

RICK SWARTZ DEFENDS THE
RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 2002

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to my colleagues' attention an interview with Mr. Rich Swartz in the Summer 2002 edition of Intelligence Report, the quarterly publication of the Southern Poverty Law Project.

For nearly two decades, I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Rick Swartz in defense of the rights of immigrants. In 1982, he founded the National Immigration Forum, which is the leading immigration rights advocacy group in the nation. We first met when we were both working to secure a safe haven for Salvadoran and other Central American refugees here in the United States.

The interview explores the lengthy battles with anti-immigration forces in the United States and the prospects for securing immigrant rights in today's national environment. Rick Swartz is someone who feels strongly about America's roots as a nation of immigrants and who believes that current immigration is an important contributor to a strong future for our country. I join him in those beliefs, and I commend this article to my colleagues.

[From the Intelligence Report, Summer 2002]

DEFENDING IMMIGRANTS

A KEY ACTIVIST IN THE STRUGGLE FOR IMMIGRANT RIGHTS DISCUSSES THE EVOLUTION AND NATURE OF THE ANTI-IMMIGRATION MOVEMENT

Over the last quarter of a century, Rick Swartz may have done more than any other activist to encourage a healthy level of immigration to America and to protect the rights of immigrants once they are here. After graduating from the University of Chicago Law School, Swartz directed an immigrant rights project at the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights before going on to found, in 1982, what has become the nation's leading immigration rights advocacy group, the National Immigration Forum. Swartz was president of the Forum, a coalition of more than 250 national organizations and several thousand local groups, until 1990. In that post, he worked to secure habeas for Haitian and Central American war refugees, to legalize the status of millions of other immigrants and to battle the anti-immigrant and English Only movements. Since leaving the Forum, Swartz, now 52, has run a small public policy firm representing a range of corporate and nonprofit clients, at the same time continuing his immigration advocacy work. The Intelligence Report asked Swartz about his lengthy battles with America's leading anti-immigration activists, his view of the movement today, and his analysis of the movement's prospects.

Intelligence Report: In looking at the contemporary anti-immigrant movement [see story, p. 44], we've found that even though there are a large number of organizations involved, they almost always seem to go back to one man—John Tanton, the Michigan ophthalmologist who founded the Federation for American Immigration Reform [FAIR] in 1979. Has that always been the case?

Swartz: Tanton is the puppeteer behind this entire movement. He is the organizer of a significant amount of its financing, and is both the major recruiter of key personnel and the intellectual leader of the whole net-

work of groups. I don't know if he's personally wealthy—it could well be that people give him big donations just because he is so mesmerizing. He does have a charismatic feel about him.

It's been clear since 1988, when a series of embarrassing internal memos by Tanton and Roger Conner [who was then executive director of FAIR] were leaked to the press, what the overall strategy is. Those memos are a blueprint for what Tanton and his friends have been doing ever since.

IR: Can you describe that blueprint?

Swartz: The blueprint envisaged creating a whole array of organizations that serve the overall ideological and political battle plan to halt immigration—even if some of these groups have somewhat differing politics. They camouflage the links between these organizations, their true origins, so that they appear to have arisen spontaneously. But in fact they have the same creator, Tanton.

IR: So the idea was to create the illusion of a grassroots movement that was supported by a significant number of Americans?

Swartz: Yes indeed, to confuse the press. The leaked memos did bring some public attention to the Tanton network, and some of these linkages were further exposed in the early 1990s. More recently, FAIR's tax records established that the center for Immigration Studies, which has become an influential Washington institution, was spun off from FAIR as a separate organization. But these facts aren't widely known by the public today.

For years and years, Fair and these other spinoffs have been part of a strategy of, "Well, it can't just be Fair and other major Tanton creations like U.S. English and the Center for Immigration studies, because then it's too easy to pin us down. So therefore how about creating Numbers USA, English First, the American Immigration Control Foundation and all these smaller local groups?" all of this was anticipated by the memos, which were written in 1986, two years before the leak.

IR: has even the limited exposure of these kinds of linkages damaged the ability of Tanton's anti-immigrant groups to affect public policy in Congress?

Swartz: They are well known to everybody deeply involved in the immigration debate. But when it comes to Congress, very few members—maybe two—can come close to understanding the situation or the history of the immigration reform efforts of the last 25 years. They may have voted on immigration-related items, but immigration is not a way of life for them.

IR: Let's go back a little. How did Tanton get started?

Swartz: When Tanton started Fair in 1979, he was already president of a liberal organization, Zero Population Growth (ZPG). He wanted ZPG to be the vehicle for a significant advocacy effort to reduce immigration, but the senior staff and at least some members of the ZPG board resisted. As a result, Fair was created. Conner ran Fair as executive director through most of the '80s before leaving to become executive director or yet another Tanton creation, the American Alliance for Rights and Responsibilities, which was intended to be an antidote to the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union). At the time, Fair was promoting employer sanctions (laws to punish those who hire illegal aliens) and dramatic increases in border enforcement, sweeps, arrests and deportations. It was opposing guest worker programs and asylum for refugees from Haiti or the Central American wars.

It was also Fair that first had the idea of barring social services and other public benefits for immigrants (an enterprise that came to fruition with California's Proposition 187,

which was passed in 1994 with the support of Fair and other Tanton creations, but ultimately found to be unconstitutional). Fair also tried to build linkages to mainstream environmental groups, but without much success.

IR: When did Tanton get into the English Only movement?

Swartz: Tanton established an organization called U.S. English in the early 1980s, and this became his second major national organization after Fair. The organization was dedicated to "English Only" [the idea that all official government business should be conducted in English alone], and it attracted into its ranks a number of well-known celebrities—Walter Cronkite and Arnold Schwarzenegger, for example. U.S. English funded a range of "official English" state and local referenda [through early 2002, 27 states had passed English-only legislation]. The most recent example of this kind of activity is in Iowa, where the governor earlier this year declared English the state's official language.

By the way, there is a lot happening in Iowa right now. Why Iowa? Well, you've got meatpacking plants and the immigrants employed in them, leading to demographic change. And you have Iowa's governor making pro-immigration statements over the last couple of years, saying we're losing people and we need new people, therefore we should be trying to attract immigrants. And, of course, Iowa is the first presidential primary. So add it all up, and you can see why they're spending a ton of advertising money in Iowa. It's perfect for Tanton's message.

IR: Although he has always denied it, Tanton and his progeny have frequently been accused of being racist, not to mention anti-Catholic and, in particular, anti-Hispanic. In fact, Tanton helped to arrange for the English-language publication of *The Camp of the Saints*, a grotesquely racist French novel that tells of European civilization being overrun by bestial Third World immigrants. And he continues to promulgate that book in his role as publisher of *The Social Contract Press*, a hate group. What do you make of the role of this remarkable book?

SWARTZ: A movement of the kind that Tanton envisions needs a bible. It needs a bible for conversion. It needs a bible as an ideological road map. It needs a bible to stimulate zeal and a sense of belief among its followers. *The Camp of the Saints* is that book for Tanton. It puts out a vision of immigrants rampaging and destroying the West, and that is the vision that Tanton believes in and wants his followers to believe in. James Crawford, who wrote a book on the English Only movement, calls *The Camp of the Saints* "a cult book"—and that is what I think it is.

IR: A similar vision of white people being overwhelmed by dusky, Third World hordes is suggested in the Tanton-Conner memos. Did the leak of those memos to The Arizona Republic hurt Tanton and Fair significantly?

SWARTZ: It hurt him a lot at the time. The revelations led to the resignation of Linda Chavez, who had become executive director of U.S. English in the mid-1980s [and is a conservative Republican columnist today]. A whole group of celebrities resigned from the board or advisory board of U.S. English because of the memos, which were complicated by *The Camp of the Saints* being sort of a Holy Bible for the movement. All this revealed the underlying ideology of Tanton.

It also made it that much more difficult for people like [former Sen.] Alan Simpson [R-Wyo.] and others who shared Fair's point of view from holding Fair up as this great organization that other members worked with all the time. And the political character of

the Tanton-Conner memos—the strategies of infiltration and so on that they discussed—also contributed to the rash of resignations.

IR: Are there good examples of that infiltration strategy at work?

Swartz: In the 1980s, while Conner was executive director of Fair, a woman named Cordia Strom became the legal director. The memos had specifically discussed infiltrating the Congressional staff, and Cordia was their big success story. She became part of the staff of Rep. LAMAR SMITH [R-Texas] and then she went to work for the House Immigration Subcommittee. She was in that job through 1996 and was the subcommittee's chief counsel during the big 1996 immigration debate [which resulted in harsh legislation, introduced by subcommittee chairman LAMAR SMITH, that sharply reduced the rights of legal immigrants]. At some point after that, she went over to the Executive Office for Immigration Review [the administrative appeals arm of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, or INS, that is responsible for making final decisions on such matters as deportations], where she is still employed [as counsel to the director and coordinator for congressional affairs]. After the 2000 election, there was even an [unsuccessful] effort to get Cordia appointed deputy director of the INS.

IR: Then the infiltration strategy was really quite effective?

Swartz: Well, these groups had their own person running the House Immigration Subcommittee at a critical moment. Being the staff director of that subcommittee brings tremendous daily influence on LAMAR SMITH [chairman of the subcommittee from 1994 to 2000] and other Republican members. The staff director has lots of access to inside information, including confidential and classified information regarding immigration. You have constant dealings with the INS, with the Justice Department and the State Department. So someone like Cordia, with her ideological bent, has an opportunity to have tremendous influence throughout the Congress and the government, as well as the media.

IR: Yes, similarly, we've found that a woman named Rosemary Jenks, a lobbyist for Numbers USA, is now working part-time out of the office of Rep. Tom Tancredo. [Editor's note: Tancredo is a Colorado Republican, chairman of the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus, and a harsh immigration critic whose Web site carries data from one of Tanton's creations, the Center for Immigration Studies. Tancredo's Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus Web site links directly to a hard-edged hate group, the Voice of Citizens Together, also known as American Patrol.]

Swartz: That's another example of infiltration at work. Fair and the others have successfully placed their people around folks like Tancredo in Congress.

IR: Are there other important methods that Tanton has employed.

Swartz: Another tactic of Tanton's is to turn ethnic groups on each other, to create conflict between different ethnic and racial groups. One of his big arguments has always been that immigration hurts blacks. Fair has bought radio advertising on black radio stations to push that vision. A prime example was Chicago 10 or 12 years ago, when an ad ran basically saying, "You know why you don't have a job? Because some undocumented Mexican came in and stole yours from you."

Fair also has hired black professionals and has put a lot of effort into building alliances with African-American intellectuals, because the unfortunate reality is that there is a lot of anti-immigrant sentiment in the black community. When you have dramatic

demographic change going on in places like South Central Los Angeles—well, it's the oldest trick in the book. It's called making those who don't have a lot but are making progress feel threatened by those coming after them. There is some conflict among Latinos, Asian and African Americans competing politically and economically, and this provides fertile ground for the kind of poison that the Tanton crowd has been trying to plant in the African-American community for years—the idea that Latinos in particular, and immigrants in general, are a threat.

Once again, all this is prefigured in the Tanton-Conner memos.

IR: That kind of conflict permeates our history, doesn't it?

Swartz: America's history is in part a story of ethnic succession. At times, we've had major ethnic violence surrounding this dynamic of ethnic succession. Benjamin Franklin was afraid Germans were going to come in and take over Pennsylvania and overwhelm the English language. We had the Know-Nothing Party that came up in response to the beginnings of Irish and Catholic migrations in the early and middle 19th century. There were similar responses to Jewish and Italian immigrants in the late 19th century. The KKK of the 1920s was rooted in anti-Catholicism. Today, Tanton works to create similar kinds of conflict amongst ethnic groups.

IR: During the 2000 Michigan senatorial race, Fair ran ads that essentially suggested that Spencer Abraham [R-Mich.] was allowing terrorists into the country by backing higher numbers of visas for immigrants with high-tech skills. The ads also implied, but didn't say directly, that that was because Abraham was an Arab American. Did the brouhaha over those ads hurt Fair? Didn't Alan Simpson, one of Fair's biggest supporters in the Senate, resign their board as a result?

Swartz: He did! Simpson condemned the ads. I think the attacks on Abraham really hurt Fair among certain Republicans. Something like 20 to 25 Senate Republicans put their names on a letter denouncing Fair for the Abraham attacks. Some of these senators today probably have no idea that so-called "respectable" organizations, like the Center for Immigration Studies, are linked to Fair. But to go back to the theme of infiltration, if you look at the record of witnesses before the House and Senate immigration subcommittees, you will see that Fair or some other Fair-connected group is a witness at the vast majority of the hearings. Thank you, Lamar Smith and Alan Simpson! Those kinds of relationships are legitimizing. Fair can say, "How can you say we're an extremist group when we're being invited to testify to Congress at the time?" It creates great camouflage.

IR: We've noticed some connections between the Tanton network and European anti-immigrant parties. For instance, Glenn Spencer, leader of the hate group Voice of Citizens Together and a Tanton grant recipient, recently shared the podium with Nick Griffin, leader of the neofascist British National Party. Both men spoke at an event put on by another racist outfit, American Renaissance magazine.

Swartz: There is a transatlantic character to the ideological underpinnings of the Tanton movement. I believe that there has been for years substantial financial and political and personnel interaction between the Tanton movement here and the anti-immigration movements in Europe. I remember in the '80s, when I was always debating Conner in a variety of public forums, that he made a lot of references to France, how he had just come back from France and so on.

In fact, I believe that Fair and Tanton have an agenda of seeking a Front National [a virulently anti-immigrant French party] type of political party in the United States, in significant part through their strong involvement in the Reform Party. Their take-over attempt was personified by the former governor of Colorado, Dick Lamm, who is a Fair adviser and director and who tried to run for president in 1996 on the Reform Party ticket. In 2000, Pat Buchanan, whose views are quite similar to those of Fair, also tried to take over the Reform Party. [Editor's note: Glenn Spencer was scheduled to speak to the Iowa Reform Party this April.] So while I can't name names, I would guess a significant number of Reform activists are connected to the Tanton network.

But then again, both Lamm and Buchanan failed pathetically. This gives hope that their ideology is seen as bankrupt by most Americans.

IR: Since California's Proposition 187 was thrown out by the courts in 1998, a number of anti-immigration groups like the Voice of Citizens Together/American Patrol and the California Coalition for Immigration Reform [CCIR] seem to have gotten significantly harder-line, and also far more conspiracy-oriented. At the same time, Tanton creations like Center for Immigration Studies very assiduously court mainstream respectability. Are these contradictory strategies?

Swartz: My guess is that every move is strategic and deliberate. The anti-immigration movement is both radicalizing on the fringes of the Tanton network and at the same time mainstreaming at the core of the network. In some ways, Fair is more moderate than it once was. NumbersUSA is also more sedate. Simultaneously, the harder edge is carried by people like [CCIR leader] Barbara Coe. She acts on the extremes, while Fair appears more "sophisticated."

My point is that Tanton is a brilliant tactician. He has created a system where he can have his cake and eat it, too. He has a political movement on the extremist, racial fringe that is stirring up popular discontent and hatred with its harsh rhetoric. There is a lot of fertile ground out there, and the fringe is increasingly significant in areas like what is going on in Iowa right now. At the same time, other Tanton groups are getting invited to testify before Congress on a regular basis.

IR: So what is your prognosis for the future?

Swartz: The challenge is to ensure that our political culture is not poisoned by Tanton and his crowd, and that leaders and citizens alike repudiate racial and ethnic fearmongering. Know-Nothing ideologies—and multimillion-dollar media buys—cannot be allowed to spawn racial and ethnic violence against immigrants.

In Europe over the last 20 years, Tanton-like leaders have resurrected far-right and sometimes violent movements—and political parties—rooted in the fear of the stranger. The Tanton vision laid out in the 1986 memos is of an apartheid United States beset by racial violence, and whites not going quietly into the night as their numbers are overwhelmed by the demographics of immigration.

It would be very unwise to underestimate the danger in the Camp of the Saints ideology that Tanton embodies and in the work that they have been doing for 25 years to turn immigrant against native, black against brown, and so on. But in the end, I am confident that the vast majority of Americans will, as they have in the past, reject the fearmonger and, through the toil of people from all over the world, build the freest and most prosperous nation yet known. America is hugely resilient and immigration is one of our priceless resources,

especially in the coming global age. I take nothing for granted when it comes to threats to America's future, but I am totally confident about the goodwill and common sense of America's people.

EGLI HILA

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 2002

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Egli Hila, seventh grader at South Middle School in Hartford, Connecticut, for being named a finalist in the national Do the Write Thing Challenge, and to submit the praiseworthy essay into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. I applaud Egli's efforts to tackle the growing problem of youth violence.

The Do the Write Thing Challenge is an initiative of the National Campaign to Stop Violence designed to give middle school students the opportunity to examine the impact of youth violence on their lives and to communicate in writing what they think should be done to change our culture and violence. The program encourages students to make personal commitments to do something about the problem with the ultimate goal of helping them break the cycles of violence in their homes, school, and neighborhoods.

In the world, people are faced with different issues as well as different emotions. There are people out there who are suffering from poverty, from lack of security in their lives but most of all people are constantly suffering from violence whether it's at home or in the streets. This eventually leads to physical and mental stress, anguish, pain, fear (and) hurt. No one wants it or even asks for it, but it still comes knocking at your door. What can one do when there is so much pain? Many questions come to mind but so little answers. How has violence affected my life? What do I think the major causes of youth violence are? What can do about youth violence? How can I stop it? I wish it didn't exist but it does and we have to deal with it the best way possible. These questions that have been raised are very hard to answer but I'll try to answer them to the best of my abilities and knowledge.

I keep repeating the questions in my head over and over again. How has violence affected my life? I can tell you that violence has affected my life but the most common one would be that it makes me angry at times and at other times I'm scared. One word "violence" makes me have so many mixed emotions running through me. Imagine what the actions of violence can do to a person. In schools I see fights and I try to understand why it is happening, but I can't. The people fighting are my fellow classmates. I feel bad for them not only because they will get physically hurt in the process but also they will get suspended. What good came out of it? I don't seem to grasp this concept. When the question of how violence has affected my life is addressed to me, I guess I have to say that in a weird way it has worked to benefit because I know what it is and what it leads to, so I try my best to stay away from it. As mentioned earlier, I also get scared because I see all this hate that people have for one another and it's just not right. I get scared because I don't want to see a world full of hate and full of violence. I am striving for a better world than the one we live in now. In the future, I want to see happiness in people's faces and not sadness.

There are many causes of youth violence. Unfortunately, too many. The major causes would be domestic violence, meaning violence at home. When the parents for whatever (the) reason may be start hitting one another and they constantly scream and can't keep themselves under control, then it's obvious that a child at home who sees these unpleasant actions will eventually do the same thing in a different environment. Peer pressure is also a very big factor of youth violence. Kids by nature want to fit in especially by being in the "cool group." What better way to fit in than do what the group says? If the group says you have to hurt that person whether it's physically or mentally, you want to do it because then you'll be considered "cool" and finally be accepted. That's how most kids fall into the trap and afterwards have a tough time getting out of it. Another cause of violence would be when kids put one another down and they get emotionally hurt. Also, gossip leads to violence because when kids hear these hurtful things being said about them, they want to fight back with the same weapon or go a step further and actually hurt someone physically. Call it revenge but whatever you call it, it will not make a difference because it's violence in the worst way.

Youth violence is simply very sad to think about. In my opinion, kids should think about doing good in schoolwork, making friends (not enemies) having fun, think about college, careers and have the power to dream for a better life for themselves and the people around them. I have been seriously thinking about this issue and what I can do about youth violence. The only answer I come up with is that I could try and stop it when I see it or if I can't stop the fight then I'll let an adult know what's going on so these kids could get help. These kids then might be able to talk about what's troubling them. I guess this could be a step toward recovery. Don't you agree?

Youth violence is everywhere but if we can limit is even just a little bit, then I think we have succeeded.

The courage and dedication that Egli has demonstrated in trying to stop youth violence is admirable. Few students would be able to verbalize their frustrations, let alone identify causes and solutions for youth violence in their schools. Egli Hila is a remarkable student and inspiration for other young Americans, and I would urge other students to follow Egli's example.

TRIBUTE TO MR. ISAAC
WASHINGTON

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 2002

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Isaac Washington, who on June 15, 2002 was bestowed the National Newspaper Association's Publisher of the Year Award on behalf of the award winning Black Media Group. Mr. Washington was born in Columbia, S.C. and grew up in public housing, Allen-Benedict Court. But his experiences were not without love. Surrounded by the love of his parents and four siblings, brothers Eddie, Jeremiah and Oliver, Jr. and a sister, Ethel, young Isaac learned the value of reaching out to others.

A graduate of C.A. Johnson High School, he earned a bachelor's degree from Benedict

College. His career began in the media business at Columbia's WIS-TV, where he served as Assistant Program Director and Director of Sales Traffic and Operations. He pioneered the Awareness program, WIS-TV's foray into minority affairs reporting and programming.

After his stint at WIS, Washington entered a partnership to publish Black News. His diverse media experience prepared him for his leadership role as President/Publisher of the South Carolina Black Media Group, SCBMG. Within a few years, SCBMG began marketing its product statewide, and eventually evolved into eight newspapers published in virtually every major market of the Palmetto State and in Fayetteville, N.C. In 1997, SCBMG consolidated its newspapers into one statewide publication, The Black News. Within the last three years, Black News has twice been a finalist for the coveted A. Philip Randolph Messenger Award, which honors Black newspapers for journalistic excellence in the field of civil rights.

Washington's community outreach also extends far beyond the walls of the newspaper office. He is a member of Zion Baptist Church in Columbia, where he serves as an ordained deacon and member of the Men's Committee. He also serves on the boards of the American Red Cross, the Will Lou Gray Foundation, and is a commissioner with the S.C. State Housing Authority. He is a lifelong member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and the NAACP. He has been bestowed many honors, including an honorary doctorate of Religious Education from the C.E. Graham Bible College, and has been honored with a mural on the Columbia Housing Authority's Wall of Fame.

Washington established the S.C. Black Media Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides opportunities for youth in the community through tutorial and job training programs, and provides public housing and other services for the elderly. Mr. Washington, a longtime personal friend, was presented his award during the Merit Awards Dinner, at NNPA's 62nd Annual convention, held in Jacksonville, FL.

He is married to the former Clannie Hart, and has one son, Isaac, Jr., who is a student at Benedict College.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in honoring an outstanding South Carolinian whose dedication to his profession and family is unparalleled. I wish him good luck and Godspeed.

INTRODUCING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING LEGISLATION

HON. TIM ROEMER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 2002

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce, along with my distinguished colleagues, Representatives JIM GIBBONS, MIKE CASTLE, and SILVESTRE REYES, important legislation that strengthens our commitment to train students in foreign language proficiency, particularly languages that are of high national security interest to the United States such as Arabic, Farsi, and Hindi.

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the federal government's deficiency with regard to the availability of experts proficient in