

Just news

Coors versus gays and lesbians

Joe Coors' sons are also in harmony on at least one other point: Homosexuals are an abomination in the eyes of God.

— Los Angeles Times, 1988

The Coors family maintains strongly held, fundamentalist religious beliefs. In a profile of the Coors family in 1988, the Los Angeles Times noted that "All five of Joe Coors' sons, inspired by their mother, Holly, 67, are self-described born again Christian fundamentalists. Hard core...the while family is awaiting Armageddon, which Joe Jr. believes will occur around the year 2000." Also according to the article, the Coors family "haggles over such diverse matters from George Bush's choice of running mate to whether AIDS is, in fact, God's pre-Armageddon punishment of homosexuals."

They can work with ease with the social issues-oriented New Rightists such as Paul Weyrich. Since Jeffrey Coors became chair of Weyrich's Free Congress Foundation (FCF), the Coors foundation's annual contribution to FCF has increased 50 percent to \$150,000. And FCF is actively mobilizing public fear of the gay and lesbian communities. FCF "Senior Contributing Scholar" Father Enrique Rueda wrote in a 1987 book, *Gays, AIDS and You*, "once you understand the agenda of the homosexual movement, you will probably perceive it as a terrible threat — to ourselves, our children, our communities, our country."

The thesis of the Rueda book is that "this movement is using the AIDS crisis to pursue its political agenda. This in turn threatens not only our values but our lives." Rueda, who is using the AIDS crisis for his political agenda, asserts that "homosexuality...is a psycho-sexual dysfunction" that is "gravely sinful by the very nature of reality." Nevertheless, he claims to have discovered that "the homosexual movement...has a coherent ideology." It should be combatted with "a well-organized campaign within the schools, professional and religious bodies, economic institutions, and the media...should the pro-family forces prevail, homosexual acts would come to be viewed as a manifestation of sinfulness, an illness or a potential and/or actual source of crime."

Enrique Rueda is not the only person who plans to make being a homosexual a crime. Last year, Paul Weyrich of the Free Congress Foundation and Edwin Feulner of the Heritage Foundation jointly released what they called an ideal platform for the 1988 elections, with several hundred planks. One plank, Halt AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases, said that fighting AIDS would require "such policy actions as: reintroducing and enforcing anti-sodomy laws." The same plank also argues that all public-school children in middle or high schools should be regularly tested for AIDS, as well as other institutional populations, including public employees, hospitals, drug treatment programs and

prisons. The government was warned against "official pandering to small socially destructive special interests."

Many other Coors-supported groups express similar views. Morality in Media is another group that has received Coors funding for many years. Morality in Media organized a Boston forum in 1985 which advocated the use of an old leper colony in Boston Harbor for the quarantine of people with AIDS. Joe Coors was then a member of Morality in Media's board of directors. In 1988, the Coors Foundation gave \$15,000 to Morality in Media.

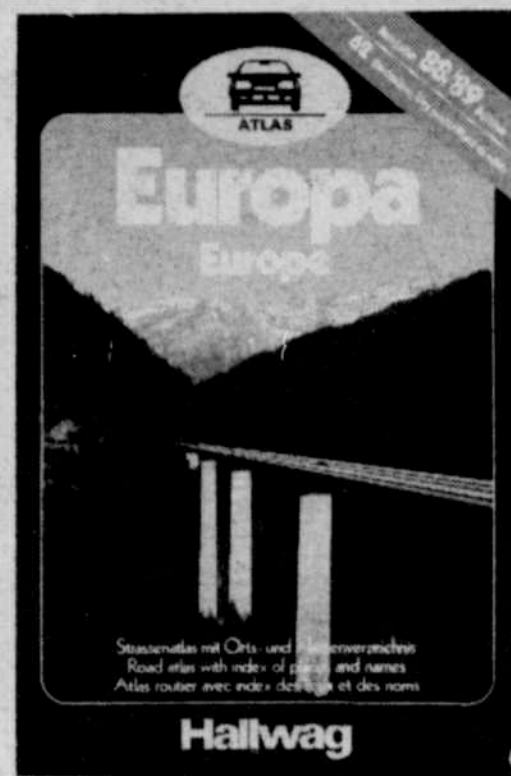
When Jeffrey Coors attends Council for National Policy (CNP) meetings, he is secretly (as is the nature of CNP events) meeting with Jerry Falwell, whose long history of anti-gay activism goes back at least to the campaigns of Anita Bryant. Or with R.J. Ruchdoony, who advocates executing homosexuals. Or with dozens of others who believe, as he does, that homosexuals are an abomination. The views of this crowd seem to be compatible with his personal views on a range of issues, including homophobia. When he castigated his father (Joe Coors) for running off to California with a young mistress in 1988, he called him "a sinner, along with homosexuals, gluttons, blasphemers, murderers, liars" according to a characterization of his remarks by the Los Angeles Times.

The Coors company has used polygraph testing to weed out homosexuals, according to a management employee. The polygraph operator who screened prospective employees or investigated current employees normally asked questions about one's sex life, such as whether one was married, single or divorced, had single or multiple sex partners, frequency of sexual activity, etc. Questions on one's political views were also asked. This kind of polygraph use was one of the issues that motivated the 1977 Coors strike. Coors representatives would later deny that Coors used the polygraph for such purposes, although a number of affidavits, sworn testimony before the Senate, and press reports indicate that Coors did indeed use the polygraph to impose its narrow political views and quest for sexual conformity upon the workers. In its associations with right-wing political groups, Coors tries to impose those same views on the entire American public.

Editor's note: *The above is excerpted from "The Coors Connection: How Coors Family Philanthropy Undermines Democratic Pluralism," by Russ Bellant. A Topical Report. Political Research Associates. August 15, 1989.*

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