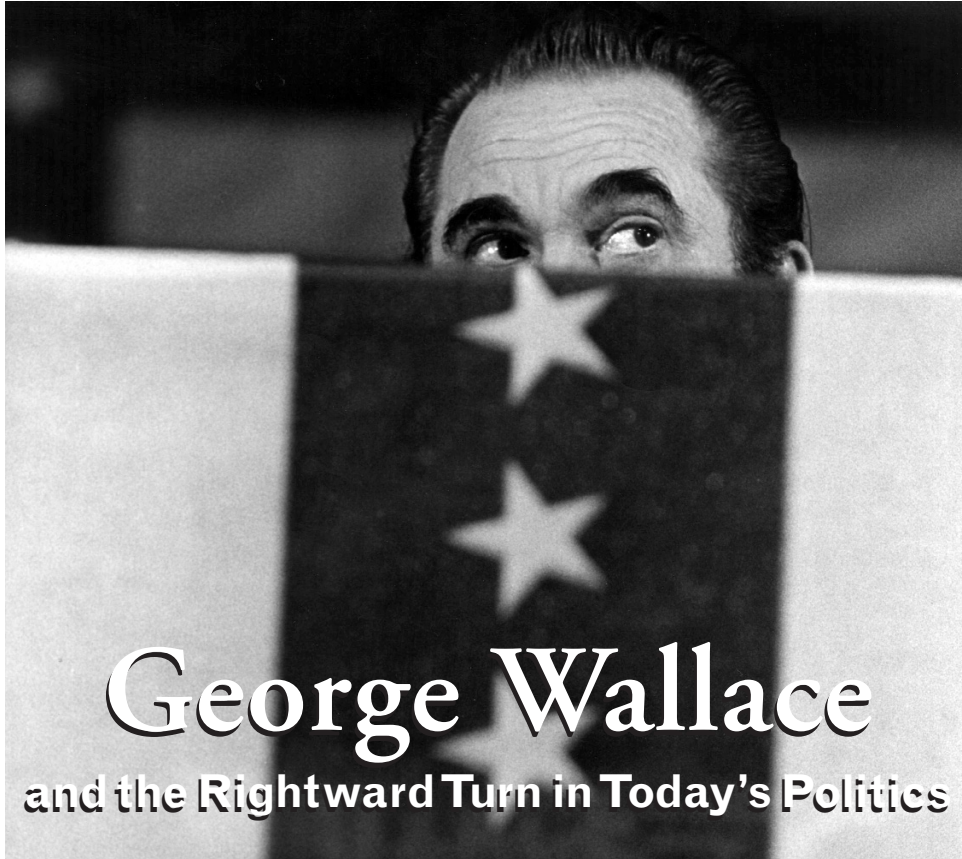


# The Public Eye

A PUBLICATION OF POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES WINTER 2005 • Volume XIX, No.3



## George Wallace and the Rightward Turn in Today's Politics

George Wallace, Governor of Alabama and presidential contender, in May 1972.

by Dan T. Carter

In the spring of 2005, Georgia's Republican-controlled legislature passed a law requiring all voters to appear at their proper polling place carrying either a Georgia driver's license or an official photo ID issued by the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicles.<sup>1</sup>

We don't have any work by social scientists to show the impact such a law would have because no American voter has ever been required to have an official photo ID for voting. But a survey by the American Association of Retired Persons found there were more than 150,000 Georgians over the age of 60 who cast their vote in the 2004 election, but lacked a driver's license. The League of Women Voters pointed out the particularly onerous impact the meas-

ure would have upon poor, rural and minority voters. In the state of Georgia, for example, there are over 159 counties but only 56 DMV offices. These offices are not equitably distributed—multiple offices are sprinkled in the predominantly white suburban counties surrounding the city of Atlanta but there is not one in the majority black city.

Applicants for these identity cards would have to obtain their birth certificate at a cost of up to \$32, travel an average of 15 to 30 miles, usually to locations lacking public transportation, wait as long as three hours, and pay a fee of \$8. The impact is particularly onerous upon African Americans of voting age who are significantly less likely to have a driver's license than whites and—

George Wallace continues on page 8

## The Rise of Dominionism

### Remaking America as a Christian Nation

By Frederick Clarkson

When Roy Moore, the Chief Justice of the Alabama State Supreme Court, installed a two-and-one-half-ton granite monument to the Ten Commandments in the Alabama state courthouse in Montgomery in June of 2001, he knew it was a deeply symbolic act. He was saying that God's laws are the foundation of the nation; and of all our laws. Or at least, they ought to be.<sup>1</sup> The monument (wags call it "Roy's rock") was installed under cover of night—but Moore had a camera crew from Rev. D. James Kennedy's Coral Ridge Ministries on hand to record the historic event. Kennedy then sold videos of the installation as a fundraiser for Moore's legal defense. They knew he would need it.

The story of Roy's rock epitomizes the rise of what many are calling "dominionism." It is a story of how notions of "Biblical law" as an alternative to traditional, secular ideas of constitutional law are edging into mainstream American politics.

The Rise of Dominionism continues on page 13

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## Publisher's Note

Welcome to the newly remodeled *Public Eye*, Political Research Associate's signature publication. We hope you'll like our new look and will join with us in welcoming and thanking our new editor, Abby Scher. Inside you'll find the same reliable investigations and analysis for which PRA has always been known. The redesign—making the publication friendlier looking and the writing more journalistic—is part of PRA's deeper effort to make such writing accessible to the widest range of people.

The *Public Eye's* new look coincides with a new chapter in the life of PRA, long known for its quality research on the U.S. Right. With the retirement, after 25 years, of our founder, Jean Hardisty, we've taken a small pause to look at the state of the world and evaluate how PRA can best help you make a difference. You'll be hearing more from us about that.

For now, let me just share two insights about the political moment that will certainly influence our future work: 1) Movement building—we're tired of seeing movement building subordinated to party-building; and 2) Vision—we're tired of too much talk about framing without enough attention given to the messages (or lack thereof) in the frames.

Framing is important, but it's secondary to a comprehensive and compelling vision. Such a vision is crafted not by silencing inconvenient voices but by weaving a rich and complex tapestry from the dreams and insights of each of us. Around such a vision, such a chorus, movements can grow and be sustained.

It is not new for PRA to be eliciting the voices of those whom leaders from across the political spectrum might prefer to silence or ignore. But in this climate that work is all the more essential. We'll be using these pages to provide a forum for continuing missives from the margins. Thank you for joining us in the work.

The Rev. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale  
*Executive Director and Publisher*

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Please make checks payable to Political Research Associates, 1310 Broadway, Suite 201, Somerville, Massachusetts 02144-1837. 617.666.5300 fax: 617.666.6622

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ISSUE 50

# Far From Fringe

## Minutemen Mobilizes Whites Left Behind by Globalization

By Roberto Lovato

Cross the white picket fence of the Minutemen offices in Tombstone, Ariz., and you're immediately made aware that the Federal Government denied the local media mogul his constitutional right to bear arms. And, the sign on the front door adds, BEWARE of his armed bodyguard who is still exercising his second amendment rights.

"What can I do for you?" asks the wiry, nervous, yet folksy Chris Simcox, the leader and founder of the Minutemen volunteer border patrol when I visited late last summer. After my local guides let him know we were there to ask him about his Minuteman work, his jean and tee-shirt-clad body, his baseball-capped head and entire being seemed suddenly to move to the beat of media personality mode; he swaggers into the tour of the home of the *Tombstone Tumbleweed*, one of the main papers in this former miners settlement, which he was soon to sell. These days, tourists keep their economy pumping with a fascination with the hallowed gunfight that took place just around the corner. The *Tumbleweed* also doubled as the command center of a movement whose members trace their gun-wielding brand of frontier justice to Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday and other heroes of the OK Corral, a movement that has garnered media attention far beyond the 1,200 person circulation (Tombstone's population is 1,504) of California-born Simcox's successful newspaper.

He begins the walk-through by pointing at several snapshots on a wall of Latino immigrants tied up and looking like nervous chickens I've seen in crowded, colorful markets they left in the poorer, war-ridden parts of Mexico and Central America.

"Those are pictures of some of the ille-



*Minutemen founder Chris Simcox trains his infrared scope on the border.*

gals we caught and handed over to immigration," says Simcox, as if proudly displaying the deer heads adorning more than a few of the homes in the gun and Harley-heavy Tombstone ("The Town Too Tough to Die").

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**Their savvy use of the web and other media combined with the strategic use of public events makes the Minutemen more effective than previous racist organizations.**

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Some civil rights organizations report that the Minutemen have pistol-whipped and, perhaps, even shot, migrants they encounter.

Wanting to ignore the boyish smile that seems to taunt me as a kind of test for my reaction, I point to two inverted flags—one Mexican, one U.S.—on the white wall opposite the pictures and ask him why the flags are placed in that manner. "That's an international distress signal. It's about two governments that aren't doing anything about an urgent problem. So we are," he answers.

Before I can process the surprisingly global perspective behind Simcox's statement, he yanks me back down to the dark realities of desert life only 25 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border. "Did you hear about the accident this morning?" Simcox asks me. On our way to Tombstone that Saturday morning, my colleagues and I had in fact driven by the horrific 11-car pileup in which six people (James Lee, 74, and Emilia Lee, 71, of Huachuca City and four undocumented immigrants who remain nameless in local

Scott Olson/Getty Images

media reports with headlines like “Illegals-Smugglers Crash Kills 6”). But before we could answer, he declared, “It was serious this time: real citizens died.”

At a time and environment in which “reality” defines the cutting edge television programming and post-Iraq WMD political debate, the oddly telegenic Simcox’s deployment of the “real” works well for a Minutemen organization mainstreaming what was the stuff of *sotto voce* grumblings in the radical extremist and polite conservative corners of white America. And so does his neat splitting of Citizen and Other. Unfortunately, too many critics of the Minutemen fail to see the nuances behind the sensationalist tactics of his brand of white fear. My encounter with Simcox doesn’t fit very well the rather simplistic explanations of the Minutemen as a bunch of new, gun-slinging racists; rather, what the encounter with Simcox and the Minutemen reflects is the need to use a more sophisticated lens than what has passed for critique among activists and thinkers in the civil and immigrant rights communities along with many Latino organizations.

Principal among the unnoticed characteristics of the Minutemen are: a global *weltanschauung*, a very nuanced media sensibility, and a very dangerous political sense that’s managed to spew out onto deserts, towns and cities the subterranean sentiments that serve elite interests, elites who benefit from the racial and class conflicts and division that the Minutemen make an industry of.

The Minutemen are far from being the fringe white men with guns of much media lore; more than an armed movement, Simcox and his cohorts have converted themselves into a nimble, media savvy, network organization for whom the guns are props. Their main goal is not to “protect” the physical borders of the United States: the primary political objectives of the Minutemen have more to do with protecting the borders of white privilege and notions of citizenship being transcended by the global economic—and political—capital. In this sense, the flag waving and other symbolism (i.e., using the Minuteman brand),

the perpetual need to generate controversy, the phallic deployment of arms at a time when economic and cultural (ie; women and nonwhites like Latino immigrants) globalization challenges American (especially white male) manhood all constitute a form of (para)psychological OPERATION or “psy-op.”

Their tactics also serve the interests of elites like George W. Bush, military industrialists and others as they wrap themselves with, and rally much poorer people around,

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The Minutemen  
provide these white  
victims of globalization  
an opportunity to feel  
they’re “doing  
something” about  
their plight.

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the flag of extreme nationalism. The corporate and political powers of the information age benefit from the Minutemen whose gunfighter antics targeting border crossers easily distract us from the elite abandonment of U.S. workers and cities (think Katrina) as well as global exploits that transfer more and more dollars into the hands of fewer and fewer people.

That the Minuteman organization is housed out of a newspaper in a tourist town whose primary theatre involves a weekly reenactment of the gunfight at OK Corral is no simple coincidence.

First of all, if they were really fringe, the Minutemen wouldn’t get the far-reaching local, national and even international coverage in print and electronic media. That the first Google search of “Minutemen” by many elementary school students will lead

the young people to information about Simcox’s organization and not the patriots of American revolutionary fame illustrates well the very effective blurring of the “real” that decentralized, tech and media-ready organizations like today’s Minutemen manufacture.

Similarly, shifting the Minuteman message—between “citizen” and “illegal alien,” “patriot” and “terrorist”—reveals as much about their intentions as their physical movements around the borders of the country. The Minutemen’s initial rhetoric of “civilization” versus the “savage” has given way to the more moderated rhetoric of “citizen” (“Concerned Citizens Leading the Effort to Secure our Borders.”) versus “terrorist” that has been the main political currency of the Bush moment. In line with this switch, Simcox and his organization have tried to diversify the overwhelmingly white Minutemen to include Latino spokespeople.

Beyond the raw ranting of previous communication, the official Minuteman website now includes opportunistic framing of their work reflected in, for example, this recent headline about their Arizona activities: “Minutemen Civil Defense Corps starts Secure Our Borders operation early to aid Border Patrol helping with Katrina relief.” Below this headline is a banner asking web surfers to donate to efforts to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Their savvy use of the web and other media, combined with the strategic use of public events, makes the Minutemen more effective than previous racist organizations. At the same time, their mixing of mainstream and old school, anti-Latino, anti-immigrant messages makes their message palatable to an audience, especially aging white males, ravaged by economic and political globalization. Unlike the previous generation of white supremacists who eschewed and even attacked the Federal government (think Oklahoma bombing or Montana militias), the Minuteman strategy complements the anti-immigrant work of local, state and national politicians like California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and U.S. Representative

Tom Tancredo (R-CO), who regularly praises them as “heroes.”

Again, transitions in Tombstone provide clues as to why the Minutemen are well-positioned to reach an audience of abandoned workers in search of answers about why the value of their labor is cheapened. Prior to the advent of the now dominant tourist economy in Tombstone, the livelihood of most here was based on silver mining, farming and the military that protected them. Such occupations as explorer, rancher and soldier informed the sense of frontier manhood that current employment with the low wage primary businesses of the region don't. While their names harken to simpler, richer, whiter days in Tombstone and the United States, the region's biggest employers—Adobe Lodge, Best Western Lookout Lodge, William Brown Holster and Old Tombstone Historical Tours—hardly provide the economic muscle that underwrote the frontier days the Minuteman nostalgia speaks powerfully to.

Wearin' guns and cowboy outfits for a living is real different from bein' a “real cowboy”; the Minutemen provide an opportunity for some, mostly aging white men, to root their sense of themselves in the storied—and extremely violent—traditions celebrated in museums, TV

shows, movies and video games. Like workers in Tombstone, most workers in American cities, towns and rural areas are reeling from the ravages of free trade agreements, deindustrialization, and other sources of corporate globalization; these trends are simplistically explained away by scapegoating.

Like blacks, Indians and Mexicans of the frontier days, Immigrant Evil Others—“illegals,” “gangster thugs,” rumored (but still unseen) Latino “terrorists” and other threats conjured by the imaginary of white fear—provide the necessary contrast to the good, white citizen doing his part to defend the “values,” “way of life” and “civilization” that the President and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld are feverishly recruiting the children of Latino immigrants to defend. Such a situation recreates the (for some) clear cut frontier era division between “good American” and “bad Other,” between “good” Latinos (soldiers, cops, Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez) and “bad” Latinos (gang members, undocumented immigrants, etc.).

In a white populace devastated by the decimation of its cities, towns and job base, a populace whose citizenship is cheapened by a political system based on the transference of tax revenues to facilitate global

trade and perpetual war, the workings of the Minutemen provide victims of globalization an opportunity to feel they're “doing something” about their plight. The Minutemen also offer elites an opportunity to develop a new kind of base as they inch the country deeper and deeper into the, for them, fertile soil of national security culture.

Seen from this perspective, the white picket fences and white walls of the *Tombstone Tumbleweed* provide an appropriate symbol of a movement taking hold in a country in where elite, global interests are gating the physical and mental borders of a populace in the throes of perpetual war.

Rather than explain the labyrinthine realities of this most complex of political and economic moments, elites stand silent while the shock troops of white fear center political—and cultural—debate around more simplistic “us versus them,” “good versus bad” dichotomies that harken back to the good ole days that never really existed.

Simcox's “real citizens” are wearing costumes of actors in an old, even ancient story of domination and plunder at the expense of the barbarian Other.

*Roberto Lovato is a writer and member of the Public Eye editorial board.*

# Do It Yourself Border Cops

*By Devin Burghart*

After highly publicized “maneuvers” in April 2005 on the Mexico/Arizona border, the Minutemen anti-immigrant vigilantes have spawned at least forty new groups in more than a dozen states.<sup>1</sup> Attracting volunteers and well-wishers from all over the country, the Minutemen are the latest and largest in a string of vigilante efforts to “secure” the border against the entry of undocumented immigrants.

## Border Watch – Klan Style

The strategy of border vigilantism as a political spectacle did not originate with the Minutemen Project, Glenn Spencer's American Border Patrol, Ranch Rescue, or even the militia groups that inspired Chris Simcox, a cofounder of the Minutemen. Instead, the “men of this calibre” who hatched the idea were leaders in the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in the '70s.

The Klan Border Watch was launched on Oct 16, 1977 at the San Ysidro, Calif., Port of Entry by Grand Dragon Tom Metzger and Imperial Wizard David Duke,

who claimed that the patrols would stretch from California to Texas. The Klan aimed to recapture its “glory” days in the 1920s, when its nearly 4 million members backed the 1924 National Origins Act. This law institutionalized racism as part of official U.S. immigration policy until the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965.

While predicting that thousands would participate, only dozens materialized for that event almost 30 years ago. But while Duke saw the Klan Border Watch as a necessary part of “the battle to halt the flow of illegal aliens streaming across the bor-

*Continues on next page*

der from Mexico,”<sup>2</sup> it was more importantly a way to “arouse public opinion to such a degree that they [the Federal Government] would be forced to better equip the beleaguered U.S. Border Patrol.”<sup>3</sup>

### Meet the Minutemen

The two men who initiated the Minuteman Project (which now also includes MinutemanHQ and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps) are Chris Simcox and James Gilchrist.

At 43, Simcox is the younger man, but he’s been involved with “secure the border” activities longer. For 13 years, Simcox taught kindergarten at the Wildwood School in Los Angeles, a well-respected private academy known for both its academic rigor and commitment to tolerance and diversity.<sup>4</sup> After 9/11, however, Simcox’s life reportedly “fell apart.” He lost his job and his family, which at least one writer speculates led inexorably to his anti-immigrant mania.<sup>5</sup>

In January 2003, the bone-thin, hyperactive Simcox was arrested by federal park rangers as he was hunting for undocumented immigrants armed with a loaded pistol, a digital camera, walkie-talkies and paramilitary gear.<sup>6</sup> In May 2004, he was convicted of carrying a concealed weapon on federal land while tracking migrants and lying to a federal officer about it and sentenced to two years probation.<sup>7</sup>

Following the conviction, Simcox continued to organize civilian border patrols and intensify his call for the militarization of the border. He has on many occasions made disparaging remarks about Mexicans, for example blaming Mexican immigrants for a laundry list of ills, including spreading tuberculosis in public schools. He is also prone to conspiracy mongering, alleging that Red Chinese troops are spread out along the U.S.-Mexican border, poised to invade. In a similar vein, Simcox claims to have hidden in terror on a mountainside while spying on a column of trucks guarded by men with assault rifles. Convinced that he was witnessing an invading army—nationality unclear in this case—

he reported it to federal agents, who informed him that what he had seen was drug smugglers.<sup>8</sup>

Besides his solo patrols seeking undocumented immigrants in the hinterland of Arizona, Simcox unsuccessfully tried to form his own local anti-immigrant vigilante organizations, including the Tombstone Militia.

In a characteristically bombastic statement to the *Washington Times*, Simcox

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**One of the Minuteman leaders embraces the so-called *reconquista* conspiracy theory, which holds that Mexico is quietly infiltrating a fifth-column of revolutionaries into the United States with the purpose of territorial conquest.**

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seemed to invite federal intervention into his paramilitary activities: “I dare the President of the United States to arrest Americans who are protecting their own country. We will no longer tolerate the ineptness of the government in dealing with these criminals and drug dealers. It is a monumental disgrace that our government is letting the American people down, turning us into the expendable casualties of the war on terrorism.”<sup>9</sup>

Yet Simcox’s “militia” was going nowhere fast—other than piquing the interest of white nationalists like Samuel Francis—even after he renamed it the less vicious sounding Civil Homeland Defense.<sup>10</sup> Fore-shadowing the exaggerations he would later make about the numbers of people the Minutemen would put on the border, in 2003 he was prone to claim 600 members of his group, while other residents of Tomb-

stone, Ariz., had a different perception. A main street bartender told reporter Max Blumenthal, “Chris can only get a three-man patrol going,” adding that “the kind of people who want to join his group can’t even pass a background check.”<sup>11</sup>

Simcox’s fortunes didn’t start to turn until he partnered with James Gilchrist. A 57-year-old Vietnam Vet and retired accountant from Orange County, Calif., Gilchrist is the organizational brains behind the Minutemen. He got religion on *ad hoc* border defense after hearing Simcox speaking as a guest on rightwing talk radio in the fall of 2004.<sup>12</sup> Gilchrist called up Simcox after the broadcast and volunteered to help him organize volunteer civilian border patrols.

Making good use of the internet, Gilchrist targeted his appeals to veterans, ex-Border Patrol agents and others receptive to messages calling for them to “serve” their country, appealing to their sense of patriotism and frustration with the status quo.

Under Gilchrist’s guidance, the Minuteman Project has tried rhetorically to distance itself from both paramilitarism and racism. Yet Gilchrist himself is prone to conspiracy mongering, as evidenced by these remarks from June 2005:

From what I have seen in videos, to me there is a clear and present danger of insurrection, sedition and succession by those who buy into the fact that this really is Mexico’s territory and doesn’t belong to the United States and should be taken back.<sup>13</sup>

Gilchrist’s words are a succinct statement of the so-called *reconquista* conspiracy theory which holds that Mexico is quietly infiltrating a fifth-column of revolutionaries into the United States with the purpose of territorial conquest. Moreover the infiltration is being accomplished with the treasonous collusion of various “liberal elite” institutions, e.g. the Roman Catholic Church and the Ford Foundation, and the applause of muddle-headed multiculturalists.

Gilchrist’s conspiracist formulation of the problem he sees with undocumented

immigration is only an extreme form of the basic xenophobic arguments repeating the time-tested formula of bigoted fear-mongering. In the early years of the twentieth century it was the “yellow peril”—which led to laws excluding those of Asian descent from immigrating to the United States.

In a May 2005 speech to a meeting of the California Coalition for Immigration Reform, a hardcore anti-immigrant group which promotes the *reconquista* conspiracy theory, Gilchrist said, “I’m damn proud to be a vigilante.”<sup>14</sup> He believes that, “Illegal immigrants will destroy this country.”<sup>15</sup> At a Memorial Day 2005 “summit” of anti-immigrant leaders in Las Vegas, Gilchrist commented, “Every time a Mexican flag is planted on American soil, it is a declaration of war.”<sup>16</sup>

A petrochemical engineer and the driving force behind the organization of a Texas Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, Bill Parmley discovered that ideas such as donating box drinks to the sheriff’s office to give to captured, dehydrated immigrants were not particularly popular. “Let the (expletive deleted) die,” commented one of his erstwhile compatriots.<sup>17</sup>

While some like Parmley have quit in disgust, the anti-immigrant paramilitarism of the Minutemen has attracted numerous longtime far-right activists into the movement. In Alabama, for instance, the state head of the Alabama Minuteman Support Team is lead by militia leader Mike Vanderboegh.<sup>18</sup>

It’s not surprising to see militia activists joining the Minutemen, given Simcox’s original border “militia.” Beyond the obvious appeal, ideologically, today’s Minutemen share many commonalities with militia groups of the 1990s. Not only do they share a common lineage extending back to white supremacist formations of previous decades, both are expressions of [white] Middle American Nationalism – the belief that “middle Americans” are being squeezed from above by the economic elites, and from below from the multicultural hordes who are sucking the lifeblood from the productive middle.

Both militia groups and the Minutemen

posit a demonized “other” based on citizenship status. The militias had the “sovereign citizen” concept, which divided people into [white] state “sovereign” citizens and second-class, so-called “14th Amendment” citizens. The Minutemen do it on the basis of *perceived* immigration status.

Minutemen leader Gilchrist has attempted to parlay his Minutemen notoriety into political gain by turning to white nationalists. Gilchrist entered the October 4 special election for the California 48th District Representative seat as an American Independent Party (AIP) candidate.

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## Today’s Minutemen share many commonalities with militia groups of the 1990s.

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The AIP was created to support the 1968 campaign of arch-segregationist George Wallace, AIP was founded by William K. Shearer, who also served on the National Executive Committee of the white supremacist Populist Party in the 1980s.<sup>19</sup>

Gilchrist’s move to a non-mainstream party like the AIP is not new for anti-immigrant activists. To express dissatisfaction with GOP fence straddling on the immigration issue, many anti-immigrant activists have participated in third parties before, including Pat Buchanan’s 2000 Reform Party campaign. During his recent campaign, Gilchrist portrayed himself as a true Reaganite conservative, in an attempt to pull the GOP rightward and make anti-immigrant sentiment a key campaign issue. He was able to win 14.4% of the vote, finishing third in a 17 person field, forcing a run-off election.

*Devin Burghart is director of the Center of New Community’s Building Democracy Ini-*

*tiative. This article is excerpted from his September 2005 report: Shell Games.*

### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> For a complete listing of Minutemen groups, visit <http://www.buildingdemocracy.org>.

<sup>2</sup> “Klan Border Watch Continues” *The Crusader*, Issue 28, 1977, pg. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 1.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Wildwood School’s mission statement (URL: < <http://www.wildwood.org/> > ): “The Wildwood experience develops an appreciation of individual and group differences, a desire to contribute to a diverse community, and a competency to adapt and lead in an ever-changing world.”

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Ketcham, “The Angry Patriot,” *Salon.com* (May 11, 2005), URL: < [www.salon.com](http://www.salon.com) > , Accessed: 12 Aug 2005.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>7</sup> Tyche Hendricks, “Dangerous Border: Militias round up illegal immigrants in desert Migrant advocates say deceptive patrols increase peril, seldom face legal scrutiny,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 31, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Ketcham, “The Angry Patriot,” *Salon.com* (May 11, 2005), URL: < [www.salon.com](http://www.salon.com) > , Accessed: 12 Aug 2005.

<sup>9</sup> *Washington Times*, “Arizona Militia Set to Patrol Border for Illegal Aliens,” (December 9, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Max Blumenthal, “Vigilante Injustice,” *Salon.com* (May 22, 2003), URL: < <http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2003/05/22/vigilante/> > , Accessed: August 13, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Max Blumenthal, “Vigilante Injustice,” *Salon.com* (May 22, 2003), URL: < <http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2003/05/22/vigilante/> > , Accessed: August 13, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Jennifer Delson, “Profile: James Gilchrist,” *Los Angeles Times* (April 11, 2005), p. B2.

<sup>13</sup> John Earl, “Immigration Reformer Wants to Send 20 Million Immigrants Back to Mexico and Start a Revolution There,” *Orange County Organizer* (URL: < <http://www.ocorganizer.com/html/gilchrist.html> > Accessed: July 15, 2005). Note that the quote excerpted in the text above, documenting Gilchrist’s unflinching belief in the *reconquista* conspiracy is from an interview conducted with Gilchrist by Earl on June 14, 2005 in Costa Mesa, California.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Wisckol, *The Orange County Register*, May 26, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Jennifer Delson, “PROFILE | JAMES GILCHRIST; One Man’s Convictions Launched a Border Crusade,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2005 Part B; Pg. 2

<sup>16</sup> From a contemporary eyewitness account of Gilchrist’s speech in Las Vegas.

<sup>17</sup> Edward Hegstrom, “Head of Texas Minutemen Quits, Cites Racism in Group,” *Houston Chronicle* (July 28, 2005), p. B1.

<sup>19</sup> Toraine Norris, “Minutemen Plan to Patrol Mexican Border,” *The Birmingham News*, August 11, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Jake Tapper, “Fanatics of the Far Right” *Salon.com* (Aug. 4, 1999) URL: <http://archive.salon.com/news/feature/1999/08/04/taxpayers/index.html?pn=3>>.

GEORGE WALLACE *continued from page 1*

according to the 2000 census—are five times more likely to lack access to a car than white Georgians. The disparate impact is made worse in the case of older black Georgians, who were often delivered by midwives before the state required a birth certificate or official registration.<sup>2</sup>

According to Republican Governor Sonny Perdue and his House and Senate leaders, this “reform” measure was a necessary safeguard to stop individuals from assuming the identity of legitimate voters, casting illegal ballots and thus corrupting the political process.

There was, however, a problem with this argument. When asked for examples of such voter fraud during the brief legislative hearings, proponents of the measure could not cite a single example in which one voter had masqueraded as another. As Georgia’s Secretary of State noted, there have been a number of cases of voter fraud in Georgia over the last twenty years, but most of these involved the misuse of absentee ballots. And yet the same legislation that required voters to bring an official photo ID to the polling place explicitly rejected any requirements for absentee voters and, in fact, made it far easier to vote by absentee ballot.

How many individuals would be disenfranchised by the new voter ID law? Three percent? Four per cent? There is no way to know for sure, but we have seen in recent elections that even a one per cent change in the vote may be critical.

You don’t have to be a cynic to see the purpose of the Georgia Voter ID requirement. The individuals most negatively affected by the legislation are more likely to vote Democratic. People who cast absentee ballots are more likely to vote Republican. The only corruption here is the naked abuse of political power by the majority party.<sup>3</sup> Only a last minute decision by a federal district court judge in late October stopped the law from being enforced during the November municipal elections. In ruling on the suit,

waged by the American Civil Liberties Union and the NAACP, he likened the law to the old Jim Crow-era poll tax. Still a few months before, the U.S. Justice Department had given the law its blessing.

No single example of contemporary American politics can fully capture all the dimensions of that steady shift to the right in the United States, but I have chosen this vignette because it involves the right to vote,

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### Proponents of the new restrictive voter requirements in Georgia had the added support and legitimacy of more than 500 conservative and right-wing foundations and think tanks which conservatives have created at a cost of more than \$2 billion over the last 35 years.

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arguably one of the most fundamental rights in a democracy. If that right can be rolled back, then who can doubt that we are in the midst of a great political reaction.

When and where did this counter-revolution gain its traction?

In 1989, I set out to write a study of the improbable career of Alabama’s George Wallace—a four-time candidate for the presidency who, at one point, had the expressed support of a quarter of America’s white voters and very nearly threw the 1968 election into the House of Representatives. Initially I was intrigued by the fact that he had been relegated to the sidelines of American history. In most of the initial historical accounts of the period,

anti-war candidate Eugene McCarthy received far more attention than the Wallace movement.

The reasons for his relative obscurity were not hard to find. Technically a Democrat for most of his career, members of that party have hardly been anxious to embrace him as one of their own. And, even though Republicans shamelessly borrowed many of his ideas, they too spurned any identification with this crude redneck—gauche, coarse and hardly suitable for inclusion with the likes of Robert Taft, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan. Without worshipful acolytes, he was left to wander on the margins of our historical memory.

As I examined his career, however, I came to believe that his role was even greater than I had thought—primarily as one of the principle originators of a new and inverted form of populist politics.

There is good reason to be leery of an adjective and noun that has been elastic enough to describe historical actors as diverse as George McGovern, the late Bella Abzug, Pat Buchanan, France’s Jean-Marie Le Pen and Venezuela’s Luiz Inácio *Lula* da Silva. Writing in the early 1970s, historian C. Vann Woodward acknowledged there **was** a considerable leap between the politics of the 1960s and 1970s and the provincial language and sometimes cranky ideas that shaped the grievances of late nineteenth century farmers. But there was a connection, he argued. The original populists

spoke for the little man against the establishment, the provinces against the metropolis, the poor and deprived against the rich and privileged. The issues they addressed centered on the unequal distribution of wealth and income, and the unjust distribution of power. These issues included prices, wages, money, taxes, unemployment, monopoly, big business corruption of government and government selling out to business.<sup>4</sup>



And their ideas resonated long after the movement itself disappeared.

If Woodward defended these late nineteenth century reformers, he acknowledged that other scholars saw them in a more unfavorable light. Populist leaders may have defended workers and agricultural producers, but they sometimes seemed afflicted by conspiratorial delusions, nostalgic dreams of a golden age that never was and hostility to industrial progress. And there is no doubt that some of them were racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic.

Whatever their multiple personalities, none of these earlier populists embraced bankers, oil companies, free-market capitalism and government policies that slavishly catered to big business.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, George Wallace helped upend this long-standing tradition.

For the most part, we still remember Wallace through the prism of race.

After his 1958 race for the governorship, swearing to his friends that his opponent had “outniggered me” and “I’ll never be outniggered again.” At his inaugural address, which included the famous declaration “Segregation today, Segregation Tomorrow, Segregation Forever.” Wallace standing at the Schoolhouse Door, and later running for the presidency in 1964 and showing surprising strength in the North by attacking the pending Civil Rights bill of that year.

And then there was the coda to his career: his 1972 near death at the hands of a deranged would-be assassin that led to the redeemed George Wallace, repenting his earlier racist sins and running and winning the Alabama governorship in the late 1970s and 1980s with overwhelming black support.

That we remember; the beginning, the end. It’s the middle part that is often ignored.

So let us briefly look back to his 1968 third party run for the Presidency.

The election, you may recall, was one of the most tumultuous in our modern history. Lyndon Johnson had been forced

to withdraw from the Presidential race; Robert Kennedy had been assassinated and a bitterly divided Democratic Party had nominated Vice President Hubert Humphrey for the Presidency. Meanwhile, the Republican Party, led by a reborn Richard Nixon, settled down for what seemed an inevitable victory.

And then came Wallace. As he campaigned across America, the crowds began

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**Wallace’s target was that alien city on the Potomac, Washington, D.C., where a shadowy coven of liberals—bearded, briefcase-carrying bureaucrats, cowardly politicians and arrogant judges—ran roughshod over the rights and freedoms of the American people.**

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to grow: from 5,000 to 10,000 to monster rallies with as many as 30,000 followers chanting their support.

His campaign benefited from white backlash to the urban race riots of the 1960s, new challenges to *de facto* housing, employment and educational discrimination in the North and the linkage of blackness with rising criminality and welfare costs in the minds of many white Americans.

With an instinctive sense for language, he exploited these racial fears through the skillful use of what soon came to be called coded language. He railed against federal, state and local officials for their timid response to Molotov-throwing urban riot-

ers, but he never referred to them explicitly in racial terms.

He talked about brutal and marauding criminals who transformed America’s urban streets into war zones. But he did not directly mention race.

He constantly complained of shiftless free-loaders, collecting their welfare checks—paid for by the hard-working American. But he scrupulously avoided using racial language to describe this new parasitic welfare class.

Even when he dealt with explicit racial issues, he always insisted that his objections to busing or affirmative action had nothing to do with race, but fairness for white as well as black Americans.

So it is clear that race remained a central element of his appeal.

But his exploitation of a new form of “populist” conservatism represented more than the exploitation of racial issues.

Wallace was not an analytical thinker but he knew that a substantial percentage of the American electorate despised the civil rights agitators, anti-war demonstrators, bra-burning feminists, and long-haired hippy students as symptoms of a fundamental decline in the traditional compass of God, family (the patriarchal family, that is), and love of country. They believed that decline was reflected in the rising crime rates, legalization of abortion, a rise in out-of-wedlock pregnancies, increase in divorce rates, the Supreme Court’s decision against school prayer, and the proliferation of “obscene” literature and films. Even when local communities seemed untouched, the nightly news vividly brought home the sights and sounds of a social revolution into the living rooms of millions of Americans.

Perhaps Wallace’s greatest contribution was his appropriation of classic populist language in claiming to speak for the forgotten Americans—what he called in every speech the “average man in the street, the man in the textile mill, the man in the steel mill, the barber, the beautician, the policeman on the beat.” (He proved to have a much more sensitive ear to the electorate than Barry Goldwater who said many of the

same things, but in a language that often seemed to appeal only to readers of the *National Review* and the nearest Country Club locker room.)

In speaking for what he called working and middle America, the fiery Alabama governor used the language of populism—its attacks on shadowy and evil conspirators, its sense of victimhood—but the villains were no longer Wall Street Bankers and malefactors of great wealth.

His target was that alien city on the Potomac, Washington, D.C., where a shadowy coven of liberals—bearded, briefcase-carrying bureaucrats, cowardly politicians and arrogant judges—ran roughshod over the rights and freedoms of the American people, issuing judicial edicts that were little more than exercises in social engineering; decisions that turned the notion of equality on its head and forced state and local governments and school boards to engage in contorted plans to fit a preconceived blueprint for racial equality and in the process trampled the rights of working people who often had to bear the burden—and the financial costs—of their decisions. The wealthy liberals who backed higher taxes for welfare abusers (again, no race mentioned) could afford to pay the bill; when out of touch judges ordered busing, well-to-do liberals could send their kids to private schools and live in communities in which they escaped the consequences of their left-wing politics.

The federal courts were a special target for Wallace. These were the “judicial activists” who used meaningless technicalities to turn criminals loose in the streets. As they forbade children from bowing their heads in school prayer they unleashed a torrent of pornography upon the streets of America on the fatuous grounds of the First Amendment. (Wallace, I should note, was the first American politician to testify in favor of a school prayer constitutional amendment).

“Question authority” was the slogan of a new, emancipated class of intellectuals and social liberals in the 1960s. For that generation, and I was certainly a part of it, there was something enormously liberating about

throwing off what seemed to be the repressive prejudices of an older generation. Liberation was possible in our politics and in our own lives. But Wallace looked out upon the disorderly political landscape of the 1960s and instinctively sensed that millions of Americans were gripped by a sense of betrayal. Discipline, hard work, self-control, and yes, traditions of racial hierarchy and patriarchy were still embraced emotionally as essential shel-

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ters in a world of turmoil and change.

By September of 1968, major polls showed him at 21%, neck and neck with Hubert Humphrey among decided voters, and only 9% behind Richard Nixon.

Wallace had discovered what journalists eventually came to call “the social issues”: a vague conglomeration of fears and apprehensions revolving around the notion that traditional standards of morality were crumbling. He didn’t know these were “wedge” issues—he just knew they worked.

On election day, many would-be Wallace voters returned to the two major parties and his final vote was a little less than 14 per cent. But I believe his success in that election was one of the factors that set in motion a major realignment of American politics. It is obvious when you read Richard Nixon’s memos and review conversations with his staff that Wallace’s success was a key factor in encouraging Nixon

and the Republican Party to adopt a political strategy based upon combining traditional Republican conservatism with a solid Republican South and angry white working class Democrats mobilized by these new social issues. By the 1972 presidential campaign, Wallace seldom gave a speech without complaining that Nixon and his vice-President Spiro Agnew had cribbed his ideas.

In 1980 and 1984, Ronald Reagan’s sweep of the old Democratic South and his appeal to traditionally Democratic blue collar and working class voters laid the foundation for today’s Republican dominance in American politics.

As a historian, reading backward from the present, it is all too easy to see this as an inevitable trend in American politics. From Goldwater to Wallace to Nixon to Reagan to Bush I and Bush II. The trajectory has its byways—Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton—but always it turns to the right.

And yet there seems nothing historically inevitable about this process. Beginning as early as the early 1970s, there were a number of pocketbook issues that should have benefited the “old populism.” The purchasing power of middle income and lower middle income families rose 40 per cent between 1947 and 1966, an average of more than 2 per cent per year. But that steady ascension came to a stop between 1966 and 1972, when actual purchasing power remained stable and failed to decline only because of the accelerating entry of women into the workforce. During the 1980s, globalization in the labor market placed a lid on wages even as the Reagan administration adopted policies that exacerbated the growing divide with the wealthy and upper middle class on one side and the struggling middle and working classes and the poor. By the middle of the 1980s, we were already on our way to the creation of a society divided between Walmart and Saks Fifth Avenue. And nothing fundamentally has changed over the last 20 years, as working and middle class income stagnates and productivity gains go directly into the bank accounts of the

already super rich.

At the same time, a new entrepreneurial class and its ideological allies unapologetically practices a ruthless form of capitalism that treats workers as another factor of production—to be discarded when they are no longer useful. Even as they have kept up a steady barrage of attacks against “government,” however, they have successfully bent the state to their own interests in a way that would have left the legendary Robber Barons gasping with envy. It is difficult to imagine a group of men—and they are mostly men—who are further away from the producer class of hardworking Americans extolled by the populists.

But there was magic in this new rancid populism, to borrow William Greider’s apt phrase. And the magic still works.

Witness the passage of the Georgia Voter ID law this past spring. Within hours after Republicans introduced the measure in the Georgia House, the black caucus began pointing to the discriminatory consequences of the legislation. As it quickly moved through the state house and senate, members of the black caucus were joined in opposition by more than two dozen civic groups, including the AARP of Georgia and the League of Women Voters.

Immediately, however, Republicans and their conservative allies went on the attack. The opponents of such “good government reform” were defenders of the tired old corrupt political system, subservient to the liberal elites and pandering, as the House Republican leader said, to “special interest groups.” Certain words began regularly appearing. A prominent conservative columnist in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* called the Democratic house minority leader a “notorious race baiter” for pointing out that the ID law would disproportionately affect African Americans; the opponents of the measure were “aggressors” against needed reform; they were “ruthlessly conspiring” with liberal elites; they were nothing more than professional “microphone-grabbers who gain finan-

cially and politically by stoking the fears of the ignorant and insecure,” “promoting victimhood,” all the while building a money-making industry that made its profits “selling racial pessimism.”

These quotes are not from far right mouthpieces like Atlanta talk-show host Neal Boortz. (He complained that the measure did not go far enough by taking away the vote from welfare recipients.)<sup>5</sup> They are from main-line conservative journalists and politicians who have learned the

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**Truth, in philosopher Theodor Adorno’s formulation, had simply become an artifact of power—or in less elevated language—the outcome of the best marketing campaign.**

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lessons first taught by Newt Gingrich in his famous seminars for young Republicans in the late 1980s. You may recall that Gingrich distributed to aspiring Republican candidates a list of 58 words that were always to be used in referring to Democrats or liberals, among them: sick, traitors, corrupt, bizarre, cheat, steal, devour, self-serving, criminal rights, soft-on-crime, free loader, greed . . . .<sup>6</sup>

Proponents of the new restrictive voter requirements had the added support and legitimacy of more than 500 conservative and right-wing foundations and think tanks which conservatives have created at a cost of more than \$2 billion over the last 35 years.<sup>7</sup> Well before the introduction of the Georgia Voter ID measure the Cato Institute had issued its position paper on election procedures, insisting that any complaint of discrimination was nothing more than the “rhetoric of victimization.” Scholars at other conservative think tanks have agreed, repeatedly deploying social science analysis to “prove” that there is no evi-

dence that African Americans continue to suffer from structural or deliberate discrimination. As Abigail Thernstrom, a Manhattan Institute Fellow has argued in a series of well-placed op-ed pieces this summer, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act was not only superfluous, it had done “more harm than good.” The “era of redneck registrars, fraudulent literacy tests, violence, and intimidation at the polls is over, she assured readers of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.”<sup>8</sup> The states should be “free to make their own decisions about voting equipment and voter registration systems” without federal interference.<sup>9</sup>

The success of conservatives in framing the issue in Georgia was made easier because television stations, in their state and local coverage, gave the issue their usual short shrift, a garbled forty or fifty seconds at most, following the now familiar: “he said,” “she said” and then on to the latest multi-car accident or celebrity trial. With the partial exception of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, the print media was little better. Listening to television or reading the state’s newspapers, the average consumer of news would have absolutely no sense that there are things that we used to call facts; there were only opinions. When asked to choose between the opinions of those who supported an honest ballot and the opinions of defenders of the status quo who were pandering to special interests, it was no contest. By the time the issue came to a vote in the legislature, a poll commissioned by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* showed that four out of five Georgians—including a majority of black Georgians—supported the new voter legislation.<sup>10</sup> Truth, in philosopher Theodor Adorno’s formulation, had simply become an artifact of power—or in less elevated language—the outcome of the best marketing campaign.<sup>11</sup>

Events can quickly change. Chronologically, it is only a few years from William McKinley to Theodore Roosevelt; Calvin Coolidge to Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

And who in 1953 could have anticipated the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965?

Hope springs eternal; it has to if you live—as I do—in one of the reddest states in the union. But I believe in honesty, and the truth is: I find my optimism challenged by what I see on every hand.

I look out at the faces of my students: polite, anxious to please, even intellectually curious on occasion. But the great passions of my lifetime—racial and economic justice—seem antiquated and irrelevant and debates over the relationship between political policies and economic inequality and injustice are as incomprehensible as a discussion of the seventeenth century controversy surrounding Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomians.

And I certainly don't want to single out my students; they are simply responding to the world of their parents and their friends. Nearly a century ago, Walter Lippman noted the political advantages of creating what he called a "fear economy." By making voters fearful of losing their jobs, fearful that their old age will not be secured, fearful that their children will lack opportunity, they become, in Lippman's nineteenth century language, a "servile and dreaming race," clinging desperately to the niche on which they precariously hang.

And even the prescient Lippman could not envision the political dividends of a permanent war on terror.

At the same time, the corruption of both political parties by vested economic interests continues apace, without restraint from an electorate increasingly adrift, cut loose from the anchors of old institutions that once bound them to an understanding of their self-interest. This has happened even—ironically—as millions of Americans accept an economic theology that insists that a market ruled by self-interest will cure all our social ills and usher in the kingdom of heaven on earth.

And of course we are all being swept downstream into a political culture in which entertainment, politics, make-believe, and breaking news have become as indistinguishable from each other as from the commercials that separate each mean-

ingless and disconnected factoid.

As one of my conservative friends, said: so much indignation, so little time.

And yet. And yet.

In 1955, at a meeting of the Southern Historical Association in Memphis, Tenn., the novelist William Faulkner shared the platform with a group of black and white educators. His very presence was a daring act of defiance at a time when whites across the region were rallying to the defense of racial segregation and the White Citizens Councils—Klansmen in business suits—ruled his home state. This was not an easy choice for Faulkner. While he was a Nobel Prize winner in literature, he lived in Oxford, Miss. Most of his friends and neighbors believed that segregation was right and just and moral. If he was emmeshed in a quarrel with his region, it was a lover's quarrel for he was Southern to the core.

But when it came his turn to speak, he did not mince words. Whatever the difficulties of ending segregation, he said, it was essential to recognize the core of segregation's inhumanity. Those who loved the South had a special obligation to "speak now against the day, when our Southern people who will resist to the last these inevitable changes . . . say, "Why didn't someone tell us this before? Tell us this in time."

In the end—whether optimistic or pessimistic—our obligation as scholars, as citizens, as human beings, remains unchanged. We must speak now—and act—against the day when a future generation asks: "Why didn't someone tell us this before? Tell us this in time." ■

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## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Georgia measure was prepared with the assistance of Erick Erickson, a self-described right-wing political junkie from Macon who is a part of a network of other conservative political activists and groups working to enact similarly restrictive measures across the nation. Indiana has passed such a measure (now being challenged in the courts); the Wisconsin Democratic governor vetoed a measure enacted by that state's legislature and similar measures have been introduced in at least a dozen other states controlled by Republicans. Macon *Telegraph*, March 17, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Four other forms of photo identification other than a state-issued driver's license or state-issued identification card were acceptable for voter identification at the polls: a valid U.S. passport, a U.S. military ID card, a tribal ID card or a municipal or state employee identification card with photo. The inclusion of these on the approved list does little to mitigate the extent of the broad-gauged restrictions included in the law.

<sup>3</sup> Bill Shipp, "Georgia is a Tough Place to Cast a Ballot," *Athens, Ga., Banner-Herald*, July 23, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> C. Vann Woodward, "The Ghost of Populism Walks Again: The New Populists," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 4, 1972, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Neal Boortz is an attorney and the host of radio's *The Neal Boortz Show*. His success is in many ways a reflection of the rightward shift in American politics. His show is syndicated in nearly 200 markets across the nation; he has twice been a finalist for the National Association of Broadcaster's Marconi Award as the nation's number one radio talk-show host and his latest book, *The Fair Tax Book*—a work of almost imbecilic inconsistencies and inaccuracies—has been puffed onto the nation's best-seller list thanks to the efforts of various conservative media outlets such as Fox News.

<sup>6</sup> The actual full list was: "decay... failure (fail)... collapse(ing)... deeper... crisis... urgent(cy)... destructive... destroy... sick... pathetic... lie... liberal... they/them... unionized bureaucracy... "compassion" is not enough... betray... consequences... limit(s)... shallow... traitors... sensationalists... endanger... coercion... hypocrisy... radical... threaten... devour... waste... corruption... incompetent... permissive attitudes... destructive... impose... self-serving... greed... ideological... insecure... anti-(issue): flag, family, child, jobs... pessimistic... excuses... intolerant... stagnation... welfare... corrupt... selfish... insensitive... status quo... mandate(s)... taxes... spend(ing)... shame... disgrace... punish (poor... )... bizarre... cynicism... cheat... steal... abuse of power... machine... bosses... obsolete... criminal rights... red tape..." The positive words to be used to apply to conservatives were "share, change, opportunity, legacy, challenge, control, truth, moral, courage, reform, prosperity, crusade, movement, children, family, debate, compete, active(ly), we/us/our, candid(ly), humane, pristine, provide, liberty, commitment, principle(d), unique, duty, precious, premise, care(ing), tough, listen, learn, help, lead, vision, success, empower(ment), citizen, activist, mobilize, conflict, light, dream, freedom, peace, rights, pioneer, proud/pride, building, preserve, pro-(issue): flag, children, environment; reform, welfare, eliminate good-time in prison, strength, choice/choose, fair, protect, confident, incentive, hard work, initiative, common sense, passionate." From *Language: A Key Mechanism of Control*

<sup>7</sup> Lewis H. Lapham, "Tentacles of Rage: The Republican Propaganda Mill, a Brief History," *Harper's Magazine*, (September, 2004), p. 34; The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy estimated that the top 20 of the more than 500 conservative, tax-free foundations

George Wallace continues on page 18

DOMINIONISM *continues from page 1*

As readers of *The Public Eye* know, dominionism—in its “softest” form the belief that “America is a Christian Nation,” and that Christians need to re-assert control over political and cultural institutions—has been on the rise for a long time. Since *The Public Eye* first began writing about dominionism ten years ago, the movement, broadly defined, has gained considerable power. Recently however, the term has become fashionable with some lumping every form of evangelical Christianity and every faction in the Bush White House into one big, single-minded imperial dominionist plot. Dominionism is narrower and more profound than that. It is the driving ideology of the Christian Right.

It comes in “hard” and “soft” varieties, with the “hard” or theocratic dominionists “a religious trend that arose in the 1970s as a series of small Christian movements that seek to establish a theocratic form of government,” according Political Research Associates Senior Analyst Chip Berlet. The seminal form of Hard Dominionism is Christian Reconstructionism, which seeks to replace secular governance, and subsequently the U.S. Constitution, with a political and judicial system based on Old Testament Law, or Mosaic Law (see box). Not all dominionists embrace this view, though most dominionists look back to the early years of the American colonies to argue that before the Constitution, “the United States was originally envisioned as a society based on Biblical law.”<sup>2</sup>

Berlet’s distinction between hard and soft dominionists is clear and broad enough to describe the two main wings of the movement. But these viewpoints, like the terms “theocrat” and “theocracy,” are openly embraced by few. They are terms used by outside observers to understand a complex yet vitally important trend. So for people trying to figure out if a conservative politician, organization, or religious leader is “dominionist,” I notice three characteristics that bridge both the

hard and the soft kind.

1. Dominionists celebrate *Christian nationalism*, in that they believe that the United States once was, and should once again be, a Christian nation. In this way, they deny the Enlightenment roots of American democracy.
2. Dominionists promote *religious supremacy*, insofar as they generally do not respect the equality of other religions, or even other versions of Christianity.
3. Dominionists endorse *theocratic visions*, insofar as they believe that the Ten Commandments, or “biblical law,” should be the foundation of American law, and that the U.S. Constitution should be seen as a vehicle for implementing Biblical principles.

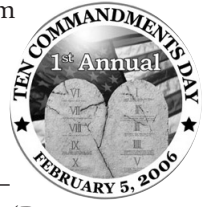
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**Dominionists celebrate *Christian nationalism*, in that they believe that the United States once was, and should once again be, a Christian nation. In this way, they deny the Enlightenment roots of American democracy.**

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Pieces of dominionism spill out in the day-to-day words and activities of our nation’s leaders all the time. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) routinely hosts tours of the Capitol for constituents, Congressmembers and their staffs by Christian nationalist propagandist David Barton. President George W. Bush claimed during one of his presidential campaign debates with John Kerry that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. House

Majority Leader Tom DeLay has said the United States should be governed under Biblical law.



And a dominionist—Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS)—is a hopeful for the Republican presidential nomination for 2008, while other dominionists are challenging the GOP through the Constitution Party, the third largest party in the nation. Moore himself is challenging a business-oriented incumbent in the GOP gubernatorial primary in Alabama for 2006.

Hard dominionists like Moore take these ideas to their extremes. They want to rewrite or replace or supplement the Constitution and Bill of Rights to codify specific elements of Biblical law. This would create a society that would be a theocracy. Soft dominionists like Brownback, on the other hand, propose a form of Christian nationalism that stops short of a codified legal theocracy. They may embrace a flat tax of 10% whose origins they place in the Bible. They are comfortable with little or no separation of church and state, seeing the secular state as eroding the place of the church in society.

Dominionism is therefore a broad political tendency—consisting of both hard and soft branches—organized through religiously based social movements that seeks power primarily through the electoral system. Dominionists work in coalitions with other religious and secular groups that primarily are active inside the Republican Party. They seek to build the kingdom of God in the here and now.

The three-shared Dominionist characteristics of religious supremacy, Christian nationalism, and theocratic visions are on vivid display in the politics of Moore’s ally, Rev. D. James Kennedy, the prominent televangelist. In early 2005, Kennedy displayed Roy’s rock at his annual political conference, “Reclaiming America for Christ” in Ft. Lauderdale. “For more than



Gary Tammontina/Getty Images

Supporters of Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore rallied outside the Montgomery judicial building in August 2003 while it still housed his 5,300 pound sculpture of the Ten Commandments. Moore, a champion of the United States as a Christian nation, was later removed from office.

900 other Christians from across the United States,” reported the *Christian Science Monitor*, “the monument stood as a potent symbol of their hopes for changing the course of the nation.”

“In material given to conference attendees, [Kennedy]... wrote: ‘As the vice-regents of God, we are to bring His truth and His will to bear on every sphere of our world and our society. We are to exercise godly dominion and influence over our neighborhoods, our schools, our government ... our entertainment media, our news media, our scientific endeavors—in short, over every aspect and institution of human society.’”

Kennedy, the *Monitor* noted, “regularly calls the United States a Christian nation that should be governed by Christians. He has created a Center for Christian Statesmanship in Washington that seeks to evangelize members of Congress and their staffs, and to counsel conservative Christian officeholders.”

The *Monitor* story shows Kennedy manifesting all three characteristics of a dominionist: he is a Christian nationalist; he is a religious supremacist; and his pol-

itics are decidedly theocratic.<sup>3</sup> But of the three characteristics, Kennedy would embrace the first, but deny the second and third.

## Moore and the Separation of Church and State

The notion we often hear in public these days—of the supposed suppression of Christian expression by an alleged secular humanist conspiracy—stems largely from the works of Reconstructionist R.J. Rushdoony and those of the Reconstructionist-influenced writer, Francis Schaefer. Tim LaHaye, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson also echo these claims.

The charge can be heard across the decades in Christian Right claims that “secular humanism” is being taught in the public schools and that Christians are “persecuted” in America. A recent variation of this claim was made by soft dominionist, Dr. Richard Land, a leader of the Southern Baptist Convention. “The greatest threat to religious freedom in America,” Land declared, “are secular fundamentalists who want to ghetto-ize religious faith and make the wall of separation between

church and state a prison wall keeping religious voices out of political discourse.”<sup>4</sup>

Virginia Reconstructionist Rev. Byron Snapp maintains, “religious pluralism is a myth. At no point in Scripture do we read that God teaches, supports, or condones pluralism. To support pluralism is to recognize all religions as equal.”<sup>5</sup> This is, of course, exactly what the U.S. Constitution requires.<sup>6</sup> It is because this is so, in part, that there is such a desperate push for what Rushdoony called “Christian revisionism” of history.

Arguably, Moore is emerging as the leading Christian Reconstructionist politician in America. So let’s return to the story of Roy’s rock.

A few years ago, Moore was an obscure Alabama county judge. He gained notoriety when the American Civil Liberties Union sued because he insisted on hanging a hand-carved Ten Commandments plaque in his courtroom and opening the proceedings with a prayer. While the case was ultimately dismissed because the plaintiff lacked standing to sue, Roy Moore

*Excerpt from speech by Rev. Joseph Morecraft, Foundation for Moral Law, February 13, 2004; on the occasion of the introduction of the Constitution Restoration Act in Congress.*

“The late 17th and early 18th centuries are referred to as the Age of Enlightenment, although, I prefer the designation, the Age of Endarkenment. During these decades Europe left its ancient Christian base of faith that truth is known only by divine revelation for a new base of blind faith that man is the measure of all things, and that he can discover truth by reason unaided by revelation.... In the 20th century, America changed foundations and changed gods.”

“So then, if the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do? What should he do? What must he do? Rebuild the foundations! ....

“Hence the central importance of the battle of Judge Roy Moore of Alabama to free the states and the people from unconstitutional federal judicial tyranny and to free us from those judges’ attempts to silence our personal and official acknowledgment of the God upon which this nation was founded, the God of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, the God of the Bible, as the sovereign source of law, liberty and government.”

## What is Christian Reconstructionism?

While Rev. D. James Kennedy of the Coral Ridge teleministry appears to represent “soft dominionism,” he is a borderline case. Some of the political agenda he, Moore and their allies pursue strikes me as hard dominionist. And by this I mean rooted in Christian Reconstructionism, a theology that arose out of conservative Presbyterianism in the 1970’s. It asserts that contemporary application of the laws of Old Testament Israel should be the basis for reconstructing society towards the Kingdom of God on earth.

Led by the movement’s seminal thinker, the late Rev. R. J. Rushdoony, Reconstructionism argues that the Bible is to be the governing text for all areas of life, art, education, health care, government, family life, law and so on. They have formulated a “biblical worldview” and “biblical principles” to inform and govern their lives and their politics. Reconstructionist theologian David Chilton succinctly described this view: “The Christian goal for the world is the universal development of Biblical theocratic republics, in which every area of life is redeemed and placed under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the rule of God’s Law.”<sup>13</sup>

It has been difficult for many Americans to accept the idea that a theocratic movement could be afoot, let alone gain much influence in 20th century America, but Robert Billings, one of the founders of the Moral Majority once said, “if it weren’t for [Rushdoony’s] books, none of us would be here.” This does not, of course, mean that everyone influenced by Rushdoony’s work is a Reconstructionist. Rather, as Billings indicated, it provided a catalyst and an ideological center of gravity for the wider movement of ideas that have percolated throughout evangelical Christianity, and parts of mainline Protestantism and Catholicism for the past three decades.

The original and defining text of Reconstructionism, is Rushdoony’s 1973 opus, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*— an 800-page explanation of the Ten Commandments, the Biblical “case law” that derives from them and their application today. “The only true order,” he wrote, “is founded on Biblical Law. All law is religious in nature, and every non-Biblical law-order represents an anti-Christian religion.” In brief, he continues, “every law-order is a state of war against the enemies of that order, and all law is a form of warfare.”<sup>14</sup>

The Chalcedon Foundation, a Reconstructionist think tank under whose auspices Rushdoony did most of his writing, recently celebrated its 40th anniversary with a conference on the life and work of Rushdoony.

Interestingly, the *Chalcedon Report*, the journal of the Chalcedon Foundation, recently reported that Roy Moore’s Foundation for Moral Law is preparing “to hold seminars that will teach judges, lawyers, and law students about Biblical Law as the basis of America’s laws and Constitution.” “There is a lot more being written and said about this than there was a few years ago,” Moore told Chalcedon Report. “The truth that’s been cut off for so long is being brought out into the open, and it will prevail.”<sup>15</sup>

became a nationally known as the “Ten Commandments Judge.” Moore, 58, turned his notoriety into election as chief judge of the Alabama Supreme Court in November 2000. Six months after his inauguration, he installed the now-famous monument. The ruling by Federal District Court Judge Myron H. Thompson in the inevitable lawsuit declared that the display constituted “a religious sanctuary, within the walls of a courthouse.” He ordered Moore to remove it; Moore refused, and he

was ultimately removed from the bench.

Judge Thompson was additionally troubled by Moore’s partnership with Rev. Kennedy. He wrote that it “can be viewed as a joint venture between the Chief Justice and Coral Ridge, as both parties have a direct interest in its continued presence in the rotunda.... In a very real way, then, it could be argued that Coral Ridge’s religious activity is being sponsored and financially supported by the Chief Justice’s installation of the monument as a govern-

ment official.”

Moore became a *cause celebre* and a popular speaker at major gatherings of such organizations as the Christian Coalition and Eagle Forum. He was publicly courted to head the national ticket of the overtly theocratic Constitution Party in 2004 and he appeared at numerous state party conventions while being publicly coy about his intentions.<sup>7</sup> (Founded in 1994, it was originally called the U.S. Taxpayers Party.) The GOP was rightfully concerned that Moore might divide Bush’s conservative Christian constituency and threaten his reelection.

But he was able to use this leverage to move elements of the GOP in his direction. Moore and his attorney Herb Titus (vice-presidential candidate of the Constitution Party in 1996) drafted the Constitution Restoration Act, which would allow local, state and federal officials to acknowledge “God as the sovereign source of law, liberty, or government” and prevent the U.S. Supreme Court from gagging them. Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL), Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS), and Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL) signed on as the bill’s main sponsors, and announced its introduction at a press conference in Montgomery, Ala., in February 2004.

That same day, a conference sponsored by Moore’s Foundation for Moral Law drew a who’s who of dominionists and dominionist-influenced Christian rightists, including Howard Philips, Herb Titus, John Eidsmoe, Phyllis Schlafly, Alan Keyes and representatives from such leading Christian Right organization as Coral Ridge Ministries, Focus on the Family, Concerned Women for America, and Eagle Forum. One of the featured speakers was Rev. Joseph Morecraft, a leader of the theocratic Christian Reconstructionist movement.<sup>8</sup>

Both the House and Senate held hearings on the bill in 2004, and Sen. Shelby reintroduced it in 2005 (S.520). As of September, it had eight GOP cosponsors. In the House (H.R.1070) Rep. Aderholt had 43 cosponsors. It is a classic and pio-



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neering “court stripping” bill, stripping the Supreme Court of its power of oversight. The clear presumption of the bill is that God’s law is, once was, and should always have been the cornerstone of law and jurisprudence in the United States. While at this writing, the bill has not, and may never progress out of committee, the depth of support for a bill of such profound consequence is one fair measure of how far the most overt dominionist agenda has come.

The rhetoric of Roy Moore, David Barton and other Christian Right leaders notwithstanding, the framers of the U.S. Constitution explicitly rejected the idea of a Christian Nation. The framers, seeking to inoculate the new nation against the religious persecution and warfare that had wracked Europe for a millennium, made America the first nation in the history of the world founded without the blessing of an official god, church or religion. They were leaving behind local theocracies that had governed the colonies for the previous 150 years in which only white propertied

men who were members of the correct, established sect were able to vote and hold public office. One of the formative experiences of the young James Madison was witnessing the beating and jailing of a Baptist preacher who preached—it was against the law in Anglican Virginia.

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**The framers of the U.S. Constitution explicitly rejected the idea of a Christian Nation.**

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Madison went on to become the principal author of both the Constitution and the First Amendment. Among the many

historical issues faced by dominionists who embrace Christian nationalism and seek to revise history in support of their contemporary political aims, one is so clear and insurmountable that it is routinely ignored: Article 6 of the Constitution bans religious tests for holding public office—no more swearing of Christian oaths. By extension, this meant that one’s religious orientation became irrelevant to one’s status as a citizen. It was this right to believe differently, that set in motion the disestablishment of the state churches—and set the stage for every

advance in civil and human rights that followed.

**Granite Rock Begets a Slate of Candidates**

Moore has taken his show on the road, speaking about his alternative view of American history at major and minor Christian Right conventions, and displaying the monument. It is typically cordoned off with velvet ropes and viewed with reverence, awe and rubber necking.

Moore leveraged this notoriety beyond the lecture tour into a campaign for governor of Alabama. Not only is he given a (long)shot at winning the June 2006 GOP primary against the incumbent business oriented GOP governor Bob Riley, *The Atlantic Monthly* reports Moore is assembling “an entire slate of candidates to run under his auspices in the Republican primary... Moore has, in effect established a splinter sect of religious conservatives bent on taking over the Republican Party, and



his reach extends to every corner of the state.” This has establishment types in both parties worried. “In style in if not in substance,” the article concludes, “Moore’s religious populism is a lineal descendant of the race-baiting that propelled Wallace to the statehouse a generation ago.”<sup>9</sup>

Moore evidently set out to provoke a confrontation with the federal courts over the Ten Commandments monument—one he was destined to lose, much as Alabama Governor George Wallace lost in his defense of legal segregation 40 years before.

Some GOP strategists fear that if Moore wins, he may set up a confrontation with the federal government by once again installing the Ten Commandments somewhere the federal courts are likely to rule violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment.<sup>10</sup>

### Conclusion

The sudden rise of a Christian Right agenda in many states and the federal government has taken many by surprise. It may be tempting to see Roy Moore as an exception, but his rise is reviving old coalitions. In 2004, his former spokesman and legal advisor, Tom Parker, was elected as an Associate Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court. At Parker’s request, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas made the trek to Montgomery to swear him in. Ex-judge Moore then also swore him in. “The Chief’s courage to stand for principle over personal position inspired me and animated voters during my campaign for the Alabama Supreme Court” said Parker. “So, I have been doubly blessed to have been sworn into office by two heroes of the judiciary.”<sup>11</sup> But Parker’s politics has additional roots in the politics of the Wallace era. He has longstanding ties to neoconfederate organizations such as the Council of Conservative Citizens and the white supremacist League of the South and calls his home “Ft. Dixie.”<sup>12</sup>

While Alabama has its distinctive politics, we can also see dominionist politics in the mix of the aggressive efforts to restrict access to abortion and to deny equal rights to gays and lesbians—and in

the efforts to teach creationism and its variant “intelligent design” in the public schools.

Naturally, people look for explanations for how it has come to this. There are many factors for this trend, just like any other important trend in history. But many Americans, regardless of their political orientation, seem genuinely baffled and obsessed about one or another factor in the rise to power of the Christian Right: they look to issues of funding, mass media,

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megachurches, dominionism, and so on. It is all of these and more. However, following the logic of Occam’s Razor, that the best explanation is usually the simplest, I offer this: the Christian Right social movement, fueled by the growing influence of dominionist ideology, gained political influence because it was sufficiently well organized and willing to struggle for power. And now they are exercising it.

While most dominionists would say they favor the U.S. Constitution, and merely seek to restore it to the original intentions of the founders, in fact, their views are profoundly anti-democratic. The dominionist worldview is not one based on the rights of the individual as we have come to know them, but on notions of biblical law. Among the political models admired by the likes of D. James Kennedy,

Pat Robertson and Reconstructionist writer Gary North is the Massachusetts Bay Colony, a government ruled by the intensely Calvinist Protestant sect, Puritanism. In the dominionist worldview, the biblically incorrect (and those of other religious views) are second-class citizens at best. While few would admit to the clear implications of Christian nationalism, dominionism in the short run necessarily means, as a matter of theocratic public policy, reducing or eliminating the legal standing of those who do not share their views.

Indeed the dominionist movement and its allies in Congress are actively seeking to eviscerate the capacity of the federal courts to protect the rights of all citizens. Developing a coherent understanding of the ongoing role of dominionism in the dynamic growth of the Christian Right movement will be integral to any effective counter strategy in this, one of the central struggles of our time. ■

*Frederick Clarkson has researched and written about the religious right for going on 25 years. He is the author of *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy*, and is a member of The Public Eye editorial board. He blogs at [www.FrederickClarkson.com](http://www.FrederickClarkson.com) and [www.Talk2Action.com](http://www.Talk2Action.com).*

### End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Frederick Clarkson, “On Ten Commandments bill, Christian Right has it wrong,” *Christian Science Monitor*, April 21, 2004.
- <sup>2</sup> Chip Berlet. 2004. “Mapping the Political Right: Gender and Race Oppression in Right-Wing Movements.” In Abby Ferber, ed, *Home-Grown Hate: Gender and Organized Racism*. New York: Routledge.
- <sup>3</sup> Jane Lampman, For evangelicals, a bid to ‘reclaim America,’ *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 16, 2005.
- <sup>4</sup> Brent Thompson, “Baptist idea of religious liberty affirmed at doctrinal conference,” *Baptist Press*, September 15, 2005.
- <sup>5</sup> David Cantor, *The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance and Pluralism in America*, Anti-Defamation League, 1994.
- <sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Frederick Clarkson, *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy*, Common Courage Press, 1997.
- <sup>7</sup> Fred Clarkson, “Will Roy Moore Crack the Bush base?” *Salon*, May 4, 2004.
- <sup>8</sup> Joe Morecraft III, “Restoring the Foundations,” *Counsel of Chalcedon*, June 2004. This speech is “An Exposition and application of Psalm 11 given at Judge Roy

Moore's Foundation for Moral Law conference in Montgomery, Alabama, February 13, 2004."

