

# Brenda Walker and Dan Amato Inject Anti-Immigrant Fervor into the Blogosphere

As xenophobic groups and individuals continue to vilify undocumented immigrants, particularly Latinos, at rallies, in the media, and on their Web sites, some anti-immigrant figures are using blogs as a vehicle to showcase their bigotry towards immigrants. Some of these blogs are independent, while others are attached to well-established anti-immigrant Web sites. The bloggers' informal posts reveal their stereotypes of immigrants and expose their ties to other xenophobic activists.

In keeping with the themes that anti-immigrant figures and groups consistently promote, these bloggers decry multiculturalism, demonize Latino culture, and portray undocumented immigrants as criminals who undercut the fabric of the United States.

Brenda Walker, based in California, and Dan Amato, based in Pennsylvania, are two of the most prolific and outspoken of these bloggers. Though located on different coasts, they have used their blogs to unite readers across the country under the anti-immigrant umbrella. Walker and Amato are not just interested in having fans who read their posts; they have encouraged readers to take action or support the movement financially. They have capitalized on blogs to express their views and connect followers and readers to developments in the anti-immigrant movement.

Both Walker and Amato came to the movement in different ways but found a home in the blogosphere. They decided that blogging is the most effective way to disseminate their views to a mass audience and can serve as a springboard to real-world action. Their blogs have attracted the attention of anti-immigrant activists and racists who invite them to participate in rallies and

conferences. At these events, Walker and Amato, along with other speakers, target non-white immigrants as invaders who threaten the quality of life in America.

## BRENDA WALKER

Brenda Walker is a California-based environmentalist and feminist turned anti-immigrant blogger, whose strident rhetoric demonizes not only undocumented immigrants, but an array of ethnic and religious groups, mainly Latinos and Muslims.

Walker has used several venues to promote her views, including racist, xenophobic Web sites, a blog, and an anti-immigrant journal. In February 2009, she appeared publicly and spoke at a racist conference aimed at addressing the alleged threat of multiculturalism to the United States.

Her main connection to the anti-immigrant movement was initially John Tanton, widely considered the movement's architect. Walker served as one of the most active supporters of Tanton's campaign to insert anti-immigrant figures into the leadership of the Sierra Club in 2004. That same year, Walker's disparaging comments about the Hmong community garnered national attention and further put her on the map as an activist who has contributed to and supported the movement's agenda.

Walker's prolific postings demonizing non-white immigrants, her access to several venues for disseminating her views, and her ties to racist figures and other anti-immigrant activists has made her a significant figure in the anti-immigrant movement.

### **Recent Activity – Speaker at a Racist, Anti-Immigrant Conference**

In February 2009, Walker spoke at a “Preserving Western Civilization” conference in Baltimore, Maryland. The conference brought together a group of racist academics, conservative pundits and anti-immigrant activists who spoke on a wide range of issues that highlighted the racist nature of the gathering. Speakers focused on how the “massive influx” of “third-world immigrants” allegedly threatens American and European cultural values, as well as the dangers of Islam, and alleged racial differences in intelligence.

Discussing the topic of “Multiculturalism and Women's Rights,” Walker claimed that Western civilization is under attack by “immigrants and multiculturalism.” She argued that non-Western countries do not properly protect women's rights and alleged that heightened immigration from these countries would lead to the curtailing of these rights in the United States. She stated, “We can have multiculturalism or women's rights and safety. Not both.” Walker repeatedly exploits the women's rights issue to attack

other cultures.

Among Walker's co-speakers were J. Philippe Rushton, head of the Pioneer Fund (which promotes eugenics) and a frequent speaker at conferences run by the white supremacist *American Renaissance* magazine; Peter Brimelow, who runs the racist VDare Web site; and Pat Richardson, a member of the far-right British National Party, a racist, anti-minority party in Great Britain.

### Blog

Walker is a regular writer and blogger for the racist VDare Web site, which has featured her columns since 2002 and her blog posts since 2005. VDare posts, promotes, and archives the work of racists, anti-immigrant figures, and anti-Semites.

In her pieces, Walker attacks Latinos, Muslims, Asians, and others. She claims that both legal and undocumented immigrants are responsible for the loss of the quality of life in America; crime; rape; the lowering of educational standards; “breakdown” of society; “lawlessness,” and the welcoming of the “inherent misogyny contained in multiculturalism.” Standing firmly against diversity and multiculturalism, she has asserted that the idea that “‘diversity is our strength’ ...is a mass delusion” and that “toxic levels of diversity are tearing the cultural fabric of this nation apart.”

Walker has also contributed pieces to *The Social Contract*, an anti-immigrant journal published by John Tanton and edited by Wayne Lutton, a close associate of Tanton's who himself has authored anti-immigrant pieces and has had ties to white supremacist groups including the [Council of Conservative Citizens](#) and the [New Century Foundation](#). Walker served as a guest editor for a 2006 issue of *The Social Contract*, in which she wrote that multiculturalism “posits the fantasy that all cultures are morally equal.”

### Anti-Latino Views

Walker focuses most of her attention on Latinos, especially Mexicans. Her general claims against undocumented immigrants reflect her opposition to Latino immigration. Walker consistently employs stereotypes and demeaning language to allege that Latinos are invading the United States and bringing with them a culture of crime, sexual abuse, academic underachievement, robbery, and resentment towards America.

One of Walker's repeated allegations is that Hispanic culture does not share American values and is prone to lazy, drunken behavior. In March 2009, Walker used her VDare blog to claim that “drinking to excess is considered macho and cool in Hispanic cultures. One way to demonstrate genuine manhood is to

slug down 12 beers in a sitting, in fact.”

In a January 2009 blog post on VDare, she referred to Mexicans as “an ethnic group that has neither interest nor aptitude.” A month earlier, she wrote, “Naturally, the influx of millions of Mexicans has brought their way of crime, including kidnapping, along [sic] the rest of their culture.”

In “Hispanic Education Still an Oxymoron,” an October 2008 blog post, Walker alleged, “Hispanics, and particularly Mexicans, are academic underachievers because their culture does not value education.” In September 2008, she claimed, “If I am around a couple of gangsterish Spanish-speakers, I don't know whether they are discussing where to go for pizza or whether they should try to rob and kill me.”

Walker has also invoked the widely-employed conspiracy theory among anti-immigrant figures that undocumented immigrants, specifically from Mexico, are secretly plotting to invade the United States and conquer its Southwestern territory. Walker has promoted this theory and exploited it to demonize Mexicans as vengeful and bitter towards the United States. In a June 2008 article for the VDare Web site, she argued that “Most of the 30 million Mexicans who reside here did not come to become Americans and join our national community: they came for the money only, and harbor resentment against this country for imagined theft of territory.”

She claimed in an August 2007 VDare blog post that “hispanics [sic] are culturally disinterested in using seatbelts, which goes against their progress-resistant, fatalistic view of life.” That same month, she lamented on the VDare blog that “the tsunami of foreigners, led by illegal immigration, is overwhelming the historic American population, south of the Mexican-Dixon line. Whites are now in the minority in nearly one in 10 U.S. counties...Immigration – it's the new way of war.”

In “Top Ten Reasons Why the US Should Not Marry Mexico,” an article she wrote for VDare in January 2007, Walker alleged, “Mexican men have a reputation for leering and worse at little girls, which shouldn't surprise us, since sex with children is socially acceptable in Mexico...foreigners bring their cultures with them, ranging from tasty cuisine to child sex abuse.”

In a May 2004 VDare article, Walker claimed that “drunk driving is an accepted behavior among Mexicans in particular.” In a 2003 letter she wrote to the Colorado Daily she alleged, “Illegal aliens do not change their stripes just because they cross the border: they bring their repulsive cultural baggage with them.”

### **Anti-Mexico Statements**

In addition to vilifying Latino immigrants, Walker also targets Mexico, which she has called “the narco-hub of the Western Hemisphere,” “the crack-house country next door,” “the country-sized crack house,” and “the Narco-neighbor.” By depicting Mexico as a source of drugs, corruption, crime, and sexism, it becomes easier for Walker to portray its citizenry as infected with such a culture.

