

PRAccess

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Welcome!

Political Research Associates (PRA) is an independent, nonprofit research center, based on progressive values, that serves as a national resource for information on antidemocratic, authoritarian, and other oppressive movements and trends. PRA is committed to advancing an open, democratic, and pluralistic society by providing useful, accurate and reliable research and analysis to activists, journalists, educators, policy makers, and the public at large.

At PRA, one of our goals is to have more contact with our supporters and friends, both old and new. So we bring to you PRAccess, our new newsletter, to provide you a glimpse into the inner workings of PRA – from the people that make the PRA engine go. Inside you'll find updates, overviews of PRA resources, article reviews and more!

We hope you enjoy – tell us what you think!



Nikhil Aziz absent from picture

library for the armchair researcher. We have assembled an extensive collection of articles, written by PRA staff and a host of our colleagues from other places, all conveniently sorted and cross-referenced by topic. We also maintain annotated lists of organizations, both on the Left and on the Right, some general and some specific to a project we have worked on, such as the anti-immigrant Right. And we can connect you through the magic of HTML code to many, many more sites.

Knowing that many people first meet PRA online through a web search or a link from another page, we have tried to make the structure or “map” of the site as easy to follow as we can. Wherever you are in our site, you can always get information on how to move around the site by clicking on the “Site Guide” button, and you will find some basic instructions.

If you do find yourself at our home page, you can begin to explore

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Home On the Web

OK. Let's say you are granted three wishes about the Web. What would they be? Here at PRA we use the Internet every day, and we are alternately excited, impressed or frustrated by the state of information available. So we know how useful it is to stumble upon a website that has lots of information, many links to other sources, and some thought-provoking ideas.

We have tried to do just that with our own website, www.publiceye.org. Under the leadership of our indefatigable webmaster (who also doubles as Senior Analyst) Chip Berlet, PRA's

web site can offer you multiple pathways to learning about the Right on the information highway.

www.publiceye.org is designed to be useful to many different parts of our audience: activists, scholars, journalists, students, other researchers. In order to respond to so many needs (we attract over 50,000 visitors per month), the site has grown in size. If you haven't visited recently, you will most definitely notice the change since the last time you visited. We now include over 600 pages of text!

The site has become an online

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around the site either by using the browser (on the left-hand, red-colored frame with a “drop-down” list of choices) or by clicking on any of the underlined “hyperlinks” you find there. We maintain a front page “Up Front” that miraculously updates regularly and gives you the latest features and news from PRA. You can scan the highlighted sections, check out the “Link of The Month,” which propels you to a progressive site doing good work to challenge the Right, order publications online from our growing inventory in our newly reopened online store or read a new article by one of our staffers or someone we’d love for you to get to know. You can also review what past front pages looked like, if you are revisiting and find the site looks a bit different. You can review past issues of *The Public Eye*, our periodical, order a subscription or make a donation to our work. Or you can even peek in at us working away in the office with an exclusive, periodically updated web cam photo!

If that isn’t enough hype to get you to rush to our site, consider that you can influence how this site looks. You can contact us with your own suggestions of information or links or ways to make it easier to use. Careful scrutiny of our material may prompt an addition to our Updates and Corrections page. You never know what you might find at www.publiceye.org.

Happy browsing!

- Pam Chamberlain

The Right Magazines?

The Right’s magazines are having a field day stoking up fear and promoting racist notions about Islam and immigrants, especially those of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent. Here are a few examples:

Chronicles, a magazine of the paleoconservative Rockford Institute, is busily advancing Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” theory in its April 2002 issue.

Roberto de Mattei posits the struggle between Islam and Christianity as a centuries-long war. He commends the Christian fleet that in 1571 defeated the Ottoman Empire at the Gulf of Lepanto, thereby freeing the Mediterranean from Islamic rule and beginning the Ottoman decline. He says that today the West faces a similar threat: “Islamic terrorism is simply a strategic variant of the broader project of conquest whose ultimate goal is the Islamization of our society. The gentler and more effective means of reaching that goal are demographic increase and gradual introduction of Islamic law...”

In a review of Pat Buchanan’s latest book, *The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasion Imperil Our Country and Civilization*, E. Christian Kopff begins by comparing birth rates in Europe to those in Iran and Iraq. He says Buchanan’s book demonstrates “that the population base of Western civilization is disappearing as Europeans and Americans are no longer reproducing themselves even at replacement rate and thus are being supplanted, both in their traditional homelands and in the New World

that they conquered and civilized, by other races, cultures, and religions.” As a result, the newly “civilized” New World is not doing so well: increasing immigration to the United States, along with single-parent homes, free trade, and affirmative action are all, according to Buchanan and Kopff, signs that the West is becoming “a decadent society and a dying civilization.”

In the March 25, 2002 issue of the secular conservative *National Review*, an unsigned article argues that racial profiling could have prevented the September 11 attacks. It says that “personal agenda[s]” have prevented racial profiling from becoming institutionalized since September 11. As an example, the article cites the opposition of the transportation secretary Norman Mineta, who as a Japanese-American was interned when he was ten years old. The article says that because of “[m]odern American racial sensitivities,” we’ve adopted the position that “PC protocols [must] be obeyed, though thousands die.” In opposition to these attempts to protect “the self-esteem of groups” the article argues racial profiling is necessary: “[w]e have to hunt for the likely couriers—and not be shy about flagging possibly innocent people...”

In the same magazine, Mark Krikorian of the Center for Immigration Studies writes that despite all the progress that has been made in tightening immigration enforcement, one taboo has yet to be overcome: decreasing overall immigration levels as a “homeland-security issue.” He presents two rea-

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sons in favor of restricting legal immigration: an overburdened INS that is incapable of performing “homeland security” functions given the current flow of immigrants, and the need to assimilate new immigrant communities lest they provide cover for terrorists.

On the second point, Krikorian says, “Immigrant communities act as the sea within which, to borrow Mao’s phrase, terrorists can swim like fish.” Though Krikorian says limiting Muslim immigrants would be an effective way to stem terrorism, he admits that this seems “contrary to American principles,” and so he advocates limiting immigration across the board.

- *Mitra Rastegar*

**Staff’s current favorite websites :
(in no particular order):**

- www.mediatransparency.org (studies influence of money in media and politics)
- www.kidpics.com (baby pictures!)
- www.worsethanqueer.com (social and political commentary by Mimi Nguyen)
- www.makezine.org (do-it yourself activism)
- www.satirewire.com (satire, pure and simple)
- www.theonion.com (political satire)
- <http://www.mnftiu.cc/mnftiu.cc/war2.html> (satirical look at the “War on Terror”)
- www.fair.org/extra/index.html (homepage of Extra! - a magazine of media criticism)
- www.diversityinc.com (diversity resources portal)
- www.poclad.org (Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy homepage)
- www.publiceye.org/Sucker_Punch/Kovel.htm (Joel Kovel article “Beyond Populism”)
- www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/humanities/staff/FAECRG2.htm (article on Fascism)
- www.arc.org (Applied Research Center homepage)
- www.family.org (Focus on the Family homepage)
- www.commondreams.org (“Breaking News for the Progressive Community”)

Wade Horn and the Bogus Cure for Poverty

Effectiveness be damned when ideology rules. With the Right now in control of the Executive Branch, ideology-based policies can be tested on the people most vulnerable to manipulation — low income women and their children.

Wade Horn, the Assistant Secretary for Family Support at Health and Human Services in the Bush Administration, is a fervent backer of the notion that welfare recipients should marry. In his frequent media appearances, he advocates for a White House proposal to allocate over \$300 million in upcoming welfare reauthorization legislation to encourage welfare recipients to marry and to offer counseling to “preserve” existing marriages. He has even supported a proposal by the Heritage Foundation that a welfare recipient be given a “marriage bonus” for marrying the father of her children and that federal dollars pay for a pro-marriage advertising campaign.

Before his appointment to the Bush administration, Wade Horn was the Director of the National Fatherhood Initiative, one of the more visible organizations of the “fatherhood movement.” Though there are a number of liberal-leaning social service organizations that help fathers improve their parenting skills and take more responsibility for their children, most politically-mobilized organizations of the fatherhood movement are right wing. Many are either part of the Christian Right or aligned with Christian Right ideology.

They oppose single mothers, who,

they claim, are unable to provide appropriate parenting because children cannot be emotionally healthy without a father. They oppose divorce for the same reason and denounce gay families, claiming that the nuclear heterosexual family as the only vehicle for raising “good” children. At the movement’s extreme right are small knots of furious divorced men who are tightly organized and use threatening rhetoric and actions to accuse women of fabricating allegations of abuse and “stealing” their children.

Wade Horn is a “softer, kinder” fatherhood advocate. He claims his interests lie primarily in the welfare of the children and the desire to pull poor families out of poverty. His current central themes are that children are severely harmed by divorce and that two-parent families are less likely to be poor. Horn does not make explicit the women-blaming implication of his position: single mothers, whether divorced or never married, bring harm to their children. The activists of the fatherhood movement are not so circumspect.

But are children severely harmed by divorce? The scholarly and credible research of Dr. E. Mavis Hetherington, who studied 1,400 families, found that 75-80 percent of children of divorced parents adapt to divorce and are not severely harmed by it. But the media — and the Right — more often cite the research of Dr. Judith Wallerstein, the premier advocate of the “divorce = harm” equation, who studied only 59

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families. And is a two-parent family less likely to be poor? Recent research shows that the marriage of two low-income parents is not a panacea for poverty. The marriage of two low-income parents alone, without adequate support services to compensate for the disadvantages of being poor, is unlikely to result in a long-term improvement of that family's stability or economic well-being.

