



YEAR
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE

2008-2013

IMAGINE 2050

RACE
IDENTITY
DEMOCRACY

In the last five years,

In the last five years, *Imagine 2050* has published thousands of articles that confront bigotry head on. Countless individuals have looked to us for deeper analysis on issues that influence America's future as a just and equitable democracy.

Imagine 2050 was born out of the revelation that by the year 2050, one out of five Americans will be foreign born, leaving no clear racial or ethnic majority. As we quickly become a nation of minorities, today's perceptions of foreignness will change how Americans identify themselves.

While many have embraced these challenges, forging ahead with uniting communities across differences, others have responded to a shifting America with xenophobia, nativism, and racism. In light of these tensions, *Imagine 2050* exists to encourage candid conversations around race, identity, and democracy.

Along with the support of our readers, *Imagine 2050* has been fortunate to have amazing contributors like Jessica Acee in our corner. Through the years, Jessica and others have dedicated themselves to producing timely, relevant, and thought-provoking commentary on issues that matter most to *Imagine 2050* and a larger community of activists, artists, immigrants, and students.

This anniversary issue of *Imagine 2050* takes a look back at all that we have accomplished in the last five years, pulling together stories that really exemplify what we stand for. In this moment of reflection, we also continue to envision a nation that embraces the right of all people to live free from hate, no matter their religious, racial, or ethnic identities.

Our commitment to providing readers with thoughtful analysis and dedicated research every day remains steadfast. We invite you to join us in the journey.

April Callen / Editor
Jill Garvey / Publisher

Many thanks to our regular *Imagine 2050* contributors:

Kalia Abiade, Jessica Acee, Aaron Patrick Flanagan, Jill Garvey, and Lauren Taylor

A very special thank you to Eric K. Ward, our founding publisher and former contributor, as well as former contributors Cloee Cooper, Stephen Piggott, and Domenic Powell.

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By Kalia Abiade

Racism and Teenage Killers in America

Originally posted on Monday, August 2, 2010

By Jill Garvey

It is impossible to measure the suffering of one against that of another. Comparing tragedies never helps make sense of them.

The story of Abelino Mazariego, though, should be told, and it must be compared to others in order to prevent it from happening again. His is the story of human dignity ripped apart.

On the evening of July 17, Mr. Mazariego sat on a park bench in Summit, New Jersey. He had just gotten off a day of work, washing dishes for a local Indian restaurant, when three teenagers approached him. One covered his face with a white cloth, another punched him in the face, and a third hit him again. Then the three fled without taking his money.

There were over a dozen teenagers hanging out nearby. One even filmed the attack with his cell phone. None of them called the police. When he was finally taken to the hospital, a nurse finished up what the teenagers started, stealing \$640 out of his pockets.

Mr. Mazariego died on July 20 of a brain hemorrhage, having never regained consciousness.

When I read about Abelino, I sat in disbelief – another innocent man, an immigrant, murdered by a group of teenagers. Just two years before, Marcelo Lucero lay bleeding in a Suffolk County street – stabbed to death by a group of seven teenagers. They were out for an evening of “beaner hopping”—the “sport” of assaulting Latinos.

Another immigrant, Luis E. Ramirez, was beaten to death by a group of white male teenagers in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania around the same time. Reports of the attack describe it as racially-motivated and brutal. A report by CNN stated, “After a night of drinking, the teens taunted the undocumented worker with racial epithets, pummeled him to the ground and then kicked him in the head, court documents charge. He died in a hospital two days later.”

The articles dedicated to Abelino’s murder quote community members who say the attack was not motivated by race. Police say it was merely a botched robbery.

Despite what those living in Abelino’s quiet suburb have to say, there were reasons those teenagers targeted an immigrant working a low wage job. They knew no one would come to his aid. They knew he was likely carrying cash instead of checks and credit cards. They knew Abelino Mazariego was of so little consequence to the community that a nurse wouldn’t think twice about robbing him as he lay dying in a hospital bed.

Maybe these particular teenagers weren’t out to bash a Latino immigrant “for fun.” That doesn’t mean their attack had nothing to do with pervasive anti-immigrant sentiments. Their crimes occurred during a time when immigrants, especially immigrants of color, are under full assault politically and in the media. The space for everyone from politicians to sheriffs to small-town teenagers to prey on immigrants is expansive and unchecked.

Parents, educators, faith leaders, and law enforcement turned a blind eye to what was happening in their own backyards. That’s the real tragedy occurring in countless towns across the nation – collective, national denial.



Derrick Donchak (l) and Brandon Piekarsky (r) were indicted for the hate crime murder of Luis E. Ramirez.

A wave of hate has swept over our country – not unlike previous shameful periods in American history. Ideological frameworks have been built up for decades to support it, whitewashed to hide their ugliness. Then, over time, furnished with terms like “wetback,” “anchor babies,” “illegal aliens,” “invaders,” “criminals.” Words lifted up by sensational TV personalities, repeated until they became accepted. Frowned upon in public perhaps, but terms privately deemed accurate.

When I was fifteen, I hung out with a guy who would later become a neo-Nazi. One afternoon after school, a bunch of friends were drinking beer at his house. He told us the real version of a story we’d heard before. He was in a car accident a year earlier and an elderly woman had died. Smashed into her car and killed her. He told us he was drunk, blew off a stop sign, smashed into her car and killed her. He told us because of his age his record had just been wiped clean. Then he laughed

hysterically. I never spoke to him again, but that story haunted me.

When a white supremacist leader showed up at our high school some time later, I heard that this boy was his first recruit. I wasn’t surprised. Together, they recruited others to their neo-Nazi group, mostly kids without many friends, looking for a place to belong. There were other teenagers who tried to stop it, but most of us took the first opportunity to leave a place we felt was poisoned with hate and racism.

A few years later one of those recruits went on a shooting rampage, targeting African-Americans and Jews. The community expressed horror and, of course, disbelief. All of this started in a quiet suburb much like Summit, New Jersey. I’ve often revisited those years and thought over and over again about what I could have done differently. Realistically, though, I was still just a kid myself. Parents, educators, faith leaders, and law

enforcement turned a blind eye to what was happening in their own backyards. That’s the real tragedy occurring not just in Summit, but also in countless towns across the nation – collective, national denial.

Locking up a handful of teenagers won’t stop this from happening again. It’s time to take a long, hard look around our communities and confront the bigotry that teaches children to hate. And eventually to kill.

After Civil Rights Gains, English-Only Policies Return

Originally posted on Tuesday, March 2, 2010

By Cloee Cooper



LA-area high school students protest harsh school policies in 1968.

Despite the violent message of “you do not belong here” that rang loud across the halls, Chicano/a students emboldened by civil rights gains in the 1960s, took democracy, freedom and equality into their own hands.

On March 3rd, 1968, over 20,000 students and families took to the streets in East LA to demand equal language rights in their high schools.

13 students were arrested and many more beaten with batons. Months later, high schools across East LA were forced to reconsider their English only policies.

Decades later, the gains and the struggles that underpinned the Civil Rights Movement, are under attack. Pro-English and U.S. English, two organizations part of the John Tanton Network have recently introduced a bill that opens the door for employers to enforce English-only policies in the workplace.

Rep. Tom Price (R-GA) – a member of the House Immigration Reform Caucus (HIRC), introduced the “Common Sense English Act” (H.R. 1588). HIRC was founded by the virulent anti-immigrant former congressman Tom Tancredo and supported by the Tanton Network.

Unfortunately, H.R. 1588 is one of many “English Only” bills that have been drafted and introduced by Tanton Network affiliates in recent years. The English Language Unity Act of 2009 introduced by Rep. Steve King (R-IA), another HIRC member, is also on a seemingly endless list of nativist pieces of legislation and measures.

In the name of Chicano students who walked out of their classrooms, risking their future to demand opportunity and dignity, we might ask ourselves the question: what will it take for us to step out equally as bold against bigotry and racism now?

Decades later, the gains and the struggles that underpinned the Civil Rights Movement, are under attack.

Tomorrow marks the 42nd anniversary of the Chicano Student walkout from LA high schools in 1968. Bold Chicano high school students organized their peers across East LA to demand the right to speak their language without institutionally-sanctioned abuse in their schools.

Students were forbidden from speaking Spanish in class or from using the restrooms during lunchtime. While nearly 70% of the high school students in East LA originated from a Spanish speaking country, the teachers were mandated to physically abuse and humiliate them in front of the rest of the class if they spoke Spanish.

The common drill: a young person slipped and responded to a question in Spanish. The teacher called the student to the front of the room demanding that they place their hands out for the class to see, and proceeded to use a baton against their hands until blood was drawn.

Food Safety Compromised by Poor Regulation and Working Conditions

Originally posted on Monday, October 15, 2012

By Jessica Acee

Metal fragments in your Frosted Mini Wheats? Salmonella in your organic peanut butter? That's just par for the course in modern day food production.

In the past two weeks alone, the FDA has recalled 44 foods for not meeting safety standards. Most involved salmonella bacteria, but metal fragments were also found in some cereal boxes.

Forty-four cases is high, though not out of the ordinary. The previous two weeks (September 15 to October 1) saw 34 recalls of food products for safety violations. Many of the recalled foods were organic or under the Whole Foods brand.

The *Washington Post* reported last year that salmonella infection is on the rise.

While Congress recently gave the FDA more power to food makers and farmers to prevent contamination from salmonella and other pathogens, the agency lacks the funding to do its job. Dr. David Katz, blogging for *Huffington Post*, noted recently that "the FDA has never maintained the person-power required to inspect the food supply with the rigor required to forestall such outbreaks more reliably than they do. And nobody else steps in to pick up the slack."

Imagine what would happen with even more government deregulation. We need government agencies that hold food production companies accountable for health and safety violations and offer incentives that create safer production processes.



Peanut butter is one of many foods that has experienced an outbreak of Salmonella contamination.

Of course the FDA is not the only reason food is making us sick. Conditions for workers at large scale, corporate farms and factories are bad. Wages are stagnant, benefits nonexistent, and safety is a four-letter word. Our food systems will never be clean, safe and healthy as long as workers toil away in unsanitary, demoralizing conditions.

Because agriculture jobs are undesirable, the majority of the workers filling these critical jobs are immigrants. For those who are undocumented (as a large portion are), it's even more harrowing. It's not enough for those that can afford it to buy local. It's not enough to buy organic.

As long as we continue to de-fund the FDA and other agencies, contaminated food will continue to be sold on grocery store shelves. As long as the corporate farms and factories place profit over human life our food supply will always be tainted. As long as the workers who grow, produce, and package our food can't afford to feed their own families, the system will fail.

Media Bias Turns Murderers of Latinos into “Illegal Immigration Activists”

Originally posted on Monday, February 21, 2011

By Jill Garvey

Mainstream news outlets barely cover tragedies when they involve victims who don't fit strict criteria of what is considered worthy of media attention. If the victim is a person of color, poor, or considered unsavory or criminal, it's unlikely that their story will be told. And when media conglomerates do cover these stories, they often get them wrong.

This was the case with 9-year-old Brisenia and her father Raul Flores, who were murdered in their Arizona home in 2009 by Shawna Forde and two alleged accomplices.

Forde's trial took place immediately after the tragic killing of another 9-year-old, Christina Green. The little girl was fatally shot during the assassination attempt on Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ).

Based on the scant coverage of Forde's crimes and trial, however, few realized the overlapping tragedy of these two young Arizona girls both lost to violence. When the Flores murders occurred, they were mostly reported on by bloggers and advocacy groups. Despite, or perhaps because of a climate in Arizona that was rife with violent and dehumanizing activity targeting Latinos, mainstream news failed to give the story enough attention. Shawna Forde was convicted on two counts of first-degree murder, one count of attempted first-degree murder for the shooting of Flores' wife, and related aggravated assault and robbery counts.

Again, little mainstream press attention was paid to the trial and conviction. CNN was one of only a handful of major news networks to report on it. I wish it could be congratulated. Unfortunately, CNN undid any benefit of reporting on the story by repeatedly describing Shawna Forde as an “anti-illegal immigration activist.” A more fitting description would have been “child-killer” or “domestic terrorist.”

Plotting to kill and rob people of a certain ethnicity to support an ideological cause isn't activism, it's terrorism. A person who kills American citizens (as all the victims were) shouldn't be described as “anti-illegal immigration,” she should be described as a cold-blooded murderer, first and foremost.

Ismael Estrada, producer for *AC360*, a CNN program hosted by Anderson Cooper, did write a very sensitive article on the trial. Unfortunately, he or his editors couldn't help but throw in the following line, “Prosecutors say Shawna Forde, a vigilante anti-illegal immigration activist, was not only the woman described in the home, but was also the ringleader of the home invasion and murder.”

Plotting to kill and rob people of a certain ethnicity to support an ideological cause isn't activism, it's terrorism.

Call Forde a vigilante, sure. Call her anti-immigrant, fine. But Shawna Forde wasn't simply targeting undocumented immigrants. She was out to get anyone she perceived as a foreigner, and her twisted definition of foreign clearly had nothing to do with citizenship or the law.

There was at least one sole voice of reason on CNN's roster who didn't find it necessary to describe Shawna Forde as anything but what she is, a murderer. Opinion contributor Ruben Navarrette, Jr. wrote a compelling article for CNN that accurately described the details of the crime. Unfortunately, Mr. Navarrette is essentially alone among his mainstream peers in refusing to adopt rhetoric that is damaging to immigrant communities.

Many have spoken out against biased terminology used by journalists and present in style guides. Colorlines' ‘Drop the I-word’ campaign is just one example of a collective outcry to stop using the dehumanizing term ‘illegal’ to describe immigrants.

But it's about more than just the term ‘illegal.’ It's about a broad spectrum of language and sloppy assertions that unfairly portray immigrants in a negative light. And in this case, portrays those who attack them as something other than violent bigots.

The less than legitimate, but no less influential network, Fox News, took distorted reporting on the Forde trial to a whole new low. Bill O'Reilly referred to the victims as “illegal aliens.” He also falsely portrayed Forde as a nutcase who'd been shunned by anti-immigrant groups. O'Reilly's mistakes go beyond irresponsible reporting, they are complicit in efforts by the anti-immigrant movement to distance itself from Forde and portray the victims as criminals.

Most writers, commentators and journalists have at one time or another mischaracterized someone or something. And sometimes, it is done by mainstream media collectively. The point is not to say if these mistakes are made, but to ask if those who bring us our news have the courage to correct them.

The mainstream media was put on notice long ago about its bias when it comes to rhetoric that dehumanizes immigrants and by extension anyone who may be perceived as a foreigner. And there should be no doubt that this bias is being documented. Violence has already come knocking at the doors of those targeted by xenophobia. History will surely judge those who turned a blind eye.

Never Random: Ignoring the Warning Signs of Organized Bigotry

Originally posted on August 6, 2012

By Domenic Powell



White supremacist Wade Michael Page stormed into a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, WI, and killed 6 people before turning the gun on himself.

Wade Page was not a random killer. He had a network, a plan, and a support base.

Starting with a tattoo on his arm, we see the signs of neo-Nazi indoctrination: a Celtic cross emblazoned with a '14,' referring to the fourteen-word slogan "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children," commonly attributed to David Lane, a founder of white supremacist organization The Order.

As the singer-songwriter for the neo-Nazi skinhead band End Apathy based in Nashville, NC, Page played to white supremacist crowds (one photo clearly indicates the presence of violent Hammerskins) and hinted at his horrific suicide mission. From the End Apathy song 'Self-Destruct' on the "Violent Victory" vinyl release:

Running out of Patience/Waiting for 'That Day'/Just when things are going good/I'll f— it up some way/If I can't move forward/I know I can move back/Blow the band money at the bar/I'm on the Attack.

That Page was a neo-Nazi is not a surprise to anyone; the surprise and shame, frankly, is how willing we have been to ignore the culture that nurtures it.

Are Sikhs suddenly more at risk than they were on August 5, 2012? No—the risk of violence against any subaltern group has always been present, just ignored. Since September 11, 2001, prejudice, violence, and racial profiling against South Asians has soared to new heights, much of it manifesting as Islamophobia.

Some of the public conversation has (to the dismay of many of us) been diverted toward understanding the difference between Muslims and Sikhs, as if the religion of the victims ought to make any difference at all.

Either way, paranoia about the Other has driven some to support undemocratic laws against minorities, and others to violence. While organized nativism might use this flame-filled rhetoric to fire up their base, the Wade Pages among them hear an urgency that cannot be answered sitting down.

The prejudice can be named any number of ways—racism, nativism, xenophobia, or Islamophobia—the underlying current is the same: a racialized idea of who is 'American,' who holds dominion over that identity, and what ought to be done about it. If immigrants can be recast as 'invaders,' racist murderers can be recast as heroes.

The more that any group of people—immigrants, Muslims, or anyone else—is spoken of as an existential threat, the more Wade Pages, JT Readys, Anders Breiviks, or Shawna Fordes there will be to act against it. Wade Page was not the first—not even the first in a while—and without serious thought to how we perceive our country and ourselves, he may likely not be the last.