In a June 2008 piece for the main VDare Web site, Walker vilified Mexico, writing, “The southerly narco-state is one of the least attractive contributors of new immigrants one can imagine—with its social norms of negativity toward education, admiration for crime, corruption throughout various levels of society, crude sexism and strong Marxican tendencies.”

In an April 2008 post to the VDare blog, Walker claimed, “Mexico only pretends to be poor so it can dump its unwanted sick and uneducated on Uncle Sucker, as well as hustle foreign aid for various reasons.” A month earlier, she attempted to prove that Mexico is “not wracked by poverty as we are led to believe,” as “the most obese person on earth is a Mexican.”

In an October 2006 interview on the *Peter Boyles Show*, a Colorado-based anti-immigrant radio program, Walker argued that Mexico is “one of the most despicable countries on Earth. One of the most corrupt countries on Earth...If there's one thing that the Mexicans are good at, it's establishing smuggling infrastructures.”

### **Disparaging Comments About Islam and Muslims**

Walker does not limit her bias to Latinos. She has, on several occasions, made discriminatory statements about other ethnic groups, especially Muslims. Mocking Muslim prayer and ritual, Walker has also claimed that the safety of the West is compromised by continued Muslim immigration because “Muslims despise our society” and basic “liberties.” According to Walker, Islam and the West are therefore essentially incompatible.

In a March 2009 article on VDare she alleged that Europe is “being buried by millions of Muslim colonists.” In the article, Walker also stressed “Islam's long-standing enmity toward Europe” and claimed that “it's a wonder the Muslims bother with terrorism at all when demography is working so well for them.” Before urging Americans to stop Muslim immigration, Walker wrote that Great Britain in particular is “far advanced along the immigration road to hell” and that the United Kingdom “looks like toast. In 30 years, London will likely be a sand-free version of Riyadh...”

In a January 2009 VDare blog post, Walker featured an image of Muslims prostrating themselves

during prayer. In describing the photo, Walker wrote that “the act under consideration is the traditional up-butt salute...”

In a November 2008 VDare blog post about a Turkish village sacrificing sheep to celebrate Barack Obama's presidential victory, Walker wrote, “In Muslim society, there's nothing like mass killing to say Celebration!”

In an April 2008 post to the VDare blog, she claimed, “So even when Saudis residing in America don't commit terrorism, many believe that they can act as they please and break American law...” A month earlier, on the VDare blog, she said, “Beside the obvious terror threat, another problem has been the bad behavior of Saudi students, particularly crummy driving and sexual harassment against women.”

In a March 2008 post, she described the “Islamic world...India and China,” as “third world [sic] sewers” and “third-world piggy zones” whose people “are coming here, bringing their crappy cultures that don't have the wit to survive without actual slavery and other sorts of oppression built into the family structure.” She also wrote that month that “‘Gimme, gimme,’ is the first phrase every immigrant learns upon entering the foolishly generous USA, and more so with the Sons of Allah.”

Rather than addressing immigration policy, Walker employs virulent stereotypes to argue that Muslims pose a threat to the security of the West. In a March 2008 VDare blog post, Walker claimed, “Some cultures are simply incompatible. The West and Islam can never live together because Muslims despise our society and the hard-won liberties we treasure: free speech, representative government under law, individual rights and gender equality. Continuing to welcome them as immigrants is madness – a kumbaya fantasy that severely endangers our safety.”

#### **Hate Rhetoric About African, Asian, and Middle Eastern Groups**

Walker also includes Africans and Asians in her diatribes against non-white immigrants that have come to America.

She attacked Somali immigrant culture in a March 2009 VDare blog post, writing that “it's cruel to plunk primitive tribal people (who have never ridden in a car or switched on an electric light) into 21st century American cities.”

In a January 2009 VDare blog post entitled “Chinese and Indian Immigrants Import Anti-Daughter Diversity,” Walker alleged that immigrants from Asian and Middle Eastern nations pose a threat to gender equality in the United States. She asked, “Speaking of Asian immigrants, do newcomers from those socially

retrograde countries retain their cultural misogyny when they relocate to egalitarian America? Absolutely.” She also speculated that due to an alleged preference for boys in Asian nations, “‘missing girls’ in America – [is] another symptom of diverse immigration!”

