GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

# The Media Response to the Growing Influence of the 9 /11 Truth Movement

## Reflections on a Recent Evaluation of Dr. David Ray Griffin

By Elizabeth Woodworth
Global Research, December 12, 2009
12 December 2009

Theme: Terrorism

The cover story of the September 24, 2009, issue of The New Statesman, the venerable left-leaning British magazine, was entitled "The 50 People who Matter Today."(1) Any such list, necessarily reflecting the bias and limited awareness of the editors, would surely contain choices that readers would find surprising.

That is true of this list – which includes families as well as individuals. A good number of names are, to be sure, ones that would be contained in most such lists created by British, Canadian, or American political commentators, such as the Obamas, the Murdochs, Vladimir Putin, Osama bin Laden, Angela Merkel, Bill and Melinda Gates, Warren Buffett, Pope Benedict XVI, and Gordon Brown. But about half of the names reflected choices that I, and probably most other readers, found surprising. One of these choices, however, is beyond surprising – it is astounding.

I refer to the person in the 41st position: David Ray Griffin, a retired professor of philosophy of religion and theology who, in 2003, started writing and lecturing about 9/11, pointing out problems in the official account of the events of that day. By the time the New Statesman article appeared, he had published 8 books, 50 articles, and several DVDs. Because of both the quantity and quality of his work, he became widely regarded as the chief spokesperson of what came to be called "the 9/11 Truth Movement." It was because of this role that the New Statesman included him in its list, calling him the "top truther" (the "conspiracy theorist" title went to Dan Brown, who was placed in the 50th slot).

In saying Griffin "matters", however, the New Statesman was not praising him. Here is how the magazine explained its choice:

> "Conspiracy theories are everywhere, and they always have been. In recent years, one of the most pernicious global myths has been that the US government carried out, or at least colluded in, the 11 September 2001 attacks as a pretext for going to war. David Ray Griffin, a retired professor of religion, is the high priest of the 'truther' movement. His books on the subject have lent a sheen of respectability that appeals to people at the highest levels of government – from Michael Meacher MP to Anthony 'Van' Jones, who was recently forced to resign as Barack Obama's 'green jobs' adviser after it emerged that he had signed a 9/11 truth petition in 2004."

I wish to raise two questions about the New Statesman's treatment of Griffin. First, is its evaluation of him as one of the most important people in the world today simply absurd, as

it certainly seems at first glance, or is there a perspective from which it makes sense? Second on what basis could the editors justify their claim that the 9/11 truth movement is promoting a "myth" – and a "pernicious" one at that?

**The Inclusion of Griffin in the List: Does It Make Sense?**

Why would Griffin's role as "top truther" – as the intellectual leader of the 9/11 truth movement – lead the magazine's editors to consider him one of the "50 people who matter today"? Unlike a president, a prime minister, or a pope, he has no political clout; unlike a billionaire, he has no financial clout; and his book sales do not begin to rival those of Dan Brown. Indeed, his books do not even get reviewed in the press. The idea that he is one of the 50 people who matter most in the world today is, as he himself has said, absurd – at least from most angles.

There is, however, one angle from which it does make sense: Given the enormity of the 9/11 attacks and of the policies, both foreign and domestic, that have been justified as responses to those attacks, a movement challenging the official story of the attacks certainly could, in principle, become so influential that its intellectual leader would be a person of consequence.

And the movement has, in fact, grown enormously in both size and credibility since 2004 and 2005, when Griffin published his first two books on the subject – "The New Pearl Harbor" and "The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions" – and began working, with colleague Peter Dale Scott, on an edited volume that was published in 2006 as "9/11 and the American Empire: Intellectuals Speak Out."

Due in large part to these volumes – plus the national exposure Griffin received when his 2005 lecture at the University of Wisconsin in Madison was carried by C-SPAN – a small group of academics formed Scholars for 9/11 Truth, which led in turn to the formation of Scholars for 9/11 Truth and Justice, the leaders of which launched the Journal of 9/11 Studies in 2006.

