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The Public Eye



TERROR NETWORK OR LONE WOLF?

Disparate
Legal
Treatment of
Muslims and
the Radical
Right

**Also:
Biblical Economics • Who Speaks for Conservative Women?**

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FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT EMERITA

1310 Broadway, Suite 201
Somerville, MA 02144-1837
Tel: 617.666.5300

publiceye@politicalresearch.org
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In Memoriam: Jean Hardisty, Founder of PRA

My dear friend, Jean Hardisty, founded Political Research Associates in 1981, the year Ronald Reagan became President of the United States. Jean had already forecast the nation's right turn, and what she found scared her.

Jean founded Midwest Research in Chicago because she was concerned that the Left's response to the rise of the New Right was inadequate and dangerously misguided. In an interview for ChicagoGayHistory.org, Jean recalled liberal and progressive activists at the time were dismissing the burgeoning right-wing movements "as a bunch of yahoos and rednecks," telling her: they don't know what they are doing; they're too stupid to hold power; and they'll be gone quickly. Jean quipped, "In those first few years people didn't know the difference between a Nazi and a neoconservative." Jean sought to educate Left activists to create more effective analyses and responses. This included convincing progressive groups to stop using dismissive language and to differentiate among the various sectors of the U.S. Right.

Peggy Shinner and I were the first two staffers Jean hired. Shinner recalls, "Jean was so scrupulous in her work, both as an academic and an activist, and that combination is very unique. Her discipline in fusing the two was extraordinary. There was simply no separation: her scholarship was the foundation of her activism." Jean insisted on scholarly integrity in our research and accessible language in our writing. Fact-checking became a team sport in the office.

We moved to Boston in 1987 and changed our name to Political Research Associates. By then, most of the Left had accepted the rise of the Right as the work of a powerful and skillful set of adversaries. PRA shifted and studied how conservative leaders were able to convince people to vote against their overall economic interests, and how fear of change in an unstable time could lead to an allegiance with repressive government policies and bigoted forms of social oppression.

When the Coors Beer conglomerate sued a small leftist group in the South into bankruptcy, Jean responded by publishing a book with South End Press by Russ Bellant: *The Coors Connection: How Coors Family Philanthropy Undermines Democratic Pluralism*. We fully expected to be sued, and created huge binders of photocopies with underlying source texts for each footnoted paragraph for our anticipated courtroom appearance. Coors claimed there were many errors, yet when PRA asked for one example they never responded—and they never sued PRA. This was Jean's way.

In all her work, Jean's goal was to help activists develop more effective strategies for countering the Right. Former PRA staff valued Jean's mentorship. Surina Khan, author of PRA's report *Calculated Compassion*, recalls, "Jean gave me the time and intellectual space to think critically and understand the motivations behind conservative political movements. She taught me to expose the leaders of the Right and never demonize or scapegoat the followers."

Pam Chamberlain helped edit PRA's Activist Resource Kits, with topics including education, reproductive rights, and the criminal justice system. Chamberlain remembers how Jean's style of mentorship set "high expectations for these kits, and initially I was sure I was not up to the task. She would sit with me, calmly asking questions until I felt as if I were teaching her, not the other way around. Eventually I came to understand her approach to political and cultural analysis. This was one of her great gifts to me."

Nikhil Aziz writes, "Jean taught me to put my impatience with the way things are, and my despair with the way things are going, into perspective." Aziz adds that Jean's essay on "Liberalism" made him realize "we can't do this alone. But it doesn't let me off the hook...I have to do my part."



Jean Hardisty
1945-2015

Over several decades Jean became a national resource for human rights movements seeking social and economic justice and an end to bigotry based on race, gender, or class. Many social change activists knew Jean as a public intellectual, especially concerning feminist and lesbian issues. She was a game-changer on several national boards, and trained women philanthropists in the strategies of the Right.

Gloria Steinem called Jean a “prophet.” Other memorial tributes describe Jean as both gentle and fierce—an accomplished scholar, strategist, mentor, activist, writer, and public speaker. Jean was all that and more.

Jean Hardisty: *Presente!*

-Chip Berlet

Terror Network or Lone Wolf?

Disparate Legal Treatment of Muslims and the Radical Right

In April 2014, an armed encampment formed at the Nevada cattle ranch of Cliven Bundy as news spread through militia networks about the confrontation between the 67-year-old rancher and the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM began to impound Bundy's cows after he'd failed to pay grazing fees for approximately 20 years, claiming the federal government had no right to regulate the public land where he brought his livestock. Confronted with this armed encampment, the federal officials backed down, ultimately returning Bundy's cows. He was not arrested for the confrontation,¹ and as of December, he bragged to reporters, he was continuing to graze his cattle, for free, on federal land.² Most media accounts treated Bundy as just a cantankerous oddball or, as an op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times* put it, "a scofflaw with screwy ideas about the Constitution."³

More attention has been paid to the U.S. Far Right in recent years, but the media and federal representatives rarely use the word "terrorism" to describe their actions. When Larry McQuilliams, who followed the racist Phineas Priesthood ideology, shot more than 100 rounds at the Austin, TX, police station, federal courthouse, and Mexican Consulate, Austin police used the label, calling him an "extremist" and "American terrorist," but media reports shied away from such terms, emphasizing his personal struggles.⁴ At the recent White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, the



Michigan Militia members, bearing guns and a "Don't Tread on Me" flag, participate in a state-wide militia training event called the WOLF Challenge. Photo via Photobucket and courtesy of Southeastern Michigan Volunteer Militia (SMVM).

focus was primarily on the threat of global jihad,⁵ and the 2014 Congressional Research Service report on countering violent extremists discussed only Muslims (although it claimed the material applied to all forms of extremist thought).⁶ This February, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) did release a report on the sovereign citizen movement, one element of the Far Right, but it amounted to barely three pages of substantive text

and offered few recommendations for action.⁷

In the nearly 14 years since 9/11, more people have died in the U.S. from politically-motivated violence perpetrated by right-wing militants than by Muslim militants.⁸ As in the McQuilliams episode, the majority of these assaults target people who work for the government, particularly law enforcement,⁹ but perpetrators rarely receive harsh penalties unless

they kill or severely injure someone. The disparity between treatment of Muslims and right-wing militants highlights the centrality of political power and vulnerability as factors shaping law enforcement anti-terrorism measures. The “War on Terror” creates tremendous political and social vulnerability for Muslims in the U.S. by associating U.S. Muslims with global *jihād*.

Right-wing militants, in contrast, benefit from the power of mainstream conservatives. For example, in 2009, the domestic terrorism unit of the DHS released a report¹⁰ indicating that right-wing activity posed the most significant terrorism threat in the United States, and that such activity was likely to increase during the Obama administration. Conservative bloggers declared the report was politically motivated and painted all conservative activists as potential terrorists, and conservative politicians reacted negatively as well.^{11,12} As a result, the report was taken out of circulation, but the report’s analysis and predictions have since proven accurate.¹³

The ways in which federal law enforcement agencies describe and classify “terrorism” obscures the extent of violence by, and even local policing of, right-wing and Christian militants. To begin with, there is some inconsistency in how different types of incidents are labeled in practice by different federal offices, even within DHS, which complicates internal communication.¹⁴ The Department of Justice (DoJ) is the lead agency for domestic law enforcement, and they classify “international terrorism” and “domestic terrorism” separately¹⁵ (see diagram). The distinction, however, lies more in motivation or organizational affiliation than in geography; for example, a terrorist incident in the U.S. will be characterized as international if the perpetrator is seen as motivated by Islamist beliefs, and domestic if motivated by militant right-wing beliefs. (It’s also a difference that becomes clear when reading the lists of official “terrorism” cases—a list that does not include, for instance, the murder of abortion provider Dr. George Tiller.)

“Terrorism,” unmodified, is used to re-

fer to international terrorism, involving people or plans that include a demonstrated or attributed link to an international entity. Cases involving Muslims that clearly originate in the U.S. are classified as “homegrown” international terrorism, even though any links to international networks or entities may exist only in the eyes of law enforcement.

The Congressional Research Service defines “domestic terrorists” as “people who commit crimes within the homeland and draw inspiration from U.S.-based militant ideologies and movements.”¹⁶ This somewhat confusing FBI and DoJ distinction between “homegrown” and “domestic” terrorism produces interesting contradictions: in domestic cases involving Christian militants, antisemitism is cast as a U.S.-based ideology, but

violence and terrorism cases, although their definitions and exact lists vary. For the purposes of this report, I have drawn upon the two most extensive and widely cited.

The Southern Poverty Law Center focuses primarily on right-wing activity, and has the most detailed and comprehensive list.¹⁸ The period from September 2001 through December 2010 lists 50 cases, almost double the number of “homegrown” Islamist cases in a similar period, and 21 of the 50 took place in 2009 and 2010, following President Obama’s inauguration. All 50 domestic cases involve elements of the Far Right, from Christian Identity to various militia movements to the KKK and other white supremacist groups. Terrorist acts often involved significant caches of weapons

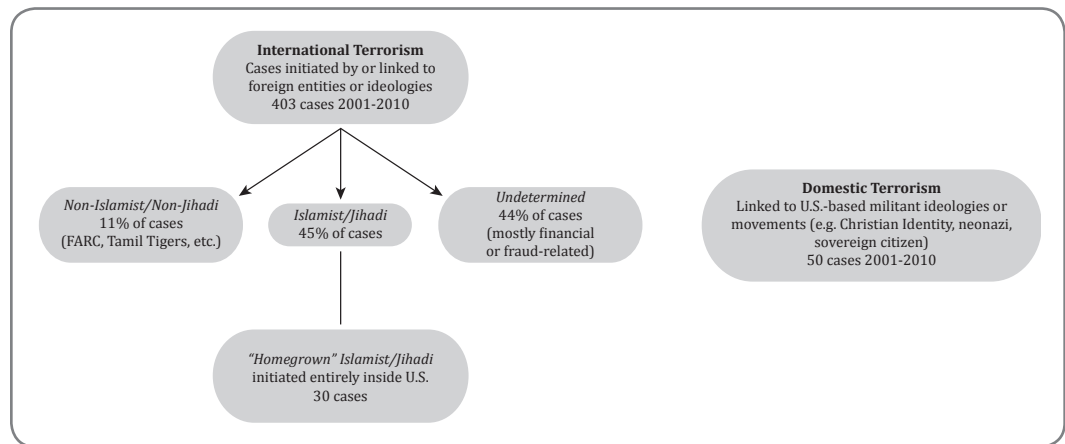


Figure 1. FBI/DoJ Classifications of Terrorism and explosives, with targets ranging from the murder of government representatives to assaults on synagogues or mosques and other Islamic centers.

According to the New America Foundation,¹⁹ which tracks cases explicitly classified as terrorism within the U.S., only 41 percent of *jihād* plots in the U.S. since 9/11 involved weapons, and in almost one-third of those cases, the weapons were supplied by U.S. government agents. By contrast, 89 percent of domestic terrorism cases involved weapons, and in 92 percent of these cases the arms were acquired without assistance from government agents.

Based on the statistics and analysis of available cases, there are significant differences in the procedures, charges, and penalties in domestic (non-Islamist) and homegrown (usually Islamist) cases. Despite the greater prevalence of incidents

in “homegrown” cases, it’s evidence of global *jihād* among Muslims.

The DoJ lists 403 cases of (international) terrorism from September 2001 through March 2010¹⁷: 11 percent non-Islamist (mostly FARC or Tamil Tigers), 45 percent Islamist, and 44 percent undetermined (mostly cases of fraud or financial misconduct involving someone with an “Arab-sounding” name). The Islamist category includes 30 cases considered to be “homegrown.”

The FBI and DoJ do not provide publicly accessible lists of domestic terrorism cases, which complicates direct comparisons between domestic and homegrown cases. The data that do exist on domestic terrorism, or politically motivated violence, result from examining local, state, and federal law enforcement activity to identify relevant cases. A few non-profit institutes track domestic political

and deaths resulting from right-wing violence, U.S. Muslims experience more aggressive surveillance, greater use of informants, more severe charges, and greater use of restrictive confinement once incarcerated.

The differential treatment of right-wing and Muslim cases draws attention to the political contexts surrounding terrorism-related law enforcement, as these disparities only make sense within politically-driven calculations. Mainstream conservative politicians and media personalities protest depictions of right-wing militants as anything more than troubled but patriotic Americans, while Muslim men—particularly young men—are constantly monitored as intrinsic security risks. In the process, Muslims lose Constitutional protections for belief, speech, and association—forced to inhabit an ambiguous territory as “un-American” and presumptively foreign.

SURVEILLANCE AND INFORMANTS

The disparate treatment of the two groups of alleged terrorists begins before charges are ever filed, with how the two are investigated. Covert surveillance is, by definition, difficult to prove unless specific prosecutions or other evidence bring it into public view. A report by the New York University School of Law²⁰ describes systematic surveillance of Muslim communities by the NYPD, FBI, and other law enforcement entities in the U.S. The widespread use of informants in homegrown terrorism cases also indicates an ongoing undercover presence. No evidence exists of similar routine surveillance of communities with significant right-wing activity, and reports and other materials about the Right produced by the FBI, DHS, and Congressional Research Service all emphasize the right to freedom of speech and expression, including the importance of differentiating beliefs from actions. Based on available case summaries, the majority of domestic terrorism prosecutions occur after the perpetrator has taken concrete action or as a consequence of other law enforcement contact, which suggests a low level of ongoing surveillance of right-wing movements.

The New America Foundation data indicate that 46.8 percent of Islamic ter-

rorism cases involve use of an informant but only 27.5 percent of non-Islamic cases do.²¹ According to a report by Columbia University Law School and Human Rights Watch, 50 percent of federal counterterrorism convictions resulted from informant-based cases, and almost 30 percent were stings.²² (A “sting” refers to a case in which an informant or undercover agent actively developed the case, leading defendants to escalate their activity and often providing explosives or other materials.) The Columbia Law School report found that all but four of the high-profile homegrown terrorism plots of the last 10 years were FBI sting operations. While informants play a role in domestic cases, there is little recent evidence of right-wing cases being built through stings (although there is some history of FBI stings with environmental activists in the early 2000s).

A 2009 case in Newburgh, NY, that became known as the Newburgh Four^{23,24} provides an example of an FBI sting operation. Newburgh is a small, formerly industrial city about 60 miles north of New York City, with a substantial African-American population and relatively high poverty rate. In 2011, the city was declared the murder capital of New York state. In the winter of 2009, an FBI informant developed a relationship with an openly antisemitic Muslim man who had a history of drug addiction. The informant offered him \$250,000 plus additional luxuries if he would gather a group of Muslims to carry out a terrorist attack.

The man recruited three friends, each of whom had significant financial needs. Each received small amounts of cash during the time the informant guided them in developing a plan to attack Stewart Air National Guard Base and bomb a local synagogue, using explosives and a vehicle provided by the informant. The men were arrested after the informant delivered the men and the explosives to cars provided by the FBI. All four were charged with conspiracy, attempt to use weapons of mass destruction, and plotting to kill U.S. government employees, and were sentenced to 25 years in prison. A judge rejected an appeal based on entrapment, accepting the government’s rationale that the men would have eventually committed terrorism on their own—a theory called “radicalization”

that has been used in multiple prosecutions of accused Muslim terrorists.

In contrast, the participation of informants and undercover agents in right-wing cases has been much more limited, and does not involve either initiating a plot or being the only source of weapons or explosive materials. In 2002, Larry Raugust, an anti-government militant well known to law enforcement, gave an explosive device to an undercover agent; he ended up pleading guilty to 15 counts of making bombs, and served just over five years in a federal prison.²⁵ Similarly, in 2005, Gabriel Carafa, a man with ties to the neonazi World Church of the Creator and a racist organization called The Hated, was arrested after he and another man asked an informant to build them a bomb. They were charged with selling 11 guns illegally to police informants and providing 60 pounds of urea for use in building a bomb; Carafa was sentenced to seven years and his accomplice to 10.²⁶ In both of these cases, not only did the defendants acquire their own weapons and explosive materials, but the men had extensive histories of right-wing activism.

The Internet plays an increasingly central role in the development and communication of beliefs, as well as law enforcement monitoring of potentially violent activity. However, the consequences of posting beliefs that signal the potential for violence varies considerably by religion. Adel Daoud was a socially isolated 17-year-old Muslim boy in suburban Chicago who found refuge online. In 2012, he began to post on message boards and write emails relating to violent *jihad*, at which point the FBI drew him into planning an attack with an undercover agent. In 2013, the agent drove Daoud to a jeep filled with fake explosives, and he was arrested after he tried to trigger the explosives outside a bar they had agreed to target. He was charged with attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction, and the case is still in court.²⁷

Compare that to the 2010 case of 26-year-old Justin Carl Moose, who described himself as the “Christian counterpart to Osama bin Laden” and posted threats of violence against abortion providers along with information about the use of explosives on his Facebook page. The FBI were tipped off, and Moose pled

guilty to distributing information on the manufacture and use of explosives. He was sentenced to 30 months in prison and was released early, despite having demonstrated knowledge of explosives and his alignment with a movement that has an extensive track record of murders and destruction of medical facilities.²⁸

SEVERITY OF CHARGES

As the five cases described above suggest, the charges and prison sentences faced by defendants in right-wing terrorism cases are significantly lower than those in homegrown cases. The key difference is usually in the specific charges brought. Many right-wing acts of violence are simply never prosecuted as “terrorism,” which has significant consequences due to terrorism “adjustments” to sentencing guidelines that increase the penalty for any given offense.²⁹ Domestic cases largely involve charges of weapons possession (including explo-

of a militia-style group called Project 7 who was wanted for assaulting police officers, was found with 25,000 rounds of ammunition and multiple pipe bombs; he was sentenced to seven years.³⁰ In a separate case, a series of raids on militia members in rural Pennsylvania netted 16 bombs and at least 73 other weapons, but none of the militia members served more than three years in prison.³¹ The quantity of armaments involved in many of the right-wing terrorism cases calls for a response of a corresponding order of magnitude, especially in light of the sentences given to Muslims who never independently obtained a weapon of any kind.

Homegrown terrorism cases, on the other hand, are prosecuted using a wider and more severe array of charges. Sixteen of the 30 homegrown cases listed by the DoJ included conspiracy charges, which can carry high sentences even in the absence of a completed criminal act.



Marchers with the Project SALAM Journey for Justice protest the incarceration of Mohammed Hossain and Yassin Aref, Muslim men convicted of providing material support for terrorism as part of an FBI sting. Photo via Flickr, courtesy of Vanessa Lynch, orangeinkeducation.wordpress.com.

sives and/or assault weapons), murder, or attempted murder; most of these are filed and prosecuted at the state and local level.

While weapons possession may sound like a minor offense, and often results in sentences of less than 10 years, the actual quantity of weapons involved can be considerable. David Burgert, the leader

Prosecutors may combine both “conspiracy” and “attempt to commit” charges in cases in which no actual violence took place, including sting cases where the only weapons involved were provided by FBI agents or informants. Domestic terrorism cases that include charges of attempt to assault or murder almost always base the charge on the active use of a weapon—usually shooting at a law enforcement officer but sometimes activating an explosive device.

The issue of conspiracy charges throws into stark relief the demonization and excessive surveillance of American Muslims. In 2008, five men were convicted of conspiracy to murder members of the U.S. military, and four of the five were convicted of possession of firearms. Four of the men were sentenced to life and the other to 33 years, even though no ac-

tual assault or violence took place. The case of the Fort Dix Five, as it came to be known, was primarily built through the use of an informant who actively guided the youngest of the five men—then just 19 years old—to collect videos depicting *jihad*-oriented violence, develop a hazy “plot” to attack Fort Dix, and recruit his friends to participate. The evidence at trial included a map of Fort Dix that one of the defendants had used to deliver pizza, and the claim that paintball games and camping trips were “*jihadi* training.”³² However absurd this may sound, this interpretation of both paintball and camping while Muslim has been used in other trials, and notes from the NYPD’s surveillance of the Brooklyn College Islamic Society include references to “militant paintball trips.”³³

The 2010 Hutaree militia case provides a very interesting contrast to this treatment of Muslims. In 2008, the FBI planted an informant with the Hutaree militia group in Michigan, and followed their activities for two years before initiating an arrest with charges of seditious conspiracy and attempt to use weapons of mass destruction based on the group’s plan to kill police officers and plant bombs at their funerals. A judge dismissed the conspiracy charges and dropped all charges against six of the nine defendants on the grounds that their hatred of law enforcement was not evidence of a conspiracy.³⁴ Three men in the group pled guilty to weapons possession, and two of them were released on just two years’ supervision.³⁵ While the informant taped conversations with the militia members, he does not appear to have conducted a sting operation. When Muslims express hostility towards the U.S. government or law enforcement, this has been treated as evidence of radicalization and intent to engage in acts of terrorism, but, at least in this case, a U.S. judge heard these same sentiments much differently when uttered by right-wing activists.