In August 2008, Walker authored a piece for the VDare blog entitled “India Immigration Growth in America Is Celebrated (by Indians).” She started her entry by demonizing Indians as failing to live up to the expectation that they be “model minorities.” Walker alleged, “Indian immigrants bring a culture that is anti-social mobility, but they expect maximum opportunity for themselves. Other off-putting Indian attitudes and practices include doggie marriage for children, an aversion to indoor plumbing, belief in witchcraft and an overdeveloped idea of their own importance regarding innovation.” In 2004, the New York Times highlighted Walker's bigotry towards one Asian group when it reported her equating Hmong immigrants in America with “drug-addicted polygamists.” This particular comment received attention because she made it during an attempt, on the part of anti-immigrant activists, to gain seats on the board of the Sierra Club, of which Walker was a member. The campaign prompted the creation of Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization (SUSPS), a group which Walker joined. SUSP's efforts, along with those of the anti-immigrant candidates, failed in the Sierra Club board elections in 2004, and the then-president of the Sierra Club condemned Walker's comments as “hateful.”

#### **Publisher of Anti-Immigrant Web sites**

In addition to her blog, Walker maintains two other anti-immigrant Web sites. She runs *Limits to Growth*, the “web home” of two anti-immigrant groups, the Bay Area Coalition for Immigration Reform and the Immigration Reform Network of Silicon Valley, both run out of P.O. boxes in California.

As with her other endeavors, Walker uses *Limits to Growth* to spread her bigotry towards Latinos, Mexicans, and Muslims. She devotes a section to decrying diversity in general. In “The Diversity File,” Walker attempts to prove that “making room in Europe and America for everyone's cultural differences can get absurd” by providing links to articles that discuss, among other things, practices in Muslim and Latino countries. In another section on the *Limits to Growth* Web site entitled “Multiculturalism Is a Fraud,” Walker claims that “the absurd preference for third-world cultures in our immigration policy amounts to importing sexism.”

In addition to posting pieces that stereotype and vilify undocumented immigrants and non-white groups, Walker links the *Limits to Growth* page to the Web sites of several anti-immigrant groups, including the [Federation for American Immigration Reform](#), the largest anti-immigrant group in the country; the

Center for Immigration Studies, an anti-immigrant think tank; [Americans for Legal Immigration Political Action Committee](#), a North Carolina-based xenophobic group and the Web site of a radio show hosted by [Terry Anderson](#), an anti-immigrant activist.

Walker also runs *Immigrations [sic] Human Cost*, the “companion” site to *Limits to Growth*. Walker dedicates this site to “individual Americans whose lives and communities have been damaged by too much immigration too fast.” Sections entitled “job displacement,” “community turmoil,” “importing criminals,” and “crime victims” further her contention that immigrants wreak havoc on the United States by threatening American jobs, safety, and the quality of life. Walker links this site to many of the same Web sites accessible from *Limits to Growth*.

## Dan Amato

Dan “Digger” Amato is a Pennsylvania-based anti-immigrant blogger and activist. Since May 2003, Amato has made his name known in anti-immigrant circles with prolific postings on his DiggersRealm blog and repeat appearances at anti-immigrant rallies, where he is often featured as a speaker. Numerous anti-immigrant figures and groups view Amato as a source of information and inspiration. He is perhaps one of the best examples in the anti-immigrant movement of a figure who has used Internet technology to inspire action, to network, and to build his reputation in the real world.

### Blog

Amato's almost daily posts on his DiggersRealm blog often glorify anti-immigrant figures, groups, and themes. He fills the site with event announcements, summaries, and news items mostly related to Latino immigration. Although Amato is based in Pennsylvania and travels mostly in the Northeast, he blogs about events and immigration-related events and issues that occur throughout the country.

In addition to reporting on actions carried out by anti-immigrant leaders, Amato encourages his readers to take action. He makes pleas to individuals to donate to anti-immigrant groups, and he has boasted about readers supporting his own travels to attend anti-immigrant events. He also prompts his readers to attend rallies and take other action to support and further the anti-immigrant movement.

Through DiggersRealm, Amato gives other anti-immigrant figures a platform to express their views and promote their groups and events. He frequently includes the writings and videos of other xenophobic activists and bloggers based in other states on his site.



### Participation in Anti-Immigrant Events/Rallies

In addition to his extensive blog, Amato often attends, participates, and speaks at anti-immigrant events and rallies in the Northeast. During an October 2008 rally staged by the anti-immigrant group Save Shenandoah in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, Amato made a speech in which he referred to northern California as “occupied territory.” (Shenandoah became a focal point for immigration-related activism following the murder of an undocumented immigrant from Mexico in July 2008.)

Amato has spewed anti-immigrant rhetoric during speeches at events hosted by Voice of the People (VOP), a Pennsylvania-based anti-immigrant group. He spoke at a VOP rally in August 2008 and at another rally staged by the group in May 2008 in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, a flashpoint for anti-immigrant advocacy and legislation. He has posted video footage of himself at these events on his blog and also on YouTube. At the May 2008 rally, Amato claimed that undocumented immigrants “have no loyalty to the United States...” He further alleged, “Every night while you sleep, Americans are being killed at the hands of illegal aliens in this country. The list of victims is growing...Are you gonna spread the word far and wide that our country has been invaded? Are you going to fight for your country?”

Amato went on to refer to undocumented immigrants as “a group of people who are only here to rape our wallets and leave our children destitute.” In addition to several anti-immigrant figures who also spoke at the May 2008 event, Amato shared the podium with [Carmen Morales](#), a xenophobic activist who has a history of demonizing undocumented immigrants. Morales is the Vice-Chair of You Don't Speak for Me (YDSFM), a Latino-run anti-immigrant group that is an offshoot of the [Federation for American Immigration Reform](#) (FAIR), the largest anti-immigrant group in the country.

During his speech at another Voice of the People rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in September 2007, also posted online, Amato told the crowd, “I've been appalled as I report on story after story of Americans being raped, murdered, and killed by vicious illegal alien thugs in our streets and behind the vehicles of cars.”

He directly attributed the presence of undocumented immigrants to “declining education” levels in Arizona and California and asked the audience, “Are you gonna wait until you have to fear for your own safety? Are you gonna wait for one of your family members to be assaulted or killed by an illegal alien?” Included among Amato's fellow speakers at the September 2007 event were anti-Semite Paul Topete, lead singer of the anti-government, conspiracy-promoting band Poker Face and Mariann Davies, a Vice Chair of YDSFM.

When Voice of the People staged a rally in Freeland, Pennsylvania in August 2007, Amato publicly alleged, “We have sex predators, drug runners, and other assorted criminals crossing our borders daily.” He declared that undocumented immigration is “destroying the fabric of communities across this nation” and claimed, “We are currently under another form of attack today, a shadow invasion being openly supported and pushed by businesses and politicians in this country.”

A month earlier, alongside anti-immigrant blogger and activist Ruth Miller, Amato helped organize and spoke at a protest in front of the Mexican consulate in Philadelphia. At the event, he publicly tore images of the Mexican flag and spoke.

In April 2007, Amato participated in “Hold Their Feet to the Fire,” a multi-day anti-immigrant event staged by FAIR in conjunction with other anti-immigrant groups from around the country. Amato was an official blogger, posting information about each event to his blog, as a part of Blogger's Row, a panel of bloggers culled by the North Carolina-based xenophobic group [Americans for Legal Immigration Political Action Committee](#) (ALIPAC). Amato's co-bloggers included Minuteman border vigilante leader Tony Dolz, anti-immigrant activist and speaker Frosty Wooldridge, and Chelene Nightingale, a leader in Save Our State, a California-based anti-immigrant group.

### **Affiliations**

Amato has befriended several figures in the anti-immigrant movement. They often invite him to speak at rallies, give interviews on Internet radio, and they link to his blog from their Web sites. Conversely, Amato supports their views, publicizes their activities on his blog, and provides links to numerous anti-immigrant sites from his blog. Several times, Amato has met with other activists to strategize and work together to plan events.

