockford, IL 61103, 815/964-3819, www.rockfordinstitute.org

Paleoconservative think tank. Publications of the Rockford Institute, which is led by Allan Carlson, include: The Family in America, and Chronicles (formerly Chronicles of Culture). A main concern is the erosion of traditional values resulting from an increasingly pluralistic society.
Rutherford Institute  
PO Box 7482, Charlottesville, VA 22906-7482, 804/978-3888, www.rutherford.org  
Founded by John W. Whitehead, the Rutherford Institute distributes tapes from the late Reconstructionist leader R.J. Rushdoony and ultraconservatives such as Phyllis Schlafly of Eagle Forum, among others. Promotes the secular humanism conspiracy theory. Recently has moderated its public image.

Scaife Foundations  
Four family foundations: Sarah Scaife Foundation, Scaife Family Foundation, Allegheny Foundation and the Carthage Foundation. All are leading funders of conservative and ultraconservative causes.

Shavano Institute  
Hillsdale College, 33 E. College St., Hillsdale, MI 49242, 517/437-7341, 800/437-2268  
Hosted by Hillsdale College. Conservative think tank and policy analysis group.

Smith Richardson Foundation  
60 Jessup Road, Westport, CT 06880, 203/222-6222, www.srf.org  
Leading funder of conservative and ultraconservative causes.

State Policy Network  
A loosely-knit network of conservative state think tanks, networks, and legal foundations. The State Policy Network replaced an earlier network called the Madison Group.

Summit Ministries  
Box 207, Manitou Springs, CO 80829, 719/685-9103, www.summit.org  

Teen Aid, Inc.  
723 E. Jackson, Spokane, WA 99207, 509/466-8679, 800/357-2868, www.teen-aid.org  
“An organization which develops, promotes, and provides family life education materials that focus on premarital abstinence and parent/teen communication.” Opposes comprehensive sexuality education, publishes Me, My World, My Future among other abstinence-only curricula.

Tim LaHaye Ministries  
PO Box 2700, Washington, DC 20013, 703/830-4898, www.timlahaye.com  
Led by Tim LaHaye, a former leader of Moral Majority and the Council for National Policy. Publishes Pre-Trib Perspectives.

Traditional Values Coalition  
100 South Anaheim Blvd., Ste. 350, Anaheim, CA 92805, 714/520-0300, www.traditionalvalues.org  
Founded and led by Rev. Louis P. Sheldon, TVC is active in supporting antigay initiatives and opposes school-based counseling programs for gay and lesbian teens. Roger Magnuson, author of Are Gay Rights Right?, is a frequent contributor to the TVC newsletter.

U.S. English  
Opposes bilingualism. Founded in 1983 by Senator S. I. Hayakawa and Dr. John Tanton. Tanton chaired U.S. English until he departed after a scandalous memo was leaked. The memo also led to Linda Chavez resigning from her position as Director. Their goal is to make English the only legitimate language of government at all levels. It has two arms: U.S. English Inc., which lobbies at the state and federal level to abolish bilingual education, as well as to make English the only language used in government business; and the U.S. English Foundation, a nonprofit organization which shares the same goals.

U.S. Taxpayers Party  
See Constitution Party.

Young America’s Foundation  
110 Elden St., Herndon, VA 20170, 800/292-9231, www.yaf.org  
Influential right-wing youth organization. Established by friends and former leaders of Young Americans for Freedom.
Young Americans for Freedom
PO Box 3951, Wilmington, DE 19807, 877/YAF-2170, www.yaf.com
National organization of ultraconservative college students.

Right-Wing Ideologues

Samuel Blumenfeld
A prolific writer currently writing weekly articles for WoldNetDaily.com. Is also author of NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education, a major source of the theory that the National Education Association is part of an immense secular humanist conspiracy. Previously published the Blumenfeld Education Report. Back issues will be available on CD-rom, through his commercial website, http://www.alpha-phonics.com/.

Patrick Buchanan
Xenophobic economic nationalist and populist. Left the Republican Party during the 2000 presidential election and ran on the Reform Party ticket with Lenora Fulani, from the New Alliance Party.