The majority of cases of homegrown terrorism analyzed in the report by Columbia, and a significant percentage of international cases, involve charges of material support for terrorism.³⁶ The original statute on material support for terrorism,³⁷ passed in 1994 after the first World Trade Center bombing, criminal-

ized the provision of weapons, physical goods, money, or training to terrorists and terrorist organizations, but included specific free speech protections and exemptions for humanitarian aid.³⁸ Subsequent versions of the law removed the free speech protection, narrowed the humanitarian aid exception, broadened the scope of what counts as “material support,” and increased the penalties for conspiracies and attempts to provide support. The material support statute applies to “designated terrorist organizations,” but the FBI’s list of designated terrorist organizations, available on its website, includes no domestic organizations of any ideological bent. As a result, material support charges have no analog among domestic terrorism cases, despite the existence of longstanding right-wing organizations associated with political violence.³⁹ In blunt terms, if a person gives money to the KKK, they will not be prosecuted for material support to terrorists. Although it might technically be possible to bring such charges, in practice, it simply doesn’t happen.

But the material support statute has become central to the prosecution of Muslims accused of terrorism. One of the more prominent prosecutions on material support concerned the Holy Land Foundation, a large Muslim charity in the U.S. that provided aid to *zakat* (charitable) committees in the West Bank and Gaza. The *zakat* committees were not involved in violent activities but supported the social services instituted by Hamas, which was designated a terrorist organization in 1997. This secondhand connection to the social services arm of Hamas resulted in the use of material support charges to close down the Holy Land Foundation and convict the senior administrators on terrorism-related charges in 2009, with sentences from 15 to 65 years.⁴⁰

The Holy Land Foundation case is not an outlier or an isolated example. In fact, 65 percent of the homegrown cases analyzed in detail by Columbia included charges of conspiracy and/or attempt to provide material support to terrorists, resulting in sentences ranging from five to 30 years in prison. The Columbia analysis of all terrorism prosecutions

conducted by the DoJ from 2001 to 2011 found that more than 25 percent involved charges of material support or conspiracy, indicating that these charges are more common among homegrown cases than genuinely international ones.

Beyond individual cases, the surveillance of Muslim communities, the use of informants, and the question of material support create a fear that limits development of community support for those caught in terrorism prosecutions, effectively isolating family members of accused or convicted “terrorists.”

While the discourse of terrorism situates Muslims accused of violence as part of a worldwide terror network, their right-wing counterparts are usually depicted as “Lone Wolves,” acting alone.

CONDITIONS OF INCARCERATION

The limited data available on domestic cases makes a direct comparison of the conditions of incarceration difficult, although some inferences can be made. The U.S. penal system has developed stringent conditions of confinement and management that can be applied under a variety of circumstances, especially at the federal level. The federal system includes the Administrative Maximum Penitentiary (ADX) Florence supermax prison in Colorado, where almost all prisoners are held in solitary confinement for 23 hours of every day. According to the Bureau of Prisons, in 2013 the ADX was holding 41 prisoners designated as “terrorists,” the majority of whom are of Muslim background. The UN Committee Against Torture has raised the question as to whether the extensive use of solitary confinement in the U.S. constitutes a form of torture.⁴¹ (See sidebar: Brutality Made Visible)

While virtually all U.S. prisons have the structural capacity for solitary confinement, the federal system has the additional ability to impose two highly restrictive forms of communication control. Communication Management Units (CMUs) were created in 2006 to isolate certain prisoners from contact with the outside world; all forms of communication with family, friends, and other prisoners are limited, and physical

contact with family and friends is completely banned. Muslims make up over two-thirds of prisoners in CMUs, even though they account for only six percent of the total federal prison population.⁴² Special Administrative Measures (SAMs) also restrict a prisoner’s communication and contact with others in ways that vary from case to case, and have become routine in terrorism cases, including during pre-trial detention.⁴³ Since the vast majority of cases formally designated as “terrorism” in the U.S. are “homegrown,” these extreme forms of control and confinement overwhelmingly affect Muslims. Almost 50 percent of the homegrown cases reviewed by the Columbia Law School report involved significant *pre-trial* solitary and/or restricted communication, which had a negative effect on the development of a legal defense. These high levels of isolation and control of communication are justified by the portrayal of Muslims living in America as representatives of global terrorist networks.

While there are no comparable reports on the conditions in which right-wing terrorists are held in U.S. prisons, the disproportionate use of pre-trial solitary, SAMs, CMUs, ADX, and other highly restrictive settings with Muslims indicates differential treatment, as does the extent of organized community support for incarcerated right-wing activists.

For prisoners who are not subject to isolation and restrictions on communication, contact with the outside world can be a vital source of affirmation, in addition to mundane assistance like commissary credits or care packages. Organizations on the Right openly provide support for and maintain contact with incarcerated individuals who share their political perspective, even those convicted of murder, such as Scott Roeder^{44,45} and Timothy McVeigh.⁴⁶ The anti-abortion movement, in particular, generally does not sever ties to those who have been incarcerated for violence against abortion providers. This level of organization reflects how much right-wing violence is grounded in social movements, even if individual perpetrators appear to be lone actors.

Brutality Made Visible

Terrorism trials have drawn some attention to the use of harsh pre-trial detention as a method for extracting guilty pleas, and of solitary confinement for prisoners convicted of terrorism. However, extended pre-trial confinement has become the norm for low-income Americans who cannot afford bail, and solitary confinement is used extensively throughout U.S. jails and prisons, including for people awaiting trial.

In 2010, 76 percent of defendants in federal district courts were detained pre-trial, up from 59 percent in 1995.¹ The Center for Constitutional Rights currently has a class action lawsuit on behalf of prisoners at a California prison who are serving indeterminate sentences in SHU (Security Housing Unit, a form of solitary confinement), usually on the basis of their alleged gang membership or affiliation. Five hundred men in the CCR lawsuit have been in SHU for at least 10 years.²

Incarceration practices based on extreme methods of control and isolation also predate the "War on Terror": the federal supermax prison ADX Florence opened in Colorado in 1994, and special administrative measures (SAMs) to control communication and contact began in 1996. Over the last 10 years, the process of resource adaptation has become bi-directional, as institutional architecture designed for the War on Terror has been used for other purposes. The use of military vehicles on the streets of Ferguson was a nationally visible example of militarized policing, but it's not the only one. Away from the public eye, "intelligence fusion centers," which bring together multiple levels of law enforcement, were originally intended to monitor terrorism threats but have instead focused the majority of their activity on drug and immigration cases.³

As these examples demonstrate, repressive measures and violations of civil or human rights spread outward from their original context, whether the example is solitary confinement for alleged gang members or expanded intelligence gathering systems brought to local police. Similarly, the procedures and processes permitted in federal terrorism trials also create precedents that could be drawn upon in other circumstances.

INDIVIDUALIZATION OF RIGHT-WING VIOLENCE

While the discourse of terrorism situates Muslims accused of violence as part of a worldwide terror network, their right-wing counterparts are usually depicted as "Lone Wolves," acting alone. As a result, the social and organizational contexts for right-wing violence are systematically erased.

When the authors of the April 2009 DHS report on right-wing extremism put out a draft version for review, the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties argued for a narrow definition of "right-wing extremist" that would be limited to persons known to have committed violence themselves and exclude those who were members of or who donated money to organizations with well-known histories of violence, such as the KKK.⁴⁷ The DHS report maintained a broader definition that included groups and social movements, but the overall trend has been toward viewing perpetrators of right-wing violence as isolated actors. The February 2015 DHS report on right-wing extremists, for example, focused exclusively on

the sovereign citizen movement, which was described as engaging in low levels of often spontaneous violence that take a highly individualized and non-symbolic form, such as a threat or assault towards a specific individual law enforcement officer or government representative.⁴⁸ For example, the DHS report describes an

Scott Roeder, Dr. Tiller's assassin, saw himself as acting as part of a movement even if he was not representing a specific organization.

incident in which a sovereign citizen in Alaska conspired to murder an Internal Revenue Service officer and a judge who oversaw legal proceedings against him.

The individualized "Lone Wolf" model of viewing right-wing violence reflects an intentional change in strategy by right-wing militant groups. In 1987, the government indicted a core group of 14 visible national leaders within right-wing militant movements, all associated

with the 1983 Aryan World Congress, on charges of conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government. They were acquitted at trial, but the experience led one of the men, Louis Beam, to republish an essay he had written calling for "leaderless resistance" as a way to evade infiltration and surveillance.⁴⁹ Over the past 10-15 years, most incidents of right-wing violence have been carried out by individuals or small groups, in keeping with the philosophy of leaderless resistance and Lone Wolf action. However, a decision to act alone does not mean acting outside of social movement frameworks, philosophies, and networks.

Research has shown that, at the time they engage in political violence, the majority of so-called Lone Wolves are over 30 years old. A comparison of case descriptions shows that many have had significant histories of participation in hard-right movements.⁵⁰ Preliminary findings from a study of individual radicalization point to the importance of social ties with other militants as a key element of the radicalization process, again casting doubt on the model of the isolated actor.⁵¹ Another study found that organizations whose members commit violence have higher levels of interconnection with other movement organizations than groups not associated with violence.⁵² The findings from these two studies fit with the age and movement experience of Lone Wolves while challenging the model of the isolated actor. Scott Roeder, Dr. Tiller's assassin, saw himself as acting as part of a movement even if he was not representing a specific organization.

Politically, the organizational and national contexts for right-wing activists disappear in the focus on the individual, while the individuality and immediate social context for the actions of Muslims are rendered invisible by the focus on the global.

SEPARATE LAW ENFORCEMENT RULES FOR MUSLIMS?

Law enforcement action shows two substantially different patterns in relation to Muslims and right-wing activists. The (appropriate) concern for protecting free speech and association expressed in law enforcement materials on right-wing organizations and activists stands

in stark contrast to the criminalization of both speech and association among Muslims. Reports by the Columbia and NYU schools of law describe the targeting of vulnerable individuals and communities, with informants building relationships with men who have expressed certain political or religious beliefs but who have not independently voiced an intent to commit violence. The cases of the Newburgh Four and the Fort Dix Five illustrate the centrality of informants and the lack of evidence of independent violent action—or the necessary resources for such—in the prosecution of these cases. These cases stand in sharp contrast to the large weapons caches and self-organization of right-wing activists, who, like Larry Raugust, are more likely to give explosives to an informant than to acquire them from one.

The prosecution of Muslims in the absence of independent action has been justified by using a theory of radicalization that argues defendants would have eventually committed terrorism without the assistance of informants. Multiple theories of radicalization exist within the study of militant movements, including some that examine processes across diverse political or religious movements. In law enforcement, models of radicalization have been part of larger frameworks that heighten the fear of hidden dangers.⁵³ For example, the theory of radicalization used in prosecutions of Muslims caught by sting operations derives from a 2007 NYPD report that described a “religious conveyor belt” from belief to action.⁵⁴ This theory has no support in social science research and situates constitutionally protected beliefs as evidence of the probability to commit violence. The core constitutional principles of freedom of religion and freedom of speech and association are repeatedly violated in relation to Muslims in arguments made in the courts as well as in surveillance practices, recruitment of informants, and day-to-day law enforcement.

POLITICS, RISK, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Data on militant violence in the U.S. suggest that the primary factors directing federal attention involve political calculations and Islamophobia, not any danger posed by their communities. Speak-

ing anonymously, a former DHS agent compared the FBI’s sting operations in Muslim communities to the practice of police leaving an expensive car unlocked in a poor urban neighborhood: if law enforcement provides a large enough incentive, he suggested, then eventually someone will make criminal use of it.

While it’s politically useful for federal authorities to demonstrate progress on prosecuting terrorism—even if it often involves trumped-up cases—the flip side of that political reality is the conservative politicians and writers who see discussions of right-wing political violence as a

Many Muslims convicted of terrorism can only be understood as dangerous if their actual life circumstances are subsumed by a narrative of global *jihad*.

threat to their own constituency, downplaying the severity of the threat from the Far Right. A July 2014 study found that law enforcement rated sovereign extremists the number one terrorist threat in the U.S.,⁵⁵ and the February 2015 DHS report on right-wing extremism documented the extent of assaults on law enforcement and other government personnel.⁵⁶ But saying this publicly has consistently led to hostile responses from conservative media. The DoJ Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee was re-launched in June 2014⁵⁷ but, as of February 2015, had not yet held a meeting, according to a former DHS analyst. It’s worth noting that right-wing violence has also increased in Europe⁵⁸ and Israel⁵⁹ over the past several years, but this trend is similarly invisible across the Western political discourse of terrorism. In Europe, it was the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks that became emblematic of terrorism, not the Anders Breivik massacre in Norway, even though Breivik’s attacks were six times deadlier.

The differential treatment of Islamic and far-right terrorism cases only becomes explicable through the lens of political calculation. The Right Wing is an entrenched element of the U.S. cultural and political power structure, raising the costs of high profile law enforcement action. The primary targets of federal anti-terrorism investigations have been Muslim men defined by their vulnerability

rather than their power. In late February, the latest case to hit the news involved a young man who wanted to go to Syria to fight for ISIS, but his FBI handler had to procure his travel documents, because his mother wouldn’t give him his passport.⁶⁰

This 19-year-old can only be understood as dangerous if his actual life circumstances are subsumed by a narrative of global *jihad*. This pattern of systemic targeting and differential prosecution is fully in keeping with well-documented law enforcement practices of racial/ethnic profiling of African Americans and with the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII. The suppression of information about right-wing movements creates a double-erasure in which Muslims can only be seen through the lens of the global “War on Terror,” while right-wing militants continue to be depicted as isolated and troubled individuals instead of social movement actors. This combination may serve a range of political and economic interests, but it does little for the health and safety of the U.S. population.

The FBI and DoJ distinction between “homegrown” and “domestic” terrorism is a political creation and should be ended. The “homegrown” classification locates Muslims as foreign agents operating in the U.S., not as part of the social fabric of this country. The portrayal of U.S. Muslims as potential or actual representatives of global *jihad* is used to justify the denial of constitutional protections and leads to representing ordinary men—asking religious questions, criticizing the U.S. government, or even going camping with their friends—as a threat to society. It is past time to apply the same constitutional protections to everyone, and develop a response to terrorism based in analysis of patterns of violence instead of political costs and benefits. ☪

Naomi Braine is an Associate Professor in the Sociology Department at Brooklyn College, CUNY, and a lifelong activist in struggles for social justice. Her political and intellectual work has addressed mass incarceration, the “War on Drugs”/drug policy, HIV and collective action, and, more recently, the “War on Terror.”

BY PETER MONTGOMERY

Biblical Economics

The Divine Laissez-Faire Mandate

In February, the culture warriors at Iowa's "pro-family" group The Family Leader distributed personalized copies of *The Founders' Bible* to every member of the state legislature as part of their lobby day—or as they put it in an invitation letter, the "war with Satan, who has taken many captive in Des Moines."¹ Greg Baker, Director of Ambassador Church Network, told pastors that the goal of "The Iowa Capitol Project" is to help legislators "do what God has asked them to do," and *The Founders' Bible* should help given its "compelling content pertaining to their job at the Capitol."²

the rhetoric of conservative pundits and politicians.³ But Barton's essays go beyond his claims about the biblical origins of the U.S. Constitution; *The Founders' Bible*, a New American Standard Bible translation, is also filled with Barton's arguments that right-wing economic policies are divinely mandated.

Though Barton's work has been repeatedly challenged by reputable scholars, including his fellow evangelical Christians, he is no fringe character, but rather a major player within the Republican Party and conservative movement. He was an active member of the GOP platform committee

and public appearances to argue that the Bible, indeed God Himself, opposes minimum wage laws, capital gains taxes, and progressive income taxes. He defines the free enterprise system—which he believes is "the economic system set forth in numerous passages in the Bible"—as "one in which 'prices and wages are determined by unrestricted competition between businesses, *without government regulation*,'" and sees any policies that penalize productivity and profits as "a completely unBiblical system."

To most readers, Jesus' parable of the vineyard is generally understood to be about the gift of God's grace, a metaphor for the Kingdom of God. In Barton's exegesis, the story about the landowner who pays workers an equal amount no matter how many hours they worked is a literal handbook for God's approach to employer-employee relations. Government, he writes, "certainly has no right to tell an employer what to pay an employee, including with a so-called minimum wage."⁵

Yes, this is a Bible the Koch brothers can love.

RECONSTRUCTIONISM, THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT, AND THE TEA PARTY

Barton is one of the figures examined by religious studies professor Julie Ingersoll in *Building God's Kingdom: Inside the World of Christian Reconstruction*,⁶ forthcoming from Oxford University Press in August. Christian Reconstructionism is hardly a household word. However, its ideology has infused not only the Christian Right but also the Tea Party and the conservative movement in general. Those familiar with Reconstructionism may associate it most often with the idea that government should enforce Old Testament law and its harsh punishments. But, Ingersoll argues, what's gone largely un-



A star-spangled David Barton appears in *America: A Call to Greatness* (1995).
Photo credit: Paige-Brace Cinema, Ltd.

Most of that "compelling content"—the non-biblical part anyway—comes courtesy of David Barton, the Republican Party activist and self-styled historian whose "Christian nation" revisionism informs

in 2012⁴ and his rhetoric about America's founding as a Christian nation is promoted by other religious conservatives, from Glenn Beck to Newt Gingrich.

Barton uses his essays and frequent me-

noticed is “The degree to which Christian Reconstructionists understand a biblical worldview to be rooted in economics.” For Reconstructionists, she writes, the very idea of God’s sovereignty is expressed in terms of property rights.

Christian Reconstructionism is grounded in the writing of R. J. Rushdoony, whose magnum opus, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, was published in 1973. Rushdoony, who died in 2001, was also active in the homeschooling movement and founded the Chalcedon Foundation, a Reconstructionist think tank. His ideas continue to be promoted by acolytes, including his son-in-law, author Gary North, and Gary DeMar, president of American Vision.

In their book *Christian Reconstruction: What It Is, What it Isn’t*, North and DeMar write, “Reconstructionists believe in a ‘minimal state.’ The purpose of getting involved in politics, as Reconstructionists see it, is to *reduce* the power of the State.”⁷ Sound familiar?

“Without a doubt, Reconstructionists have been advocates for, and activists within, the Tea Party,” Ingersoll notes. North is a former staffer for Ron Paul,⁸ and is currently helping Paul promote a curriculum for homeschoolers that North helped develop.⁹ That North-Paul connection, like the larger homeschooling movement—Rushdoony was an early advocate of homeschooling—is one of the streams by which Reconstructionist thinking has come to pervade the Christian Right and the Republican Party. And while Home School Legal Defense Association Chairman Michael Farris disavowed the application of Old Testament law in the U.S., he served with a number of Reconstructionists on the steering committee of The Coalition on Revival, a group founded in 1984 to bridge theological divides on the Christian Right. COR’s 1986 “A Manifesto for the Christian Church” proclaimed a dominionist message: that the Bible is the only measure of truth and applies to every sphere of life, including law, government, and economics. “All theories and practices of these spheres of life are only true, right, and realistic to the degree that they agree with the Bible,”¹⁰ the Manifesto argued. Among the “social evils” that the Manifesto’s signers pledged to oppose was “Statist-collectivist theft from citizens through devaluation of their money and redistribution of their wealth.”