The existence of these scholarly organizations stimulated the creation of three professional organizations: Veterans for 9/11 Truth, Pilots for 9/11 Truth, and the destined giant of the movement, Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth, which was formed after architect Richard Gage, a conservative Republican, heard an interview with Professor Griffin on his car radio that would change his life. In it, Griffin was describing the newly released oral testimonies from the dozens of New York firefighters a who had heard booming explosions in the Twin Towers.(2) After looking into the evidence for himself and concluding that the destruction of the World Trade Center buildings could not have resulted from anything other than explosives, Gage formed his organization of architects and engineers, which now has almost 1000 licensed members.

While these developments were occurring, translations were made of some of Griffin's books, beginning with "The New Pearl Harbor," which was published in Italian, Chinese, Danish, Czech, French, Dutch, Japanese, and Arabic. Thanks in part to these translations, a worldwide movement is now calling for 9/11 truth.

Also, this movement, which at one time was discounted as crazy conspiracy theorists playing around on the Internet, has now become widely professionalized, with Griffin again a critical influence in his consultant role to the emerging organizations of journalists, lawyers,

medical professionals, religious leaders, and political leaders.

One of those organizations, Political Leaders for 9/11 Truth, includes in its membership British MP Michael Meacher, who has, according to the New Statesman, succumbed to the "sheen of respectability" given to "the 'truther' movement" by Griffin's books. The New Statesman would presumably look equally askance at other members of this organization, including Senator Yukihisa Fujita, one of the leading members of the new ruling party of Japan, who made a nationally televised presentation questioning the official account or 9/11, and Ferdinando Imposimato, a former Italian senator and judge who presided over the trial of the assassination of President Aldo Moro and the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II.

If political leaders are so easily taken in by a "pernicious global myth" about 9/11 because of the "sheen of respectability" lent to it by Griffin's books, one could hopefully look to firefighters, who are generally practical, sensible people, for reassurance about the truth of the official account of 9/11. This hope is dashed, however, by the testimonies about explosions in the Twin Towers by dozens of firefighters, some of whom Richard Gage heard Griffin discussing on that interview in 2006. New York firefighters lost 343 of their own on September 11. The members of Firefighters for 9/11 Truth are demanding the investigation and prosecution of those involved in arranging explosions, destroying evidence, and orchestrating a cover-up.

One thing bringing Griffin to the attention of the editors of the New Statesman may have been the selection of his seventh book about 9/11, "The New Pearl Harbor Revisited," by America's foremost book trade reviewer, Publishers Weekly, as its "Pick of the Week" on November 24, 2008. This honor, which is bestowed on only 51 books a year, perhaps increased the sheen of respectability these editors attribute to Griffin's books.

And, if the New Statesman did its homework in researching its #41 position, it would have found that Griffin was nominated in both 2008 and 2009 for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Whatever the case, there can be no doubt that the 9/11 truth movement, which Griffin has done more than any other single person to bring to its present level of professionalism and credibility, now poses a significant threat to the public narrative about 9/11, which has been accepted as a basis for policy by virtually all governments and news organizations around the world.

The decision of the New Statesman to include Griffin on the list of people who matter today does make sense, therefore, insofar as it was saying that the movement he represents is important. This way of understanding it was, in fact, Griffin's own, as soon as he learned about the article. In a letter to fellow members of the 9/11 truth community, he said: "We should take this [New Statesman] article as a reluctant tribute to the effectiveness of our movement."(3)

**Does the 9/11 Truth Movement Promote a Pernicious Myth?**

My second questions is: On what basis could the New Statesman editors justify their claim that this 9/11 truth movement promotes a "myth" – a "pernicious" one at that?

To call it a "myth" implies that it is not true. But why is it "pernicious"?

If the New Statesman were a right-wing magazine, we could assume that it would regard the 9/11 truth movement's central claim – "that the US government carried out, or at least colluded in, the 11 September 2001 attacks as a pretext for going to war" – as pernicious because it seeks to undermine the imperialist wars justified by 9/11. But surely the left-leaning New Statesman does not share that view.

The word "pernicious" might simply mean that the myth "that the US government carried out, or at least colluded in, the 11 September 2001 attacks as a pretext for going to war," is too morally repugnant to accept. But that gut reaction does not bear on the truth or falsity of the possibility, especially in light of all the morally repugnant things carried out by the Bush-Cheney administration that have already been publicly documented.

More likely, the New Statesman shares the view of left-leaning intellectuals, such as Alexander Cockburn and George Monbiot, that the 9/11 movement is distracting many left-leaning people from dealing with truly important issues.

However, would many people who regard 9/11 as a false-flag operation – in which forces within the US government orchestrated the attacks to have a pretext for, among other things, going to war against oil-rich Muslim countries – consider the attempt to reveal this truth a distraction from important issues? Surely not.

For the Statesman to call the central claim of the 9/11 truth movement "pernicious," therefore, seems to be simply another way of calling it a "myth" – of saying that it is false.

If so, the question becomes: On what basis would the editors of the New Statesman argue that the position of the 9/11 truth movement, as articulated in Griffin's writings, is false?

I will suggest a possible way they could do this: They could use the pages of their magazine to explain why the cumulative case Griffin has constructed against the official story is unconvincing. To assist them in this task, I have provided below a summary of some of the main points in Griffin's case, with page references to his most comprehensive work, "The New Pearl Harbor Revisited" (2008), and his most recent book, "The Mysterious Collapse of World Trade Center 7."

**Elements in Griffin's Cumulative Case Against the Official Account of 9/11**

**Evidence that the attacks were carried out by Arab Muslims belonging to al-Qaeda**

The FBI, which does not list 9/11 as one of the terrorist acts for which Osama bin Laden is wanted, has explicitly admitted that it "has no hard evidence connecting Bin Laden to 9/11" (NPHR 206-11).

Mohamed Atta and the other alleged hijackers, far from being devout Muslims ready to die as martyrs, regularly drank heavily, went to strip clubs, and paid for sex (NPHR 153-55).

The main evidence for hijackers on the planes was provided by phone calls, purportedly from passengers or crew members on the airlines, reporting that the planes had been taken over by Middle-Eastern men. About 15 of these calls were specifically identified as cell phone calls, with Deena Burnett, for example, reporting that she had recognized her husband's cell phone number on her Caller ID. But after the 9/11 truth movement pointed

out that cell phone calls from high-altitude airliners would have been impossible, given the cell phone technology available in 2001, the FBI changed its story, saying that all the calls, except two made from a very low altitude, had been made using onboard phones.

Although US Solicitor General Ted Olson claimed that his wife, Barbara Olson, phoned him twice from AA 77, describing hijackers with knives and box-cutters, his widely reported story was contradicted by FBI evidence presented to the Moussaoui Trial in 2006, which said that the only call attempted by her was "unconnected" and (therefore) lasted "0 seconds" (NPRH 60-62).

Although the decisive evidence proving that Al-Qaeda was responsible for the attacks was originally said to have been found in a rented Mitsubishi that Mohamed Atta had left in the airport parking lot in Boston, the present story says that it was found in luggage that did not get loaded onto American Flight 11 from the commuter flight that Atta took that morning from Portland, Maine. This story changed after it emerged that Adnan and Ameer Bukhari, originally said to have been the hijackers who boarded American 11 after taking that commuter flight from Portland, had not died on 9/11.

The other types of reputed evidence for Muslim hijackers, such as security videos at airports, passports discovered at the crash sites, and a headband discovered at the crash site of United 93, show clear signs of having been fabricated (NPHR 170-73).

In addition to the absence of evidence for hijackers on the planes, there is also evidence of their absence: Although the pilots could have easily "squawked" the universal hijack code in two or three few seconds, not one of the eight pilots on the four airliners did this (NPHR 175-79).

The Secret Service, after being informed that a second World Trade Center building had been attacked—which would have meant that unknown terrorists were going after high-value targets—and that still other planes had apparently been hijacked, allowed President Bush to remain at the unprotected school in Sarasota, Florida, for another 30 minutes. The Secret Service thereby betrayed its knowledge that the airliners were not under the control of hostile hijackers.

**Evidence of a "stand-down" order preventing interception of the four planes**

Given standard operating procedures between the FAA and the military, according to which planes showing signs of an in-flight emergency are normally intercepted within about 10 minutes, the military's failure to intercept any of the flights implies that something, such as a stand-down order, prevented standard procedures from being carried out (NPHR 1-10, 81-84).

Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta reported an episode in which Vice President Cheney, while in the bunker under the White House, apparently confirmed a stand-down order at about 9:25 AM, which was prior to the strike on the Pentagon. (NPHR 94-96).

The 9/11 Commission did not include this testimony from Mineta in its report and claimed that Cheney did not enter the bunker until almost 10:00, which was at least 40 minutes later than Mineta and several other witnesses reported his being there (NPHR 91-94).

The 9/11 Commission's timeline for Cheney that morning even contradicted what Cheney himself had told Tim Russert on "Meet the Press" five days after 9/11 (NPHR 93).

**Evidence that the official story about the Pentagon cannot be true**

Hani Hanjour, who according to his flight instructors could not safely fly a single-engine airplane, could not have possibly executed the extraordinary trajectory reportedly taken by American Flight 77 in order to hit Wedge 1 of the Pentagon (NPHR 78-80).

Wedge 1 would have been the least likely part of the Pentagon to be targeted by foreign terrorists: It was remote from the offices of the top brass; it was the only part of the Pentagon that had been reinforced; and it was still being renovated and hence was only sparsely occupied (NPHR 76-78).

**Evidence that the official story about the destruction of the World Trade Center cannot be true**

Because the Twin Towers were supported by 287 steel columns, including 47 massive core columns, they could not have come straight down, largely into their own footprints, unless these columns had been severed by explosives. Therefore, the official theory – according to which the buildings were brought down solely by fire plus, in the case of the Twin Towers, the impact of the planes – is scientifically impossible (NPHR 12-25).

Many other things that occurred during the destruction of the Twin Towers, such as the horizontal ejections of steel beams from the top floors and the liquefying of steel and other metals with melting points far above any temperature that could have produced by fire, can only be explained by powerful explosives (NPHR 30-36).

The almost perfectly symmetrical collapse of WTC 7, which was supported by 82 steel columns, could only have occurred if all 82 of those columns had been sliced simultaneously (MC Ch. 10).

In its final report on WTC 7, issued in November 2008, NIST admitted that this building had come down in absolute free fall for over two seconds. NIST, however, was still affirming a theory of progressive collapse caused by fire, which, as NIST had explained the previous August, could not possibly result in absolute free fall, because the lower floors would offer resistance. NIST was able to avoid admitting that explosives had brought the building down, in other words, only by continuing to affirm its fire theory after admitting that it could not explain one of the empirical facts it had come to acknowledge (MC Ch. 10).

Journalists, city officials, WTC employees, and over 100 members of the Fire Department of New York testified to having witnessed massive explosions in the World Trade Center buildings (NPHR 27-30, 45-48, 51).

A scientist who had formerly worked for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which produced the official reports on the world Trade Center, reported in 2007 that it had been “fully hijacked from the scientific to the political realm,” so that its scientists had become little more than “hired guns” (NPHR 11, 238-51).

The fact that NIST in writing its reports functioned as a political rather than a scientific agency is illustrated with special clarity by its report on WTC 7, in which it not only omitted all the evidence pointing to the occurrence of explosives (MC Chs. 3-5), but also falsified and even fabricated evidence to support its claim that the building was brought down by fire (Chs. 7-10).

Until the editors of the New Statesman are able to refute Griffin's cumulative argument, we can agree with their view that Griffin, by virtue of his role in the 9/11 truth movement, has become a person of global importance, while rejecting as groundless their charge that the growing importance of this movement is pernicious.

**Notes**

1.New Statesman. "The 50 People Who Matter Today," September 24, 2009 (http://www.newstatesman.com/global-issues/2009/09/world-fashion-gay-india-church ).

2. New York Times. "The Sept. 11 Records. A rich vein of city records from Sept. 11, including more than 12,000 pages of oral histories rendered in the voices of 503 firefighters, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians, were made public on Aug. 12. The New York Times has published all of them." http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/met_WTC_histories_full_01.html

3. New Statesman Cover Story: David Ray Griffin 41st Most Influential Person in the World!" 911 Blogger, September 26, 2009, posted by Adam Syed (http://www.911blogger.com/node/21468).

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © Elizabeth Woodworth, Global Research, 2009

---

**Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page**

**Become a Member of Global Research**

*Articles by:* Elizabeth Woodworth

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca