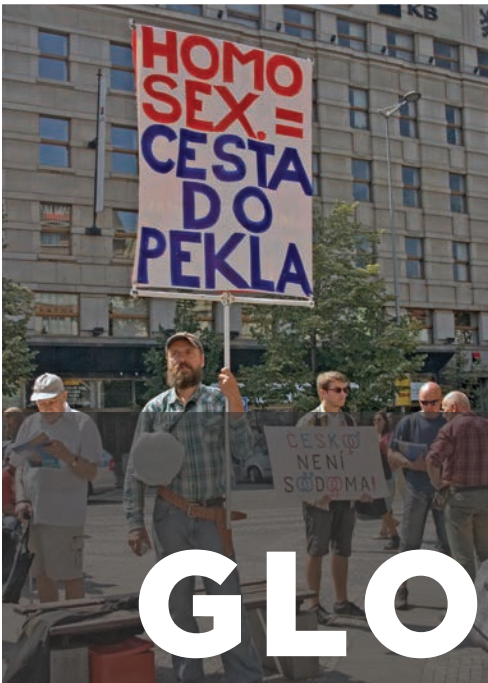
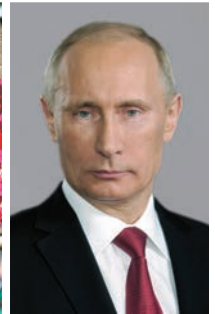


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GLOBALIZING HOMOPHOBIA:

How the American Right Supports and Defends Russia's Anti-Gay Crackdown



Introduction

In the summer of 2013, as part of a larger effort to channel political dissatisfaction by scapegoating minorities, the Russian government escalated its crackdown on the rights of gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual citizens. President Vladimir Putin and his allies found support and guidance in their anti-gay efforts from a group eager for an opportunity to notch some victories in the battle against LGBT freedom and equality: the American right.

On June 11, the Russian Duma passed a law banning “propaganda” about homosexuality to minors, essentially a gag rule criminalizing any advocacy for LGBT equality. (Moscow had already instituted a 100-year ban on gay pride parades.) Weeks later, on July 3, Putin signed a bill banning the adoption of Russian children by same-sex couples abroad and by

single people in countries that allow marriage equality. Shortly afterward, a member of the Duma proposed a law that would revoke gay people’s custody of their biological children. The bill’s sponsor said in an interview that children would be better off in orphanages than with a gay mother or father.

Throughout this process, Russian gay rights groups reported a surge in anti-gay hate crimes.

Russia’s crackdown on LGBT people comes amidst a broad crackdown on the rights of minorities and political dissenters or, in the words of one lawmaker, a campaign “to defend the rights of the majority.” On the same day the Duma passed its ban on gay “propaganda,” it also approved a harsh anti-blasphemy law promising jail time for “offending religious feelings.” The blasphemy measure was meant to strengthen the



laws that led to the political prosecution of the feminist punk band Pussy Riot, whose members were sentenced to two years in a penal colony for a performance that was deemed to offend “religious sensibilities.”

Russia’s repression of LGBT people and the Pussy Riot case have provoked an international outcry, intensified by the country’s role as the host of the 2014 winter Olympics.

But throughout all this, one group has cheered on Putin’s actions: the American Religious Right and its international allies.

Even as tensions have grown between Russia and the United States, several Religious Right leaders have spoken loudly in favor of Putin’s crackdowns on gay people and political dissenters (see sidebar on page 7):

American conservative groups haven’t just praised Russia’s crackdown on gays. Working through several channels, American anti-gay activists quietly provided intellectual backing and international support that directly and indirectly fueled the resurgent anti-gay movement in Russia and in other former Soviet states like Lithuania, Moldova and Ukraine.

In this report, we investigate how American activists influenced Russia’s anti-gay laws by funding anti-gay activism in Russia, testifying before the Duma, providing false research to fan the flames of anti-gay laws abroad, and building an international movement to back the harshest anti-gay laws around the world.

‘Today the Whole World Is Looking At Russia’

On June 13, 2013, just days after the Russian Duma passed laws banning gay “propaganda” and actions that “offend religious feelings,” a delegation of five French Catholic anti-gay activists --at least one with ties to the far-right Front National party -- traveled to Moscow at the invitation of the Duma committee on family, women and children to discuss, among other issues, Russia’s plans to tighten its ban on adoption by same-sex couples abroad. Joining them was one of the most well-known

figures in the American anti-gay movement, National Organization For Marriage president Brian Brown.

Brown had worked closely with the French anti-gay

movement in its protests of the country’s marriage equality law, traveling to Paris to demonstrate against the law and signing onto an email to members of the Collectif Famille Mariage, one of the most prominent groups working to oppose marriage equality in France. (Excerpt:“You are the people who invented Gothic art and built these wonderful cathedrals soaring toward the sky, inspiring the entire civilized world...The new cathedral that you are building right before our eyes is composed of living stones: you, dear Resistance fighters, young people and adults, men and women, boys and girls!”)

The French activists joining Brown were far-right thinker Aymeric Chauprade; activist Odile Téqui; François Legrier, president of the Mouvement Catholique des Familles; and Hugues Revel, president of Cahtoliques en Campagne.

The French delegation was led by Fabrice Sorlin, head of the far-right nationalist group Dies Irae, which is named after a liturgical poem about the Day of Judgment, has been accused of racist and anti-Semitic behavior and, according to Box Turtle Bulletin, “had been working to create autonomous militias in France under the inspiration of American white nationalist William Luther Pierce’s conspiracy-laden novel The Turner Diaries.” (The group has denied the charges.) Sorlin is also a former candidate for the far-right Front National party, and chair of a group called Alliance France-Europe Russia, which is dedicated to forging a “strong connection between Europe and Russia” and uniting

THE BILL’S SPONSOR SAID IN AN INTERVIEW THAT CHILDREN WOULD BE BETTER OFF IN AN ORPHANAGE THAN WITH A GAY MOTHER OR FATHER.

“the Anglo-Saxon world” against the emerging economies of China and India based, in part, on shared “Christian values.” The project of building a stronger alliance with Russia is a project held dear by the French far-right.

Le Figaro notes that elected officials at the front of the French anti-marriage movement did not respond to the Duma’s invitation to attend the meeting for fear of being “associated with a campaign of homophobia directed by Moscow” but that the name of the far-right Le Pen family “was mentioned several times” at the event.

According to Russian news reports, the French activists and Brown attended two events in Moscow. One was a joint meeting on changes in international adoption laws with the Duma’s

“EVERY CHILD SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO HAVE NORMAL PARENTS: A FATHER AND A MOTHER.”

-National Organization for Marriage President Brian Brown in a speech to the Duma

committee on foreign affairs and its committee on family, women and children – whose chair, Yelena Mizulina, authored the ban on gay “propaganda” and the adoption bill.

The other event was a roundtable discussion on “Traditional Values: The Future of the European Peoples,” hosted by the St. Basil the Great Foundation – a Russian Orthodox group run by Konstantin Malofeev, the head of a private equity group and spirited anti-gay activist – and also sponsored by the Duma’s family committee, the right-wing Center for Social-Conservative Policy, and a new multi-party group of Russian MPs formed, with approval of the Russian Orthodox Church, to “protect traditional Christian values” and fight “aggressive liberalism” in reaction to Pussy Riot’s protests. Among the measures pushed



Protesters against Baltic Gay Pride in Riga, Latvia

by the group was the new law imposing jail time for “insulting religious feelings.”

The National Organization for Marriage did not publicly announce Brown’s participation in this international meeting of anti-gay minds. However, his presence was mentioned by Revel in a blog post about the visit, in which he noted that Brown gave a “remarkable speech in the Duma.”

The NOM leader also spoke to Russia 1’s Vesti news program. According to a re-translation of the Russian translation of the interview with Brown, he told the reporters that restricting Russian adoptions to gay and lesbian couples was a way of halting a slippery slope of “very negative developments all over the world”:

Right now you’re having the fight about adoption, but the adoption issue is indivisible from the marriage issue. If you don’t defend your values now, I’m afraid we’re going to see very negative developments all over the world.

We reached out to NOM for more information

“...TODAY ANOTHER DANGER THREATENS FRANCE AND EUROPE—THAT OF THE LOSS OF ITS BEARINGS, OF ITS TRADITIONAL VALUES; IN SHORT, THE SUICIDE OF OUR CIVILIZATION.”

- Fabrice Sorlin, French nationalist leader

about Brown’s trip and a copy of the speech he gave to the Duma, but did not receive a reply. But luckily, the committee that hosted the activists posted copies of all the speeches on their website.

In his speech to the committee (again, translated from English to Russian and back again to English), Brown warned of the dangers of allowing gay people to adopt children, saying, “Every child should have the right to have normal parents: a father and a mother,” and sharing some of NOM’s favorite stories of the supposed religious persecution following marriage equality in the U.S.:

But we are now convinced, having heard the presentations of our French brothers and sisters, that we are talking about very serious problems indeed. We are talking about violations of rights, we are talking about the rights and problems of children in their education. We should not shy away from this and should not forget about it and create an illusion for ourselves. A reconsideration of the definition and understanding of marriage is in fact a real threat to rights. Very soon after a law was passed that legalized same-sex marriage in the state of Massachusetts, we saw that religious organizations were closing down, religious organizations that dealt with adoptions and that



A fundraising email from NOM's Brian Brown for the French anti-gay group Collectif Famille Marriage



2011 protest against Russia's banning of Moscow Gay Pride
 Photo by Peter Gray via Flickr

did not support adoption by same-sex families. They were closing one after another.

We have actually seen that in some schools, they are talking to children about homosexuality, but in fact they don't have the right to learn about a lot of things like that until a certain age.

...

I think that this visit, the invitation to visit Russia, will enable the development of this movement around the world. We will band together, we will defend our children and their normal civil rights. Every child should have the right to have normal parents: a father and a mother.

(After Right Wing Watch exposed Brown's trip to Russia, Brown told the Russian news source Ria Novosti that he had been invited to testify before the Duma by "activists working

with the World Congress of Families," a group whose influence we explore later in this report.)

If anything, Brown's speech was one of the most restrained at the Duma meeting. You can get an idea of the flavor of the event from the speech of one of the French activists, Aymeric Chauprade, who gleefully portrays Russia as a guiding light for anti-gay activists throughout the world:

In this new battle, ladies and gentlemen [of the Duma], those who do not want the U.S. anti-missile shield, the dominance of NATO, or the war against Syria and Iran are in the same camp as those who refuse the loss of sovereignty, population replacement on a grand scale, FEMEN, gender theory, homosexual marriage, as well as the further commodification of the human body.

AMERICAN ANTI-GAY ACTIVISM AROUND THE WORLD

While Russia's embrace of anti-gay policies has lately captured the imagination of the American right wing, it is far from the only country receiving support from American activists in its anti-gay efforts.

Infamously, American Religious Right leaders' financial and political support have been inflaming anti-gay passions in **UGANDA** for years, leading to the 2013 passage of a bill that imposes a life jail sentence for so called "aggravated homosexuality." American conservative activists Lou Engle and Scott Lively traveled to Uganda and to help rally support for the bill, spreading apocryphal stories of the harms that come from gay rights. The Family Research Council's Tony Perkins dismissed criticism of the Uganda law, calling the proposed law an effort to "uphold moral conduct." The American Family Association's Bryan Fischer claimed Ugandan lawmakers were merely engaged in "talks supporting natural marriage." Meanwhile, gay and lesbian Ugandans are fearing for their lives.

In 2013, American anti-gay activists stepped up their engagement with other countries seeking to impose new restrictions on homosexuality or considering loosening their anti-gay laws.

As we note in this report, the World Congress of Families is deepening its involvement in anti-gay movements throughout Eastern Europe, including in **SERBIA** and **UKRAINE**. In Ukraine, the issue of gay rights has been caught up in the country's debate over joining the European Union, as anti-EU nationalist groups work to inflame anti-LGBT sentiments, a strategy similar to Putin's in Russia.

In November 2013, Liberty Counsel head Mat Staver received an award from **PERU**'s government for his efforts to resist what he termed the Obama administration's exporting of "anti-God, anti-values" in Latin America. Meanwhile, the Arizona-based Alliance Defending Freedom has worked for several years to preserve **BELIZE**'s law criminalizing homosexuality.

The next month, Peter LaBarbera of Americans For Truth About Homosexuality and Brian Camenker of MassResistance traveled to **JAMAICA** to advocate for the preservation of the country's criminal sodomy laws.

In addition, Religious Right groups in the United States nearly universally oppose the Obama administration's efforts to promote gay rights as human rights throughout the world. In a 2011 speech announcing the policy, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton specified that the administration would combat measures that criminalize homosexuality or encourage violence toward LGBT people.

The administration's pledge to protect gay people from violence did not sit right with the Religious Right, who immediately leapt to attack Clinton. In opposing the new policy, many American activists cited **NIGERIA**'s efforts to strengthen its penalties on homosexuality, which led to the arrests of dozens of gay men in early 2014. It is against this backdrop that American anti-gay groups have conducted their activism abroad.



Yelena Mizulina, author of Russia's "homosexual propaganda" law, speaks after the visit from American and French activists

Ladies and gentlemen, it is with President Putin and all the driving forces of Russia that your country has embarked upon an unprecedented shift in the military, geopolitics, economics, energy and spirituality that commands the admiration of French patriots!

Patriots around the world, as committed to the independence of nations as they are to the foundations of our civilization, turn their eyes at this time towards Moscow.

Fabrice Sorlin, the nationalist leader, went even further, comparing Russia's anti-gay stand to its protection of Europe against the Mongol hordes and against fascism in the twentieth century:

“SUPPORTING GAY RIGHTS ‘IS ACTING WITH UNDECLARED MOTIVES THAT CANNOT BE EXPLAINED OTHER THAN BY SATANISM.’”

- Archpriest Dmitri Smirnov, a Russian Orthodox leader

Dear friends, I say to you-- The people of France taking to the streets today to defend fundamental values are watching you closely. For throughout history, if France has often played the role of rouser of our conscience, Russia for its part has always played that of protector of the nations of Europe.

To name but two examples, first let us recall the Mongol hordes of Genghis Khan that you fought in the 13th century, thereby protecting Europe from their invasions.

But let us above all remember the twentieth century, where once again you were the shield as well as the sword of Europe, crushing the fascism that was then sweeping over her-- paying for it the dearest human toll that any nation has ever paid.

But your role does not end there. For though times have changed, today another danger threatens France and Europe—that of the loss of its bearings, of its traditional values; in short, the suicide of our Civilization.

Francois Legrois, the head of Mouvement Catholique des Familles, put it this way (Translated from French to Russian to English):

Our European governments are coming up against this ideology that puts them at risk and that may drive them to social suicide. This means both demographic suicide, because homosexuality is the same as infertility, but also moral suicide, because in this situation a person does not know where he comes from and where he is going. Such a person will become only a resentful person who has no reason to love either his family or his motherland.

The only alternative is a return to reality, a return to Christianity, which is a genuine treasure that we must open for ourselves once again. This implies a policy that defends the family against that which would lead to its collapse.

Needless to say, this message was well received by the hosts of the two events. At a press conference after the Duma meeting, Mizulina, the committee chair who spearheaded the propaganda and adoption measures, said:

You heard what our French colleagues said: that today the whole world is looking at Russia with hope that Russia will hold fast and not give in to this unusual pressure from European governments and will conserve its own traditional family identity. It's perfectly clear that Europe today, faced by the collision of two very serious values—the right of children to a family and the right of sexual minorities to a family—is making its choice in favor of sexual minorities.

This line of reasoning continued at the roundtable meeting. Malofeev, the head of the St. Basil the Great Foundation, who seemed to be the emcee of the roundtable, is fond of the message that Russia is the savior of civilization. He spoke at



LGBT rights activist Nikolay Alexeyev is arrested at a protest at Moscow City Hall in September 2010 Photo by Niko111

last year's World Congress of Families gathering in Sydney, where, according to one attendee, he promised, "Now Christian Russia can help liberate the West from the new liberal anti-Christian totalitarianism of political correctness, gender ideology, mass-media censorship and neo-Marxist dogma."

Speaking at the roundtable, Malofeev called the passage of the gay "propaganda" ban "a great success and a big step forward for Russia." He added that the world must follow Russia's lead or risk human extinction:

Against the backdrop of what is going on in France and other countries, we are seeing the degradation of civilization. We can even use the term 'anticivilization,' and this anticivilization is progressing. Things are happening that will lead to the physical extinction of humans.

AMERICAN ACTIVISTS APPLAUD RUSSIA'S CRACKDOWN ON

Even as tensions have grown between Russia and the United States, American activists groups have spoken out loudly in favor of Putin's crackdown on LGBT rights.



PAT BUCHANAN

Conservative commentator and former Republican presidential candidate Pat Buchanan praised Putin for "trying to re-establish the Orthodox Church as the moral compass of the nation" by going after gays and political dissent and suggested that the United States follow his lead.

Religious Right activist Bob Vander Plaats, **BOB VANDER PLAATS** whose Family Leader events in Iowa have become must-attends for Republican presidential candidates, praised Putin's "decisive leadership" on anti-gay laws.



MATT BARBER

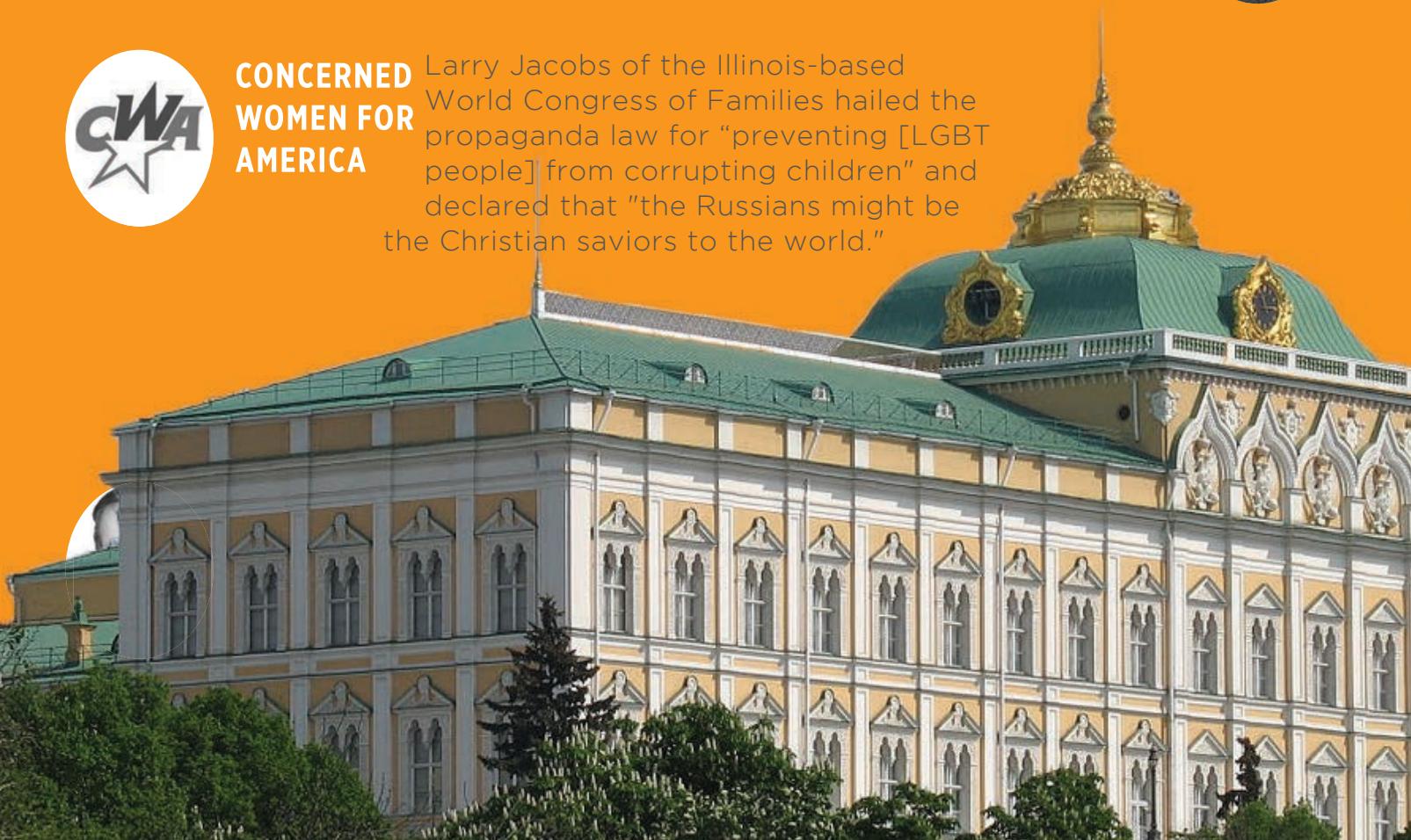
Liberty Counsel's Matt Barber lamented that Putin was being allowed to "out-Christian our once-Christian nation."

American Family Association spokesman Bryan **BRYAN FISCHER** Fischer declared that Russia's gay "propaganda" ban was exactly the kind of "public policy that we've been advocating" and that, if anything, the ban didn't go far enough.



CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA

Larry Jacobs of the Illinois-based World Congress of Families hailed the propaganda law for "preventing [LGBT people] from corrupting children" and declared that "the Russians might be the Christian saviors to the world."



GAY RIGHTS AND TIGHTENING GRIP ON POLITICAL DISSENT

in the United States, several Religious Right leaders and Putin's crackdowns on gay people and political dissenters.



PETER LABARBERA Peter LaBarbera of Americans For Truth About Homosexuality praised the propaganda law, writing, "Russians do not want to follow America's reckless and decadent promotion of gender confusion, sexual perversion, and anti-biblical ideologies to youth."

Rush Limbaugh praised Putin for "putting [his] foot down" against gay peoples' "full-frontal assault on what has always been considered normalcy."

RUSH LIMBAUGH



SCOTT LIVELY Scott Lively, an American activist linked to some evangelical Ugandans' push for the death penalty for gays, wrote that under Putin's leadership, Russia has become a "beacon of freedom" while the U.S. has descended into a "gay version of the Soviet Union." Lively also gave himself credit for "indirectly" assisting the ban on "homosexual propaganda," calling it "one of the proudest achievements of my career."

Austin Ruse of the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute (C-FAM) called the Russian law a "good thing" and claimed that "most of the people in the United States" would support a similar measure.

AUSTIN RUSE



WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES

Six American Religious Right groups, including the World Congress of Families, Mission: America and C-FAM, joined an international coalition of right-wing groups in signing a statement supporting the anti-gay crackdown and condemning the international outrage against it.

Larry Jacobs of the Illinois-based World Congress of Families hailed the propaganda law for "preventing [LGBT people] from corrupting children" and declared that "the Russians might be the Christian saviors to the world."

LARRY JACOBS





University of Texas professor Mark Regnerus

EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT THE REGNERUS STUDY ALSO INFLUENCED THE ARCHITECTS OF RUSSIA’S BAN ON GAY “PROPAGANDA” AND ITS BAN ON THE ADOPTION OF RUSSIAN ORPHANS BY GAY COUPLES AND SINGLE PEOPLE LIVING IN COUNTRIES THAT ALLOW MARRIAGE EQUALITY.

Yurii Shuvalov, head of the Center for Socio-Conservative Policy, another sponsor of the roundtable, told reporters at the meeting that it is incumbent on Russia to “present an alternative” to a world that is increasingly embracing LGBT rights and where “morality has been turned upside down and cannot gain a

At another point in the meeting, Malofeev praised the French for realizing that “Moscow is really the center of their salvation”:

The French have realized that Moscow is really the center of their salvation in this case, the center of salvation for conservative, Christian, European values. Russians need to recognize that we are already leaders. We should not strive to be like someone else, but rather need to help others so that they can become more like us.

foothold.”

Archpriest Dmitri Smirnov, a Russian Orthodox leader, added that a “wealthy minority” supporting gay rights “is acting with undeclared motives that cannot be explained other than by Satanism.”

Besides Brown, there was another American guest at the roundtable, who enthusiastically embraced the Russia-as-savior line.

Russian news reports mention that also present to give the American perspective was a man named Jack Hanick. On his LinkedIn page and in interviews, Hanick describes himself as a founding employee of Fox News, who worked there for 15 years as a news director. Fox News confirmed that Hanick was an employee from 1996 through 2011 where he worked in “a production role dealing with the visual aspects of the show” rather than in any “editorial capacity.”

Hanick told the roundtable that God had called on Russia to “stand up for traditional values” (translated from English to Russian and back to English):

When it came time to stand up for traditional values, this was the place. God called on this country to fulfill that role.

In an August interview with a Russian magazine, Hanick expanded on his view that Russia’s flirtation with theocracy should be a model for the United States (translation via Google Translate):

In the U.S., serious problems, including the decline of morals, brought the separation of church and state. According to the Constitution of 1787, the government had no right to make an official religion - so the separation of church and state was understood. But 200 years later, it has acquired a different meaning: everything about faith was expelled from everyday life, it was given a special place and time - a few hours a week, within the church. This is a horrific result because it shows that we have gone away from that promise with which our laws were written 200 years ago, have distorted it.

In Russia, the issue of separation of church and state, obviously, is much less of an issue, and I see this as a positive thing. If in the U.S. religion was removed from public debate, in Russia - thanks to the Church and state - these topics are submitted to the agenda.

The appeals of the Americans and the French at the meeting were effective. Five days later,

the Duma passed a ban on the adoption of Russian children by same-sex couples and by single people living in countries that allow marriage equality.

Another American was prominent in news reports about the event, although he was not present: University of Texas professor Mark Regnerus.

As one sociologist charged with auditing Regnerus’ study for an academic journal put it:

“SINCE ONLY TWO RESPONDENTS WERE ACTUALLY RAISED IN GAY OR LESBIAN HOUSEHOLDS, THIS STUDY HAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT GAY PARENTING OUTCOMES. INDEED, BECAUSE IT IS A NON-RANDOM SAMPLE, THIS STUDY HAS NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT ANYTHING.”

A New Life for Discredited Research

When Russian lawmaker Alexei Zhuravlyov introduced a bill that would allow the state to remove children from openly gay parents - classifying homosexuality along with drug abuse and child abuse as offenses that merit the loss of custody - gay rights activists noticed something interesting in the text of the bill.

Zhuravlyov, who insisted, “In the case when a parent has sexual contact with people of their own gender, the damage that can be inflicted on the psyche of a child is enormous,” had in the text of his bill quoted extensively from a 2012 study conducted by University of Texas researcher Mark Regnerus that purports to show that having LGBT parents harms kids.



The World Congress of Families' partner organizations include prominent U.S. Religious Right groups

New evidence shows that the Regnerus study also influenced the architects of Russia's ban on gay "propaganda" and its ban on the adoption of Russian orphans by gay couples and single people living in countries that allow marriage equality.

In the June 13 joint Duma committee hearing on the proposed gay adoption ban and a related "traditional values" roundtable discussion – attended by National Organization for Marriage's Brian Brown and a number of far-right French activists – Regnerus' research played a central role.

THROUGH THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES, AMERICAN RELIGIOUS RIGHT GROUPS ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ANTI-GAY MOVEMENTS IN RUSSIA AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WCF STAFF IN RUSSIA ACTIVELY ADVOCATED FOR RECENT ANTI-GAY LAWS, INCLUDING A BAN ON GAY "PROPAGANDA."

to be fired from the university in Texas [where he worked]. An independent assessment was ordered, an independent commission, who totally confirmed the scientific validity of the study's representativeness and the reliability of its conclusions.

Mizulina went on to hypothesize that gay parents would teach their children to be gay just as alcoholics would likely have children who drink, and compared the "social experiment" of marriage equality to the experiment of communism in Russia:

In her speech at the committee hearing, Yelena Mizulina, the chairwoman of the Duma's committee on family, women and children and the sponsor of the "propaganda" bill, cited Regnerus to advocate for the adoption measure, claiming that Regnerus had provided the only "reliable" research on same-sex parents:

At the same time, the American scholar Mark Regnerus, who carried out an extensive study over the course of one and a half years of 3,000 people who had been raised in same-sex families, showed the opposite, and the data are absolutely stunning, they are published. They called for him

It is established that if the parents in a family smoke, their child will likely smoke. And in these families the share of children who smoke when they become adults is higher. If parents drink, the probability that children in these families will drink is much higher than in families where parents do not drink.

Why and on what basis is there an exception regarding imitation of the behavior of parents when we're talking about homosexuality? Why? Where do they get that children will not imitate this particular behavior? It's untenable, even without scientific studies. But scientific studies would of course be important here, too.

Why? By creating such pair—man with man or woman with woman—they renounce the ability to have their own children, so they say, 'Give us those of others.' What does this represent? It seems to me some very twisted logic.

A news report about the meetings on the TV Tsentr channel included an interview with Evgenii Makushkin, a Russian Ministry of Health and Social Development psychologist, who insisted that "a same-sex pair may raise a child with a host of sexual problems." His evidence? An American study published in the Social Science Research journal – the Regnerus study.

FamilyPolicy.ru CEO Pavel Parfentiev Appointed World Congress of Families Ambassador to the European Institutions

IN IN CIS, IN RUSSIA, NEWS, OUR NEWS / BY FAMILYPOLICY.RU / ON MARCH 2, 2013 AT 1:00 PM /



World Congress of Families has appointed Pavel Parfentiev its ambassador to European Institutions. Parfentiev is Managing Director of the FamilyPolicy.ru Advocacy Group and the Chairman of the "For Family Rights."

The World Congress of Families is the most representative international network of the supporters of the natural family, traditional moral values and right to life, uniting NGOs from over 80 countries. WCF sponsors international Congresses and

The World Congress of Families is expanding its efforts in Russia and Eastern Europe

But this type of experiment, this sexual revolution as they call what is happening in Europe today, is a social experiment that the West is conducting on its own children. Russia has had enough of social experiments.

Last century we had social experiments where the family was destroyed. It was argued that there would be no more families, that this institution would die out, and many others. And the West watched and did the opposite.

Mikhail Zoplev, a member of the Duma's foreign affairs committee, had his own take, claiming that gay couples "renounce the ability to have their own children, so they say, 'Give us those of others.'"

Makushkin: The life principles of such a child [who has been raised by homosexual parents] may be completely distorted. The child develops psychological problems, problems learning materials in school, problems integrating with peers, problems orienting themselves during puberty. Towards whom will a child who has been raised in a homosexual family orient? It's probably that a change in sexual orientation may even occur. This is indeed a new problem. In this way, a same-sex pair will produce a child with a host of sexual problems.

Voiceover: According to the results of a study by American psychologists, 31% of children in lesbian families and 25% of children in gay families were forced to have



Berlin, Germany "Enough is enough – Open your mouth," demonstration against homophobia in Russia. Photo by Marco Fieber

sex with their so-called parents. In typical families in the US, this indicator stands at 8%. Almost one-third (28%) of children raised by gays or lesbian mothers cannot find steady employment.

At a July 4 meeting in France, a leader of the anti-gay group French Spring praised Mizulina for her adept use of the Regnerus study in pushing anti-gay measures.

The Regnerus study has captured the imaginations of anti-gay activists throughout the world. But in reality, it is complete bunk. Shortly after Regnerus published his work, the narrative behind it unraveled. It turned out that Regnerus had relied on a slew of flawed methodology and had only studied two people raised by same-sex couples. As one sociologist charged with auditing Regnerus' study for an academic journal put it: "Since only two respondents were actually raised in gay or lesbian households, this study has absolutely nothing to say about gay parenting outcomes. Indeed, because it is a non-random sample, this study has nothing to say about anything."

But Regnerus had never intended to conduct an honest assessment of the outcomes of children raised by gay and lesbian parents. Instead, Regnerus was an ideologue with a point to make and funders on the Religious Right were ready to help him make it.