Linda Chavez
See Center for Equal Opportunity.

Ward Connerly
Member of the University of California Board of Regents, African-American conservative, and opponent of California’s anti-affirmative action Proposition 209. See American Civil Rights Institute.

Holly Coors

James Dobson
See Family Research Council and Focus on the Family.

Dinesh D’Souza
A founder of the right-wing student paper, the Dartmouth Review, later served as senior domestic policy analyst in the White House from 1987 to 1988. A research scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, and author of numerous books, including The Virtue of Prosperity and The End of Racism. Opposes affirmative action.

Jerry Falwell
Televangelist and founder of now-defunct Moral Majority. See Coral Ridge Ministries and Liberty University.

Steve Forbes
Editor of Forbes magazine and 1996 Republican presidential primary candidate who advocated for a flat tax. Founded Americans for Hope, Growth and Opportunity.

Samuel T. Francis
Isolationist concerned about promoting White culture as cornerstone of U.S. national sovereignty. Authored the security section of the Heritage Foundation’s Reagan transition study, and became legislative assistant for national security to ultraconservative Senator John P. East. Has written for the Washington Times during 1980s, for Rockford Institute’s Chronicles during 1990s and New American. Has served as cochairman to American Immigration Control Foundation and board member of Council of Conservative Citizens.

David Horowitz
See Center for the Study of Popular Culture.

Dr. D. James Kennedy
Influential in the Protestant theocratic right. See Center for Reclaiming America and Coral Ridge Ministries.

Beverly LaHaye
See Concerned Women for America.

Tim LaHaye
See Tim LaHaye Ministries and Council for National Policy.

Rev. Sun Myung Moon
Leader of the Unification Church, which promoted Moon as a successor to Jesus and maintained a dictatorial internal structure to build, in Moon’s words, “an automatic theocracy to rule the world.” Cultivated ties with Christian Right and ultraconservative leaders in the United States, the Reagan administration and the World Anti-Communist League.
Reed Irvine
See Accuracy in Academia and Accuracy in Media.

Grover Norquist
President of Americans for Tax Reform and arguably Washington’s leading right-wing strategist. He helped design former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich’s 1994 Contract With America.

Marvin Olasky
One of President George W. Bush’s most influential advisors. Author of Compassionate Conservatism: What it is, What it Does and How it Can Transform America. Coined the concept “compassionate conservatism,” the basis of Bush’s faith-based initiative. Professor of journalism at the University of Texas at Austin and editor of World.

Howard Phillips
See Conservative Caucus and Constitution Party.

Larry Pratt
See English First and Guns Owners of America.

Pat Robertson
See American Center for Law & Justice and Christian Coalition.

R.J. Rushdoony

Richard M. Scaife
Multimillionaire heir to the Mellon family fortune and a major ultraconservative funder of right-wing causes. Controls three foundations, Sarah Scaife Foundation, Carthage Foundation and Allegheny Foundation. Vice Chairman of the Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees. See Scaife Foundations.

Francis A. Schaeffer
Evangelical activist and a pioneer of dominion theology. Argued against secular humanism and abortion, and challenged Christians to take control of a sinful society. Influenced many early Christian Right activists, including Tim LaHaye, John W. Whitehead, Randall Terry and Jerry Falwell. Founder of the L’Abri Fellowship in Switzerland, and author of How Should We Then Live? and Whatever Happened to the Human Race?

Phyllis Schlafly
See the Eagle Forum and the Rutherford Institute.

Rev. Lou Sheldon
Was appointed by George W. Bush to a religious advisory council to help implement Bush’s faith-based initiative. See Traditional Values Coalition.

Christina Hoff Sommers
W. H. Brady Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, formerly a professor at Clark University. Author of Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women and The War Against Boys. Claims that most feminist battles have been won and women are achieving as much or more than men are.