<sup>9</sup> Joshua Green, "Roy and His Rock," *The Atlantic Monthly*, October 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Nina Easton, "Conservative's popularity may be problem for GOP," *The Boston Globe*, June 14, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Tom Parker for Justice, <http://www.parkerforjustice.com>

<sup>12</sup> Heidi Beirich and Mark Potok, "Honoring the Confederacy: In Alabama, a well-known Supreme Court candidate lauds an antebellum slave trader and appears with hate group leaders," *Intelligence Report*, Fall 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Frederick Clarkson, *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy*, Common Courage Press, 1997, pg 78.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 79.

<sup>15</sup> Lee Duigon, "Is There Hope for Our Judiciary? Yes, Says Ten Commandments Judge Roy Moore," *Chalcedon Report*, October 6, 2005.

Dominionism means as a matter of theocratic public policy, reducing or eliminating the legal standing of those who do not share their views.



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GEORGE WALLACE *continued from page 12*

alone spent \$1.1 billion between 1990 and 2000. National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, *\$1 Billion for Ideas: Conservative Think Tanks in the 1990s* (New York: NCRP, 1999). In "The Money Man: Can George Soros's Millions Insure the Defeat of President Bush," *New Yorker* writer Jane Mayer contrasts the conservative uproar that greeted the relatively modest contributions of wealthy liberals like George Soros with the lack of attention given by the media to the huge contributions of wealthy conservatives to their ideological cause. *The New Yorker*, October 18, 2004. Literature on these new conservative advocacy foundations is surprisingly thin. Jean Stefanic and Richard Delgado's *No Mercy: How Conservative Think Tanks and Foundations Changed America's Social Agenda* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996) is a useful summary of the interlocking relationship of these groups and a summary of their policy posi-

tions, but it breaks little ground. In his excellent study, *The Idea Brokers*, James Allen Smith seeks to put them in a larger historical context, but one of his more important conclusions—that these conservative policy research organizations would survive only by moving toward the center and away from strong advocacy positions—has been proved wrong in the 13 years since he published his work. A useful recent work is by John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> *Richmond Times Dispatch*, August 5, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> John Samples, Cato Institute Policy Analysis No 417, "Election Reform, Federalism and the Obligations of Voters." <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa417.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> The only mistake the Republican leadership may have made was in underestimating the impact the bill would

have on middle class white older voters. There is little downside to giving a swift boot to the poor and powerless, but taking on the "geezer" voters (as one commentator put it), is not a politically smart move.

<sup>11</sup> "The conversion of all questions of truth into questions of power, a process that truth itself cannot escape if it is not to be annihilated by power, not only suppresses truth as in earlier despotic orders, but has attacked the very heart of the distinction between true and false, which the hirelings of logic were in any case diligently working to abolish. So Hitler, of whom no-one can say whether he died or escaped, survives." Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life*. Translated by E. F.N. Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1974), p. 109.

# Book Review

***IT TAKES A FAMILY***  
*Conservatism and the Common Good*  
 Rick Santorum

ISI Books [an imprint of the  
 Intercollegiate Studies Institute,  
 Wilmington, Delaware]  
 449 pages, \$25 hardcover, 2005.

Reviewed by Eleanor J. Bader

Forget the red state/blue state split. The real divide, articulated by ultraconservative Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum, is over human nature.

“The truth is that human beings are not born naturally inclined to do the right thing,” he writes. “A philosopher once said that the only empirically provable philosophical doctrine is that of original sin: I know it and you know it, and as a father of six, I know none of us is born without it.”

Ignore, for now, the unnamed thinker. Instead, let Santorum walk you through his world, a place where human beings are forever battling against temptation and transgression.

Santorum’s lengthy but readable tract is a for-the-masses guide to contemporary Christian conservatism. An obvious rebuttal to Hillary Rodham Clinton’s 1996 bestseller, *It Takes a Village to Raise a Child*, he focuses on multiple themes: the role of families as arbiters of “social capital;” the centrality of religion in civic life; and the ways popular culture shapes both identity and ideology. Abortion and LGBT rights are, of course, slammed and public education is derided. Needless to say, liberalism is portrayed as one-hair shy of Satanism.

Despite his rhetoric, Santorum comes across as earnest—he seems to truly believe what he writes—as he argues the benefits of a rigid, hierarchical domestic tableau. Much of his doctrine comes from Catholicism’s theory of *subsidiarity*, the principle that all social challenges should be addressed at the level of the smallest possible social unit, the family.

An unabashed supporter of heterosexual marriage, he echoes Irving Kristol’s 1970s dictum that families are the primary arena for lessons in social functioning, the place where boys learn to be men and girls learn to honor and obey their fathers, brothers and husbands. But that’s not all. Santorum is also a booster of Covenant Marriage. “Divorce is simply far too easy to get in

this country,” he writes. “States should put in braking mechanisms for couples who have children under the age of 18. This means a mandatory waiting period and mandatory counseling before a divorce is granted.” His arguments sound rational—until you question who will counsel whom and look at real world reasons for marital dissolution, from spousal battering to marital rape to blatant incompatibility.

What it boils down to is this: According to Santorum, marriage is not for adult pleasure; it is for child-bearing and child-rearing. Consequently, he believes that the dissatisfaction of grown-ups is of little consequence. At the center of his beliefs

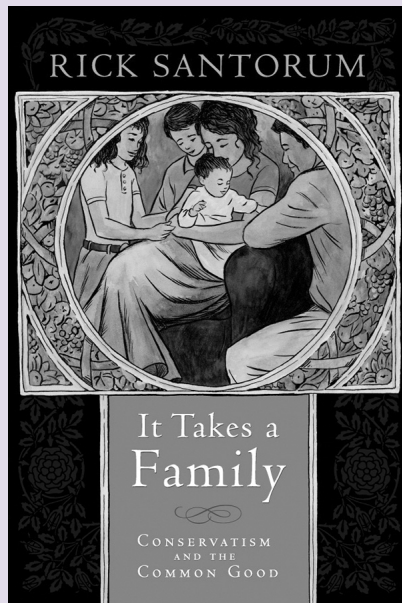
is the rejection of what he calls individualism. Time and again he rails at self-centered adults who give little credence to community needs or the collective good. Here, too, it’s a question of perspective. As he sees it, abortion epitomizes society’s capitulation to individuality by allowing women to define morality for themselves. The same, he continues, is true of sexuality.

“Laws have meaning and therefore, laws teach. When something is legal it has the presumption that it is moral and right. If the sexual unions of men with men and women with women have equal dignity with the union of men and women, then marriage cannot be understood as having anything intrinsically to do with children. Society will teach the next generation that marriage is a self-centered endeavor about adult satisfac-

tion, not children’s well being... Children have a right to a faithfully married mother and father.”

Santorum blames popular culture and the public schools for promoting this rampant individualism and for pushing the idea that thoughtful people can make good, moral choices from an array of options; to hear him tell it, feminists and queers run everything and promote free love at every turn. *Sex and the City* (he calls it *Sex in the City*) and *Friends* come in for particular criticism because they depict unmarried partners having sex for pleasure, not procreation. “Teen pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, addictions to pornography and its debasing message about women and sex, high school drop-outs, depression and suicide: all come in whole or in part from increased sexual activity,” he writes.

For Santorum, cause and effect are simple and there is no need



for references, attribution, or proof to buttress his statements. We should just take his word—he is, after all, a U.S. Senator. Indeed, he presents good and bad in black-and-white, easy to define, terms: Good culture “tells us about life as it really is—it tells the truth.”

Let’s return to *Sex and the City* and *Friends*... Apparently, Samantha, Carrie, Miranda and Charlotte, to say nothing of Joey, Phoebe, Rachel, Chandler, Monica, et.al., live lives so distinct from Santorum’s as to be unfathomable; they are thereby “false,” beyond the pale. And good culture? One need look no further, he argues, than Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*, a film that “tells the truth, no matter how discomforting.”

Got that?  
Just in case you missed the point, in Santorum-ville, truth is never relative; like original sin, it is the same for everyone. In this schema religion is always a social good, to be lauded by government and supported by public policy. The agenda is clear: Intelligent design should be taught in public schools; tax dollars should pay for parochial education under cover of school choice; prayer should be returned to the classroom; and respect for authority should be ironclad. While corporal punishment is not mentioned, it is a short leap from Santorum’s

theories about respect for elders, no matter their behavior. Predictably, pedophilia is ignored.

In the end, Santorum’s straightforward assessment of domestic policies is an instructive look at the Christian right. Although his worldview will stun those unfamiliar with religious conservatism, progressives will likely be equally surprised by his advocacy of workplace flexibility and telecommuting; returning the right to vote to felons after five arrest-free years; using incarceration to teach parenting skills to both male and female detainees; and expanding down-payment assistance programs to enable low and moderate income adults to purchase homes.

Santorum’s *It Takes a Family* raises important questions for progressives and those on the faith-based left. How we approach people who believe that humans are intrinsically evil remains to be seen. But in a country in which 40 percent of the population says they are born-again, we can no longer afford to give these concerns short shrift.

*Eleanor J. Bader is a Brooklyn, N.Y.-based teacher, writer and activist. She is the co-author of Targets of Hatred: Anti-Abortion Terrorism (St. Martin’s Press, 2001).*

**What it boils down to is this:  
According to Santorum, marriage  
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# .....Reports in Review.....

## REVIEW OF THE MONTH

### **The Waltons and Wal-Mart: Self-Interested Philanthropy**

by Betty Feng and Jeff Krehely, *Center for Responsive Philanthropy*, September 2005

With \$90 billion earned from their stake in the Wal-Mart Corporation, the Waltons are the richest family in the world. They manage their money and ownership stake jointly through Walton Enterprises, set up by Sam Walton five years before his death, allowing his wife Helen and four children to avoid paying estate taxes. It is through Walton Enterprises that the family owns 39% of Wal-Mart's stock. So the family controls the corporate giving of the Wal-Mart company's Foundation, which distributed \$170 million in 2004, making it the second largest corporate giver in the country. And the family also controls the Walton Family Foundation, which, according to this splendid report, gives comparatively little given the family huge assets but still managed to give away just under \$107 million in 2003.

What do they do with their money? Given all the black eyes Wal-Mart has gotten, the Wal-Mart Foundation's giving is up 70% from 2002 to 2004, earning it a generous reputation among Americans. Ninety percent of it is distributed through local stores by local managers following corporate guidelines: churches get a lot of it, and other charitable endeavors that would "benefit" a typical Wal-Mart shopper. The average grant is \$1000.

"Corporate philanthropy is tantamount to government-subsidized (through tax breaks) advertising for for-profit corporations,"

write the authors. Put simply, it is part of a company's business plan.

The family foundation, on the other hand, can be credited with propping up charter school and voucher campaigns aiming to privatize schooling. Children's First America—an advocate for vouchers that has written amicus briefs for the U.S. Supreme Court and provides research and materials for allied groups—received \$30.7 million in 2004. One donation that seems to raise the ire of the even-handed authors is the relatively modest \$600,000 given to the Black Alliance for Educational Options, a Washington, D.C. nonprofit which markets vouchers to African Americans, and has been charged with creating only an "image of a grassroots voucher movement." The discredited columnist Armstrong Williams serves on its board, and indeed, like Williams, the nonprofit also got large sums from the Department of Education to peddle the benefits of No Child Left Behind.

Wal-Mart's corporate PAC is the nation's third largest, giving \$2.1 million in 2004. It retains six D.C. lobbyists to promote tax breaks for off-shore holdings, greater restrictions on union organizing, and Medicare prescription drug benefits.

"It appears that philanthropic grant making and campaign contributions to political action committees (PACs), as well as to candidates increasingly represent the surplus capital of the wealthy, which they can devote to promoting their sociopolitical worldview," the authors write. The Waltons are major conservative donors, up there with the Scaife and Koch families, but get far less attention.

## Other Reports in Review

### **Anti-Gay Ministry**

**A Report from "Love Won Out": Addressing, Understanding, and Preventing Homosexuality, Minneapolis, Minn., September 18, 2004**

by Cynthia Burack and Jyl J. Josephson, *National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, New York, 2005*. <http://www.thetaskforce.org/reslibrary/list.cfm?pubTypeID=2#pub230>.

