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Tea party activism tied to extremists

By Joel Wendland

The tea party and its Republican Party handlers are on the defensive this week after an Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights report linked several prominent tea party leaders to extremist and openly racist organizations.

To cite some examples, the IREHR report revealed that Karen Pack, a leader of the Wood County Texas tea party in Texas, has been linked to the KKK. According to the report, Pack, who is a self-described “Christian, tea party member, a Constitutionalist and a Patriot,” has been listed as an official supporter by the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and a subscriber to a periodical published by a so-called “white patriot” organization.

Another leader of the tea party movement is Roan Garcia-Quintana of Mauldin, South Carolina, who was identified as “advisor and media spokesperson” for the 2010 Tax Day tea party rally in Greenville, South Carolina. As the IREHR report notes, Garcia-Quintana serves also as a member of the Council of Conservative Citizens, the “direct descendant of the white Citizens Councils that fought to defend Jim Crow segregation during the 1950s and 1960s.”

Dale Robertson helped found, and serves as the president of, 1776 Tea Party, which has an on-line membership located in several cities across



the Southwest and South, from Mesa, Arizona, to Miami, Florida. According to the report, Robertson’s extremist, anti-immigrant views have been well-publicized.

In 2009 “Robertson attended a tea party event in Houston with a sign reading ‘Congress = Slaveowner, Taxpayer = N*ggar.’” He has circulated racist e-mails depicting President Obama as a pimp and has a record of promoting anti-Semitic speakers on his radio program.

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Head of design, marketing, and advertising for the Council of Conservative Citizens newsletter in Florida is Peter Gemma, who also belongs to the ResistNet tea party. He is joined in that group by Tucson, Arizona, native Clay Douglas, who uses their website to promote his anti-Semitic blather-

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ings on his Free American website and radio program. Douglas is known to have blamed Jews for the September 11, 2001, terror attacks. Another ResistNet tea party activist is Arkansas native Billy Joe Roper, founder of a group called “White Revolution.” Roper’s group favors racial segregation and regularly denounces civil rights laws.

Virginia tea party activist, Larry Pratt was a leading figure in the anti-government militia movements in the 1990s, has participated in the KKK, Aryan Nations, and so-called Christian Identity groups, which preach, along with white supremacy, that Jews are Satanic and people of color are “mud people.”

Recent events not discussed in the report reveal how far tea party supporters of Republican candidates are willing to go in this election. For example, the race for Michigan Attorney General turned ugly this week when supporters of the Republican candidate’s campaign lobbed anti-Semitic attacks on David Leyton, the Democratic candidate.

According to a story in the central Michigan

Morning Sun, one supporter of the Republican who had been used in campaign commercials posted a string of anti-Semitic comments on a news website. Another incident in Arizona revealed further how vicious and violent tea party activists can get to further their cause. Rep. Raul Grijalva was forced to close a congressional office in Tucson, Arizona, this week after a staffer opened a letter covered with swastikas and containing what seems to have been toxic white power.

“These groups and individuals are out there, and we ignore them at our own peril,” said NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous in a press statement. “They are speaking at tea party events, recruiting at rallies and in some cases remain in the tea party leadership itself. The danger is not that the majority of tea party members share their views, but that left unchecked, these extremists might indirectly influence the direction of the tea party and therefore the direction of our country: moving it backward and not forward.”



Joel Wendland writes for the People’s World.

There they go again

By PW Editorial Board

Here we go again. Just like they did when President Barack Obama was running for the White House, the Republicans, now with their tea party allies, are throwing the kitchen sink again at their opposition. This November they are after winning a majority in Congress, and then, they hope, to grab the White House in 2012.

The GOP is not for an honest debate on the issues. They believe there’s a better chance of winning if the debate gets down and dirty. Republicans strategists believe they can win if:

- the focus is on personal attacks and slander instead of principal and policies;
- they can confuse enough working-and-middle-class voters with bigotry, homophobia, racism, religious intolerance and anti-communism;
- they can convince people to vote against their own interests;
- people believe that Obama is against white people and only favors black people;
- they convince Americans that all Muslims are terrorists;
- voters believe same sex marriage will de-

stroy the institution of marriage;

- the electorate concludes doctors who perform legal abortions are baby killers;
- workers are led to feel immigrants are the cause of high unemployment;
- people believe that the stimulus did not create any jobs;
- voters draw the conclusion that because the unemployed are receiving compensation, they will lack the initiative to look for a job.

The GOP is betting on that if they get enough people to push the panic button on deficit spending they will succeed. Indeed, with some of these “tea baggers” any help from the federal government to working people is “socialism” and therefore should be feared and rejected.

They are called “deficit hawks” but in the past they have run up the largest deficits ever. Even their solution to deficits is more deficits.

To those who don’t see any thing worth fighting for in this election, but claim to be committed to a better and more democratic society, we urge you to rethink your conclusions.

The GOP is not for an honest debate on the issues.

Cook County sheriff refuses to foreclose

By Joe Sims

In a dramatic expression of public anger at the growing foreclosure crisis Cook County Sheriff Thomas Dart yesterday refused to enforce foreclosures issued by big banks. Earlier in the week, the Bank of America and GMAC mortgage announced a resumption of proceedings against homeowners in 23 states.

"I can't possibly be expected to evict people from their homes when the banks themselves can't say for sure everything was done properly," Dart said in the statement according to CNBC.

In the recession of the 1980s, sheriffs like James Trafficant of Youngstown, Ohio, made national news when refusing to foreclose on unemployed steel workers, recognition that gained him a seat in Congress and later a federal jail cell for racketeering.

Big banks, in a rush to foreclose on as many homes as possible, urged mid-level bank officials to employ "robo-signing," which means putting signatures on hundreds of thousands of documents without bothering to read them.

Driven by the demand for maximum profits, banks, says the Washington Post, "penalized processors if they foreclosed too slowly. The firms that worked the quickest received bonuses from the banks that employed them and higher marks from credit-rating agencies. According to court papers filed in the many cases brought against the banks and the processors, some processing firms hired people essentially off the street to come in and sign documents."

Federal and state investigators are now looking into filing criminal charges against the banks for fraud as a movement grows for maintaining a national moratorium on foreclosures.

The White House, treading carefully, declined to support the moratorium demand after several



leading Democrats in the House lent their names to the call. Officials however, took pains to indicate support for holding those responsible for possible financial fraud accountable. The New York Times writes, "Robert Gibbs, the White House press secretary, said that the administration was 'strongly supporting the investigation by the state attorneys general' while noting that the Federal Housing Administration and Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force have undertaken their own investigation."

Institutional Risk Analytic's Chris Whalen, warned of growing systemic risk. "The U.S. banking industry is entering a new period of crisis where operating costs are rising dramatically due to foreclosures and defaults."

Growing public pressure to hold the banks accountable and rescue homeowners on one hand, and finance capital's need to maximize profits to maintain stability on the other, underlie the current contest of political wills.

Meanwhile the banks' managers will receive a four percent pay raise this year, totaling a whopping \$144 billion.

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Latino congressmen confront racism

By Vivian Weinstein

A U.S. congressman told a group of students here that tea party protesters in Washington, D.C., had urged he and a colleague to “go back to Mexico.”

Rep. Ruben Hinojosa gave a talk at the University of Texas-Pan American on October 18, when he brought the story to light. A reporter from the Rio Grande Guardian picked up the story. The Texas AFL-CIO sent it out to all the state’s union activists.

Hinojosa said, as he and Rep. Silvestre Reyes made their way to the House of Representatives, there was a tea party rally against major health and higher education legislation. Five tea party members stopped them and asked if they were congressmen. When they replied “yes” and that they were from Texas, the five white men shouted, “Why don’t you go back to Mexico?”

The Rio Grande Guardian reporter wrote, “The audience gasped!” after hearing the story.

It was widely reported in March that tea party protesters accosted congressmen with racist and anti-gay epithets as the House convened to vote.

House Majority Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina told the Huffington Post that the tea party abuse “was absolutely shocking to me.”

The anti-Latino, anti-immigrant harassment came at the same time.

Hinojosa told the story to explain the challenges confronting Latino, Black and women elected officials to get Republicans to support legislation that addresses needs for these constituents.

Entrevista a Eliseo Medina

Por Pepe Lozano

People’s World y Mundo Popular entrevistó a Eliseo Medina, el destacado organizador y defensor de los derechos de los inmigrantes, y aquí sus impresiones. Medina recientemente ha sido elegido el primer Secretario-Tesorero latino de la poderosa organización sindical Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

Medina nació en Zacatecas-México, vino legalmente a Estados Unidos con sus padres que se acogieron al programa Braceros para trabajar en los campos del Valle San Joaquín, California. A los 19 años de edad Medina, un recogedor de uvas, tomó parte en la famosa huelga de los trabajadores granjeros unidos de 1965, que dirigió César Chávez.

En 1986 Medina se afilió al SEIU, y ayudó a revivir el sindicato local logrando aumentar su membresía de 1.700 a 10.000 en cinco años.

Hoy Medina está dirigiendo al sindicato SEIU y al movimiento sindical en general en tres aéreas: la lucha para organizar trabajadores, la lucha por conseguir trabajo para todos y la lucha por una reforma migratoria completa.

Durante esta entrevista telefónica, Medina indicó que se siente extremadamente homenajeado y humilde que sus colegas le hayan escogido para esta nueva misión. Medina indica que los latinos están jugando un mayor rol en el movimiento obrero

y que lo continuarán haciendo. Los trabajadores quieren hacer oír su voz, para hacer saber que lo que hacen tiene valor, que son respetados por su diario trabajo.

“Las cosas para la gente trabajadora están malas”, dice él. “Ahora hay más millonarios que nunca y poca gente es parte de la clase media. La mayor parte de la gente está viviendo debajo de la línea de la pobreza, mientras vivimos en la era de maximizar las ganancias a cualquier costo”.

Se requiere una coalición popular más grande, el movimiento obrero no puede hacer este trabajo solo, dice Medina. Y agrega: “Tenemos que asociarnos con otros sindicatos, con la comunidad, con grupos civiles o religiosos, así como con organizaciones de los derechos de las mujeres, organizaciones defensoras del medio ambiente que participan de una visión de una mejor sociedad.”

Medina está convencido que el Presidente Obama cree en lo que dice. “Después de todo el fue elegido presidente y no rey”. Y la agenda presidencial tiene que tener el visto bueno, no solo de los republicanos en el Congreso, sino de las mayores corporaciones y de Wall Street, todo lo cual es una fuerza difícil de vencer, dice Medina. “Tarde o temprano vamos a ganar y el cambio va a suceder aun después de las elecciones”, él dice. “Porque yo creo que cada generación tiene que luchar por su libertad”.

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