But the Reconstructionist influence has spread well beyond the COR. As Frederick Clarkson noted in *The Public Eye* back in 1994,¹¹ dominionist thinking has proliferated even among evangelical leaders who might disavow the Reconstructionist label. Gary North, wrote Clarkson, claimed that “the ideas of the Reconstructionists have penetrated into Protestant circles that for the most part are unaware of the original source of the theological ideas that are beginning to transform them.” Reconstructionists have integrated their theology with Pentecostal and charismatic religious networks such as the New Apostolic Reformation and groups like International Transformation Network, as well as among religious leaders who embrace dominionist doctrines such as “Seven Mountains” theology, which holds that the right kind of Christians are meant to control societal spheres of influence such as education, entertainment, business, and government.

Billy Graham himself told revival attendees that the Garden of Eden was a paradise with “no union dues, no labor leaders, no snakes, no disease.”

Even in 1994, Clarkson argued, dominionism was no longer “the exclusive revolutionary vision of Christian Reconstructionist extremists,” but had “achieved virtual hegemony over many forms of Christian fundamentalism.” That certainly holds true 20 years later.

David Barton is a good example. Ingersoll says she considers Barton “Reconstructionist-lite”¹²: someone heavily influenced by Reconstructionist thinking even though he doesn’t publicly identify with the term and may depart from some of its more extreme positions. Barton’s rhetoric about biblical law applying to every aspect of life, including civil government, reflects that influence, as does his Christian-nation revisionism when it comes to American history. Barton has plenty of company, as evidenced by the prevalence of Reconstructionist rhetoric about the role of government at conservative political gatherings, such as the March 19 Pennsylvania Pastors Network

gathering at which Barton spoke.

Barton’s insistence that the Bible provides authoritative instruction for every aspect of life, including tax policy, echoes COR’s Manifesto and Rushdoony’s insistence that “authority is not only a religious concept but also a total one. It involves the recognition at every point of our lives of God’s absolute law-order.” That includes economics. In *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, Rushdoony says, “The child has no right to govern his parents, the student their school, nor the employees their employer.”¹³

According to this “biblical worldview,” unions and the laws supporting workers’ rights and ability to organize interfere with God’s economic plan. Barton says the Bible disapproves of “socialist union kind of stuff.”¹⁴

There have been many examples of this playing out in current domestic politics. In 2012, dominionists associated with the New Apostolic Reformation’s Reformation Prayer Network urged “prayer warriors” to pray that God would “break the power and control” of California’s largest unions and that “financial contributions of unions intended to manipulate the voice of the vote would be shut up and shut down.”¹⁵

Christian Right leaders such as the Family Research Council’s Tony Perkins have cheered on Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker’s relentless attacks on the state’s unions.¹⁶ And in February, Gary North gloated over Walker’s anti-labor “right to work” legislation as representing what he called “a death spiral for unions in America.”¹⁷

THE DEEP ROOTS OF ANTI-UNIONISM

This hostility toward unions has been part of the Christian Right from the movement’s earliest days. Author Jeff Sharlet has written that Pat Robertson’s father was among the members of Congress who were told by Abraham Vereide, founder of the National Prayer Breakfast and The Fellowship Foundation (aka The Family), that God wanted them to break the spine of organized labor.¹⁸ And in a March 14, 2015 commentary in *The New York Times*,¹⁹ Princeton University professor Kevin Kruse places Vereide within a larger context of corporate titans recruiting religious leaders to evangelize on behalf of unrestricted capitalism in the 1930s, ‘40s

and '50s. One of them, writes Kruse, was Billy Graham himself, who told revival attendees that the Garden of Eden was a paradise with “no union dues, no labor leaders, no snakes, no disease.”

The Christian Coalition's 1990 leadership manual quotes four biblical passages of the “slaves-obey-your-masters” variety, which president Ralph Reed, stunningly, used as a model for modern employer-employee relations.

Corporate efforts to push back against government regulation and to engage religious leaders as public spokespeople were reenergized in the wake of a 1971 memo by Lewis Powell written just months before his nomination to the Supreme Court. In the memo, Powell warned against the “attack” on the American free enterprise system coming from the nation’s campuses, pulpits, media, and arts. Powell called for an aggressive long-term political, intellectual, and cultural campaign by American business interests to attack their critics, resist regulation, and promote the idea that economic freedom is “indivisible” from other rights.²⁰

It is hard to imagine a memo having greater impact. Powell’s manifesto sparked a massive investment in right-wing infrastructure building by conservative funders and strategists, many of whom came to be called “The New Right.” Among them were Paul Weyrich, Richard Viguerie, and Howard Phillips. These strategists started building the institutional infrastructure that still undergirds the right-wing movement, through powerful organizations like The Heritage Foundation. And, as political scientist Richard J. Meagher wrote for *The Public Eye* in 2009, they worked to bring conservative evangelicals into their political organizing, hoping that social issues and a “pro-family” platform could help secure their commitment to the Republican agenda.²¹

By the end of the decade, these New Right leaders had recruited Jerry Falwell and helped him launch the Moral Majority. From that national pulpit, Falwell argued that “the free enterprise system of profit [should] be encouraged to grow, being unhampered by any socialistic laws or red tape.”²² Rus Walton, the late former

director of the Plymouth Rock Foundation, included a Christian political agenda in his book *One Nation Under God* that included abolishing minimum wage laws and compulsory education; instituting

right-to-work legislation; ending social services; and applying anti-trust laws to trade unions.²³

As Paul Weyrich wrote in *Conservative Digest* in 1979,

“The alliance on family issues is bound to begin to look at the morality of other issues such as...the unjust power that has been legislated for union bosses.”²⁴

Weyrich’s prediction certainly seemed to be true. In 1990, the nascent Christian Coalition published a leadership manual for its local leaders, co-authored by its then-president Ralph Reed. In a section titled “God’s Delegated Authority in the World,” the manual says, “God established His pattern for work as well as in the family and in the church.”²⁵ The manual quotes four biblical passages of the “slaves-obey-your-masters” variety, which Reed, stunningly, used as a model for modern employer-employee relations:

Of course, slavery was abolished in this country many years ago, so we must apply these principles to the way Americans work today, to employees and employers: Christians have a responsibility to submit to the authority of their employers, since they are designated as part of God’s plan for the exercise of authority on the earth by man.

THE NEW NEW RIGHT

Today’s equivalent of the “New Right,” one could argue, is the huge, opaque network of political organizations funded by the Koch brothers and their pro-corporate, anti-regulation allies.²⁶ The Koch brothers, who describe themselves²⁷ as libertarians uninterested in social conservatives’ culture wars, are more than willing to use Christian Right voters as well as mountains of cash to achieve their anti-government, anti-union ends.²⁸

One of the Koch brothers’ many projects is the LIBRE Initiative,²⁹ which was created to promote laissez-faire economics

among American Latinos—this year LIBRE has been cheerleading³⁰ for state passage of “Right to Work” legislation³¹—and to serve as a vehicle for deceptive advertising trashing Democratic candidates.³² Former National Association of Evangelicals official John Mendez, who directs LIBRE’s faith outreach, told ThinkProgress last year that his job is to put LIBRE’s free-market message “in a theological context.”³³ As Mendez told ThinkProgress, “In Scripture it tells us of dependency on God, not dependency on Man...To whom you’re dependent on is who you belong to. So you should not be dependent on government.”

Mendez elaborated in an interview with the Pacific Justice Institute last year that “we come in and inform them and teach them on those principles of economic freedom and free enterprise from not only a constitutional perspective, but also a biblical perspective.”³⁴

Mendez works with both Tea Party³⁵ and Christian Right groups who are organizing politically, offering advice on how conservatives can reach out to Latinos. Last year, for example, he participated in Ralph Reed’s “Road to Majority” conference and took part in a “Watchmen on the Wall”³⁶ conference organized by Family Research Council and Vision America Action.³⁷ In 2013, he led a “prayer gathering” in advance of a prayer breakfast to help “unite” Virginia’s clergy around their state legislature and inform the religious leaders “of their biblical role and constitutional rights in shaping Virginia.”³⁸

One of the other right-wing organizations formed in the wake of President Barack Obama’s election is the Freedom Federation, a coalition of Christian Right political groups and dominionist “apostolic” ministries and organizations. Tucked among them is the Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity (AFP), which preaches a small-government gospel.³⁹ The presence of AFP may explain why the coalition’s founding “Declaration of American Values” included, in addition to predictably conservative positions on social issues, opposition to progressive taxation.

AFP’s Tim Phillips, a former business partner of Ralph Reed, spoke at the Freedom Federation’s Awakening conference a few years ago, along with anti-tax and anti-government activist Grover

Norquist, in order to encourage religious conservatives to prioritize shrinking the size of government.⁴⁰

THE MAN WHO DOESN'T WORK DOESN'T EAT

Perhaps even more central to the Reconstructionist philosophy than opposing unions is hostility to government social service spending. North and DeMar are not out to minimize the state simply to save money or prevent government overreach—rhetoric you might hear at a Tea Party function—but because they believe the Bible has delineated clear areas of jurisdiction for the family, church, and government. And, they argue, the Bible leaves charity, like education, to the individual and the church, with no biblically legitimate role for government.⁴¹

A particularly clear example of what Reconstructionists call “sphere sovereignty”—the idea that God granted the family, the church, and government authority over specific areas of life—can be found⁴² in the writings of Michael Peroutka,⁴³ a former Constitution Party presidential candidate who runs the Institute on the Constitution. Peroutka was elected last year to the Anne Arundel County Council in Maryland as a Republican,⁴⁴ despite the fact that he’s argued that the Maryland General Assembly is an invalid government body since it has passed laws that Peroutka believes violate “God’s law.”⁴⁵ Peroutka also believes that, given the government’s only legitimate, biblically-sanctioned role is to protect “God-given rights,” then “It is not the role of civil government to house, feed, clothe, educate or give health care to...ANYBODY!”

John Lofton, the late right-wing pundit and spokesperson for Peroutka’s Institute on the Constitution, had a similar message in 2012, writing that “it is crystal clear that in God’s Word He gives NO AUTHORITY to civil government (Caesar) to give health, education or welfare to ANYBODY. If people need help, it is the role



Star Parker speaking at the Republican Leadership Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. Credit: Gage Skidmore.

of the Church—God’s people—to provide this help and NOT government.”⁴⁶

David Barton sounds similar themes. Last July he appeared on Trinity Broadcasting Network’s “Praise the Lord.”⁴⁷ In addition to promoting his theories about Jesus’s views on various taxes, Barton declared, “It’s not the government’s responsibility to take care of the poor and needy, it’s the church’s responsibility.” He added, “What we’re doing right now is for the first time in America we have ignored what the Bible says. The Bible says you don’t work, you don’t eat.”

If that has a familiar ring, it’s because some Republican lawmakers quoted that verse to support cuts in spending on food stamps in 2013. One of them was Rep. Stephen Fincher of Tennessee, who also said, “The role of citizens, of Christianity, of humanity, is to take care of each other, not for Washington to steal from those in the country and give to others in the country.”⁴⁸ (His rhetoric equating taxation for social services with theft apparently did not apply to his family’s farming operations, which have received millions of dollars in federal farm subsidies.⁴⁹)

Star Parker, a frequent speaker at Christian Right political gatherings, similarly equates taxation with theft. Like many conservative activists, Parker has a con-

version story. Her shtick is to denigrate recipients of government assistance by describing herself as having once been lazy and dependent on government handouts until someone confronted her that her lifestyle was not pleasing to God. She suggests that anyone willing to work hard can make it like she did. Today, she calls redistribution of wealth “a violation of scripture.”⁵⁰

Parker’s rhetoric goes beyond bootstraps hectoring. Like other Christian Right activists, she portrays concerns about income inequality as sinful covetousness. Noting that African Americans are traditionally a religious group, she asks, “Why does a people so inclined to turn to God so readily violate the Tenth Commandment’s prohibition on covetousness and measure themselves in terms of what others have? And then use this sin to justify violating the Eighth Commandment and give government license to steal what others have in order to redistribute?”⁵¹

“Perhaps more fundamentally,” she asks, “how can a church-going people buy into the materialism of socialism?”

It may not be surprising to hear this kind of language from people at the far right of the evangelical political movement. But similar rhetoric can be heard from people

widely considered to be among the reasonable centrists of the evangelical community. Rick Warren is often held as the model of moderate, politically engaged evangelicalism (although PRA readers know to treat that notion skeptically⁵²). Warren told NPR in 2012, “The primary purpose of government is to keep the peace, protect the citizens, provide opportunity. And when we start getting into all kinds of other things, I think we invite greater control. And I’m fundamentally about freedom.”⁵³ More pointedly, as journalist Sarah Posner noted that same year, Warren has called the social gospel “Marxism in Christian clothing.”⁵⁴

THE MEANING OF “SOCIALISM”

“Socialism,” one of the chief rallying cries against health care reform, gets thrown around a lot by conservatives grousing about the Obama administration and progressive policies in general. Ingersoll offers a useful insight into the Christian Right’s use of the term:

When scholars, or liberal activists and commentators, hear the label “socialist,” they understand it to mean a political and economic system where the government centralizes ownership and control in the hands of the state, eliminating private property. When the Reconstructionists use the term, they mean a system in which salvation (in its earthly historical manifestation) is thought to be found in government and in politics; a system that by its very nature seeks to replace God. In this view the legitimate role of government in the economy is limited to ensuring that people deal honestly with one another. Tea Partiers and Reconstructionists see socialism in the “government takeover” of major functions of other institutions. But it is also much broader than this, as socialism is understood as a systematic world and life view.⁵⁵

North, notes Ingersoll, sees the world as a binary: “either faith in God or faith in man. It is either Christianity or Marxism.”⁵⁶ In this conceptualization, writes Ingersoll, “socialism’ is when the civil government usurps authority ‘legitimately granted’ to the individual, the family, and the church.”

The social gospel—a strain of progressive-minded Christianity concerned with the promotion of social and economic justice—particularly annoys religious conservatives. And that can play out even within the Republican Party. In January, Ohio’s Republican Governor John Kasich cited Matthew 25, in which people facing the final judgment are asked whether they fed the hungry and clothed the naked, to defend his decision to accept Medicaid expansion in the state. Some conservatives and right-wing activists were beside themselves.⁵⁷

Gary DeMar responded to Kasich by saying, “Jesus is not describing the development of government programs...Governments can’t legitimately be charitable and magnanimous with other people’s money.”⁵⁸ He continued, “They are organizing politically to impose the covetousness prohibited by the tenth commandment.”

The notion that looking to government for economic assistance is a form of idolatry is an idea we have heard elsewhere in the public arena, notably in the ultimately unsuccessful Senate campaign of Sharron Angle, who said entitlement programs “make government our God.”⁵⁹ Also a few years ago from then Sen. Jim DeMint, who told The Christian Broadcasting Network’s David Brody that many Tea Party members may have been motivated by “a spiritual component”:

I think some have been drawn in over the years to a dependency relationship with government and as the Bible says you can’t have two masters and I think as people pull back from that they look more to God. ...The bigger God gets the smaller people want their government because they’re yearning for freedom.⁶⁰

DeMint now heads The Heritage Foundation, a right-wing marketing behemoth that is among the institutions that seek to merge the philosophies and organizing energies of the Christian Right and the economic right-wing. One manifestation of that work is “Indivisible: Social and Economic Foundations of American Liberty,” a publication and project devoted to convincing conservative activists that free-market conservatism and traditional values conservatism go hand in hand, as

Justice Lewis Powell urged more than 40 years ago. Among the highlights are anti-gay activist Bishop Harry Jackson’s writing that the minimum wage is a form of coercion that “reminds me of slavery,” and *WORLD* magazine editor-in-chief Marvin Olasky’s argument that “[t]hose who esteem the Bible should also applaud St. Milton Friedman and other Church of Chicago prelates, because their insights amplify what the Bible suggests about economics.”⁶¹

A POWERFUL COMBINATION

Advocates for social and economic justice who watch with dismay as right-to-work laws take effect in formerly strong labor states,⁶² as Republicans propose savage cuts to social spending,⁶³ and as inequality skyrockets in the wake of tax giveaways to the wealthy—what David Barton might call biblically-mandated rewards for profit-makers—are up against a brutally powerful coalition.

For more than half a century, groups of pro-business, anti-regulation, anti-social spending conservatives have built an infrastructure designed to gain and hold political power and have enlisted religious leaders as spokespeople for laissez-faire economic policies. Their efforts have been buttressed by the parallel rise and spread of dominionist theology, grounded in Christian Reconstructionist ideology that unrestricted free-market capitalism is mandated by the Bible and that God grants no role for the government in education or care for the poor. This ideology provided fertile ground for the anti-government zealotry of the Tea Party and the belief that a radically limited role for the federal government is not only a constitutional mandate but also a biblical one. Any long-term strategy for rebuilding progressive political power and reclaiming the legacy of the New Deal must grapple with the realities and motivating power of these intertwined economic, ideological, and religious ideologies. ☪

Peter Montgomery is a Washington, D.C.-based writer and editor. He is a senior fellow at People For the American Way and contributes to its Right Wing Watch blog, and he is an associate editor for online magazine Religion Dispatches.

Who Speaks for Conservative Women?

“Feminisms” for Life, Liberty, and Politics

When the planned vote on a harsh new 20-week abortion ban went off the rails in January, liberal news outlets gloated while conservative commentators fumed over what they respectively called a Republican congresswomen “revolt” or “mutiny.”

At the beginning of the year, GOP leadership scheduled a high-profile vote on the “Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act” to coincide with the 2015 March for Life, the annual protest of *Roe v. Wade*. They had a Congressional majority and expected smooth passage of the bill. But, to their surprise, female House representatives balked at the bill’s draconian rape and incest exemption, which would have forced survivors to file a police report before they could access an abortion. The Republican dissenters—primarily women, joined by a couple of moderate male allies—thought the provision was tone-deaf and would turn off women and millennial voters.¹ The memory of Todd Akin’s “legitimate rape” gaffe loomed in the background. Rep. Renee Ellmers (R-NC) chastised her party, arguing that Republicans could no longer afford to appear “harsh and judgmental” now that they control both the House and Senate.² Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), the legislation’s lead co-sponsor, passionately criticized her party for yet again letting insensitivity about rape derail Republicans’ agenda.³

Most strikingly, the female opposition was led by anti-abortion stalwarts with strong right-wing credentials, namely Ellmers and Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-IN). None of the dissenting congresswomen identify as pro-choice; all had received approval from the Susan B. Anthony List (SBA) and Concerned Women for America (CWA)—two powerful and well-funded right-wing organizations—for their solid track records on limiting abortion rights;

and Ellmers and Blackburn had received honors from the libertarian Independent Women’s Forum in 2014.

As an Indiana state legislator, Walorski killed a hate crimes bill by adding fetuses as a protected class, and called for an investigation of Planned Parenthood for allegedly covering up rape.⁴ Ellmers joined Congress in 2010 on a Tea Party wave, endorsed by Sarah Palin, and was an enthusiastic participant in the Koch-backed attack on healthcare reform.⁵ Blackburn boasts an unblemished record of over a decade of anti-abortion votes in Congress. And they all appeared untroubled by voting for the “No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act,” the bill Republicans instead passed for the *Roe* anniversary. In other words, these women were not the RINOs—Republicans In Name Only—whom you might expect to block an anti-abortion bill.

The controversy’s significance lies in pitting Republican congresswomen not only against the majority of their male colleagues—who, as Abby Scher writes in *The Progressive*, rely on them as “front-women to sell [the party’s] regressive policies”⁶—but also against the major conservative women’s movement organizations and female anti-abortion advocates who backed the reporting requirement. And it was not the only incident in the last year that put female politicians and advocacy leaders from organizations such as CWA and SBA at odds, as part of a legitimacy contest over who speaks for conservative women.

CONSERVATIVE WOMEN’S MOVEMENTS

In 1979, the rise of feminism and the Equal Rights Amendment motivated conservative evangelical Beverly LaHaye to found Concerned Women for America, established as an overtly anti-feminist female voice. Yet CWA has clung to rel-



evance over the years, better than infamous anti-feminist Phyllis Schlafly, by demonstrating its adaptability in toning down strident anti-feminist language and laying claim to pro-life feminist arguments when convenient, as when a CWA publication asserted in 2003, “Today’s feminists wrongly claim kinship to feminism’s founders, thereby cloaking their radicalism in the early movement’s popularity and moral authority.”⁷ In *Righteous Rhetoric: Sex, Speech, and the Politics of Concerned Women for America*, religious studies professor Leslie Dorrough Smith explains the shifting rhetoric was spurred by the need “to appear progressive and yet simultaneously traditional, a move perhaps motivated by its need to recruit and maintain younger members as well as to prove its political relevance” in a society which likes what feminism has accomplished even if it doesn’t always accept the movement itself.⁸

Sarah Palin’s 2008 vice presidential candidacy and membership in the



A young woman takes part in the 2015 March for Life in front of the Supreme Court of the United States. Photo via Flickr and courtesy of Elvert Barnes.

organization Feminists for Life brought increased attention in recent years to “conservative feminism,” a movement that says it represents the true legacy of “the original feminists,” claiming for itself the banner of the women’s suffragists—rather than that of the conservative women who fought voting rights. Importantly for Republicans, whose base trends older and male, the brand was seen as resonating with youth and women.⁹ The appeal of conservative feminism neither began nor ended with Palin’s failed campaign. For decades, there have been two streams of conservative movement “feminism”—one for life, and one for liberty. Feminists for Life (FFL), founded in 1972, was the original “pro-life feminist” group, touting its history of supporting women’s rights initiatives such as the Equal Rights Amendment and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). FFL never achieved the prominence of better-funded Christian Right organizations

that took over the “protect women” frame as a convenient (albeit substance-free) marketing strategy as Schlafly’s brand of traditional anti-feminism lost appeal. The Independent Women’s Forum (IWF) has pushed a brand of free market feminism, also known as equity feminism, since 1992.¹⁰ For the Right Wing to appear legitimate, women’s and women-led organizations must be at the forefront of opposition to abortion rights and other policies affecting women.¹¹

FEMINISTS FOR LIFE: COOPTING THE BRAND

“Since 1973, it’s been the same thing: One side of the abortion wars yells, ‘What about the woman?’ Instead of yelling back, ‘What about the baby?’ Feminists for Life answers the question,” FFL president Serrin Foster explains, insisting that their feminism is not a “strategy” or “ploy.”¹² But the anti-abortion movement’s pervasive “abortion as harm to women” frame looks very much like a

ploy when deployed by organizations like CWA or SBA. Political Research Associates’ *Defending Reproductive Justice* Activist Resource Kit describes how Christian Right organizations like CWA, the National Right to Life Committee (founded by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops), Family Research Council, and the extensive crisis pregnancy center network market themselves as concerned for women—not just fetuses—through extensive misrepresentations of the medical hazards of abortion and a fabricated “post-abortion syndrome.”¹³ (The Christian Right deployed a similar strategy in coopting the ex-gay movement in the 1990s to put a more compassionate face on their homophobic agenda.¹⁴)

FFL’s \$300,000 budget—far greater than other small feminist pro-life groups, such as the tiny coalition of secular and Democratic anti-abortion organizations that rallied at the margins of the 2015 March for Life¹⁵—is negligible compared to the five or six million dollars in the coffers of Christian Right organizations like CWA (which has millions more in its PAC), SBA, and the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) and American Life League (single-issue anti-abortion organizations both led by women). Anti-abortion advocates point to their marginalized pro-life feminist groups as evidence of the movement’s pro-woman nature, while actually giving most funding to organizations where concern for women is no more than a marketing device.¹⁶ Even though Palin’s FFL membership brought attention to the phenomenon of conservative feminism, organizations like SBA and CWA swiftly coopted both the brand and the cash. (This includes donations from the Koch brothers, who fund Christian Right movement organizations with the mobilization capacity and willingness to support “free enterprise” along with their culture wars agenda.)

The Susan B. Anthony List—named for one of conservatives’ favorite “reclaimed” historical feminists—illustrates the financial rewards of using feminism as a brand rather than an ideology. In 1992, FFL leadership founded SBA as a bipartisan, anti-abortion counterpart to EMILY’s List, which helps elect women politicians. But after former FFL president and SBA co-founder Rachel MacNair left for graduate school in the mid-1990s, she says, “Republicans took over.”¹⁷ Co-founder Marjorie Dannenfelser, a former

Heritage Foundation employee, assumed the SBA presidency and aligned the organization with a network of well-funded Christian Right organizations.¹⁸ SBA almost completely stopped backing Democrats and began diverting funds to male candidates running against pro-choice women, prioritizing a hard-right stance over the founding mission of cultivating female candidates.¹⁹

In 2013, NARAL Pro-Choice America and the American Bridge Project published a joint report on SBA, finding an extensive anti-woman track record. The organization backs candidates who

tend to be more liberal than their male counterparts within the same party.”²¹ In order to successfully pursue a hardline agenda against women’s bodily integrity, SBA abandoned its woman-centered founding purpose and updated its mission to include electing “pro-life men” who “oppose pro-abortion women”—a policy that would inevitably decrease the total number of women elected representatives.

FFL lost control not only over its child organization, SBA, but the entire “pro-life feminist” brand. Today, CWA and SBA have spawned a new generation

In the world of pro-life feminism, FFL demonstrates, it doesn’t pay to live up to the label.

FEMINISTS FOR LIBERTY: IF AYN RAND WERE A FEMINIST

In her 1994 book *Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women*, Christina Hoff Sommers applauds the achievements of women suffragists as “classically liberal” feminists, but argues that now U.S. women have achieved equality of opportunity. Equity feminists—Sommers’ term for a form of free market or libertarian feminism—support legal rights for women but deny the existence of structural forces constricting women’s advancement. They chalk present-day disparities in the U.S. up to intrinsic sex differences, condemn “war on women” rhetoric as infantilizing, and argue that valid feminism must focus on “real” oppression in less developed countries.²⁶ Equity feminists accuse “gender feminists”—by which they mean mainstream feminists—of lying about statistics on violence against women and exaggerating rape culture as part of a victimhood narrative. They imply that female students often lie about being raped when they regret “hooking up,” attracting media attention by offering dissident women’s critiques of the rapidly growing movement against campus rape.²⁷

On the other hand, equity feminists suggest that American boys and men suffer at the hands of gender feminists. In 2013, concern over boys’ educational achievements brought Sommers’ message to mainstream media outlets including *The New York Times*, *TIME*, and *The Atlantic*. Their hostility toward gender feminists and skepticism of rape survivors dovetails alarmingly with—and gives the legitimacy of women’s voices to—the misogynist ideology of the Men’s Rights Movement.²⁸

The free market feminist belief in individual empowerment shares ideological similarities with neoliberal feminism, exemplified by works such as Sheryl Sandberg’s *Lean In*, and some adherents (including Sommers herself) identify as Democrats,²⁹ although the movement organizations all sit within the conservative network. An American Enterprise Institute (AEI) article, reposted by the Independent Women’s Forum (IWF), argues, “Feminists hate *Lean In* because, as Republican Party activist Ann Stone com-



U.S. Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee speaking at the 2015 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in National Harbor, Maryland. Credit: Gage Skidmore.

oppose legal abortion even in cases of rape or incest, who support criminalizing women for obtaining abortions, and who voted against equal pay legislation and VAWA. SBA supported candidate Todd Akin after he stated that “legitimate rape” cannot lead to pregnancy, as well as Indiana Tea Party senatorial candidate Richard Mourdock when he called pregnancies that result from rape a “gift from God.” Then SBA launched a training program to prevent Republican men from continuing to make these public gaffes—a far cry from their founding goal of electing women representatives to fight for women’s interests.²⁰ In *Righting Feminism*, Ronnee Schreiber suggests that one reason right-wing women’s organizations like CWA and SBA eschew “the strategy of getting more women into public office is that empirical studies suggest that women elected officials

of young pro-life “feminists,” beloved by the anti-abortion movement, like Lila Rose, who published an opinion piece in *Politico* in 2012 titled “Battle Hymn of the Anti-Abortion Feminist.”²² Her organization, Live Action, exploits concern for women and girls to promote its Planned Parenthood sting videos, accusing the clinics of enabling “gendercide,” rape, and human trafficking.²³ Rose capitalized on the tragic death of a 24-year-old following an abortion procedure, calling her “the true face of the ‘War on Woman.’”²⁴ Her hardline positions on abortion and contraception belie her claims to care about women, as she blithely opposes even life-saving abortions as “never medically necessary.”²⁵ In its few years of existence, Live Action already has more than double the budget of FFL, with 2013 revenues of nearly a million dollars.

mented from the audience, Sandberg ‘stuck a knife in the breast of [female] victimhood big-time.’” One of the largest groups in the movement, the IWF—of which Sommers is the advisory board chair—developed out of a group formed to help defend Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas against Anita Hill’s allegations of sexual harassment.³⁰

Today organized free market feminism is a small and closely interlinked network that, thanks to its economic conservatism, reaps support from right-wing groups like the massive AEI and substantial donations from the Koch family foundations or through Donors Trust/Donors Capital Fund, which Andy Kroll at *Mother Jones* calls “the dark-money ATM of the right.”³¹ IWF received \$1.8 million from Donors Trust/Capital in 2012 and also receives funding from the well-known conservative Bradley and Scaife foundations. In March 2015, IWF demonstrated support for another infamous Koch-funded organization, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), in honoring CEO Lisa B. Nelson in its “Modern Feminist” feature.³²

Like those who claim “pro-life feminism,” free market feminist organizations recognize the value of reaching a younger generation. Sommers’ caricature of gender feminism—as exaggerating the oppression of U.S. women—continues to attract female students 20 years later, while the Clare Boothe Luce Policy Institute (\$1.5 million budget) trains young women to “take back feminism.” The small Network of enlightened Women (NeW), whose president is an IWF fellow, also works on campuses. And in 2013, AEI refreshed the equity brand by publishing Sommers’ new book, *Freedom Feminism: Its Surprising History and Why It Matters Today*, as part of a Values & Capitalism series for Christian college students.

IWF avoids culture war issues such as abortion and LGBTQ rights, though it defends gun rights and opposes education on climate change, which can encourage restrictions on the free market. Though primarily affiliated with conservative organizations, equity feminists include individuals who identify as pro-choice, secular or atheist, or Democratic.³³ This keeps them from playing with—and receiving funding from—the larger and more powerful Christian Right operations like CWA. But they at times follow

different paths to the same position. For instance, *On the Issues* summarizes the vehement opposition to VAWA as falling into “two broadly ideological areas—that the law is an unnecessary overreach by the federal government [free market feminism], and that it represents a ‘feminist’ attack on family values [pro-life feminism].”³⁴ CWA also draws on the equity feminist justification for opposing equal pay legislation—that wage disparities result from women’s “choices,” and government regulations that address the income gap would thus interfere with women’s exercise of choice—demonstrating the shared free market influence that helps Christian Right organizations win the Koch brothers’ largesse and protects equity feminism from total isolation.³⁵

THIS IS WHAT A CONSERVATIVE FEMINIST LOOKS LIKE?

When Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ) first introduced the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act in 2013, he modeled the legislation after the NRLC’s proposed bill, which lacked any rape and incest exemption. Defending this, Franks asserted that “the incidence of rape resulting in pregnancy are very low,” triggering swift comparisons to Todd Akin’s famous *faux pas* in 2012. Republican House leadership went into damage control mode, putting their female colleagues in charge of the floor debate to deflect criticism, with Blackburn as lead co-sponsor.³⁶ They also added a rape and incest exemption, modified with the police-reporting requirement to satisfy anti-abortion organizations including SBA and CWA (which, an Ellmers aide told a constituent on tape, insisted on its inclusion).³⁷

But compromise came with a cost. Though NRLC accepted the weakening of their model bill, its Georgia chapter was outraged by the deal and broke away to form the even more hardline National Personhood Alliance.³⁸ This loss of face likely contributed to the NRLC’s refusal to compromise further and risk denunciation from their right flank. NRLC president Carol Tobias vehemently condemned the congresswomen and men “who metaphorically stabbed a knife in the back of all the pro-lifers who voted for them.”³⁹ Some abortion opponents advocated returning to the original bill, suggesting that the reporting requirement would not be a problem if they removed the exemption altogether.

Despite a meeting between the male Republican leadership and the group of concerned congresswomen—it’s rare for women legislators to rate so much time with the leadership—the impasse between these two influential bodies of conservative women, the elected officials, and the organizational leaders, thwarted compromise.⁴⁰

The January upset came within a year of another schism that pitted Republican congresswomen against Christian Right women’s organizations. In May 2014, Blackburn, Ellmers, Walorski, and all but two of the Republican women then in Congress ended up on the opposite side of CWA and SBA over legislation for a National Women’s History Museum. (One of the museum’s two female opponents was Tea Party favorite and then-representative Michele Bachmann, who herself appears in an exhibit.) Along with Phyllis Schlafly’s Eagle Forum, the Family Research Council, and Heritage Action, the conservative women’s organizations denounced the proposed museum as a biased “national shrine to abortion” that would “fuel the radical feminist movement for decades to come.” Blackburn, the lead Republican co-sponsor of the bipartisan bill, offered CWA president Peggy Nance a seat on the museum’s board to attempt to win the conservative organization’s support. Nance refused unless she or another right-wing leader could serve as chair.⁴¹ IWF and its sister organizations stayed out of the fight, but a couple of connections suggested a measure of support for the museum: IWF has praised as a “modern feminist” one of the museum’s three founders, Ann Stone, who still sits on the museum’s board along with a Clare Boothe Luce Policy Institute board member.⁴²

When the museum bill passed with an overwhelming majority, Sarah Mimms at the *National Journal* summarized the moral: “The message from the Republican majority to the outside groups opposing the bill is clear: You’re not helping.” She warned that, given the widening gender gap between the parties, “Republican opposition to a bipartisan legislation for a museum celebrating the accomplishments of women” would backfire at the polls.⁴³

Despite the conflict over the museum, Ellmers, Walorski, and Blackburn looked like they followed the Palin brand until this January, when the battle over Franks’

abortion bill took the underlying conflicts to a new level. While Christian Right women's organizations reacted to the Republican congresswomen's actions as a betrayal, and free market feminist organizations steered clear of the debate, that doesn't mean the dissident GOP congresswomen are simply more closely aligned with free market feminism. While the less-funded free market or equity feminist network might benefit from embracing the congresswomen's position, they were founded on and continue to promote a dismissive approach to sexual harassment, rape culture, and violence against women. Contrast that with congresswomen like Ellmers, who has gone against the conservative grain to co-sponsor proposed legislation addressing campus sexual assault. Even on VAWA, while Blackburn, Ellmers, and eight other Republican congresswomen voted no on reauthorization, Walorski and the majority of female GOP representatives (including all female senators) bucked their party and both conservative movement feminisms to vote yes.

The divide among conservative women seems to speak to a larger sense among GOP congresswomen of what their party must do to appeal to women—a serious concern given that “polls showed women tend to see Republicans as ‘intolerant, lacking in compassion and stuck in the past.’”⁴⁴ In December 2014, Blackburn joined Rep. Susan Brooks (R-IN) and then Rep.-elect Barbara Comstock (R-VA) in a panel at *Politico's Women Rule Summit* (co-sponsored by the Tory Burch Foundation and Google), titled “Conservative Feminists: Why It's Not an Oxymoron.” During the discussion, Brooks, who hails from the same state as candidate Richard Mourdock, was asked to comment on his remarks on rape. “We took a stand as Republican women, and said, ‘This is not our party,’” Brooks said, adding that Republicans shouldn't allow the GOP to be branded by such remarks.⁴⁵ This was a marked departure from SBA's decision to stand behind Mourdock despite his offensive comments.

A conservative women's movement prioritizing bipartisan work to promote women's accomplishments and taking a more positive approach to sexual violence—whether motivated by branding or substance—would significantly break with the existing right-wing base, even if it otherwise retains stringently anti-choice and free market positions.

Since Christian Right women's organizations cater to a male-dominated movement in holding a hardline stance, their position is unlikely to soften. The Republican congresswomen testing out this third way risk incurring the wrath of influential female Christian Right leaders (and their male backers) who stand for ever more extreme right-wing policies. When the Franks bill ultimately failed, anti-abortion blogger Jill Stanek and Students for Life America president Kristan Hawkins promptly organized young women to protest at Ellmers' office during the March for Life, countering Ellmers' stated concerns about losing millennial votes with a “new poll,” from right-wing Catholic group Knights of Columbus, purporting to show that millennials are “a pro-life generation.”⁴⁶ Asked whether Ellmers would face a primary challenge, SBA president Dannenfels responded decisively: “That tidal wave has already begun. ... That's going to happen, and she deserves it.”⁴⁷ ☐

Alex DiBranco studies social movements and nonprofit organizations as a sociology Ph.D. student at Yale, analyzing the U.S. Christian Right and reproductive rights and justice movements. She is a Public Eye editorial board member and has been published in outlets including *The Nation*, *Alternet* and *RH Reality Check*.

Justice in the Age of Terror, p.2

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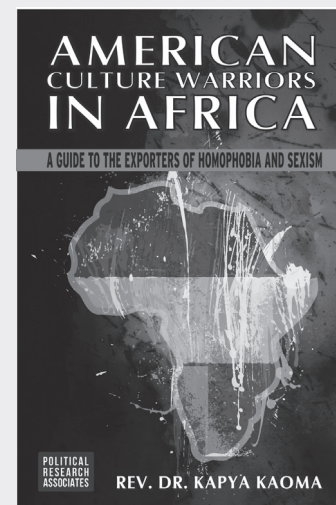
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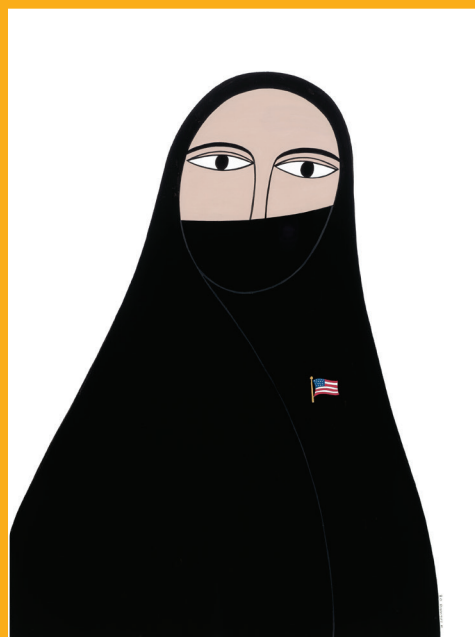
The Art of Activism

Spotlighting the efforts of artists and organizations who are engaged in the struggle for social justice and are helping build the movement through their work.

Helen Zughaib came to her longtime home in Washington, D.C., by way of many other nations. Born in Beirut, Lebanon, she also lived in Iraq, Kuwait, Greece and France, before coming to the United States to earn her BFA at Syracuse University in 1981. That intricate itinerary brought with it lessons about what it means to live and work as an Arab American artist in the U.S.

Zughaib began her series of paintings, "Changing Perceptions," after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began, hoping to bring together the abaya—the loose overgarment worn by many Muslim women—with iconic Western artists like Picasso and Kahlo. Although Zughaib was raised in the Orthodox Christian tradition, she watched as the abaya was used as a symbol of "negativity and oppression" after 9/11 and the wars that followed. In her work, she sought to synthesize images of East and West into new representations that could provoke discussion of the abaya and Arab Americans.

Although she didn't set out to create a series addressing Islamophobia, she says, "It ended up speaking to that issue" as negative media representations of Arabs and Arab Americans persisted. While she was working on the series, President Obama was running for



Helen Zughaib, © *Abaya with Flag Pin*, gouache on board, 2008, collection of Maymanah Farhat and Athir Shayota

office, and was frequently labeled a Muslim and criticized for not wearing a flag pin—as though those things made him "somehow less patriotic than other candidates." Zughaib created "Abaya with Flag Pin" as a rejoinder: a way of saying that "Arab Americans are just as patriotic and grateful to be in this country."

Zughaib's recent work has included paintings and mixed-media fabric pieces related to the Arab Spring—both its hopes and disappointments—as well as a more personal series, "Stories My Father Told Me," with themes drawn from her father's childhood in Lebanon and Syria.

"I think that many artists are activists in some way or another," Zughaib says. "They reflect their times, their environment, visually recording what happens around them. The work that becomes important has its finger on the critical issues of the day. ...I feel my message is more able to be heard if my painting is lovely to look at. Even though my message may be quite devastating, at least I have come close to opening up a point of view, creating that dialogue that can possibly result in mutual understanding, or at least inching towards that goal."

-Kathryn Joyce

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