Sotomayor, Birthers, and the Rise of White Nationalism

Originally posted on Monday, August 10, 2009

By Eric K. Ward

Remember Y2K? The whole country was going to be plunged into barbarism because of a simple computer glitch. Millions of ordinary Americans stockpiled water and food in their basements and stayed home on New Year's Eve shaking in fear.

It was December 1999 and there were four days left in the year. Phone calls from journalists just wouldn't stop and they all wanted to know the same thing. "Would hate groups attempt to terrorize communities on Y2K?"

It was during a time when the Aryan Nations was attempting to establish a white nationalist homeland in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming- an idea they labeled the Northwest Imperative. I was part of a coalition confronting organized bigotry in the Pacific Northwest. Another faction of white nationalists calling themselves militias were also active in the region threatening public officials, environmental activists, and anyone else they deemed as second class citizens.

Earlier in the year (ten years ago today) on August 10th an Aryan Nations member by the name of Buford Furrow Jr. had gone on a shooting spree in Southern California wounding five individuals, including three young children, at a local Jewish community center. Furrow went on to murder a Filipino postal worker before turning himself into authorities.

Every time the phone rang I took a deep breath, a sip of coffee, and said "hate groups' will be doing exactly what I'm planning on doing New Year's Eve." "What's that?" the journalist would ask going for the bait. I would quickly reply "staying at home, feet on the sofa, popping buttered popcorn, and watching Lawrence Welk." While not a suitable quote, I wanted to share with journalists that the majority of the white nationalist's in the United States could care less about Y2K. They were more interested in 2050. According to the U.S. Census Bureau at

the time, 2050 was the year when there would be no clear racial majority in the United States. The media (out of ignorance) and white nationalists (for propaganda value) liked to phrase 2050 as the period when "whites will be the minority in the U.S." as if somehow on January 1, 2050 every minority community will somehow suddenly unify and decide to persecute those considered white.

Unlike Y2K the shift from white supremacy to white nationalism was successful. White nationalism is now mainstream, not because of its success as a movement, but due to our willingness to remain silent.

The big story had nothing to do with Y2K. The real news item was that a shift was occurring. A shift that was taking the movement from the idea of "white supremacy" (i.e. whites are superior and therefore should be in charge) to "white nationalism" (i.e. whites are being victimized and need to create their own nation where they could be in charge). In the world view of white nationalists the U.S. was once theirs but no longer. Buchanan expressed the sentiment to Rachel Maddow on MSNBC thus:

"This has been a country built basically by white folks in this country who are 90 percent of the entire nation-in 1960, when I was growing up, Rachel-and the other 10 percent were African-American who had been discriminated against. That's why."

It is this belief that has been the lynchpin of many recent debates including the Sotomayor confirmation hearings. During the past month the blogosphere and broadcast news has been filled with discussions regarding the rise of the Birthers

- a growing group of individuals allegedly concerned about President Obama's place of birth. In actuality, the Birthers should be described as a political formation with the goal of convincing other whites that Obama is an "other" (i.e. not white) and therefore not American.

The recent disruptions at local town hall meetings discussing the Obama administration's health care proposal has less to do with health care than who gets access (people of color need not apply). It's not surprising that many of the comments made by those disrupting these public events quickly turned to anti-immigrant rants and conspiracies about whites facing martial law. Again underlying the protests was not opposition to health care but the belief that "white America" is under attack.

What to do about 2050 has created some divisions within the white nationalist movement on how best to proceed towards the goal of creating an all-white nation. Some argue that terror is the answer represented in the actions of Holocaust Memorial murderer James W. Von Brunn and anti-immigrant activist and killer Shawna Forde who held that killing religious and racial minorities was the answer.

Other white nationalists like Jared Taylor believe that the definition of whiteness should be expanded to include Jews and Catholics (or at least work with them as short term allies) while also attacking the concept of citizenship as established by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

Regardless of their strategic decisions, by far the best weapon of the white nationalist movement has been the unwillingness of liberals, conservatives, progressives and their respective institutions to reject the advances of white nationalism. Unlike Y2K the shift from white supremacy to white nationalism was successful. White nationalism is now mainstream, not because of its success as a movement, but due to our willingness to remain silent.

Immigration Reform Keeps NumbersUSA Heir From Financial Independence

Originally posted on Wednesday, May 29, 2013

By Domenic Powell

In an eighteen-state ad blitz, NumbersUSA is advocating for the young adults who are “wondering if they’ll ever be financially independent.” The ad being run nationwide strikes out against unemployment, attempting to make a connection to immigration that has been easily and repeatedly debunked. One such young adult is Jeremy Beck, son of NumbersUSA president Roy Beck.

The younger Beck writes regularly for his father’s organization calling out the media for its unsatisfactory reporting on immigration. “Wage suppression doesn’t sell well in Washington – or with the public, for that matter – so the billionaire tech lobby has instead appealed for better access to foreign workers on the grounds that there isn’t enough talent in the United States to meet their demands,” he said in a blog in early May.

Beck has been blogging for NumberUSA for the past several years while he supports his apparently not very lucrative acting career. According to 990s filed by NumbersUSA, he was paid over \$57,418 for “contract work” in 2011. The tax forms also recognize that Jeremy is Roy Beck’s son.



Jeremy Beck, actor and anti-immigrant blogger.

The anti-immigrant thespian has managed to get bit parts on television, including *Person of Interest* and *Law and Order*, apparently while moonlighting as the Director of the Media Standards Project for NumbersUSA. He also played a small role in the film *Gods and Generals*.

Are part-time bloggers and off-off-Broadway actors at risk of losing their jobs to immigrants as well? If you’re interested in helping Jeremy Beck become financially independent from his father, email his agent at agents@professionalartists.net or directly at jbecktex@msn.com.

Despite White Nationalist Ties, Anti-Immigrant Movement Continues to Speak for African-Americans

Originally posted on Monday, September 9, 2013

By April Callen



Screenshot from a 2012 NumbersUSA ad targeting Black joblessness.

While the Black American Leadership Alliance (BALA) has received a fair amount of press this summer for its rallies and “tours” to proselytize that immigrants take jobs from Americans, particularly African Americans, it is NumbersUSA president and founder Roy Beck who has most recently voiced “support” for Black America.

On the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, Beck published a NumbersUSA blog arguing that “[O]ne of the greatest contributors to the huge civil rights advances in the 1960s was the fact that the United States had a tight labor market that increasingly needed Black American workers.” He adds that the “dramatic reduction in annual immigration flows ever since 1921” was “a key reason for the tightness of the labor market.”

Beck continues: “I have long argued for reducing immigration to tighten labor markets as one of the top moral claims on our political system, particularly to level the playing field for Black Americans.”

In Beck’s self-aggrandizing essay, he fails to mention that some of the most obvious contributing factors to Black poverty, unemployment, and underemployment, both presently and historically, are job discrimination and violent systemic racism, not immigrants. Those two factors alone have made it difficult, and in many cases, impossible, for the “playing field” to be leveled.

The NumbersUSA president should be aware, perhaps more than anyone, of the role that racism plays in cultural and economic politics, as he has presented at the Council of Conservative Citizens, a white nationalist organization that has called

African-Americans a “retrograde species of humanity.” Beck and NumbersUSA are also closely tied to noted white nationalist, John Tanton, architect of the modern day anti-immigrant movement. Tanton has funded platforms that debate racial eugenics based on the belief that those identified as the most productive “gene pool of the human stock” should be the ones with access to and control over scarce resources.

The anti-immigrant movement, including BALA, is painfully out of touch with the base they claim to speak for. Nothing more clearly illuminates that than BALA enlisting the Tea Party to promulgate their message. To attract large audiences and attention for their July 15 “DC March for Jobs” rally, BALA bussed in Tea Party members from Texas, Alabama, and Arizona, among other states; and broadened their narrative to say immigrants are taking jobs from the American worker, not simply African Americans. And of the dozen mostly white speakers at that July 15 rally, only a few even remembered to mention the Black jobs crisis.

Though they keep chugging along, BALA and the anti-immigrant movement at large, including Beck’s grassroots NumbersUSA, are losing ground. Support for immigration reform is growing by the day while anti-immigration activists can’t even bother to show up at rallies.

The Boston Bombings and the Threat of Far-Right Violence

Posted on Wednesday, April 24, 2013

By Aaron Patrick Flanagan

In the United States, our collective memory has been lastingly damaged by the wreckage of the Oklahoma City bombing and by September 11. The latter most certainly dominates our psyche, as 9/11 exposed us to the immense cruelty of Osama bin Laden's network and the nonchalance with which most Americans approached their daily lives.

The September 11 attacks and the subsequent "War on Terror" have fueled the fabrication that the only sources of terrorism threatening our country stem from radical Muslims. John Tirrman, Executive Director of MIT's Center for International Studies, blames our news media, which through its singular obsession with radical Islam has ultimately shifted public perception. Tirrman writes, "The 'Muslim threat' meme has so overwhelmed the discussion of political violence that the actual topography of terrorist groups in this country is neglected."

Moments like the recent backpack bombings in Boston only reinforce this point. *The New York Post* printed the photographs of two young men on its front page simply because they "looked" Muslim and were photographed carrying backpacks.

Thankfully, the FBI and other branches of law enforcement have never stopped taking seriously the domestic threat far-right extremist groups pose. Their present diligence, however, came at a cost—Timothy McVeigh's murder of 168 people via a 6,500-pound truck bomb he built with the aid of three others, and with the support

of militia members and associations with groups like the Aryan Republican Army. On February 6, 2002, FBI Executive Assistant Director of Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Dale L. Watson testified before Senate that, "From the 1960s to the 1980s," the FBI believed, "leftist-oriented extremist groups posed the most serious domestic terrorist threat to the United States." After McVeigh and 9/11, Agent Watson testified that, "On the national level, formal right-wing hate groups, such as the National Alliance, the World Church of the Creator (WCOTC) and the Aryan Nations, represent a continuing terrorist threat [...]"

Over the last few years, evidence of the potential for far-right terrorist attacks stands starkly, as their existences far exceed the presence of radical Islamists within our own borders. Southern Poverty Law Center estimates that "the number of conspiracy-minded antigovernment 'Patriot' groups reached an all-time high of 1,360 in 2012, while the number of hard-core hate groups remained above 1,000."

Tirrman adds, "The START database on terrorism in America, which tracks all incidents of political violence, shows that most attacks in the last two decades have been on black churches, reproductive rights facilities, government offices, and individual minorities. And those have been committed mainly by right-wing extremists."

According to a report from Muslims Public Affairs Council (MPAC), to date,

135 total plots against the US government have been planned since 9/11 by domestic extremists who were non-Muslim. Worldwide since 9/11 radical Muslim terrorists have enacted 60 such plots. MPACs report, which collects publicly accessible data from law enforcement and right-wing and left-wing research groups, also reveals that the election of Barack Obama is further fueling these plots. Since the 2008 presidential election, 88 plots by domestic non-Muslim violent extremists have been uncovered, with 38 originating worldwide from radical Muslims.

"The START database on terrorism in America, which tracks all incidents of political violence, shows that most attacks in the last two decades have been on black churches, reproductive rights facilities, government offices, and individual minorities. And those have been committed mainly by right-wing extremists."



Brothers Tamerlan (l) and Dzhokhar (r) Tsarnaev, accused bombers of the Boston Marathon.

In the days after President Obama's election, federal authorities arrested two young neo-Nazi skinheads of the Supreme White Alliance. They were stockpiling weapons to launch a shooting-spree of 88 African Americans that would end in the assassination of President Obama. Prior to this, a similar plot was uncovered in Denver, Colorado, where three neo-Nazis planned to assassinate President Obama when he appeared at the Democratic National Convention.

In May 2012, 10 members of the neo-Nazi American Front were arrested in Florida. The group had been stockpiling weapons and training at the private compound of its leader to kill immigrants, Jews, minorities, Occupy protestors, and to attack a City Hall.

In the immediate wake of the Boston back-pack bombings, some within US media quoted federal authorities that these attacks stemmed from either

"Jihadists" or far-right terrorists. Much of our media, of course, as the New York Post so shamefully demonstrates, latched immediately onto radical Islamists—as it stands now, the suspects are two young Chechen refugees who apparently "self-recruited" themselves into radical Islam.

Sadly, in the absence of a death toll, much of our media is quick to forget, or to dismiss, cases like that of Kevin Harpham. Federal agents arrested the ex-soldier and long-time neo-Nazi, charging him with planting a "backpack bomb" along the planned route of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day march in downtown Spokane, Washington in January 2011. With cases like Harpham's, one can understand why federal law enforcement would entertain far-extremists and radical Islamists alongside one another.

A reported member of the National Alliance, Harpham was also a regular poster on a white supremacist message board

website named Vanguard News Network (VNN), which he used to correspond and to connect with other extremists and to solicit advice for his various plots. Here's a quote from another VNN poster, Victor Gerhard, which illustrates the mindset of these violent extremists: "...We should be blowing up NYC and DC, not waiting for a bunch of camel Jockeys to do it for us."

In Light of Zimmerman Ruling, Racial Profiling Poses Even Greater Threat to Black and Brown Bodies

Originally posted on Thursday, July 18, 2013

By Kalia Abiade



Activists march in New York City to protest racial profiling and stop and frisk policies.

In the days since a Florida jury found George Zimmerman not guilty of murdering 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, there has been an outpouring of reactions across the Internet and in the streets. Race, as it did in the commentary surrounding the trial, has played a major role in working through the outrage, grief and even guilt that many have felt.

Emotional accounts from columnists, celebrities and prominent officials alike have explored what the verdict means to them — as black men and fathers of black boys and men. Mothers of black boys and men have expressed fear that their sons could be next. And, while white privilege is being dealt with out in the open by sites such as Feministing and a new Tumblr, “We Are Not Trayvon Martin,” there is this:

“America does not have a racism problem. It has a problem obsessing about racism. The obsession isn’t black or white, it comes out of the ranks of academics and activists who use it to disrupt society while profiting from the havoc. The Trayvon Martin case is only one of countless cases dug up and deployed by the racism industry to maintain this perpetual consciousness of grievance at the expense of social harmony.”

Those are the words of David Greenfield, writing for *FrontPage Magazine*. He, and others on the right, have used the Zimmerman trial to accuse the media and the left of race-baiting. To Greenfield, the story has become “a toxic sinkhole of politically correct outrage and racial guilt.” However, those who actually study the impact of race and racism on state policy beg to differ.

A recently updated study from the Urban Institute shows that the racial divide is clear and present in cases such as Zimmerman’s. That is, homicides involving a white shooter and a black victim are much more likely to be deemed self-defense than when the scenario is reversed. This is true in states without “Stand Your Ground” laws where 29.3 percent of white-on-black homicides are judged justifiable and only 2.9 percent of black-on-white shootings are.

In “Stand Your Ground” states, 35.9 percent of white-on-black shootings are found to be justifiable, while a mere 3.4 percent of black-on-white homicides are ruled the same. It’s no surprise that Greenfield, a fellow at David Horowitz’s Freedom Center, would willfully ignore such analysis. But it’s important to note that Greenfield isn’t alone in his thinking.

In a widely criticized Washington Post column, Richard Cohen minimized the impact of race in the Zimmerman case, saying he “can understand why Zimmerman was suspicious and why he thought Martin was wearing a uniform we all recognize.” He then criticizes politicians and others who have worn the uniform — hoodies — in solidarity with Martin.

He continues:

“[T]he least we can do is talk honestly about the problem. It does no one any good to merely cite the number of stop-and-frisks involving black males without citing the murder statistics as well. Citing the former and not the latter is an Orwellian exercise

in political correctness. The disproportionate rates of crimes among black individuals cannot be set aside.”

As Ta-Nehisi Coates argues in *The Atlantic*, the problem with Cohen’s analysis is that it calls for the “annihilation of the black individual” by tying the vast majority of black people who do not commit violent crimes to the small minority who do. Further, Cohen ignores statistics that show racial profiling doesn’t work.

Black and Latino individuals are most often the target of racial profiling, so much so that the number of young black men stopped in New York City is actually higher than the number of young black men who live there. But, nine out of 10 of those “stopped and frisked” by police in New York have been completely innocent, according to data from the New York Civil Liberties Union.

The NYPD’s stop-and-frisk practice is still on trial and its surveillance of Muslim communities is the subject of at least two lawsuits. Still, NYC Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, a strong proponent of profiling Black, brown, and Muslim communities and individuals (and someone who says, we may not be profiling enough), is being considered to lead the Department of Homeland Security.

Racial profiling that is allowed — and promoted — at every level of law enforcement sends a message to private individuals that similar behavior is acceptable. This is especially dangerous when individuals feel emboldened by self-defense laws that are stacked against people of color. The Zimmerman verdict cannot be disassociated from these factors. We cannot consider race only when it’s convenient for associating entire communities with criminality. Centuries of race-based policies have created this context and need to be thoughtfully addressed. Failing to recognize that could continue to have deadly consequences.



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