The authors visited a regional ex-gay conference sponsored by James Dobson's Focus on the Family (FOF). They joined a paying audience of ministers, family members, mental health clinicians and youth workers.

Focus on the Family ministers to the family of gay people, all of whom are "hurting." Lesbians and gay men are portrayed as broken, angry and unhappy, and their dysfunctional families in need of support and guidance. Some speakers identified as ex-gay, and some were family members of gay men or lesbians. [This year's lineup features Nancy Heche, widowed by the death of her husband from AIDS and actress Anne Heche's mother.] As a ministry, the religious ex-gay movement stresses the love of God as the healing force for the homosexual "problem."

"We are all heterosexual in our true

nature" . . . but "some of us have a homosexual problem" said speaker Joseph Nicolosi, the president of NARTH, the National Association of Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, and the leading advocate for reparative therapy for lesbians and gay men. The other less well-known figures all were, or had been, employed by Focus on the Family.

The speakers portrayed same-sex attraction as a misplaced need for "love, approval, wholeness, or affection," deemphasizing sexuality and placing the focus of homosexuality on certain parenting styles and on the essentially reparative, or "repairing," drive of homosex-

uality to regain lost childhood security. The conference called for compassion for gay-identified loved ones within the family structure, distinguishing its approach from an anti-gay culture war.

The researchers noticed some theocratic elements in the talks. Joe Dallas, former president of Exodus International, an organization of “ex-gays,” framed homosexuality as a central battleground for the church’s influence on the United States. The authors’ summarized his comments as, “Christians who do not act politically are being unfaithful.”

In referring to data and their own credentials to make their case, the speakers were sometimes misleading. For instance, presenters drew on feminist and “queer” theory’s description of sexual identity as fluid to defend reparative therapy’s work in intervening and changing individuals’ identities.

The audience received several tips and strategies for successful ex-gay campaigns, including trying to avoid punitiveness, cultivate the appearance and reality of compassion, avoid quoting the Bible when dealing with schools, and present yourself as a victim of an anti-free speech campaign by the gay movement.

Watch for Love Won Out conferences in St. Louis in February and Ft. Lauderdale in May.

### Criminalizing the Poor

#### “To Punish the Poor: Criminalizing Trends in the Welfare System”

by Kaaryn Gustafson, *Women of Color Resource Center Working Paper No. 3(2005)*

Poor people are criminals. At least, that seems to be the assumption of state lawmakers putting the 1996 welfare “reform” law into practice, argues Kaaryn Gustafson in her recent report for the Women of Color Resource Center, “*To Punish the Poor: Criminalizing Trends in the Welfare System.*”

State TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) laws invade welfare recipients’ privacy (through drug testing, making welfare files available to law enforcement officials, and fingerprinting); disenfranchise families economically (by permanently barring individuals from welfare benefits); and criminalize childbearing (by setting “family caps” that deny an increase in benefits for children born

to women receiving welfare). All, says Gustafson, in the name of “crime control.”

Race plays a role too. Across time and geography, as African Americans make up a greater percentage of welfare recipients in a state, state lawmakers create increasingly punitive welfare policies, assuming greater criminality among recipients. All this is possible because the 1996 welfare reform law ended welfare as a federal entitlement, allowing states to implement their own rules, regulations and practices. As in the 1950s, Gustafson argues, welfare benefits now reflect the racial climate of each individual state.

### Government Information Remains Hidden

#### A Flawed Tool: Environmental Reporters’ Experiences with the Freedom of Information Act

By Elizabeth Bluemink and Mark Brush, with Darren Samuelsohn and Lacey Phillabaum, *First Amendment Task Force, Society of Environmental Journalists, September 2005*

The Society of Environmental Journalists formed a First Amendment Committee after September 11th, as its members faced greater challenges in securing information from the federal government. Then U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft in October 2001 issued a memo giving federal agencies more leeway in rejecting reporter requests for information under the 1966 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The change is visible and documented in this report, based on interviews with 55 members. In a blow especially to daily news reporters, agencies are no longer responding to routine telephone requests for Superfund or mine inspection reports and are demanding written FOIA requests for once routine information; it is “difficult or impossible to collect information for stories on so-called ‘critical infrastructure,’ such as hydroelectric dams and pipelines”; some reporters are still waiting years later for information, and often when agencies do release documents they cross out large portions; the Departments of Energy, Defense, Mine Safety and Health and the Food and Drug Administration are the worst offenders.

The report has a plan of action for Congress: pass the three Senate bills that would

quicken the process, create a panel to investigate the delays, and establish a special office just to track FOIA requests. Also Congress must clarify that FOIA also covers access to information held by federal contractors.

### Young Women of Color

#### She Speaks: African American and Latina Women on Reproductive Rights

*The Pro-Choice Public Education Project, 2004*

This report is a must-read. Focus groups conducted with young African American and Latina women add still under-represented voices to the mix in ways that challenge standard political strategy. For instance, “rights talk” —like “never go back” or “keep your laws off my body” —“often reference the era before abortion was legal” and has no relevance to these women, many of whom feel in control of their “reproductive rights.” And focusing only on abortion rights overlooks the health challenges that young Latino and African American women do relate to. Some of these challenges are the higher incidence of HIV/AIDS, higher mortality rates for reproductive cancer, and lack of health care coverage in their communities. Also, rather than ignore young women’s desires to have babies, we must connect healthy families and babies with reproductive rights. And since this is a personal issue for these young women, not a political one, talking about reproductive health personally is the way to go.

### From the Right Bloodless Revolution?

#### Cato Supreme Court Review

ed. Mark Moller, *Cato Institute, Washington, D.C., October 2005.*

In the Libertarian Cato Institute’s annual *Cato Supreme Court Review*, criticism of the Rehnquist court can get heated: “The post-New Deal administrative state is unconstitutional, and its validation by the legal system amounts to nothing less than a bloodless constitutional revolution.” ■

# Eyes RIGHT

## FREE PREACH

The chairman of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, Kevin J. Hasson, has published a book *The Right to be Wrong: Ending the Culture War Over Religion in America*. Sounds nice, but what is the Becket Fund? For one thing, it supports spending public tax funds on religious schools. It also has created a website, [www.freepreach.org](http://www.freepreach.org). Yes, that's free preach not free speech.

In a letter beginning with the salutation "Dear Religious Leader," Hasson, wrote last year that "every election year, well-funded groups that oppose true freedom of speech and religious exercise attempt to gag leaders like you."

Although not named, Hasson was referring to groups such as Americans United for Separation of Church and State and People for the American Way, which accurately note that nonprofit groups such as churches should abide by federal tax laws that set limits on how much time and money they spend on certain political activities. Hasson wrote that he wanted to "debunk these exaggerated threats, especially as they relate to preaching from the pulpit and preaching on moral and political issues."

Thus groups that defend the Constitution and Bill of Rights against assaults by the Christian Right are reframed as the real enemies of free speech.

Sources: *The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty promotional mailing, on file at PRA, <http://www.becketfund.org>; American United for Separation of Church and State.*

## IT'S RIGHT TO BE A SURVIVALIST

The lesson of New Orleans, according to the newsletter *American Sentinel*, is that you need to get "The Social Chaos Survival Guide," a pamphlet available by extending your subscription. Warning, "government

bureaucrats cannot protect you from social chaos," the promotional mailing added that "the veneer of civilization is very thin indeed." The text of the mailing plays on unconscious (or conscious) "White Fear" of an invasion of dark-sinned marauders, to use the term proposed by anti-racist social critic Roberto Lovato.

The *American Sentinel* mailing also claimed, "large segments of the U.S. population are conditioned to government hand-outs and will cheerfully accept the imposition of a national police state." According to Lee Bellinger, publisher of the *American Sentinel*, "I specifically designed this manual to guide right-thinking Americans like you." Was that pun intended? Consider that this right-wing newsletter was once titled *Pink Sheet on the Left*, and came printed on pink paper with articles warning that Ted Kennedy was part of the extreme left.

Sources: *American Sentinel promotional mailing, on file at PRA; Lovato, "White Fear," <http://www.alternet.org/story/18734>.*

## TROUBLE IN FANTASYLAND

Disney nurtures an apolitical, family friendly image, but it has long wired its parks for video surveillance. The systems are not obvious, however, nor is the Disney penchant for this monitoring widely known. Now Disney has gone public with a plan to finger scan everyone who goes into its Florida theme parks. A local Orlando, Florida television station poll found 66% upset at the idea of Disney staff monitoring their vacation. Disney says it's to keep track of ticket holders, but civil libertarians wonder where the information will end up.

Source: *Local6.com: "Finger Scanning At Disney Parks Causes Concern," July 15, 2005.*

## CREEPING DARWINISM

It was only a matter of time before two current strands of conservative thought would evolve into a bigger, better claim. Witness the connection between intelligent design, the most recent alternative to evolution, and the claim by conservatives that they have been silenced in the classroom.

Jeff Jacoby, a columnist for the *Boston Globe*, writes:

"How things have changed. When John Scopes went on trial in Tennessee in 1925, religious

fundamentalists fought to keep evolution out of the classroom because it was at odds with a literal reading of the Biblical creation story. Today, Darwinian fundamentalists fight to keep the evidence of intelligent design in the diversity of life on earth out of the classroom, because that would be at odds with a strictly materialist view of the world. Eighty years ago, the thought controllers wanted no Darwin; today's thought controllers want only Darwin. In both cases, the dominant attitude is authoritarian and closed-minded—the opposite of the liberal spirit of inquiry on which good science depends."

Memo to Jacoby: actually, in both the Scopes case and today it is primarily a group of Christian Fundamentalists trying to force the teaching of a religious creation story in the public schools at the expense of the scientific method. However, we must admit the clever phrase "Darwinian fundamentalists" briefly served as a distraction from the facts.

Source: "The Timeless Truth of Creation," by Jeff Jacoby, *The Boston Globe*, October 2, 2005.

# Eye LASHES

## I Beg Your Question?

"Evolution is a religion," not science, to "Creation Evangelist" Ken Ham. He illustrates this point with a drawing of Darwin's *The Origin of the [sic] Species* as a book of scripture on a podium, opened to a page that reads, "This book is the supreme authority in all matters of faith, conduct and thought."

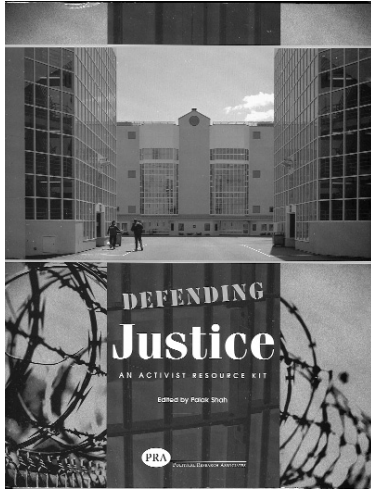
—The Lie: Evolution, (*El Cajon, Calif. Master Books: 1987*), pp. 15-21.

COMPANION WEBSITE LAUNCHED FOR

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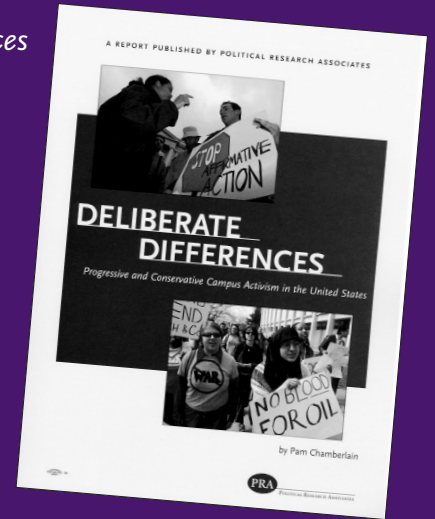
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