

Special Issue: Race, Migration, & The Environment

IMAGINE 2050

JANUARY 2011



By the year 2050, one out of five Americans will be foreign born. Latino and Asian communities will increase significantly. There will be no clear racial or ethnic majority.

We will become a nation of minorities. Today's perceptions of foreignness will challenge how Americans identify themselves over the coming decades. In light of these challenges, *Imagine 2050* believes igniting candid conversations around race, immigration, and environment will become increasingly necessary to American democracy.

The mission of the Center for New Community is to build community, justice, & equality, but it doesn't explain all that the organization stands for. The Center is a national civil rights organization that challenges powerful threats to democracy with one hand and empowers American communities with the other.

Its leaders work with others who share their vision of a democratic future based on human rights, justice, and equality. The Center is committed to being "on the ground," which is another way of saying, it works with the people who are denied dignity in their daily lives, and who uplift their communities through faith and activism.

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On Earth Day, Environmentalists must not Link Arms with Anti-Immigrant Forces

April 21, 2009

On Earth Day, the environmental movement in the United States must reject bigotry. It must not join hands with anti-immigrant groups who are trying to infiltrate the environmental movement and co-opt its message.

Hiding behind innocuous-sounding names such as America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning, anti-immigrant organizations — many with ties to political extremists — are running full-page ads in progressive magazines such as *The Nation*, *Mother Jones* and *Harper's* and in newspapers such as the *New York Times*.

The goal of these anti-immigrant groups is to lure the environmental community into an America First-style immigration policy. This won't solve anything, and it denies the increasing economic and environmental interconnectivity of the planet.

Many recent immigrants come to the United States

because the free-market policies that Washington forced on Latin America have backfired. Subsistence farmers can't compete against U.S. agribusiness, and millions have had to abandon the countryside. Furthermore, U.S. manufacturers open up shop overseas and then just as quickly close up shop, leaving millions more without jobs.

It's unfair to blame immigrants who come to the United States because Washington's policies make it so they can't eke out a living at home. What's more, climate change is going to cause more people to emigrate from southern countries and from low-lying coastal areas, which will become all but uninhabitable.

These immigrants aren't the cause of the environmental crisis; on the contrary — they are deeply affected by it, and they should not be blamed.

On Earth Day of all days, the environmental movement can't let anti-immigrant groups divert us into a narrow ideological cause that reflects neither realism nor inclusiveness.

Environmental organizations cannot afford to remain silent in the face of a few anti-immigrant leaders who attempt to speak on their behalf. Instead, as environmentalists, on Earth Day and every day, we should uphold a vision of sustainability characterized by cooperation, opportunity and equity.



CAPS Falsely Blames Immigrants for Environmental Problems

April 24, 2009

Environmentalists everywhere need to stand up against hate groups in America.

Californians For Population Stabilization (CAPS) is an anti-immigrant group that has been pushing its racist agenda on Californians for years now. They insist that immigrants are responsible for the “destruction of forests, national parks, and natural habitats; (...) over-consumption of precious natural resources; deadly sewage on our beaches; continually expanding urban sprawl; and more.” Out of all of the bogus, bigoted ideas put forth by CAPS, this is by far the most ridiculous reason to hate on the immigrant community. To make things worse, CAPS recently released Nine Things to Talk About on Earth Day¹— another attempt to position itself as an organization that cares about the environment.

But that’s just it; CAPS isn’t really concerned about population or the environment. Just a few weeks ago Rick Oltman of CAPS was on FOX talking to Glenn Beck.¹ Did he comment on overpopulation or environmental issues?

No, he talked about President Obama’s sweet old aunt, who he thinks should be kicked out of the country.

The main flaw in CAPS’s over-population argument is that immigrants, as a group, have nothing to do with the global population problem. I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again: it does not matter if someone lives in Tijuana or San Diego. Wherever they are, they are still humans contributing to stresses on the environment. As far as mother earth is concerned, population growth is strictly a global problem, and she cares not where you are on the planet. Furthermore, the U.S. imports almost twice the amount of goods as it exports, so most of the negative environmental consequences of our consumerism actually take place elsewhere.

As of now, most environmental groups have not taken a stand against groups like CAPS. This needs to change. We can’t continue to allow hate groups to blame an impoverished and exploited population for our environmental problems.

CAPS keeps trying to push its square peg through a round hole, and it is making itself look pretty darn silly. But silly or not, if these folks continue to position themselves as real environmentalists, someone out there will start to believe them. For the sake of the environment and the people who live in it, this real environmentalist doesn’t want to let that happen.

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Sustaining White America: Population, Environment, and Immigration

July 1, 2009

Ever since John Tanton launched Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) three decades ago, the anti-immigrant movement has used population growth and its environment impacts to advance specious arguments for its restrictionist agenda. The Center for Immigration Studies' (CIS) latest report touting The Environmental Argument for Reducing Immigration to the United States marks another step in the movement's ongoing attempts to lay environmental degradation on the backs of the wrong people.

The anti-immigrant movement is deeply rooted in the population control movement of the 1960s/70s — a movement that often wavered between its racially-tinged, eugenics edges and full-bore blame on overly-consumptive "Americans" (i.e., whites) for the environmental crisis of that era. Today the movement has resolutely staked its claim on those old, racially-tinged arguments in a disingenuous move to lure environmentalists into its fold. By doing so, it has completely abandoned assigning any responsibility for the contemporary environmental crisis on a still-wealthy nation that consumes some forty percent of the world's resources, regardless of immigration levels.

That FAIR and its allies would lay blame for urban sprawl, water shortages, and a host of other problems on immigrants is utterly ludicrous — as if struggling,



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low-wage immigrant workers have purchased high-cost suburban homes on the nation's relentlessly expanding metro edges, or generated the tons of waste that characterize the consumer society.

Behind this facade of blame lies the crux of the Tanton Network's real concern: that whites will soon be a minority among minority populations "in their own country." The extremes of this concern are posted in publications like the Citizens Informer — the newspaper of the white nationalist Council of Conservative Citizens. In a recent letter on Global Warming and White Birthrate Decline, a reader postulated that "White Americans are committing suicide by not replacing themselves while importing highly fertile aliens whose goal is to improve their standard of living by consuming and polluting."

Birthrates in developed (predominantly white) nations worldwide are, indeed, continuing to drop dramatically. Concurrently, the ageing population is rising — by

mid-century those over 60 will comprise 22% of the world's population, double the current rate. This is what FAIR and the anti-immigrant movement doesn't want to talk about: the fact that a reduced, ageing white population in the U.S. is going to be compelled to share resources and power with a growing, younger population of immigrants of color.

In a nation where the primary population growth is among immigrants, it is clear that FAIR and CIS share a singular goal around their renewed efforts to link environmental degradation to population. Disregarding the environmentally destructive consumption patterns of white America, the environment/population problem is, in their view, immigration. The solution is, in their view: stop it. Were they truthful, their (white nationalist) argument would be much simpler: Keep America Beautiful. Keep America White.

Is Treehugger Embracing Hate?

August 15, 2009

It really bummed me out to read David Friedlander's article on treehugger.com¹ titled Yale Essay Says Sustainability and Open Immigration are Often at Odds. The author is not thoroughly informed on immigration, and badly mangles the issue of sustainability and immigration. He should be careful about wandering into this area unless he is fully versed on the environmental agenda of the anti-immigrant movement.²

In Friedlander's piece, he refers to a statement made in an article posted on Yale Global: "Contrary to popular thought, the dominant force fueling America's demographic growth is not natural increase, but immigration. This is because immigrants not only add their own numbers to the nation's overall population, but also contribute a disproportionate number of births whose effects are compounded over time."³

Aside from the falsities present in the Yale Global article (enough for another blog post), Friedlander's skewed interpretation is troublesome. He says, "One can also infer from his essay that immigration is also a driver of global population growth."

That's quite an assumption. When the author of the Yale article said that immigrants contribute a "disproportionate number of births" he was referring to (in his opinion) having "too many births" in the U.S., because of migration. When he says the effects are "compounded over time", he is talking about the exponential growth that will occur as a result of procreation, again, in the U.S.

Friedlander, I hate to break it to you, but you fell right into the well-laid plans of anti-immigrant groups trying to create fear around immigration in the minds of environmentalists. The anti-immigrant movement is a powerful network⁴ and heavily connected to white nationalists. When true environmentalists point to "overpopulation" as a problem, they are talking about global population, not a population within a certain geographical region. And population control — which is usually the conversation anti-immigrant pundits initiate after overpopulation has been established — is also a topic rife with controversy.⁵

Although Treehugger.com has pretty moderate "ecological" viewpoints, it is still considered one of the top sites for information on environmental issues. Yet this isn't the first time Treehugger has veered severely off the environmental line. Take, for example, Tom Szaky's article about importing labor.⁶ Here he claims to solve the problem of U.S. jobs going overseas by proposing "manufacturing towns" in which immigrants are permitted to earn two dollars per hour for up to ten years, when they can finally be granted citizenship.

In Szaky's own words, "This solution would give American manufacturing companies the low-cost labor they require domestically, boost the US population with hard-working immigrants, and revive our old manufacturing towns (among other things)."

Szaky's article has zero consideration for workers' rights, to say nothing of very basic human rights. It's a sick,



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punitive statement that smacks of an ugly era in American history.

Environmental sites need to be wary of publishing controversial "immigration" pieces. Why? Their writers are not experts on immigration, and are susceptible to so-called "experts" with menacing agendas. Readers too need to think critically about what is written on environmental sites, and call out editors when they detect discriminatory elements.

It reflects poorly on all environmentalists when respected sites like Treehugger.com lend a voice to bigotry.

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Anti-Immigrants Believe Third Time's a Charm for Greens

August 19, 2009

This morning I came across a quote from the Christian Bible that says "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The environmental movement, if it is to remain politically relevant, would do well to remember this, as bigots once again target it with anti-immigrant rhetoric and action. Environmentalists' responses will impact the movement's relationship to communities of color for decades to come.

The controversial anti-immigrant organization, the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS),¹ announced on August 18, 2009 that it would hold a "debate" called Immigration, Population, and the Environment² in the Murrow Room at the National Press Club³ in Washington D.C. The Center for Immigration Studies is known for its ties to political extremists, including to white nationalists.

According to the national civil rights organization the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC),⁴ in 2007 Mark Krikorian, executive director of CIS, spoke at the Michigan State University chapter of Young Americans for Freedom. That chapter has been named as a hate group⁵ by SPLC. At the time of Krikorian's speech, the Young American's chapter had been widely covered in the media for staging controversial events — like Catch an Illegal Immigrant Day, a Koran Desecration competition, and posting Gays Spread AIDS fliers on campus.

Krikorian seems not to care that he was part of a speaker's series that included Nick Griffin, a Holocaust denier who heads the British National Party,⁶ and white nationalist Jared Taylor of the revamped White Citizens' Councils⁷ of the segregated area. The Center for Immigration Studies also regularly circulates to its membership articles produced by the white nationalist website VDARE. VDARE⁸ is named after Virginia Dare, allegedly the first white child born in North America. The fact that none of these relationships concern CIS is not surprising, if one knows anything about the founder of CIS.

The Center for Immigration studies was founded by John Tanton, who also founded the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). CIS is part of the John Tanton Network¹⁰ — a network of anti-immigrant front groups and



spin-off organizations designed to give the illusion of being a mass movement. John Tanton's relationship to white nationalism¹¹ has been covered extensively in the blogosphere.

CIS was created to serve as the pseudo-think tank of the John Tanton Network. As Tanton said at the time, according to documents obtained by the Center for New Community, "[f]or credibility, it [CIS] will need to be independent of FAIR, though the Center for Immigration Studies, as we're calling it, is starting off as a project of FAIR." Even today, CIS continues to pretend as if it is a neutral beltway think tank instead of a strategic piece of the anti-immigrant network.

Two of the three panelists in the CIS-sponsored Immigration, Population and the Environment "debate" have deep relationships with the John Tanton Network. Philip Cafaro works with CIS and is a co-author of its recent paper entitled The Environmental Argument for Reducing Immigration to the United States. According to Mickey Fitzpatrick, M.A., who teaches and studies as a doctoral student at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology,¹² "Dr. Cafaro posits in his writings a controversial belief that immigration and immigrant rights impinges on his (and others) freedom to lead his understanding of a good and virtuous life." It also appears that underlying Cafaro's philosophy¹³ is a belief that there is a "moral obligation to protect such a way of life by arguing that a reduction in immigration not only protects the environment and its resources (which he believes are burdened by immigrants), it also fosters the "good life" as he and others know it," Fitzpatrick notes. The gist: eliminating immigrants is the way to maintain the "good life."

Also participating in the three-person panel is Don Weeden, the executive director of The Weeden Foundation.¹⁴ The media release by the CIS fails to mention that Weeden's foundation has funded CIS since at least 2002 and that the foundation's president sits on the board¹⁵ of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) from which CIS was created. In addition, the Weeden Foundation consistently funds Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS).

CAPS staffer Rick Oltman¹⁶ was a former regional director for FAIR, and was also named as a member of the white nationalist Council of Conservative Citizens.

To give the panel a veneer of respectability, CIS invited respected environmentalist Andrew Light¹⁷ to participate at the event. Light is a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress¹⁸ and Director of the Center for Global Ethics at George Mason University. It is in the best interest of the environmental movement to pressure respected speakers like Light not to share a platform with groups and individuals associated with white nationalism.

Environmental organizations cannot afford to remain silent in the face of anti-immigrant activists attempt to speak on its behalf. Local and national environmental leadership should see these resurgent attacks as an opportunity to speak out aggressively against organized bigotry.

Thirty years ago, moderates within the Republican Party remained on the sidelines as radicals drove a so-called Southern Strategy¹⁹ steeped in anti-black racism. Today, the Republican's shrinking membership is quickly sending the GOP into political irrelevancy. Now rejected by most people of color because of their relationship to bigotry, Republicans have a shrinking base from which to grow. If the environmental movement continues to allow the John Tanton Network "to walketh about within its midst," its fate will surely be the same.

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Of Waves and Walls: Climate Change and Structural Racism

September 23, 2009

In his provocative new book *Ultimatum*¹, set in the U.S. in the 2030s, British author Matthew Glass writes that Europe's low-intensity, climate-related warfare in Africa "...is also a racial war, and the countries prosecuting it are becoming increasingly xenophobic." Within Glass's disturbing story of a future environmental and nuclear cataclysm, this observation stands out: climate change and structural racism are inherently inter-related.

Rising seas, drought and other dramatic climate disasters will force migrations of millions³ of peoples of color. The response of receiving and resettlement nations to their arrival (and survival) will — given the restrictions already imposed by predominantly white nations² on immigration — constitute an extraordinary challenge. As waves of people are forced from their homelands, walls and other barriers will rise to keep them out. Coupled with the anticipated economic and political costs of forced migration, Glass's fictional portrayal of racial warfare two decades hence is unnerving.

The infamous and ineffective U.S. border wall with Mexico, which has already cost \$2.4 billion³, is but a harbinger⁴ of things to come. Military and law enforcement initiatives to keep immigrants out of Fortress Europe have resulted in thousands of deaths.⁵ When millions seek survival in these and other lands wracked by climate change, the reception record to-date does not bode well for their welcome. The unconscionable federal response to Katrina, which forced over a million people⁶ from their homes, ought to give pause to doubters. And while community-based responses⁷ to evacuees were truly laudable, racist

rants about resettling tens of thousands of displaced African Americans exposed the underbelly of the structural racism that marked federal rescue and recovery commitments.

The reality of climate-forced migration is upon us. The Maldives, the Pacific islands nation that lies less than six feet above sea level, is already preparing for the coming rise in ocean levels, literally seeking to buy a new homeland.⁸ The nation is going carbon-neutral in its own efforts to stem climate change, and is a leader in the new Alliance of Small Island States⁹ — pressing urgently for serious and immediate responses¹⁰ to the environmental disaster they confront. A Muslim nation, The Maldives faces perilous prospects as it lays the foundation for the forced migration of its people. And whether it "buys" a new homeland or finds a welcoming nation to receive its people, it will likely have to contend with the harsh realities of structural racism that shroud the prospects for peoples of color forced from their homes by the climate challenge the global community now faces.

H.E. Mohamed Nasheed, the Maldives' young and charismatic president, warned in a speech in New York that "if you can't defend The Maldives today you won't be able to defend yourselves

tomorrow." His insight goes far beyond the immediacy of the moment, and drives toward the collective conscience of nations that will, indeed, be unable to defend their actions — and inaction — if they raise walls to keep out the waves of peoples forced by climate change to migrate, and if they fall back to the perils of structural racism for justification in doing so.

Nasheed himself is hopeful; he resolutely declared that "with grassroots movements it is possible to do anything" — a call to be heard and heeded, especially by our nation, immersed as it is in the structural racism that nags its soul by the day, in countless ways and venues, and that stalks its yet-uncrafted response to the urgent challenge of climate change and the coming migrations of people of color.

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Will Restricting Immigration Protect the Environment?

October 29, 2009

The question — will restricting immigration protect the environment — is a pressing one currently discussed across the country, and an issue that the Center for New Community takes quite seriously. I take this issue so seriously that it will be my focus for the next two to three years in my role as Field Organizer for the Center for New Community's new initiative on Migration, Race and the Environment.

Anti-immigrant activists use both Malthusian and nativist theories¹ (described in further detail below) to argue that immigration should be restricted; it is my opinion that these theories lack substance, and thus my answer to this question is that immigration should not be restricted.

The Malthusian theory² was born in 1798, when Malthus published *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, in which he stated that the discrepancy between the rates of population and food growth would lead to a permanent food shortage for humans. Specifically, scholars belonging to the Malthusian tradition claim that populations are constrained by the carrying capacity of the environment, and that population growth causes environmental degradation.

They argue that immigrants contribute to the degradation of the environment by urban sprawl, congestion, pollution, waste generation, water consumption, land conversion, depletion of natural resources (since they are more likely to acquire cars) and biodiversity loss. A detailed explanation of this can be found in Roldan Muradian's article, *Immigration and the environment: Underlying Values and the Scope of Analysis*, published on March 6, 2006. A formula which includes a change in pollution multiplied by a change in population was even created to demonstrate these relationships, and can be found in Surya Prasai's article entitled, *Global Climate Change: US*



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*immigration and its environmental effect*⁶ published on January 28, 2008.

Nativists, on the other hand, worry more about racial composition, claiming that immigrants will alter the racial composition of the United States. Nativists have added environmental concerns to their arguments about a change in the racial composition⁴ of the United States. Garrett Hardin — an advocate of eugenics⁵ and a contributor to the Social Contract website⁶ started by John Tanton — went as far as to say that unrestricted immigration moves people to the food (as opposed to food aid, which moves food to the people) and thus speeds up the destruction of the environment in the rich country.

The Malthusian and nativist theories are weak, limited and incomplete. Evaluation of the environmental impacts of immigrants depends on many factors, such as consumption, technology, and the measurement of impacts. Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis including immigrants' political preferences, economic dynamics, cultural issues and the environmental impacts of immigration worldwide should be conducted. An example of such an analysis, as presented by Roldan Muradian, follows: a Mexican farmer migrating from Chiapas to Houston would use updated and greener transport technologies if he migrates to Houston rather than Mexico City and the environmental impacts of urban sprawl in Texas are less severe than in Mexico's slums, due to better economic and technological capacities.

Urban-rural migration from Mexico to the U.S. probably reduces the expansion of the agricultural frontier into high biodiversity natural habitats in Mexico. Betsy Hartmann suggests in her article *10 Reasons Why Population Control is not the Solution to Global Warming*⁷ that blaming population growth for climate change undermines a progressive climate justice agenda that seeks to reduce economic, social, gender and racial inequalities.

I am convinced that immigration should not be restricted to improve environmental problems. The arguments that Malthusians and Nativists present are not comprehensive enough and do not consider how advancements in the U.S. and other industrialized countries could actually boost efficiency and decrease waste. Also, blaming immigrants prevents wasteful Americans from taking ownership of their contribution to environmental pollution and degradation. A holistic approach, combined with an emphasis on climate justice, would prove much more worthwhile than blaming immigrants for environmental problems.

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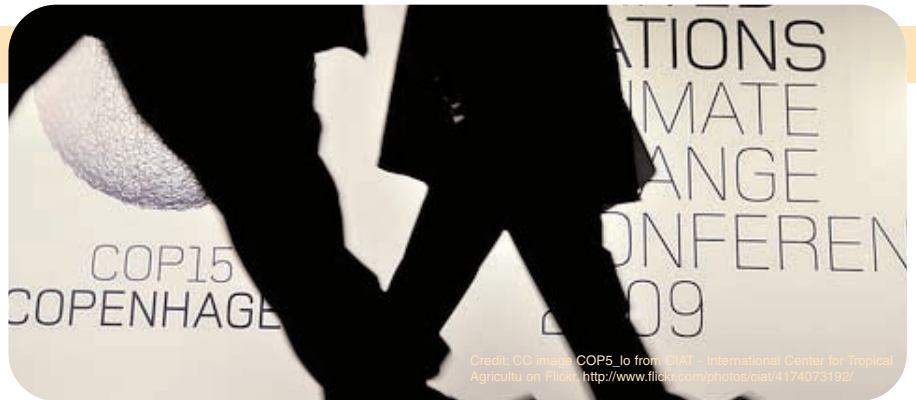
Discussions on Race and Climate Change

November 12, 2009

There is a lot of talk these days about the climate change bill¹ (also known as the clean energy bill) being considered in the Senate. On the eve of the United Nations Climate Change Conference² — in Copenhagen from December 7th to 18th 2009 — it is especially important to incorporate conversations about racism in a discussion about climate change. The climate change bill addresses important issues such as green jobs, and clean energy, and would require industry to cut carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions 20% by 2020.

What the climate change bill does not address however, are issues of race, environmental racism³, environmental justice⁴, and the ways that both climate change and a climate bill affect communities of color. Also rarely discussed is that this comes at a point in history in which controversial individuals like Frosty Woodridge⁵ and politically extreme organizations like the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS)⁶ continuously push environmental organizations to take anti-immigrant stances.⁷

The well-respected civil rights organization the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has described Frosty Woodridge as a “rabid nativist who has accused immigrants of bringing a ‘diseased jihad’ to America and warned that continuing immigration will soon bring “internal civil conflict.”⁸ The SPLC’s take on the Center for Immigration Studies is that “CIS often manipulates data relying on shaky statistics or faulty logic to come to the preordained



conclusion that immigration is bad for this country.”

Those of us who care about our global environment must make sure that the rights of immigrants and minorities are not compromised when addressing the issue of climate change.

Jim Snyder and Silla Brush, in their article Civil Rights groups join climate talks⁹ suggest that climate change itself — as well as the climate bill — may pose disproportionate risks to the African American community. They assert that severe weather patterns have a disparate impact on minority and poor communities, because heat waves worsen air pollution in urban areas, where more than 40% of African Americans live, compared to 20% of white people. Additionally, on a global scale, global warming already has had a severe impact on countries in Africa.

On the other hand, Snyder and Bush suggest that climate change legislation (drafted to improve the problems created by climate change) could lead to a transfer of wealth from urban communities with large black populations to rural

areas that stand to benefit more from “green” jobs created by a carbon cap. Hilary O. Shelton of the NAACP¹⁰ has lobbied to make sure that high schools, community colleges, colleges and universities that serve minority populations receive federal money to help retrain workers in green jobs.

It is not my intention to support or criticize the current climate change legislation introduced in the Senate, but instead to suggest that race not be excluded from the debate. I recommend that we preserve and salvage civil all human rights when addressing environmental issues. Rights of minorities — especially those of immigrants and refugees — cannot be ignored when looking at the amelioration of the environment.

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Anti-immigrant Groups and Environmentalists at Odds

January 7, 2010

As we move into a new month, year, and decade — and closer to the 30th anniversary of Earth Day — we must be mindful of environmental issues, and appreciative of people who are legitimate environmental experts. Conscious and informed environmentalism is imperative to solving dire environmental problems.

However, we must also be aware that there are politically extreme organizations that purport to prioritize environmental preservation/conservation but that actually use environmentalism to promote their anti-immigrant agendas.¹ To accomplish this, they employ several aggressive tactics, including outright attacks on mainstream environmental organizations for not taking an anti-immigrant stance, and TV and radio advertisements which falsely connect immigrants to environmental degradation.²

Jerry Kammer, a senior research fellow at the anti-immigrant Center for Immigration Studies (CIS)³ in his memorandum entitled, *Strategic Negligence: how the Sierra Club's Distortions on Border and Immigration are Undermining its Environmental Legacy*,⁴ attacks the Sierra Club by saying it has “retreated timidly from the national debate over immigration policy.” Kammer also attacks Carl Pope, the executive director of the Sierra Club, for saying that if the Club favored reduced immigration, it would be perceived as assisting people whose motivations are racist. What Kammer refers to as a “smear campaign” is in fact an excellent example of an environmental organization successfully detecting and exposing anti-immigrant extremists who were trying to hijack it.⁵



Credit: CC image cityprojectca from The City Project
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/cityprojectca/1472903232/>

Unfortunately, Center for Immigration Studies is not the only offender we need to be wary of, and most attacks on mainstream environmental organizations are not as overt as Kammer’s memorandum. Negative Population Growth (NPG), an anti-immigrant group financed by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR),⁶ ran an advertisement⁷ in the mainstream E-Magazine in October 2009. Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS) released a multi-media, multi-market ad campaign⁸ at the end of October of 2009. The CAPS ads harshly attacked immigrants, and specifically targeted California communities that are sensitive to environmental problems. Roy Beck, the Executive Director of NumbersUSA,⁹ wrote about the ability of a fence to allow a desert to sprout back to life. Additionally, Progressives for Immigration Reform,¹⁰ another anti-immigrant organization, advertised themselves as an environmental organization on environmental blogs.

These organizations are all working in tandem¹¹ as part of the John Tanton Network,¹² a web of inter-connected anti-immigrant organizations (see this map¹³ for more details.) They have formed a

movement to advance the notion that environmental organizations, and those supporting environmental issues, should take a strong anti-immigrant stance. What can we do about this? For starters, we can educate ourselves. Who are the authors and organizations behind what we read? What have they done for the causes they purport to support? One of the most important steps we can do to combat this racism is to ensure that individuals and organizations who care about the environment are not fooled by those masking themselves as something they are not. There is no room for hatred, racism,¹⁴ discrimination, or division in the environmental movement.

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Anti-Immigrant Leader Admits Using Climate Change for Political Gain

February 23, 2010

The anti-immigrant movement has long capitalized on environmental concerns to attack America's immigrant communities. This tactic was on full display at the Conservative Political Action Conference¹ in Washington D.C., in February 2010.

While most people listened to Newt Gingrich speak, about 75 people assembled in one of the smaller rooms to hear a discussion entitled Immigration: The Defining Issue for the Republican Party, sponsored by American Council for Immigration Reform. The panel's four speakers included: Robert E. Rector, Senior Research Fellow, The Heritage Foundation; Mark Krikorian, Executive Director, Center for Immigration Studies (CIS);² James G. Gimpel, Professor of Government, University of Maryland; and Rep. Steve King³ from Iowa. Each speaker had 20 minutes to speak, followed by a question and answer session. The audience boasted a host of anti-immigrant individuals, including Chad McDonald from NumbersUSA; Wayne Lutton, editor of The Social Contract; Howard Wooldridge, younger brother of anti-immigrant activist Frosty Wooldridge; and James Russell of Catholics for a Moral Immigration Policy.⁴

The panelists made a number of alarming comments throughout the session. Rep. Steve King stated that he "sympathized" with the man who crashed his plane into the IRS building in Texas⁵ on February 18. When asked later in the Q&A session about his comments, King did not take them back, and instead launched into a rant against the IRS for targeting him in his pre-political days. Mark Krikorian,⁶ a man known for his outlandish comments, stated that immigrants are "19th century rural peasant workers" who are coming to 21st century America.

The discussion's most alarming comment came during the Q&A session when a young man asked Mark Krikorian why CIS published articles that supported the theory of global warming on its website. The man also asked Krikorian to explain his and CIS's connections to John Tanton whom he referred to as a man that "favors population control."

Krikorian nonchalantly answered the first question by stating that CIS publishes articles in favor of global warming to force a wedge between different people on the Left.



Krikorian argued that people on the Left can not be in favor of both open borders and taking care of the environment.

Assertions such as Krikorian's — that non-draconian border policy is a prominent cause of eco-ruin — have little stock with serious environmental thinkers (although that does not prevent Center for Immigration Studies from producing slanted reports on the topic.) What is surprising is Krikorian's candor about his organization's true goal — to strategically deploy pseudo-environmental rhetoric to split its opposition.

His comments at the Conservative Political Action Conference also suggest that Krikorian's veneer of environmental concern is so thin that common work with global warming deniers and anti-environmentalists is not beneath him. This is unsurprising, given that Krikorian's career involves promoting white nationalist ideas while adamantly denying that he is a racist — a phenomenon we've also seen with Roy Beck of NumbersUSA,⁷ who co-authored a 2003 report for CIS. Both NumbersUSA and Center for Immigration Studies were established by John Tanton⁸ as front groups⁹ for his anti-immigrant network.

Aiding in Krikorian's enviro-wedding strategy are characters such as Phillip Cafaro, of the misnamed Progressives for Immigration Reform (PFIR)¹⁰ — also part the Tanton Network. Cafaro and PFIR exist as an element of the "wedding" strategy explained by Krikorian at February's conservative gathering. Phil Cafaro also participates in the Weeden Foundation-funded Apply the Brakes network, which gives an anti-immigrant spin to concerns about human population levels. Cafaro's lack of commitment to progressive

causes was further demonstrated by his linking, on January 12 of this year, from his PFIR blog to the white nationalist Social Contract Press¹¹ website.

Coincidentally, Social Contract's editor, Wayne Lutton, was at the Conservative Political Action Conference¹² in Washington D.C. to cheer on his anti-immigrant associates. In addition to releasing racist publications, Lutton is also active with the overtly racist magazine American Renaissance¹³ — the flagship publication of the Council of Conservative Citizens.¹⁴ The Council of Conservative Citizens is the reconstituted, segregationist organization White Citizens' Councils.

It is clear that Krikorian and the rest of the Tanton Network don't care one bit about the environment, as they use climate change concerns only to widen their anti-immigrant platform.

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Center for Immigration Studies Picks Up Torch on Greening Bigotry

April 1, 2010

Anti-immigrant groups are eyeing America's environmental movement in the hopes that it will serve their controversial agenda.

Immigration and climate change might not seem to have much in common, but a bitter battle has been waging between the anti-immigrant movement and mainstream environmental groups for decades. The John Tanton Network is, as usual, deeply involved in this conflict.

The latest example of anti-immigrant attacks on environmentalists comes from Center for Immigration Studies, a controversial anti-immigrant group founded by John Tanton,¹ who also founded the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR).

Spearheading the effort is Jerry Kammer, senior research fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies² with his memo entitled, *Strategic Negligence: How the Sierra Club's Distortion on Border and Immigration Policy Are Undermining Its Environmental Legacy*.

Jerry Kammer doesn't just write about the Sierra Club; he also took his attacks to the Breaking Down the Walls conference³ in Phoenix, Arizona, speaking on a panel called *The Politics of the Environment in the Modern World*. Once again, Jerry Kammer and Center for Immigration studies are trying to divide and conquer environmentalists in the hopes of bringing climate-concerned activists into their anti-immigrant fold.

Leaders in the John Tanton Network may seem to have a genuine interest in environmental issues, but it is important

to remember that John Tanton¹ built his network in part from the \$1.2 million he received from the Pioneer Fund. The Pioneer Fund is a foundation with a history of promoting the genetic superiority of white, European-Americans.

Organizations founded by or in connection with Tanton should not be considered legitimate environmental voices. While Tanton has a long history of personal involvement in environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club, his dissatisfaction with progressive environmentalists grew during the 1970s, and led him down an extreme path. He eventually created groups⁴ like FAIR and CIS to focus on U.S population control, and forged troubling ties with white nationalists.

In the 1990s, Tanton helped with an effort to pressure the Sierra Club to officially take an anti-immigration position. A major battle ensued, with many Sierra Club members seeing the proposed stance as fundamentally racist. Tanton later wrote that "the Sierra Club may not want to touch the immigration issue, but the immigration issue is going to touch the Sierra Club!"⁵

At the time, Carl Pope, current Sierra Club chairman, considered it a hostile takeover attempt.⁶ "The whole idea of people trying to hijack an organization to advance their cause was outrageous," Pope told a *Washington Times* Reporter in 2006. "And I found many of the things he [Tanton] had said since I had known him deplorable and unconscionable."

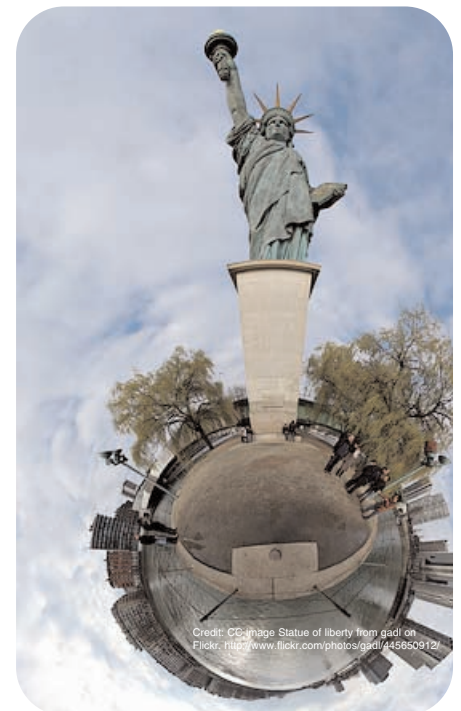
Kammer attacked Carl Pope for trying to protect the integrity of the Sierra

Club when Pope said that if the Sierra Club would come out in favor of lower immigration levels, "we would be perceived as assisting people whose motivations are racist."⁸ Kammer referred to this as a "smear campaign".

Jerry Kammer is trying to continue what Tanton started; he is attempting to green hate⁷ and to force an anti-immigrant voice onto the environmental movement.

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Earth Day Will Not be Rooted in Immigrant Bashing

April 22, 2010

This Earth Day we must counter attempts by anti-immigrant groups to infiltrate our festivities. Groups like California Population Stabilization (CAPS)¹ and NumbersUSA² are attempting to focus on overpopulation by specifically bashing³ immigrants and blaming them for environmental degradation. As environmentalists and activists, it is our responsibility on this day to define the significance and direction of our movement. We must address anti-immigrant bigots who promote a punitive immigration policy and expose their intentions to put forth openly racist agendas.

CAPS participated in Earth Day events in Santa Barbara and San Diego this year, promoting its stance on the correlation between immigration and U.S. population levels. While CAPS considers itself an environmental group, it is important to understand where its interests really lie. CAPS argues that immigrants are responsible for the “destruction of forests, national parks, and natural habitats; [...] over-consumption of precious natural resources; deadly sewage on our beaches; continually expanding urban sprawl; and more.”⁴

Rick Oltman, the media director for CAPS, is also a member of the Council of Conservative Citizens⁵ — formerly known as the White Citizens Council. The Council of Conservative Citizens⁶ statement of principles states:

“We therefore oppose the massive immigration of non-European and

non-Western peoples into the United States that threatens to transform our nation into a non-European majority in our lifetime.”

While CAPS pushes awareness around population, its interest in environmental concerns is clearly unfounded. Like CAPS, the anti-immigrant group NumbersUSA⁷ hosted several articles on its website to mobilize around Earth Day with messages of hate. NumbersUSA president Roy Beck states on his website, “Thursday is the 40th Anniversary of the first Earth Day — and a grim reminder of how immigration has undercut virtually all environmental progress.”

NumbersUSA operates⁸ at the nerve center of the most influential anti-immigrant network in the country. This network, created by John Tanton,² consists of over two-dozen lobby, legal, legislative, and environmental groups that have penetrated mainstream social and political discourse. NumbersUSA⁹ was founded in 1997 under the financial umbrella of Tanton’s U.S., Inc.

NumbersUSA and CAPS have no real programmatic initiatives to address climate change. The interests of both of these organizations lie in stopping immigration, and in blaming immigrants for climate change and environmental degradation. NumbersUSA and CAPS are not legitimate environmentalists, nor do they have legitimate solutions that we should be thinking about on Earth Day.



NumbersUSA and CAPS should be shut out on Earth Day. Instead, the discussion must be led by people who believe that to preserve the earth, we must not exclude people of color from the table. While Earth Day festivals throughout this week focus on climate change, sustainability and community-building, we must make sure that anti-immigrant groups like CAPS and NumbersUSA² do not lead us down the slippery slope into the murky world of white nationalism. No matter how environmentally friendly it purports to be.

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Sustainable Hate

April 26, 2010

The John Tanton Network is having a field day in honor of the 40th Anniversary of Earth Week. Last week, Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), NumbersUSA, Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS), Negative Population Growth (NPG), and Progressives for Immigration Reform (PFIR) shared the same message. Linked together by hate,¹ each of these organizations used Earth Week to blame environmental degradation on immigrants. Groups under the Tanton umbrella are once again² attempting to infiltrate environmental constituencies.

These anti-immigrant groups have a unified vision for a sustainable future. They promote U.S. population stabilization and lower levels of immigration and, throughout Earth Week, they homed right in on these arguments.

They argue that the connection between U.S. immigration levels and U.S. population must be environmentalists' main focus. To understand why, let's examine where these groups are coming from.

The notorious hate group FAIR was founded by John Tanton, who solicited and received over \$1.2 million from the Pioneer Fund, which has a history of promoting the genetic superiority of white, European-Americans. FAIR's Earth Day report states:

"Immigration is the primary factor that fuels demand for new housing construction as secondary migration, spurred by record-setting levels of immigration into existing cities, spawns urban and suburban sprawl... Any credible population policy must address immigration. Environmentalists looking for a population policy compatible with their goals for a sustainable ecological future will find it here."

NumbersUSA was founded in 1997 under the financial umbrella of Tanton's U.S., Inc. and, like FAIR, touts population stabilization to promote an anti-immigrant position to the environmental community:

"NumbersUSA does not take a position on any environmental issue other than immigration's role. Whatever your

stance on various governmental efforts to combat environmental problems, we all can be united in the understanding that immigration is creating the double whammy of creating great pressures for more and more regulation to control environmental consequences while negating any positive effects."

This alleged "greening"³ of FAIR and its allies is merely a piece of a strategy to lure progressives and environmentalists into its anti-immigrant web. Local and national environmental leadership should see these resurgent attacks as opportunities to speak out aggressively against organized bigotry. Environmental organizations cannot afford to remain silent⁴ in the face of anti-immigrant activists who attempt to speak on its behalf.

NPG, financed by FAIR, stated earlier in April that, "in order to truly protect our environment, population growth must be slowed, halted, and eventually reversed. Only by achieving a smaller, truly sustainable U.S. and world population can we ever expect to fully protect our environment." CAPS — also motivated by support from the Pioneer Fund — added flames to the fire with racially explicit words around population control. CAPS and NumbersUSA published a piece attacking the rights granted by the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (which grants citizenship to all people born in the United States, including the children of immigrants) in which they assert:

"Unrestrained mass immigration — with one million legal immigrants and at least three times as many illegal immigrants entering the nation each year — and the elevated birth rates among those immigrants has, in just a quarter of a century, set the stage to remake the ethnic, cultural and political dynamic of the United States."

Last, but not least, an opinion piece written by William Ryerson — the chairman of PFIR and president of Population Institute and the Population Media Center, claims that "Population growth has outpaced the green movement. People today are more environmentally conscious, more energy efficient and far more likely to recycle — but there are a lot more people on



the planet." FAIR's front group, PFIR is simply another addition to a growing list of anti-immigrant groups being set up under the Tanton Network.

It is the intention of these groups to push overtly racist ideologies of exclusion in environmental circles. Organizations with ties to the Pioneer Fund and the Tanton Network do not represent environmentalists, but rather bigots. Environmentalists will not be the back bone for those who wish to preserve the white race, nor will we passively allow groups like FAIR, NumbersUSA, CAPS, NPG, or PFIR to use sustainability rhetoric during Earth Week to promote racism.

All Earth Day Reports Below:

FAIR's report, The Environmentalist Guide to a Sensible Immigration Policy⁵
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Oil Spill Brings Out Best & Worst of Environmental Groups

May 7, 2010

An environmental disaster hit the Gulf coast on April 20, after the Deepwater Horizon rig explosion. With 210,000 gallons of oil¹ seeping into the Gulf of Mexico each day, the damage will be catastrophic. Thousands of birds, fish and shrimp have been removed, covered in oil.² New Orleans can already smell the aftermath. The Gulf can't seem to catch a break with oil fumes choking its atmosphere. We face clean-ups, displaced communities, and families uprooted from their homes.

Disasters like these throw into stark relief the twisted analysis of anti-immigrant organizations like Negative Population Growth (NPG)³ — a group that regularly blames environmental degradation on immigrants and people of color.

The real culprit to blame for the Gulf coast disaster is British Petroleum (BP).⁴

NPG, financially supported by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR),⁵ conveniently ignores the blatant causes of environmental disasters (corporations) by producing data that unfairly blames those who are often the most severely impacted.

An example of this tactic is the recent paper published by NPG about the tragic earthquake in Haiti, and the country's subsequently ravaged population. In discussing plans to aid in Haiti's reconstruction, the author states, "Haiti can never be self-sustaining without a huge reduction in population."

Any discussion of "huge reduction in population" should raise red flags. How exactly is such a huge reduction achieved?

Legitimate organizations may talk of family planning to help improve the quality of life for residents in poor countries, but this is a completely different conversation from "huge" population reductions. This kind of coded and dangerous rhetoric is often employed by anti-immigrant



Credit: CC image Oiled Bird - Black Sea Oil Spill - 19378866 from marinephotobank on Flickr.
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/19378866@N04/2892104789/>

groups that are more concerned with the number and racial composition of refugees, asylum-seekers, and immigrants coming into the US.

Groups like Negative Population Growth³ have one interest in the environment: to arouse an anti-immigrant base that attacks people of color on the basis of climate change, access to resources, and destruction of our ecosystems. The group says as much on its website: "Only with a much smaller population can we protect our fragile ecosystems, conserve our finite resources, and ensure that future generations will inherit a clean and healthy environment where all Americans can enjoy a quality standard of living."

Really? Call me crazy, but I think there might be a few other environmental threats to pay attention to.

If Negative Population Growth had a concern for the ecosystems affected by oil spills or other disasters, it would be holding companies like BP accountable. If an organization devotes itself to issues around preserving resources, one would think it would at least mention the disaster on its website, right? The only recent mention of "oil" on its website is promoting an article about oil supply shortages.

The spill is "really a river of oil flowing out of the bottom of the Gulf," according

to the New Orleans Times-Picayune.⁶ While oil rapidly spreads into our water, and creeps into the blood streams of our crucial fisheries and eventually to our shore line, it is clear that the parties responsible for this are part of a system rife with inefficient accountability measures.

A blogger named Christian rightly points out in solidarity-us.org⁷ that "For those who live in South Louisiana and are flooded every time a major hurricane comes, sometimes every few years, it means a losing battle to hold on to land, community and ultimately culture. The oil companies have never been held accountable for their role in this other, slower disaster."

The environmental movement is desperately scrambling to clean up this mess, save fragile ecosystems and support communities. Why isn't NPG?

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Population and Fake Progressives

May 13, 2010

William Ryerson, president of Progressives for Immigration Reform (PFIR),¹ wrote a response to Julia Whitty's² recent article on population in Mother Jones magazine. Whitty's piece, Population the last Taboo: What unites the Vatican, lefties, conservatives, environmentalists, and scientists in a conspiracy of silence? Population³ explores population growth, consumption and the connection between the two on a global scale. She delves into the "taboo" issue of population, including the controversial anti-immigrant history within the environmental group the Sierra Club.

Ryerson responds to Whitty to set the record straight. It seems he and many others online⁴ don't find the topic taboo; rather they are happy to speak up to defend their territory around population — especially in regards to underlying questions of racism. Ryerson⁵ adamantly protects the right and urgency to discuss population as long as nativists and racists are not at the table, "There are, of course, some racists involved in population and immigration debates. However, their racist arguments are not condoned or supported by the mainstream population stabilization movement. Nor should they be." I'm glad we are on the same page with Ryerson.

Or are we?

Last summer The Social Contract Press⁶ circulated a special issue⁷ for PFIR. The Social Contract Press is a quarterly white nationalist journal founded by John Tanton. This special issue covered the resources and data available on PFIR's website, including its stance on immigration and population: "The results of a national poll of self-identified liberals and progressives which underscores the broad range of political constituencies involved in and the non-

ideological concerns about the current levels of immigration into the United States and the harmful effect that current immigration policies are having on U.S. population growth, the environment, and the availability of jobs."

We need to look a little closer as to why Ryerson wants to come off as "progressive" while at the same time circulating his work in white nationalist networks. As I wrote in my blog on sustainable hate,⁸ PFIR is a front group for Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR).⁹ Whether it be the Tanton film¹⁰ exposing the racist roots of Arizona's S.B. 1070 or the Rachel Maddow investigation into the group,¹¹ there are many signs that we should be concerned with the hate group FAIR.

Check out Imagine 2050¹² for more information on PFIR, including the fact that John Tanton's colleague Roy Beck (and former consultant and editor of Tanton's Social Contract Press) helped staff PFIR by circulating an employment letter for PFIR's executive director in June 2008. It's not clear how Ryerson got tangled in Tanton's nasty web of anti-immigrant front groups, but he remains intertwined with those crafting today's most overtly anti-immigrant, racist bills.

Ryerson is right; racists should not be allowed to participate in the population debate. The deep-seated racism of FAIR and those involved in the Tanton Network guides their interest in the kind of population debate that took place at the Sierra Club, and it is trying again to gain traction. Thanks to Maddow, this has been brought to the forefront. Ryerson has a choice: either remove himself from the debate on population or extricate himself from his white nationalist connections. As someone who also believes that

population shouldn't be a taboo topic, I hope that we are able to spot a racist in progressive drag, and force him to take a stand.

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