The marriage initiative pushed by Horn, Heritage, and a host of right-wing advocates ignores what research has shown to be the most reliable vehicle for lifting welfare recipients out of poverty — education and job training. Both increase employment opportunities and open a path to self-sufficiency for welfare recipients. Yet the administration's welfare reauthorization plans include further reductions and restrictions on education benefits for women receiving welfare. Other liberal

programs that benefit low-income families, such as childcare, housing assistance, and health care, are in line for deep cuts. Even the Christian rightists and economic conservatives who are promoting marriage as the key to further reducing the welfare rolls cannot argue that education and government assistance do not aid low-income welfare recipients. So why push marriage, which is a dubious solution, over proven programs?

The answer lies in the Bush administration's right-wing ideology. In this case, pro-marriage public policy is the doorway to the broader right wing agenda of family values. The Right loudly asserts that liberalism has caused the breakdown of the family — the alleged root cause of all our social problems. It follows that the restoration of the family is the key to ending those problems. Based in this ideology, the fatherhood movement is the proactive change agent that offers a demon and a cure

for social problems. The demon is liberalism and the women whose options were expanded by it, and the cure is the restoration of the nuclear family. Ending all alternatives to the nuclear family, and simultaneously ending the liberal programs that make those alternatives possible, will restore social order. It is a fantasy that appeals to many voters.

Ironically, the Right's pro-marriage policy depends on social engineering by government programs and their government-funded, faith-based allies. Many of these marriage proponents are the same political players who rail against liberal programs as "social engineering experiments." It seems that "Big Government" can be trusted to do some things — such as promoting the family values social agenda.

— Jean Hardisty

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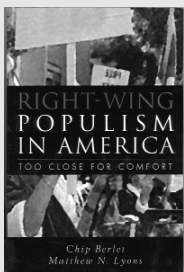
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Have you joined PRA's email list? It's so easy! Just visit www.public-eye.org, and click on the "Get PRA Email List" link in the "About Us" section. Once you've joined, you'll receive special announcements, information and other surprises, and we won't deluge you with messages. Sign up today!

Right-Wing Populism in America is Outstanding!

PRA Senior Analyst Chip Berlet was awarded the Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award by the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Human Rights and Bigotry for his work *Right Wing Populism in America: Too Close*



for Comfort (available from PRA), co-authored with Matthew N. Lyons. The awards were presented in a ceremony Tuesday, December 11, 2001 at the Barnes and Noble Book Store in Boston's Kenmore Square. Due to its overwhelming popularity, the book has gone into its second printing!

Coming to a Town Near You...

The PRA Speakers Bureau is gearing up! Now you'll have the opportunity to meet face to face with the author/activists whose analysis

you've enjoyed over the past 20 years. Please visit our home on the web, www.publiceye.org, regularly for updates.

PRA Celebrates its 20th Anniversary!

PRA will hold its second 20th Anniversary Celebration in New York City on May 22, 2002. The event is part fundraiser/part reception, will go from 6:00pm – 8:30pm, and will be held at:

The RamScale Loft
463 West St.
(between Bank and Bethune)
Suite 1300
New York, NY 10014

Expect great food, fellowship, and a very special musical guest. Contact Allen Jackson (at a.jackson.pra@mindspring.com or 617.666.5300) for more details or an invitation.

Can we count on you?

PRA works hard to inform progressives of right-wing attacks on democracy, with the support of our loyal donors, subscribers and friends like you. If you've enjoyed this newsletter or any of our other publications, or visiting our website, www.publiceye.org, then please let us know. Send in your \$25 donation using the reply device on the preceding page, and do your part to ensure PRA's continued success!

On the Horizon

Here's an excerpt from Bill Berkowitz's article, in the forthcoming Summer 2002 issue of *The Public Eye*:

"Do faith-based programs really work? This critical question has been virtually overlooked in the debate over the president's faith-based initiative. While most supporters have a sheath of anecdotes at the ready, there is no solid empirical evidence that religious institutions actually perform better than secular ones."

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PRAccess.....

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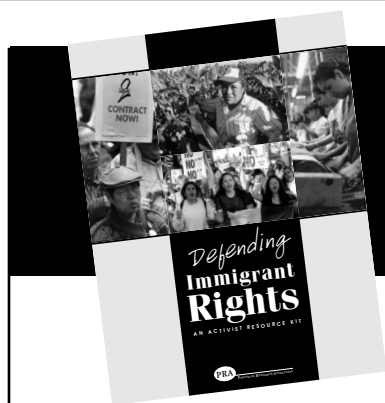
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- Inflammatory TV and newspaper ads by the Right blame immigrants for overpopulation and sprawl.
- The Right's armed vigilantes "protect" our borders.
- New anti-immigrant "security" measures target people of color and "foreigners."

Defending Immigrant Rights – A Resource to Help You

Defending Immigrant Rights, PRA's latest Activist Resource Kit, will help you:

- ✓ Understand the anti-immigrant movement
- ✓ Organize against right-wing campaigns
- ✓ Respond to anti-immigrant arguments
- ✓ Identify important opponents and allies

“ A very timely guide for all activists concerned about the attack on immigrant rights. User friendly and full of information and resources. ”

– Catherine Tactaquin, *Director, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights*