



PRAccess

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Words and phrases go in and out of fashion with alarming speed these days. Some months ago, I noticed that every other conservative pundit seemed to be using the phrase "at the end of the day," as in "at the end of the day, America will still be responsible for policing the world." Then the word "robust" came into vogue with the Bush administration folks: as in "the US has a robust economy, a robust military, the President is in robust health, we're building a Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator."

Here at PRA, we know that at the beginning and at the end of the day, the Right is producing some very robust rhetoric. Fortunately, we offer a variety of resources to help you sort it all out.

In this issue of PRAccess, our Information Specialist Toby Beauchamp invites you to take a look at our special, extensive library collection of books, periodicals and other archived records.

Our interns, Sarah Augusto and Shamarukh Mohiuddin, have contributed articles that illuminate the purpose of so much of the Right's overwrought verbiage: to deflect criticism away from themselves by ridiculing or ignoring progressive efforts toward economic and social justice. Sarah reviews Ann Coulter's slanderous book *Slander!* Shamarukh provides an overview of conservative commentary about the corporate scandals rocking the financial world. Full versions of these articles are available on our web site: www.publiceye.com.

Kate Cloud

Shelving Shame, Filing Hate

Thorough research depends upon thorough sources. Here at Political Research Associates, the foundation of our research is the PRA library. One of the most extensive collections of its kind, our library houses over one half million items by and about the political Right. Our own staff use the library every day, getting in-depth research accomplished largely in-house, answering information requests, or fact-checking work that is nearing publication date. But the library is free and open to the public as well. Should you be able to visit, here's what you can expect to find...

There are some 5,000 books in our collection, comprised of both primary and secondary source materials, and arranged by topic. Browsing through our stacks, you might find yourself caught up in the series *Left Behind*, a fictionalized account of the apocalypse, and then move on to our extensive collection of nonfiction volumes on apocalyptic conspiracism. Or you might find our primary source materials reflecting sexism and heterosexism to be of particular use to a current research project. We also have extensive primary sources on scapegoating, racism, antisemitism and authoritarianism. Additionally, our secondary sources include a range of materials on social movement theory and sociology.

Our periodicals collection archives well over a thousand sample serials, with 120 current subscriptions. Some of these run in full sets back to the early 1980s. As with

all our library materials, our periodical collection covers the entire range of the political Right, from the Focus on the Family magazine to the World Church of the Creator newsletter to the *Conservative Chronicle* newspaper.

Periodicals are often cross-referenced to the organizations that publish them, and we keep extensive files on organizations across the whole spectrum of the Right, from the Republican party to Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, from the Heritage Foundation to the National Association for the Advancement of White People. These files include direct mail appeals, news clippings, pamphlets and flyers.

To balance the collection, we do try to keep our finger on the pulse of the Left, too. The library includes books by progressive researchers, reports from progressive organizations, and other secondary source materials written from a left perspective.

We welcome the general public to visit the library. Just call ahead to let

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Shelving Shame *continued from page 1*

us know you're coming. We have a comfortable, well-lit reading room with additional space and equipment for viewing or listening to our collection of hundreds of video and audiotapes by and about the Right. Staff members are happy to collect some information pertaining to your research before you even get here, and then show you around once you arrive so you can browse on your own. We've hosted researchers of all sorts, including high school students, legal professionals, university professors and community activists. If you're unable to visit our office, our staff will attempt to hunt down information and documentation from our library at your request, and we'll mail or fax a copy of the materials to you for a small fee. We're all so thrilled to have this comprehensive, specialized resource at our fingertips every day, and we're anxious to share it with you, too!

— *Toby Beauchamp,*
Information Specialist

On the Horizon **Marriage in Danger!!**

No, this is not about the increasing divorce rate in the U.S. Although...

Unless you've been out climbing in the Andes you might have heard that the institution of marriage is in serious danger from the "homosexual onslaught." The next issue of the *Public Eye* examines this imminent danger, and analyzes the Christian Right's "defense of marriage" agenda.

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The Unbearable Goodness of Being Greedy

Treasury Secretary Paul O' Neill's confidence in the "genius" of capitalism, even as corporate scandals continue to unravel, might be ironic but it is certainly not surprising. The defense of unfettered capitalism has been a trademark of the contemporary U.S. conservatism ever since the political Right wedded moral traditionalism with libertarian free market principles. Now, in the wake of a corporate crisis, the Right stands ready once again to justify a free-market system that has sustained it for years.

Still, some right-wing critics are unsatisfied with the way the Bush Administration has been defending capitalism. Columnist Donald Lambro in the conservative *Washington Times* complains that, "this is the time when the Bush administration should be, like Ronald Reagan, defending capitalism and expressing confidence in American businesses and the economy. Instead, it seems to be heading for the tall grass, afraid yet another financial scandal will break." (*Washington Times*, 07/01/02). In fact, questionable financial and corporate behavior continues to leak out like the contents of Pandora's Box.

Denial seems to be a consistent theme in the Right's reactions to the corporate scandals. Even as stocks plunge and workers are being laid off, conservative commentators vigorously try to minimize the economic effects of the scandals. Their message: because productivity is high and inflation low, the economy is doing just great! Another group of rightists is less myopic. Having seen

ominous clouds in the distance, they are blaming economic problems on everything from the falling dollar to Osama Bin Laden to Alan Greenspan.

Those on the Right who do address the lack of business ethics are also scrambling to develop an incredible list of scapegoats. Political analyst Ann Coulter, in a column on the conservative website townhall.com, points an accusing finger at former President Clinton, who she says has "bequeathed America a culture of criminality and rationalization by the powerful."

(www.townhall.com, 07/26/02). In the conservative *WORLD* magazine (07/20/02), Timothy Lamer blames college professors for offering a "skewed view of business priorities."

Many conservatives continue to assert that there is no need for government regulations because the market is able to "self-correct." The Right's market fundamentalist prescription, per columnist Steve Chapman, is for government to "step aside" and let the market run its course (www.townhall.com, 07/11/02). James L. Gattuso of the conservative think tank, Competitive Enterprise Institute, has an equally ingenious solution. He agrees that accounting standards need tightening, but "this can and should be done," he says, "through private, rather than political, regulatory bodies." (www.cei.org, 07/28/02).

Conservative commentators in other countries are also rushing to defend the free market. George Tref-

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garne, economics editor of London's *Telegraph* posits that since markets are based on human nature, it is only inevitable that they will "fall victim to humors and passions, such as greed and fear." He says that the very fact that the corporate scandals are taking place shows that "rather than the markets failing, they are working." Like many supporters of unfettered capitalism he fails to mention for whom they are working.

The current Administration's close ties to Enron, Halliburton and Arthur Andersen, demonstrate the links between economic and political actors. Arthur Anderson's promotional video from 1996 shows Vice President Dick Cheney (then CEO of Halliburton) applauding the accounting firm for providing advice "over and above the just sort of normal by-the-book auditing arrangement." (www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0710-01.htm). And not so long ago, President George W. Bush, a long time friend of Enron's Kenneth "Kenny Boy" Lay, was the head cheerleader for the superiority of US business leaders. While campaigning in 2000 he said corporate CEOs were "revolutionizing how businesses conduct their business." (C-Span, 01/04/01). In light of current events, this statement rings devastatingly true.

*Shamarukh Mohiuddin with
Kate Cloud and Nikhil Aziz*

Slander!

Ann Coulter begins her new book, *Slander* by claiming "Instead of actual debate about ideas and issues with real consequences, the country is trapped in a political discourse that increasingly resembles professional

Join Us in Welcoming...

Michael Chapman is PRA's new board chair. Michael has served on PRA's board for several years and brings enthusiasm and fund raising expertise to his new post. He is a member of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and recently moved back home to his reservation where he hopes to be able to "strengthen their capacity to self-determine their future."

Michael has assisted several national Native and non-Native organizations with fund raising and public relations. He also served in the Clinton Administration as Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary and the Deputy Commissioner for Indian Affairs, facilitating many of the administration's tribal consultations on Indian policy.

Michael feels, "PRA is a remarkable, for it provides a context for the times we find ourselves in. In many respects, PRA is the barometer that keeps public policy from being too reactionary during this patriotic siege. It is an honor to serve with my colleagues and be continually inspired and challenged by the collective intellect of PRA's staff!"

Palak Shah is the new researcher for PRA's Activist Resource Kit Series. Prior to working at PRA, Palak was a strategic consultant in the media and entertainment practice at Accenture. Palak is a graduate of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University where she received her B.S. in journalism and political science. She joined the staff in July 2002 and brings enthusiasm and activism to PRA.

"I think the Activist Resource Kits are perfect blend of challenging research and community organizing. I feel very fortunate to have found a group that not only researches issues from a progressive perspective, but actively works to make that analysis accessible to the community level groups," she said.

A child of South-Asian immigrants, Palak has been active in both the progressive and South Asian communities. After graduating high school, Palak helped establish VISIONS Worldwide, a youth-run and youth-led non-profit dedicated to improving public health in developing countries and underserved communities in the United States.

wrestling." If political debate in the United States is the World Wrestling Federation, then Ann Coulter is the SmackDown champion. Slander consists of little more than an angry tirade against all things liberal expressed through sarcastic, inflammatory, and often misleading language. Coulter seems more concerned with bashing liberals and glorifying conservatives than presenting rational, coherent arguments and enhancing the quality of political debate.

Coulter claims that liberals are angry, bitter, vicious, hate-mongering name-callers who make issues out of nothing. Ironically, Coulter is guilty the reverse – making nothing out of issues. Coulter deems ethnic profiling "nonexistent" and states that "the 'religious right' refers to an organization that, strictly speaking, in the technical sense, doesn't exist." I guess the hundreds of young Arab men searched, arrested, and

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Slander! *continued from page 3*

detained without charges in recent months were all chosen at random. Furthermore, while the religious right may not be an organization “in the technical sense,” it most certainly does exist and its supporters have influenced the president’s decision to provide federal funding for faith based initiatives, cut funding to international family planning funds, sent anti-abortion delegates to the United Nations, and pushed for school vouchers.

Perhaps even more disturbing is Coulter’s assertion that “the gravest danger facing most black Americans today is the risk of being patronized to death.” She compares liberals to the Ku Klux Klan because “liberals and white supremacists are the only people left in America who are neurotically obsessed with race.” Apparently, liberals’ “infernal racial set-asides, race quotas, and race norming” are unnecessary because racism, like ethnic profiling, is virtu-

ally nonexistent.

On the other hand, Coulter is quick to point out that “Conservatives champion a color-blind society.” While we can easily replace “color-blind” with blind to discrimination, Coulter nonetheless argues “conservatives in America are the most tolerant (and long-suffering) people in America.” This from the woman who remarked that if Islamic terrorists had enough energy to hate America as much as liberals, “they’d have indoor plumbing by now.” There’s tolerance for you.

Coulter also manipulates information and spins half-truths to back her arguments, often presenting information that is clearly deceptive when viewed in its original context. For example, she refers to a *New York Times* editorial about Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and then goes on to say that “He is called a ‘colored lawn jockey for conservative white interests,’ ‘race traitor,’ ‘black snake,’ ‘chicken-and-biscuit-

eating Uncle Tom,’ ‘house Negro’ and ‘handkerchief head,’ ‘Benedict Arnold’ and ‘Judas Iscariot.’” The paragraph is cleverly crafted to make it look as if these insults appeared in the *Times*, but the footnotes reveal that the first four quotes were taken from an interview with former Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders in *Playboy*, while the last four were comments made by Civil Rights leader Joseph Lowery at a Southern Christian Leadership Council meeting.

Coulter also champions David Brock’s book *The Real Anita Hill*, pointing out that although it was highly criticized by the left, it was a bestseller. However, she fails to note that Brock later admitted that he had fabricated evidence for the book. Nor does she mention that his next book was titled *Blinded by the Right: the Conscience of an Ex-Conservative*. Interestingly enough, a few pages later Coulter remarks that “Books that become

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Slander! continued from page 4

publishing scandals by virtue of phony research, invented facts, or apocryphal stories invariably grind political axes for the left...but it's hard to think of a single hoax book written by a conservative."

Another of Coulter's blatant inconsistencies is the fact that she engages in name-calling throughout *Slander* despite the fact that such behavior is one of her chief complaints about liberals. For example, she refers to Al Gore as "little-Miss-Know-It-All," and "Norman Bates

in the last scene of *Psycho*." Gloria Steinem is "banal" and an "unaccomplished feminist harpy."

Actresses Laura Flynn Boyle and Heather Graham are "worthless silicone nothings" and "anemic Hollywood starlets" for stating their personal opposition to organized religion. The worst of it is saved for liberals, of course, who Coulter calls "snobs," "completely unhinged," "hateful and vicious," "hate mongering," "bitter," "narrow-minded and parochial," and "savagely cruel bigots who hate ordinary Americans

and lie for sport," among other things. Anyone willing to read through her columns, which can be found at townhall.com and anncoulter.org, will find that they, too, are filled with nasty insults and name-calling.

While Coulter's underlying premise about the ineffectiveness of current political debate is a valid point, she completely discredits both herself and her argument with the misrepresentations, half-truths, name-calling, and sheer political malice that fills the pages of *Slander*.

-Sarah Augusto, PRA Intern

Save the Dates!

When: Saturday, November 2, 3-5: p.m.

Where: Sproat Hall St. Paul's Cathedral, Tremont St., Boston

What: A celebration in honor of PRA's good friend and longtime supporter Horace Seldon's 79th Birthday.

Each year, Horace celebrates the work of the Little Giants, four Boston-based organizations he feels are doing exceptional work. This year's Little Giants are:

- Community Change
- Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston
- Boston Society of Vulcans
- Political Research Associates

When: Wednesday, November 20, 6:00 to 8:30pm.

Where: The San Francisco LGBT Community Center, 1800 Market St., San Francisco

What: Political Research Associates 20th Anniversary Celebration

PRA will celebrate its 20-year history of providing information and resources and alerting the progressive movement to dangerous right-wing initiatives at a celebration/fundraiser at the San Francisco LGBT Community Center on Wednesday, Nov. 20, from 6pm - 8:30pm. We hope all our friends, both old and new, will come out and celebrate with us!

For more information on either event, please contact Allen Jackson at 617.666.5300 or via e-mail at a.jackson.pra@mindspring.com.



PRAccess

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A REPORT FROM POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

By Paul Dunphy with Mark Umri Perkins
JULY, 2002



“One of the fundamental changes wrought by Pioneer and its supporters has been a massive shift of public funds from democratically accountable institutions to private, often for-profit entities such as charter schools or corporate-run health care centers.

In education alone, close to \$600 million has been diverted to charter schools, which are answerable not to their community or any democratically elected body, but only to an appointed Board of Education, whose members are largely aligned with Pioneer.

Contrary to Pioneer’s claims, its initiatives have meant higher costs, less access to schools and services (charters are free to limit enrollment) and reduced public scrutiny.

The recent wave of corporate scandals emphasizes, again, the importance of public accountability, and makes it clear that Pioneer is pushing Massachusetts in the wrong direction.”

– Paul Dunphy, Co-author

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