Perhaps his closest ally in the movement is Ruth Miller. She runs the anti-immigrant blog *Illegal Protest*, has acted as a rally organizer, and has spoken at anti-immigrant rallies staged by other groups. Amato and Miller met during Feet to the Fire in 2007, and they have since spoken alongside one another at rallies, organized a protest in front of the Mexican consulate in Philadelphia in July 2007, and traveled to and participated in several other events together. Amato titled a blog entry “Why I'm Fond of Ruth Miller,” and the DiggersRealm blog features several links to her Web site, which is dedicated to “American Citizens who are tired of the illegal alien invasion.”

Amato has consistently expressed support for William Gheen, a North Carolina anti-immigrant

activist who often has publicly demonized undocumented immigrants as criminals, drug dealers, disease carriers, and rapists. Amato has called Gheen's group, ALIPAC, "the future of immigration groups in America," and he has asked the public to donate to ALIPAC.

In addition to participating in a blogger's panel that Gheen organized, Amato has twice appeared on Gheen's Internet radio show, *Last Americans Standing*. Gheen featured Amato in an August 2008 show dedicated to promoting anti-immigrant bloggers. When Amato called in to Gheen's first show in July 2008, Gheen called him "a great example for this movement." *Last Americans Standing* is syndicated by the Republic Broadcasting Network, an Internet radio hosting service which also carries shows hosted by anti-Semites and anti-government figures.

Amato has also affiliated himself with leaders of [You Don't Speak for Me](#) (YDSFM), a Latino-run anti-immigrant group. He has spoken alongside YDSFM Vice Chair Carmen Morales at anti-immigrant events. When describing Morales's speech at an October 2007 rally in New Jersey, Amato wrote on his blog that she "brought the place to life with her lively and passionate anger at the absolute assault this nation is under with the illegal alien invasion." Morales also posted a letter that she wrote to the mayor of San Diego, California, to the DiggersRealm blog. In her letter, Morales objected to the proclamation of a "National Council of La Raza" day in San Diego in July 2008. The National Council of La Raza is a Latino civil rights and advocacy organization.

In addition to Morales, Amato has worked alongside his "good friend" Mariann Davies, another YDSFM Vice Chair. He credits a personal meeting with Davies, in part, for his July 2007 decision to move to Philadelphia to continue to "fight illegal immigration." Davies has sent material to Amato to be posted on the DiggersRealm blog, and Amato has participated in anti-immigrant events with her.

Amato has also maintained a close relationship with Voice of the People, a Pennsylvania-based anti-immigrant group, led by Dan Smeriglio, with whom Amato is also closely affiliated. Amato has spoken at rallies staged by Voice of the People, and he has posted information about Smeriglio and Voice of the People's activity. In turn, Smeriglio has posted language praising Amato to the DiggersRealm blog. In one comment posted in February 2008, Smeriglio proclaimed that he is "writing in DAN AMATO, FOR PRESIDENT!!! We need a person who isn't afraid to tell it the way it is as commander in chief! He has served our country and continues to serve our country on a day to day basis, by keeping us informed and by holding those who are deserving accountable for their blatant acts of treason against this nation!"

In addition to more mainstream anti-immigrant activists, Amato has affiliated himself with the

[Minutemen](#) border vigilante movement; Minutemen chapters often stage armed patrols of the Mexican-American border. Amato has made numerous posts to his blog covering Minutemen activity throughout the county, and he has worked with leaders in Minutemen groups. During the April 2007 Hold Their Feet to the Fire events in Washington D.C., Amato joined a rally in front of the White House, where he held a sign with Raymond Herrera, the National Rally Spokesperson for the Minuteman Project, one of the largest Minutemen groups, based in California. Also during Hold Their Feet to the Fire, Amato worked on a blogger's panel with Tony Dolz, who claims to be “one of the founding members of the Minuteman Grassroots Movement and the California Legislative Liaison and Greater Los Angeles Chapter Leader for the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps.” The latter is a large, Arizona-based Minutemen faction.