John Tanton
Editor and publisher of The Social Contract. Founded U.S. English and Federation for American Immigration Reform (see above). Formerly president of the Northern Michigan Planned Parenthood chapter. From 1971-1975 he was chairman of the Sierra Club National Population Committee and from 1975-1977 he was president of Zero Population Growth.

Randall Terry
Militant antichoice activist, and founder and former leader of Operation Rescue (see above). Founded Christian Leadership Institute “to identify, equip and raise up men who will rebuild American institutions on the Ten Commandments.” Hosts “Randall Terry Live,” a daily radio program.

Abigail Thernstrom
A Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute in New York, a commissioner on the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and a member of the Massachusetts State Board of Education. Co-author with husband, Stephan Thernstrom, of America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible. Opponent of race-based programs, including affirmative action. See Center for Equal Opportunity.

Ron Unz
See Center for Equal Opportunity and One Nation/One California.
Paul Weyrich
See Free Congress Foundation. Also leader of Coalitions for America.

John W. Whitehead
See the Rutherford Institute.
Groups Defending Democracy and Diversity from Right-Wing Attack

This list of Groups Defending Democracy and Diversity from Right-Wing Attack was created to aid you in gathering information for organizing in your community. We have listed organizations that in some component of their work deal directly with and have resources about challenging the Right. These organizations either monitor and analyze right-wing groups or movements, are directly affected by and working against certain right-wing campaigns, or have published material on understanding and challenging sectors of the Right. National, regional, and local organizations are all included in this list, as are groups working on single issues or on a broad range of social justice causes. While some organizations that are primarily online resources have been listed here, links to more online resources and directories are listed on our website, www.publiceye.org, under the red “Links” icon. Organizations with international scope can also be found there. We strongly encourage you to visit our website.

As with many of our projects at PRA, this is a work in progress. We apologize for any oversights and welcome suggestions for changes, corrections or additions.

If you are interested in connecting with social justice organizations defending democratic principles and practices, see our more extensive listings on our website, www.publiceye.org, at “Building Equality & Democracy” under the red “Links” icon.

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
4201 Connecticut Ave., NW, #300, Washington, DC 20008, 202/244-2990, www.adc.org
National nonsectarian civil rights organization committed to defending the rights of people of Arab descent. Produces periodic reports on incidents of violence and the nature of anti-Arab prejudice. Publishes a bimonthly newsletter, the ADC Times.

American Civil Liberties Union
125 Broad St., 18th Floor, New York, NY 10004, 212/549-2500, www.aclu.org
National membership organization, many local chapters. Interested in the threat to civil liberties posed by aspects of the Religious Right, including school prayer, school vouchers, equal educational and employment opportunity (on the basis of sex, race, and national origin), reproductive freedom, welfare reform, pornography, the NEA, capital punishment, the war on drugs, and AIDS policy. Series of books on constitutional rights, some available in bookstores. Write for full list.

American Jewish Committee
Jacob Blaustein Building, 165 E. 56th St., New York, NY 10022, 212/751-4000, www.ajc.org
National membership organization with many local chapters and international offices. Protects the rights and freedoms of Jews the world over; combats bigotry and antisemitism. Examines rise of the Religious Right and the Far Right, especially armed militias. Publications and programs on hate on internet and talk radio; Christian Identity; militia movement; Holocaust denial; bigotry on campus; Louis Farrakhan. Original publisher of Commentary, a leading neoconservative publication now published independently.

American Jewish Congress
15 E. 84th St., New York, NY 10028, 212/879-4500, www.ajcongress.org
American Library Association
Intellectual Freedom Committee, 50 E. Huron,
Chicago, IL 60611, 800/545-2433, www.ala.org
Monitors censorship, school curricula, library
protests, legal decisions. Frequently covers local
campaigns by religious and political Right. Publishes Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom.

Americans for Religious Liberty
PO Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20916,
301/598–2447
Public interest educational organization with national
scope dedicated to preserving the American tradition of religious, intellectual, and personal freedom in a secular, democratic state. Publishes a newsletter, the Voice of Reason. Several books and pamphlets available.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State
518 C St., NE, Washington, DC 20002,
202/466-3234, www.au.org
National membership organization. Several state and local chapters. Monitors the Religious Right and promotes church-state separation. Opposes public funding of parochial schools. Supports religiously neutral public education. Several pamphlets available on church/state topics, and packets of articles on the Religious Right in politics, and on school vouchers. Write for information. Resources include a monthly magazine, Church & State and a videotape, Religious Freedom: Made in the U.S.A.

Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith
823 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017,
212/490-2525, www.adl.org
Largest and most frequently cited resource on anti-Jewish bigotry and prejudice. National organization with many regional offices. Print and electronic media resources are extensive. Special reports on Skinheads, the Ku Klux Klan, Identity Churches, Liberty Lobby, LaRouche, and many other topics. Call for current availability and pricing. Publishes two newsletters, ADL On The Frontline and Law Enforcement Bulletin.

Boston Coalition for Freedom of Expression
c/o Mobius Gallery, 354 Congress St., Boston,
MA 02210, 617/542-7416,
www.ultranet.com/~kyp/bcfe.html
Local alliance of writers, artists, arts administrators, educators, and citizens concerned about censorship,

Catholics for a Free Choice
1436 U St., NW, Ste. 301, Washington, DC 20009,
Research, policy analysis, education, and advocacy on issues of gender equality and reproductive health.
Many publications in English, Spanish and Portuguese. Excellent book on the Catholic Right, with updates. Works both nationally and internationally.

Center for Democracy Studies
177 E. 87th St., Ste. 501, New York, NY 10128,
212/423-9237, www.cdsresearch.org

Center for Democratic Renewal
PO Box 50469, Atlanta, GA 30302, 404/221-0025, www.thecd.org
Community-based coalition fighting hate group activity. Has numerous local affiliates. Write for complete resource list. Every civil rights or human relations office should have a copy of the handbook When Hate Groups Come to Town to provide a ready response to incidents of hate-motivated violence or intimidation. Extensive list of publications.

Center for Media and Democracy
520 University Ave. #301, Madison, WI 53703,
608/260-9713, www.prwatch.org
Nonprofit, public interest organization dedicated to investigative reporting on the public relations industry. Serves journalists, researchers and others seeking to recognize and combat manipulative and misleading PR practices. Publishes an excellent newsletter, PRWatch.
Center for New Community
PO Box 346066, Chicago, IL 60634, 708/848-0319, www.newcomm.org
A faith-based, rural-urban initiative with a mission to revitalize congregations and communities for genuine social, economic, and political democracy. The Center’s “Building Democracy” project is aimed at countering far-right, antidemocratic movements in the Midwest, and is carried out through monitoring activities, and education and organizing initiatives.

Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, California State University, 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407, www.hatemonitor.org
National research and policy center that examines the ways that bigotry, advocacy of extreme methods, or the use of terrorism deny civil or human rights to people on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other relevant status characteristic. Seeks to aid scholars, community activists, government officials, law enforcement, the media and others with objective information to aid them in their examination and implementation of law and policy.

Citizens Project
PO Box 2085, Colorado Springs, CO 80901, 719/520-9899, www.citproj.ppages.com
Researches the Religious Right, especially in Colorado. Took a strong stand in exposing theocratic bigotry behind Colorado’s Amendment 2. Publishes a newsletter, Freedom Watch.

Clearinghouse on Environmental Advocacy and Research (CLEAR)
503/236-8788, ebeadent@earthlink.net, Archive of old website at www.ewg.org/pub/home/clear/clear.html
Works to expose corporate agenda of the Wise Use Movement. Currently exists as an email newsletter, A Clear View. To subscribe send email to: list_requests@c-t-g.com and type “subscribe CLEAR_View” in body of message.

DataCenter
1904 Franklin St., Ste. 900, Oakland, CA 94612, 800/735-3741, www.igc.org/datacenter/
Research by contract into a variety of topics with special expertise in corporations and current political issues. Serves organizations throughout the country. Large collection of clippings and specialized computer skills for searching electronic databases. Write for complete resource list.