Regnerus received significant funding for his study from Religious Right groups: \$700,000 from the Princeton-based anti-gay Witherspoon Institute and over \$90,000 from the Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation. Both groups have deep ties with the movement to prevent marriage equality: National Organization for Marriage cofounder Robert George also cofounded the Witherspoon Institute and sits on the board of the Bradley Foundation. In addition, George helped draft the Manhattan Declaration, a religious conservative manifesto that has drawn the support of a who's who of Religious Right leaders.

Documents obtained by the *American Independent* revealed that the Witherspoon Institute was closely involved in Regnerus' work through the go-between of W. Bradford Wilcox, a professor at the University of Virginia who at

the time ran Witherspoon's program on family, marriage and democracy, which had recruited Regnerus to conduct the study on LGBT parents. Regnerus in turn hired Wilcox on contract to assist him with data analysis on the study. Along with working with Regnerus on his skewed interpretation of the data, Wilcox urged Regnerus to release the study in time to influence the U.S. Supreme Court in its upcoming marriage equality

cases. (Regnerus later signed onto an amicus brief seeking to influence both cases, which extensively cited his own research).

Wilcox's interest in the Regnerus study went beyond influencing American law and public opinion. He is also active in the Illinois-based World Congress of Families, which promotes anti-gay policies throughout the world. This

NOM: JUST ABOUT MARRIAGE?



The National Organization for Marriage (NOM) emerged in 2007 to lead the fight for California's Proposition 8, the ballot measure that banned marriage equality in the state until it was overturned

by the courts. Funded by a small number of mostly anonymous donors, NOM went on to launch campaigns against marriage equality in states across the country.

Throughout its history, NOM has attempted to distance itself from the Right's more vitriolic anti-gay rhetoric, claiming that it simply exists to "defend marriage" and sidestepping many debates that are not directly related to marriage equality.

Yet Right Wing Watch's reporting on NOM president Brian Brown's advocacy in Russia exposed the organization's willingness to ally with extreme anti-gay positions ... at least when they think that no one is watching.

Brown's trip to Russia may have signaled the group's intentions to expand its mission beyond the United States and beyond the issue of marriage. In September 2013, NOM announced that it was backing an effort to repeal a California law that protects transgender students. Then, in December, Brown joined the board of directors of CitizenGO, a Madrid-based group that

opposes gay rights throughout the world and that has allied with anti-gay extremists including Scott Lively.

Brown, who took over the leadership of NOM from Maggie Gallagher in 2010, has in recent statements echoed the vitriolic language common in the anti-gay Right: he has accused marriage equality advocates of defending their "twisted worldview" by being "brutal bullies"; asserted that marriage equality erodes "the very nature of what it means to be a human being"; warned that marriage equality will lead to "normalizing pedophilia"; encouraged parents to send their children to an "ex-gay" event to prevent them from embracing "a destructive way of life"; and claimed that a same-sex wedding at a California parade was meant to "target children" and "indoctrinate kids."

The gradual expansion of NOM's mission under Brown's leadership may reflect more than the new president's personal priorities. It also speaks to the tremendous success of the marriage equality movement in the United States. Many anti-gay groups, while they continue to vocally oppose same-sex marriage, have found more success in recent years in opposing workplace rights for transgender people, advocating for "reparative therapy" or claiming that strengthened rights for LGBT people actively injure evangelical Christians. By expanding its anti-gay activism in the United States and carrying its agenda abroad, NOM may be working to build a broader anti-gay narrative that could bolster its anti-marriage efforts in the future.



Police detain participants in the demonstration against newly elected president Vladimir Putin on May 6, 2012 in Moscow, Russia

year, Wilcox was a keynote speaker at WCF's summit in Sydney, along with leaders from the Family Research Council and Concerned Women for America.

When word began to spread that Regnerus' study was playing a key role in the Russian anti-gay movement, Regnerus backtracked, saying that the Russian effort to remove children from biological parents who are gay or lesbian was a "misuse" of his research. While actively snatching children from gay parents might have been a step too far for Regnerus, he hasn't stopped pushing

his flawed findings around the globe. In fact, the same day that Regnerus claimed that Russian lawmakers had gone too far with his study, the anti-gay Alliance Defending Freedom announced that Regnerus would join it at a panel at the United Nations seeking to inject anti-gay politics into discussions of the UN's Millennium Development Goals.

The World Congress of Families and Russia's 'Christian Saviors'

In September, 2013, Serbian authorities abruptly cancelled a planned gay pride parade in Belgrade, citing "serious security concerns" about right-wing groups opposing the event. A few days later, an American group stood up to claim credit: the Rockford, Illinois-based World Congress of Families.

In its press release celebrating the parade's cancellation, WCF highlighted its role in last week's Belgrade protest against the planned parade. Speaking at the protest were WCF communications director Don Feder and

the group's top man in Moscow, Alexei Komov. Also present was Fabrice Sorlin, the far-right nationalist French activist who organized a delegation of American and French activists to advocate for anti-gay laws at the Duma in June, which we discuss above. It's no coincidence that WCF was able to pull such

THROUGH THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES, AMERICAN RELIGIOUS RIGHT GROUPS ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ANTI-GAY MOVEMENTS IN RUSSIA AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WCF STAFF IN RUSSIA ACTIVELY ADVOCATED FOR RECENT ANTI-GAY LAWS, INCLUDING A BAN ON GAY "PROPAGANDA."

a delegation to Belgrade: For the past several years, the organization has built an organization in Russia to advocate for anti-gay policies there and throughout Eastern Europe. WCF staff in Russia actively advocated for recent anti-gay laws, including a ban on gay “propaganda” – essentially a gag rule on gay rights advocacy – and the curtailing of international adoptions to gay couples and single people in countries that allow marriage equality. Through WCF, American Religious Right groups are able to provide support to anti-gay movements in Russia and throughout the world.

The World Congress of Families was founded in 1997 by Religious Right activist (and former Reagan National Commission on Children appointee) Allan Carlson as a project of the Rockford, Illinois-based Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society. WCF’s purpose is to be a multi-faith, multi-national coalition of social conservative groups working to push its vision in the United Nations and in governments around the world. But it draws its most prominent support from the American Religious Right.

The World Congress of Families has friends in high places. The Bush administration’s representative to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women spoke at WCF’s 2004 world meeting in Mexico City, saying, “As one of the pillars of civilization, families must remain strong and we must defend them during a time of great change.”

Since President Obama took office, WCF has found itself in a different role, joining with groups like the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute (CFAM) to resist the



administration’s efforts to include gay rights in international human rights efforts and object to its repeal of the Mexico City Policy. WCF has strongly opposed international efforts to decriminalize homosexuality, and has even whitewashed the push by some Ugandan officials to make homosexuality a capital crime (see sidebar on page 7).

The group continues to draw financial support from nearly every major Religious Right organization in the United States. WCF’s American “partners” include Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, the American Family Association, Concerned Women for America, Americans for Truth About Homosexuality, Alliance Defending

Freedom and Americans United for Life. Concerned Women for America's Janice Shaw Crouse is a member of its board. Leaders of many of these groups are also staples at WCF's annual conferences.

The National Organization for Marriage's Brian Brown is also an enthusiastic booster of WCF's work. In an August 2013 fundraising email, WCF quoted Brown:

The World Congress of Families is THE group standing up for the family around the world. They have done amazing work in uniting all of those who stand for the truth about marriage and family. It has been an honor to partner with WCF and to be a part of their most recent Congress in Australia and regional conference in Trinidad and Tobago. I wholeheartedly endorse their work and urge you to financially support their efforts

In fact, it was WCF that arranged for Brown to testify before the Russian parliament in

June, as Brown admitted after Right Wing Watch exposed his participation.

Through the World Congress of Families, American Religious Right groups that might shy away from international affairs in their more public work provide very direct support to efforts preventing international recognition of gay rights as human rights, and to the crafting of anti-gay policies abroad. And that is exactly what's happening in Russia.

In September 2013, the World Congress of Families joined with five other American groups in signing a statement with over 100 groups from around the world supporting Russia's "gay propaganda" law and condemning the international outcry surrounding it.

In early June 2013, shortly before the Russian

Duma passed its ban on "gay propaganda," World Congress of Families managing director Larry Jacobs told End Times radio host Rick Wiles that the ban was a "great idea," as it would prevent gay people from "corrupting children."

"The Russians might be the Christian saviors of the world," he said. "At the UN, they are really the ones standing up for these traditional values of family and faith."

Just a few days after the "propaganda" bill was passed, Jacobs took to Voice of Russia radio to defend the law, saying, "Russia is actually doing something that used to be pretty common in the west, which is trying to protect children from harmful materials." Asked whether the U.S. should consider a similar law, Jacobs dodged: "Interesting question, and one that certainly politically

would not fly, and again, mostly because of special rights and lobby interest groups on both sides of the issue."

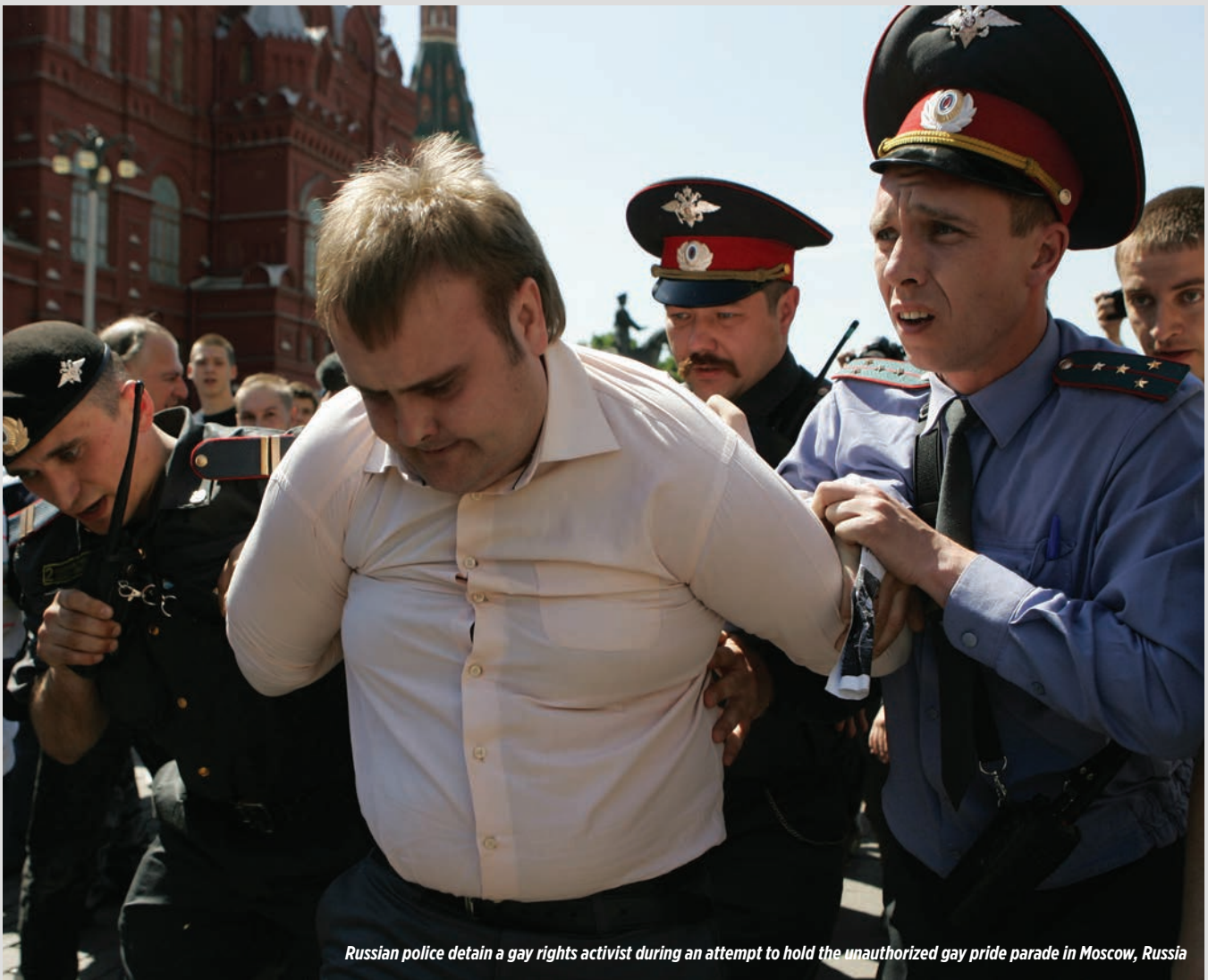
The World Congress of

Families has done more than cheer on Russia's anti-gay crackdown from the sidelines. It has also built an advocacy structure within the country.

In 2012, WCF helped found a Russia-based group called FamilyPolicy.ru, a group whose goal was "to build [a] highly efficient network of pan-Russian grassroots socially conservative activists, that would be able to consistently exert real influence on the family policy in Russia, at the U.N. and internationally."

The top staff members at FamilyPolicy.Ru also hold positions with WCF. FamilyPolicy.ru's president, Alexey Komov (the one who spoke at the rally in Belgrade), is WCF's official "Representative in Russia." Komov also heads a program for St. Basil's, the foundation headed by Konstantin Malofeev,

KOMOV PRAISED REPUBLICANS AND THE TEA PARTY FOR DEFENDING "TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES" IN THE UNITED STATES.



Russian police detain a gay rights activist during an attempt to hold the unauthorized gay pride parade in Moscow, Russia

the businessman and activist who hosted the June meeting on anti-gay laws attended by Brian Brown and Fabrice Sorlin. In March 2013, WCF appointed FamilyPolicy.ru staffer Pavel Parfentiev to be its “ambassador to European institutions.”

Shortly after its founding, FamilyPolicy.ru held a “demographic summit” dedicated to providing “solutions to Russia’s well-below replacement fertility rate.” The summit featured Parfentiev, the World Congress of Family’s Don Feder, and John Mueller of the Washington, DC-based Ethics in Public Policy Center. The “demographic winter” theme is central to the scholarship and advocacy of WCF and the Howard Center, which fault feminism, gay rights, legal divorce, birth control and other progressive advances for falling population in the developed world. (In

2011, Jacobs attended a Moscow conference that influenced Russian activists in adopting American anti-choice tactics.) And it is a program that Russian president Vladimir Putin has enthusiastically embraced .

FamilyPolicy.ru quickly became a leader in Russian anti-gay politics. In an interview with Voice of Russia radio in June, Parfentiev claimed credit for being an “initiator” of Russia’s ban on adoptions to gay couples and single people in countries that allow gay couples to marry. “As far as I know, I was one of the first people that publicly spoke about the necessity of such a move,” he said. “Of course, I would support this move because, in fact, I was one of its initiators.”

Parfentiev also advocated for Russia’s gay propaganda ban. In March, he sent a detailed

memo to the European Commission for Democracy through Law defending the law (then still in progress) and a similar proposed measure in Ukraine. In May, he sent a similar memo to the Council of Europe.

When the Duma passed the propaganda ban in June, Parfentiev posted gleefully on Facebook that he “got greetings and congratulations from many foreign colleagues representing the movement to protect the family.”

Komov has also proved to be a prolific

When the World Congress of Families announced that it would sign the international statement of support for Russia’s “homosexual propaganda” law, Komov and Parfentiev weighed in with their own press release. The release quotes Komov as saying:

This announcement shows, despite the attempts of supporters of the interests of the so-called “sexual minorities” to create the opposite impression, that a huge number of people and human rights organizations around the world are supporting Russia in an effort to protect



The banner reads "Love can be different colors" and "I'm proud of being gay." A gay rights activist takes part in the unauthorized gay pride parade in central Moscow

spokesperson for the anti-gay cause in Russia. In an interview with Voice of Russia radio in August, Komov announced that Russia remains “the last bastion of moral values” against a U.N.-sponsored push to recognize gay rights around the globe. In another interview, Komov praised Republicans and the Tea Party for defending “traditional family values” in the United States.

their children and their family values from aggressive immoral propaganda. [via Google Translate]

Parfentiev added a statement comparing gay rights advocacy to “the use of toxic chemicals in baby food”:

PARFENTIEV COMPARED GAY RIGHTS ADVOCACY TO “THE USE OF TOXIC CHEMICALS IN BABY FOOD.”

[The] Russian law meets the generally recognized rules of international law. Protecting children from propaganda contrary to family and moral standards is a completely normal, routine step. In fact, it is no different, for example, from prohibiting the use of toxic chemicals in baby food – to which hardly anyone will object. It’s amazing how a far-fetched and artificial trend created outrage around this simple measure by those who seem to dislike the family and simple family values. [via Google Translate]

Perhaps the clearest sign that the World Congress of Families is invested in Russia’s anti-gay renaissance – and sees it as a model for the world – is that it has scheduled its 2014 world conference for Moscow.

Leading the “the hosting committee” for the event will be FamilyPolicy.ru’s Alexey Komov. Also on the committee is Konstantin Malofeev, the private equity head who convened the “Traditional Values” roundtable with NOM’s Brian Brown and the French activists that we discussed previously.

As we mentioned earlier, Malofeev spoke at the World Congress of Families 2013 gathering in Sydney, where, according to one attendee, he held out Russia as a model for the world, saying, “Now Christian Russia can help liberate the West from the new liberal anti-Christian totalitarianism of political correctness, gender ideology, mass-media censorship and neo-Marxist dogma.”

In October 2013, WCF held a planning meeting in Moscow for the upcoming conference. Attending the meeting were Brown; Jack Hanick, the former Fox News employee who also participated in the June roundtable; the far-right French activist Fabrice Sorlin; and

representatives from the prominent American conservative groups Focus on the Family, Alliance Defending Freedom, the Catholic Family & Human Rights Institute and the Christian Broadcasting Network. According to a WCF press release, the planning group met with Yelena Mizulina, the Russian legislator who coauthored the country’s “gay propaganda” ban.

Anti-gay activists in the United States, finding it increasingly difficult to push their agenda at home, have turned to Russia both as a place receptive to their politics and as a “savior” of the world against increasing social liberalism. In doing so, they have provided international backing to an oppressive, anti-democratic regime that is increasingly using LGBT people as scapegoats for broader political dissatisfaction.

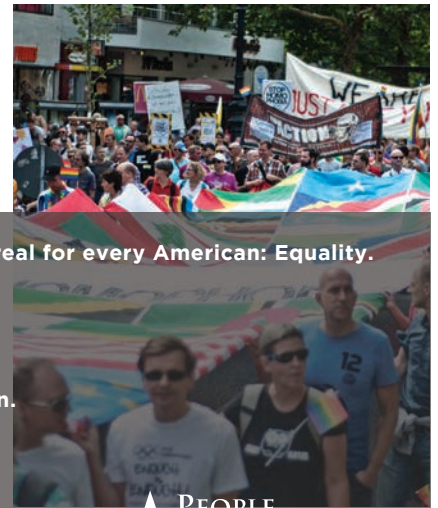
When they support the World Congress of Families and attend its events – including the upcoming conference in Moscow – American groups send a clear message about how far they are willing to go to promote anti-gay ideology.

This report was adapted from a series of blog posts published on People For the American Way’s Right Wing Watch in October 2013.

Citations are available in the online version of this report at www.pfaw.org

Note on translations:

All translations are by a professional translator, except where noted. We have noted when statements have gone through multiple translations (for instance, translated from English to Russian and back to English again). Google translations have been lightly edited for clarity.



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