Equal Partners in Faith
2026 P St., NW, Washington, DC 20026, 202/296-4672 x14, www.cus.net/epf
A national coalition of clergy and faith-based activists committed to equality among all people concerned about the Promise Keepers’ use of Christian teachings to create a divisive and potentially dangerous message. Copublisher with Political Research Associates and the Center for Democracy Studies of Challenging the Promise Keepers: An Organizer’s Information Packet. Also copublished Challenging the Ex-Gay Movement with PRA and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Facing History and Ourselves
Publishes high school curricula on the Holocaust, slavery, Armenian genocide, and theory of prejudice and violence. Addresses a broad range of human rights issues.

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)
National mediawatch group. Publishes Extra!, a bimonthly magazine that examines biased reporting, censored news, media mergers, press/state cronyism, the power of corporate owners and advertisers, and right-wing influences in the media. Write for publications list.

The Fight the Right Network
PO Box 2084, Philadelphia, PA 19103-0084, 215/389-1400
A regional organization that has various projects that work to oppose “the political ascendancy of theocrats and fascists.”

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)
248 W. 35th St., 8th Floor, New York, NY 10001, 800/GAYMEDIA
National organization that promotes fair, accurate, and inclusive representation of individuals and events in all media as a means of challenging homophobia.
and all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Publishes a newsletter: GLAAD Bulletin.

**Holocaust Survivors & Friends in Pursuit of Justice**


Publishes materials refuting Holocaust deniers and “historical revisionists.” Coordinates survivor lectures and exhibits. Provides services mostly to upstate New York.

**Independent Media Institute**

77 Federal St., San Francisco, 2nd Floor, CA 94107, 415/284-1420, www.independentmedia.org

National electronic news service and information clearinghouse for editors, journalists, and activists on the myriad aspects of the Culture War, particularly attacks on freedom of expression.

**Institute for Democracy Studies**


The Institute for Democracy Studies is a nonprofit, tax-exempt research and educational center devoted to the study of antidemocratic religious and political movements and organizations in the United States and internationally. Has programs on Law and Democracy, Religion and Democracy and Reproductive Rights and Democracy.

**Institute for First Amendment Studies**

PO Box 589, Great Barrington, MA 01230, 413/274-0012, www.ifas.org

Tracks the Religious Right and covers separation of church and state issues. Reliable expertise on Religious Right and reconstructionism. Provides speakers, available for talk shows and interviews. Publishes the Freedom Writer.

**Institute for the Study of Academic Racism at Ferris State University**

PO Box 510, Big Rapids, MI 49307, 231/591-3612, www.ferris.edu/htmls/othersrv/isar/homepage.htm

A nonprofit educational foundation that monitors academic racism and serves as a resource center for scholars, legislators, civil rights organizations, and journalists. Mostly an online resource.

The Interfaith Alliance

1012 14th St., NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20005, 202/639-6370, www.interfaithalliance.org

National alliance of religious leaders concerned about the narrow vision of the Religious Right. Promotes positive role of faith as a healing and constructive force in public life.

**Institute for Public Accuracy**


Challenges the assertions of right-wing think tanks like the Heritage Foundation which have enormous impact on news coverage and political discourse in the United States. A nationwide consortium, IPA has a roster of 200 researchers and analysts, serves as a resource for media professionals, and helps bring other voices to the mass-media table by building communication with alternative media outlets and grassroots activists.

**Montana Human Rights Network**

PO Box 1222, Helena, MT 59624, 406/442-5506, www.mhrn.org


**National Campaign for Freedom of Expression**


**National Center for the Pro-Choice Majority**

PO Box 1315, Hightstown, NJ 08520, 609/443-8780

Works for reproductive freedom. Monitors the actions and the individuals who are engaged in harassment and intimidation of abortion providers and the women who need their services. Provides resources to providers and to the pro-choice community in an effort to responsively educate the public, legislators, law enforcement personnel, and the media.
National Coalition Against Censorship
275 Seventh Ave., 20th Floor, New York, NY 10001, 212/807-6222, www.ncac.org
Alliance of religious, educational, professional, artistic, labor and civil rights groups that works to educate about the dangers of censorship and how to oppose it. Publishes a newsletter, Censorship News.

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
Seeks to make philanthropy more responsive to people with the least wealth, more open and accountable and more relevant to critical public needs. Published an excellent study titled Moving a Public Policy Agenda: the Strategic Philanthropy of Conservative Foundations which documents the role and work that key institutions and groups have played in developing the institutional base of U.S. conservatism. Publishes a quarterly newsletter, NCRP News.

National Conference for Community and Justice
Formerly National Conference of Christians and Jews. A nonprofit human relations organization with 65 regional offices dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism. Focuses on interreligious affairs, youth and education, workplace and community relations programs. Resource materials on multicultural education, interreligious relations, and citizenship/pluralism.

National Education Association
1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, 202/833-4000, www.nea.org
The largest teachers union in the United States. Maintains an active Human and Civil Rights Committee. Write for information about resources on combating censorship in schools.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)
Progressive national gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender organization. Along with advocacy at the national level, NGLTF supports state and local activists through its field program. Publishes a number of organizing resources for activists and holds Creating Change, a national annual conference for GLBT activists. Provides policy analysis through its think tank, the Policy Institute.

Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity
PO Box 21428, Seattle, WA 98111, 206/762-5627, www.nwchd.org
Coalition of public, private, and governmental organizations that monitors supremacist groups and activities. Holds an annual conference and symposium on the Far Right and hate crimes. A good resource for activists.

The Pennsylvania Alliance for Democracy
A regional alliance engaging in promoting democratic values, including respect for a diverse society, separation of church and state, and individual rights as guaranteed in the Constitution.

People Against Racist Terror
PO Box 1055, Culver City, CA 90232, 310/495-0299, www.antiracist.org
Produces reports with a radical analysis of racism, White supremacy, police abuse, anti-Jewish and anti-Arab activity, and fascism that feature substantial research and an accessible style. Opposes colonialism and supports efforts to free political prisoners. Publishes a newspaper, Turning the Tide: Journal of Anti-Racist Action, Research & Education. Previous reports have been collected in the book White Lies White Power: The Fight Against White Supremacy & Reactionary Violence by Michael Novick. The southern CA affiliate, and western regional contact of the Anti-Racist Action Network.

People for the American Way
National political action committee. Conducts research, legal and educational work on Religious Right and its allies. Has several reports and press releases on the rise of the Religious Right and homophobic campaigns. Resources include a newsletter, Right-Wing Watch and a videotape, The Religious Right, Then and Now. Extensive publications list.
Political Ecology Group
A multiracial, volunteer based organization working for environmental justice in the San Francisco Bay Area. Brings people together for collaborative action, participatory education, leadership development, and for carrying out campaigns with national and international impact. Published The Greening of Hate on the campaign to persuade the Sierra Club to favor immigration restrictions.

Political Research Associates
1310 Broadway, Ste. 201, Somerville, MA 02144, 617/666-5300, www.publiceye.org
Independent research center that monitors and analyzes the U.S. political Right. Extensive twenty-year file and publication archive on right-wing movements ranging from New Right to White supremacist groups. Publishes a periodical, The Public Eye. Extensive publications list.

The Prejudice Institute
2743 Maryland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218, 410/366-9456, www.prejudiceinstitute.org
A national center with a comprehensive approach to the problems of prejudice and intergroup conflict. Conducts research, consultation, training, education, and operates a clearinghouse for information on current events and model programs of prejudice reduction, prevention, and response. Publishes a newsletter, Perspectives.

ProChoice Resource Center
16 Willett Ave., Port Chester, NY 10573, 914/690-0938, 800/733-1973, www.prochoiceresource.org
Helps grassroots organizations in their fight for reproductive freedom in the United States. Provides prochoice activists with on-site trainings, technical assistance, publications, and links to local and national prochoice activities. Publishes ProChoice IDEA: How Grassroots Fought the Opposition—and Won.

Project Tocsin
Tracks the political activities of the Religious Right in California. Publishes a variety of materials on Christian dominionism and reconstructionism. Also tracks funding of right-wing political candidates.

Public Good Project
A research and education project working in the Northwest that focuses on conflicts where democratic values are being challenged.

Rethinking Schools
A nonprofit, independent newspaper with a national scope advocating the reform of elementary and secondary schools. Emphasis on urban schools and issues of equity and social justice. Published by teachers and educators with contributing writers from around the country. Other publications include: Rethinking Schools: An Agenda for Change, Rethinking Columbus, Rethinking Our Classrooms, and Classroom Crusades: Responding to the Religious Right’s Agenda for Public Schools.

RWWatch
www.topica.com/lists/rwwatch
A project of Organizers’ Collaborative (www.organizenow.net). A low-traffic email forum that responds to right-wing campaigns to misrepresent the truth in order to undermine democracy. To subscribe send a blank email to: rwwatch-subscribe@topica.com.

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
National organization dedicated to affirming that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of life. Develops, collects, and disseminates information, promotes comprehensive education, and advocates the right of individuals to make responsible sexual choices. Projects have been launched to help communities fight attacks on sexuality education.

Simon Wiesenthal Center
1399 South Roxbury, Los Angeles, CA 90035, 800/900-9036, www.wiesenthal.com
International Jewish human rights organization. Extensive collection on the Holocaust and the dynamics of prejudice. Write or see website for complete resource list. Library open to the public.
South End Press
7 Brookline St. #1, Cambridge, MA 02139,
617/547-4002, 800/533-8478 (for book orders only),
www.southendpress.org

Southerners on New Ground (SONG)
PO Box 3912, Louisville, KY 40201, 502/896-2070,
www.peopleforprogress.net/sng.htm
Seeks to place lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender organizing in an antiracist, class conscious framework. Integrates work against homophobia into freedom struggles in the south. Provides information for house meetings on the Right, participatory workshops on the economy, and publishes a journal, SONG.

Southern Poverty Law Center
400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104,
National organization. Combats hate, intolerance and discrimination through education and litigation. Has developed a Teaching Tolerance curriculum. Monitors militia and antigovernment groups and has close relationship with government law enforcement agencies. Publishes a newsletter on hate groups, Intelligence Report.

State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Periodicals Collection, 816 State St., Madison,
WI, 53706, 608/264-6400, www.shsw.wisc.edu
Has large microfilm collection of obscure periodicals, including impressive resources on the political Right and Religious Right.

Texas Freedom Network
PO Box 1624, Austin, Texas 78767,
512/322-0545, www.tfn.org
A statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan alliance that includes over 7500 religious and community leaders. Works to counter the growing social and political influence of Religious Right in Texas.

Wisconsin Research Center
PO Box 510051, Milwaukee, WI 53203,
414/272-9984, www.wisresearch.com
An information clearinghouse on the Right in Wisconsin. Publishes a quarterly newsletter and maintains a cross-referenced database containing 20,000 documents, which are available to the public on request.

The Women’s Project
2224 Main St., Little Rock, AK 72206, 501/372-5113, wproject@aol.com
Focuses on political organizing and strategy. Back issues of newsletter have excellent articles on Religious Right. Publishes a quarterly newsletter, Transformation. Also published In the Time of the Right by Suzanne Pharr; Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism also by Suzanne Pharr; Resource Manual for Women in Arkansas; and Handbook for Victims of Hate Violence. Offers technical assistance on grant writing and organization development to nonprofits. State and regional focus but excellent model.
**INTRODUCTORY BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR STUDYING U.S. RIGHT-WING POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

### Conservative Right

- **Monroe, ME:** Common Courage.

### Christian Right


### Xenophobic Right

- **Berlet, Chip.** (1994 [1991]). *Right Woos Left: Populist Party, LaRouchian, and Other Neo-fascist Overtures to Progressives and Why they Must be


White Nationalism & Far Right


Reference Shelf


Guides to Challenging the Right


Useful Resources from the Right


Prejudice, Discrimination, & Demonization


Notes: