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The Public Eye

DARK MONEY, DIRTY WAR



**Corporations Attack the Low-Wage
Worker Resurgence**

**CHRISTIAN RIGHT THOUGHT
LEADERS CONSIDER HOLY WAR**

**REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE FOR ALL:
An Interview with Lynn Paltrow**



The Least We Can Do

When the Democratic mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, recently announced that business, union, and community leaders had agreed on a deal to raise the city's minimum hourly wage to \$15, the news provoked strong reactions from pundits across the political spectrum. Progressives generally applauded; conservatives generally protested. The latter were particularly vocal. A writer for the *National Review* noted, with a hint of both relief and nervousness, that the city's experiment is just a local phenomenon. "It would certainly be better," he wrote, "for Seattle to keep its new wage floor to itself than for the country as a whole to adopt something like it."

Well, no worries. The \$15 minimum wage is more than twice the federal minimum of \$7.25, and while President Obama put forward a proposal to hike the federal minimum to \$10.10 in his State of the Union speech in January, it has little chance of passing as long as the GOP controls either chamber of Congress.

Yet there is some evidence of slowly building momentum for small increases at the state level. Five states and the District of Columbia had raised their minimum wage as of April, and a total of 34 states have considered—or are now considering—increases to their minimum wage this year, according to *Stateline*. Connecticut's recent hike to \$10.10 will give it the highest minimum of any state.

These small signs of progress are set against a broader, ongoing story of escalating economic insecurity and inequality. The \$15 minimum wage that has alarmed pundits and politicians on the Right still falls far short of a "living wage" for workers who try to support a family on it. According to a formula devised by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the hourly living wage for a single person supporting one child in Seattle should be \$20.53. For a single parent with two children, it's \$24.76.

Adding to workers' pain are the aggressive assaults on organized labor and workers' rights in recent years. As Mariya Strauss notes in her piece in this issue—"Dark Money, Dirty War"—a recent report published by the International Trade Union Confederation found that the United States ranks among the worst nations, globally, in terms of violating workers' rights. (Also see the related Report in Review in this issue.)

Recent anti-worker legislation in state legislatures is the outcome of a well-organized, multi-faceted campaign that was forged and refined through decades of experimentation. Challenging it will require an equal level of determination, experimentation, and organization by advocates for social justice.

The Public Eye hopes to contribute to the pushback with this issue's cover story on new worker organizations, which are calling out corporate abuses and proactively asserting the rights of workers. It would be naïve to think that these organizations can, in themselves, reverse the long-term trends toward inequality and lower wages. But they might be the seeds of a grassroots movement that can help challenge dominant trends within the American economy. Institutions, politicians, and activists on the Right are certainly taking the threat seriously. They're mobilizing their resources in a bid to undercut these rising organizations and nip their work for a fairer economy in the bud.

As Strauss rightly puts it: The battle is joined, and the stakes are high.

Theo Anderson
Editor-in-Chief

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

publiceye@politicalresearch.org
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BY COLE PARKE

Exploiting Fears of Exploitation

Last month in the United States, rainbow flags were unfurled across the country in honor of LGBT Pride Month. Meanwhile, in Brazil, fans from around the world eagerly waved the flags of their countries and favorite teams for the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Beyond the flag-waving and weeks of revelry, there may seem to be few connections between the two events, but the U.S. Christian Right tracked the happenings in both San Francisco and Rio de Janeiro very closely.

As with many major sporting events, preparations for the World Cup were accompanied by lots of media hype about the supposed surge in sex trafficking that plagues these gatherings. Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott has claimed that the Super Bowl (featuring the *other* football) is the single largest sex-trafficking incident in the United States. At a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing about trafficking and sports events held on January 27, Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) cited a popular statistic from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, claiming that 10,000 prostitutes were transported to Miami for the 2010 Super Bowl.

Yet when questioned, researchers at the Center admitted that they have no idea how Ernie Allen, the organization's former president, derived the number. In fact, in a 2011 report examining the record on sex trafficking related to World Cup soccer games, the Olympics, and the Super Bowl, the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women found that "despite massive media attention, law enforcement measures and efforts by prostitution abolitionist groups, there is no empirical evidence that trafficking for prostitution increases around large sporting events."

So what is the relationship between quests for athletic glory and hyperbolic claims about human trafficking? In short, the Christian Right has identified the fight against human trafficking as an un-opposable mission by which it can covertly promote restrictive ideologies around sexuality and bodily autonomy. While they purport to be nobly fighting the exploitation of young children and poor, defenseless women, Christian Right groups advance a surreptitious attack on some of their favorite scapegoats: LGBTQ people—especially transgender women of color, who are disproportionately targeted by police and "anti-trafficking" efforts.

Consider Project ROSE, a "prostitution diversion" program jointly developed by 15 partner organizations, including the Phoenix Police Department, Arizona State University School of Social Work, and Catholic Charities (its primary funding source). During bi-annual stings, Project ROSE profiles and arrests suspected sex workers, forcing them into faith-based programs without due process or a conviction. Participants who don't qualify (as was the case with Monica Jones) or refuse to participate in the program are transferred directly into the criminal punishment system.

In a *New York Times* op-ed published earlier this year, Kate Mogulescu, the supervising attorney of a project at the Legal Aid Society that represents nearly all of the people arrested on prostitution charges in New York City, documented a massive increase in prostitution-related arrests in the lead-up to the 2014 Seattle/Denver Super Bowl showdown. But by the end of the weekend, not a single trafficker had been investigated or prosecuted. Ultimately, the anti-trafficking frenzy hurt the very people that advocates claimed to be protecting. Hundreds of sex workers—who are already vulnerable—found themselves facing jail time, potential deportation, warrants for failure to appear in court, and lifelong criminal records. As Mogulescu observes, "These arrests are not indications of an increase in prostitution activity, but rather of an increase in policing."

Certainly, the abuse, manipulation, and exploitation of others is unacceptable in any context, and should be confronted and stopped. Yet conservative religious groups, lobbyists, and legislators have done little to curb the harmful elements of the sex trade. Rather, they use anti-trafficking policies to maintain a righteous "tough on crime" image while ignoring the broader systemic issues that put people at risk for exploitation in the first place. The Right's focus on sex trafficking has far more to do with restricting individuals' bodily autonomy—and maintaining the poverty-induced subservience of already marginalized people—than with ending the exploitation of vulnerable populations.

As feminist scholar and activist Emi Koyama observes, the youth sex trade is fueled by a variety of "push" and "pull" factors independent of religious morality or women's empowerment, including poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia/transphobia, family violence, failures of the child welfare system, and the effects of incarceration and deportation on family cohesion. To be truly effective, efforts to combat sex trafficking and its associated human-rights violations must be developed in partnership with sex workers and their allies. As Koyama points out, it is "workers organizing among themselves that [has] successfully challenged and transformed exploitative and abusive working conditions, not police officers or politicians." (Or, I might add, the Christian Right.)

BY MARIYA STRAUSS

Dark Money, Dirty War

Inside the Latest Corporate Crusade Against Low-Wage and Immigrant Workers

Corporate interests have taken credit for reducing private-sector unions to a fraction of their former strength, and for eroding public-sector collective bargaining, especially since the 2010 “Tea Party midterms.” A resurgence in low-wage worker organizing, sparked by growing inequality in the United States, promises to help defend the rights—and paychecks—of vulnerable workers. But corporations and their paid shills aim to snuff out the movement before it catches fire.

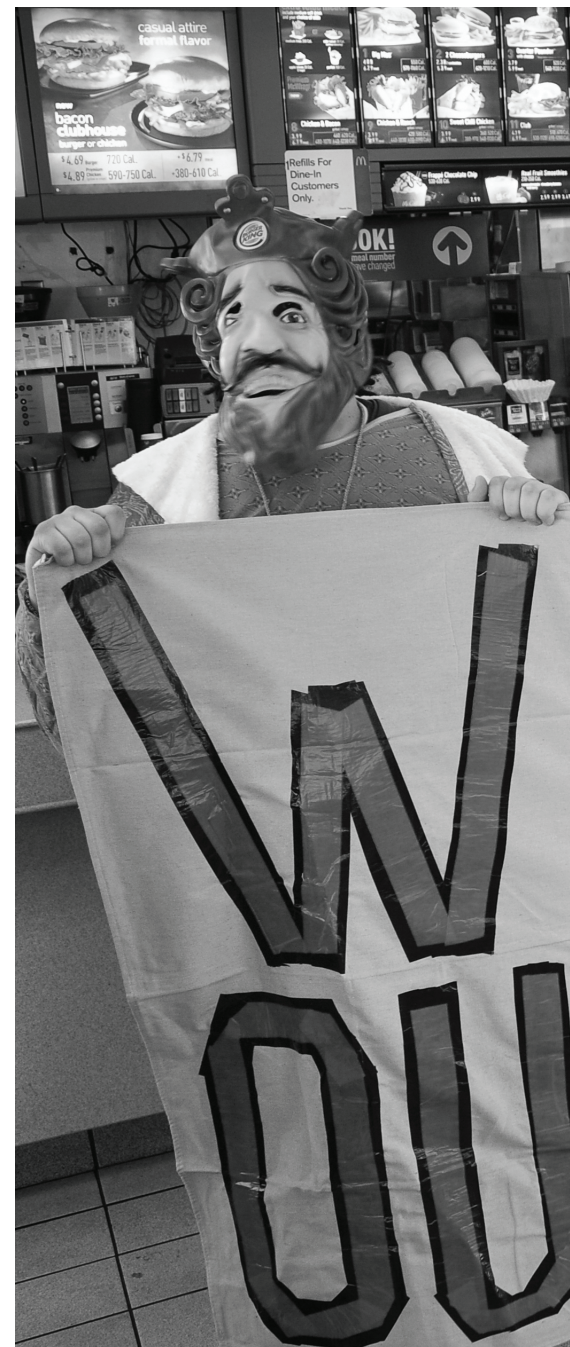
During an April 16 event at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Joe Kefauver—a lobbyist and PR man for the National Restaurant Association and the Convenience Store Association—warned the audience of business leaders about an emerging challenge to their corporate dominance. The threat comes, he said, from groups that “have the ability to leverage infrastructure to bring a multi-pronged attack, and force internal corporate changes [that] they wouldn’t have been able to get through [union] collective bargaining.” Though the organizing efforts the Chamber warns about take many forms, corporate PR lumps them together under the label “worker centers.”

At the same Chamber event, Kefauver gloated about industry’s recent successes in weakening “the union movement,” which, he said, “has hit a lot of roadblocks, in large part due to the good work of a lot of folks in this room.”¹ Building on their victories, over unions, corporations are now deploying their firepower against a resurgence in low-wage worker organizing prompted by the worst eco-

nom ic inequality in a century.

The stakes are high. For too many working Americans, chronic debt and economic insecurity have become inescapable facts of life. Institutions that once offered refuge and the hope of escape from poverty have been hollowed out by decades of policies that concentrate wealth in fewer and fewer hands. Labor unions have been decimated by business interests’ relentless anti-unionization campaigns, and by their successful lobbying in Congress and state legislatures for laws and regulations that favor employers.

As workers face intimidation and legal challenges to their right to join unions (including a case that would damage public sector unions, *Harris v. Quinn*, on which the Supreme Court recently ruled²), the United States has gained a reputation for lousy treatment of workers. In a new report, the International Trade Union Confederation used a five-point scale to rank countries on their commitment to workers’ rights, with five being the worst. The United States received a ranking of four, meaning there are systematic violations.³ Only about 11 percent of U.S. workers are



now represented by unions, down from a peak in the private sector of around 35 percent in the 1950s.⁴ Today, most union members are public-sector employees such as police officers, teachers, and government workers.

Without unions to advocate for workers’ rights at the local level, employers are able to keep wages low and suppress worker self-organization with impunity. Workers’ rights advocates have documented abuses—such as wage theft, in-



Fast food workers in the San Francisco Bay area call for an end to wage theft at an April 2014 day of action. Photo courtesy of Brooke Anderson.

timidation, and sexual harassment—being committed against immigrant and low-wage workers without fear of prosecution. Inequality is at its highest level since 1928,⁵ and studies show that 95 percent of the financial gains made during the current recovery have gone to the top one percent of income earners.⁶

Into this breach has stepped a small but vibrant constellation of low-wage and immigrant-worker organizations. This organizing resurgence features a va-

riety of structures and approaches striving to ensure that workers' voices are heard in public-policy debates on wages and employment practices. According to a recent briefing paper by United Workers Congress, a federation of such groups, "Worker centers [and other low-wage and immigrant worker advocates] have won changes in local policies and practices, built vocal and active membership, and raised public awareness of workers' issues. These efforts have laid

the groundwork for the recent spread of legislative efforts to protect the rights of workers not covered under existing labor law, and to raise the minimum wage for all workers."⁷

Such organizing efforts have also drawn the attention of corporate wolves—PR flacks and conservative-leaning think tanks answering to the same business interests that are responsible for the decline of unions and other anti-poverty institutions. While some

new worker organizations have endured and even thrived in the face of relentless attacks, their antagonists have generally hailed from the particular industry (restaurant, agribusiness, big box retail, etc.) or social sector (e.g. anti-immigrant movement) that they challenge.

In the court of public opinion, low-wage and immigrant worker organizing campaigns are gaining a reputation for being scrappy underdogs, standing up for the little guys. (More often than not, these “little guys” are actually women; a recent study from the National Women’s Law Center found that women represent almost two-thirds of minimum wage workers.⁸) But the business lobby is trying to use its megaphone to reverse that momentum. Groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Restaurant Association are taking advantage of low public awareness of new worker organizations to frame these loosely connected groups as part of the union “Goliath”—a familiar frame that allows corporations to repurpose decades of anti-union messages and tactics.⁹

Although the attacks are well-coordinated, there are opportunities for low-wage and immigrant worker organizing to respond strategically. The business community is trying to hit a field of small, moving targets with independent leadership. The strength of the field lies partly in its diversity—its networked

strength rather than its deep pockets. The opposition is trying to homogenize a heterogeneous field of grassroots organizing in order to simplify, vilify, and attack it. The experienced operatives at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce refer to their chosen targets as “worker centers,”

WAGE THIEVES

Attacks on worker organizing are taking place against a backdrop of an economy in crisis. A 2013 *New York Times* article, quoting a report by the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, noted that the “median income for working-age households (headed by someone under age 65) slid 12.4 percent from 2000 to 2011, to \$55,640. During that time the American economy grew more than 18 percent.”¹¹

As real wages stagnate or fall, consumers have less money to spend. In response, big corporations seek to preserve their profits in ways that further squeeze workers and their disposable income. This squeezing takes many forms: scheduling workers for fewer hours on the shop floor, spreading fear and anti-union propaganda, cutting back on benefits packages, and, perhaps most shockingly, committing outright wage theft.

Imagine being hired as a cashier at a big-box retailer and being told that you’ll make \$8.81 per hour, the average wage of a Walmart cashier.¹² Imagine getting your meager pay-

check and finding that it’s even less than you expected. Now imagine learning that the missing money isn’t being withheld by mistake. It’s being stolen by your employer. Such wage theft is pervasive across all U.S. industries, and the sums involved amount to much more than

As real wages stagnate or fall, big corporations seek to preserve profits by further squeezing workers and their disposable income: scheduling workers for fewer hours on the shop floor, spreading fear and anti-union propaganda, cutting back on benefits packages, and, perhaps most shockingly, committing outright wage theft. As political economist Gordon Lafer asserted, “The total amount of money stolen out of American workers’ paychecks every year is far bigger than the total amount stolen in all the bank robberies, gas station robberies, and convenience store robberies combined.”



OUR Walmart challenges poor working conditions outside the Walmart Home Office in Bentonville, Arkansas. Photo courtesy of Marc F. Henning.

using the term to merge all organizing efforts—union and non-union, immigrant rights’ groups, domestic workers, food service and retail workers, day laborers, supply chain workers, and more— together into one single, seemingly formidable enemy.¹⁰

petty larceny.

“When we measure it,” Gordon Lafer, a political economist at the University of Oregon’s Labor Education & Research Center, recently told *Moyers & Company*, “the total amount of money stolen out of American workers’ paychecks every year is far bigger than the total amount stolen in all the bank robberies, gas station robberies, and convenience store robberies combined.”¹³

“It really has become for many industries the way they do business,” said Sally Dworak-Fisher, lead attorney in the Workplace Justice division at the Public Justice Center in Baltimore, Maryland. “By not paying overtime or paying less than the minimum wage, they are eroding the bedrock of labor protections in this country.”¹⁴

The phenomenon of wage theft is especially cynical given the amount of money that low-wage employees already produce for their employers: McDonald’s, for instance, makes an average per-employee revenue of \$65,000, according to a report from the business blog “24/7 WallStreet,” derisively titled “The Companies with the Least Valuable Employees.”¹⁵

In an article for *Alternet* in 2013, Paul Buchheit wrote that “McDonald’s employs 440,000 workers worldwide, most of them food servers making the median hourly wage of \$9.10 an hour or less, for a maximum of about \$18,200 per year.”¹⁶ That \$9.10 per hour McDonald’s employee is being paid is less than one-third of what she earns for her employer in a year. Now she is also having those meager wages stolen, as the Labor Department found in at least two recent cases in New York and Pennsylvania.¹⁷

Wage theft is just one of a variety of weapons that private-sector businesses have deployed in order to cheat workers and maximize profits. Other tools include public policy instruments like so-called right to work laws that hamper union organizing; threats of deportation to keep unauthorized immigrant workers from asserting their rights; and lobbying to carve out loopholes in new worker-protection laws, among other devices.

For the past few years, in metro regions and states, workers and their communities have galvanized around the problem

of wage theft, standing together to sue and win back money that rightfully belongs to the workers who earned it and the local communities where they spend their paychecks. Additionally, low-wage and immigrant workers are seeking relief from abusive and exploitative working conditions by expanding the laws that defend their interests—raising the minimum wage, creating stiffer penalties for wage theft, and instituting paid sick days and other basic workplace protections. Their grassroots organizing—sometimes, but not always, conducted in partnership with unions—has been effective, and a growing number of cities and states are passing these new laws.

Corporate interests are striking back with bills to pre-empt cities from passing their own minimum wage increases or to mandate paid sick days. These pre-emption bills are heavily influenced by right-wing bill mills like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and pushed by state lawmakers who are often groomed for office by corporate lobby groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.¹⁸

The legislative attack is well underway. After Wisconsin’s paid sick days pre-emption bill was shared at an ALEC meeting, similar legislation spread across the country, in most cases introduced by ALEC members. Eleven states, including Wisconsin, Florida, and Oklahoma have now passed state-level “pre-emption” laws banning cities and counties from mandating employer-provided paid sick days. At least six other states, according to the watchdog group Center for Media and Democracy, are currently considering similar pre-emption bills that would prohibit local governments from raising the minimum wage.¹⁹

CHAMBER OF HORRORS

When the Los Angeles-based Koreatown Immigrant Workers’ Alliance (KIWA) began urging city voters in 2012 to support a state bill that would allow workers to place a temporary lien on the business owner’s property if the business owner committed wage theft, KIWA’s members were excited. The bill would have allowed workers whose employers had stiffed them to place a lien—that is, a transfer of possession—on the em-

ployer’s property until workers received the back pay they were owed. A lien is a red flag for lenders and can become a PR problem for employers. “We see this lien as a tool to bring employers who are committing wage theft to the table,” said Alexandra Suh, KIWA’s executive director. “If there’s a lien on the table, they’re going to pay attention.”²⁰ One state—Maryland—passed a similar lien law that went into effect in October 2013.

Dworak-Fisher of the Public Justice Center said she expects that Maryland’s law will deter employers from committing wage theft. “We’re just getting it up and running,” she said. “We’ll be bringing wage lien claims over the summer and into the fall. The unscrupulous employers will be on notice.”²¹

As the California campaign gained steam, however, local politicians and business owners—some of whom were involved with KIWA projects in the community—started getting notifications from the California Chamber of Commerce. These Facebook ads, blog posts, and other advertising materials claimed that the anti-wage theft bill posed a danger to homeowners.

In one ad shared with PRA, the California Chamber falsely claimed that if the bill passed, it would mean that a third-party homeowner who had a contractor or cleaning service work in the home could wind up with a lien on the home. “Despite the fact that the third party homeowner had absolutely no control over the employee’s work or the wages he/she was paid,” read the statement from the California Chamber, “that homeowner could have his/her property leveraged for unpaid wages of the company’s employees.”²²

In reality, the bill explicitly prevents third-party liens, or liens from one company’s workers on a third party’s, or homeowner’s, property. Yet the Cal Chamber’s lie confused and frightened California homeowners. The anti-wage theft measure died in the state Senate in January 2014. When it was brought up again for a vote in the State Assembly on May 28 of this year, it passed by a vote of 43-27. It now moves back to the California Senate for a potential vote later this year.²⁴

The corporate smokescreen also obscures the widespread nature of the

Reclaiming Stolen Wages: The Koreatown Immigrant Workers' Association



KIWA activists stage a rally in Los Angeles. Photo courtesy of Charlie Kaijo.

A hive of activity in central Los Angeles since 1992, the Koreatown Immigrant Workers' Association (KIWA) offers English classes, workers' rights clinics, and housing advocacy for the area's wide range of ethnic populations, according to executive director Alexandra Suh. "It's a very diverse neighborhood," Suh said. "Anyone who wants to come in and join is welcome to do so." KIWA's members are overwhelmingly Korean and anyone who identifies as Latino. The neighborhood of Koreatown is 58 percent Latino (which includes people from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and other Central American countries), but Koreans make up the single largest ethnic group. Other groups that KIWA works with include African Americans, South Asians, Chinese, and others.

The approximately 5,000 immigrants and low-wage workers that KIWA serves could be considered poor, working poor, or working class. Many of them work precarious part-time and low-wage jobs. But rather than approaching these populations with an attitude of charity, KIWA approaches them with a message of soli-

darity. Its mission statement explains this approach: "KIWA seeks to strengthen progressive, immigrant worker leadership as part of a broad-based movement for social change."

KIWA's Worker Empowerment Clinic provides workshops and technical support for workers to learn their rights and how to recover their stolen wages. KIWA says that it "stands with" workers who are abused and exploited, helping them get more press coverage to expose bad-actor employers; it also organizes tenants and acts as a real-estate developer to build more affordable housing in central Los Angeles.

The need for KIWA's organizing work is real. Los Angeles' low-wage workers face rampant wage theft and other wage-and-hour violations. A 2010 study by UCLA researchers found that the nearly 750,000 low-wage workers in Los Angeles County "regularly experience violations of basic laws that mandate a minimum wage and overtime pay and are frequently forced to work off the clock or during their breaks." Respondents to the survey used in the study reported losing an average of \$39.81 out of a weekly average wage of \$318—meaning their employers stole an average of 12.5 percent of their earnings every week. "Assuming a full-year work schedule," wrote the researchers, "these workers lost an average of \$2,070.00 annually due to workplace violations, out of total annual earnings of \$16,536.00."

The need for organizing for better working conditions and an end to wage theft is so great that KIWA is now banding together with other Los Angeles-based worker organizations to form a new group: the L.A. Worker Center Federation. Suh, who is acting director of the new group, said that the goal of both KIWA and the new L.A. Worker Center Federation is to proactively create a movement of low-wage workers—not simply respond to wage violations.

"I've seen how hard many business owners work and how much they struggle—including some of my family members and friends," she said. "Business owners in the trenches where wage theft is worst know better than anyone the bitterness of the race to the bottom. I would invite honest businesspeople to speak out and join us in the movement to create workplaces where all are respected. We need businesspeople of integrity to go all in on the side of justice, and help create a community where everyone can thrive."

problem, which continues to be “very, very serious,” as Suh said.²³ Indeed, a 2010 UCLA-sponsored survey showed that the vast majority of workers are experiencing some type of wage-related violation on the job in Los Angeles County. “Low-wage workers in L.A. County frequently are paid below the minimum wage, not paid for overtime, work off the clock without pay, and have their meal breaks denied, interrupted, or shortened,” according to the report. “In fact, 88.5 percent of workers in the L.A. sample had experienced at least one type of pay-related workplace violation in the week of work before the survey.”

LIES, SMEARS, AND INNUENDO

The high-profile battle in California may have helped provoke an aggressive response from the national business lobby: the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber’s Workforce Freedom Initiative (WFI) has released three faux-academic reports on low-wage worker organizing since last fall, starting with one in November 2013 that purported to expose a cabal of left-wing, foundation-funded, low-wage worker advocacy groups like KIWA.

The report presents a kind of historical analysis of how low-wage and immigrant worker organizations emerged; labels this highly diverse landscape of organizations “worker centers”; charges that they are “union front groups” (UFOs) that circumvent the many restrictions that tie the hands of unions; and maps foundation funding for the low-wage organizing sector (implying that foundations are as responsible as unions for its existence). The report fingers worker-advocacy groups of varying forms and sizes—from small worker centers such as KIWA to larger national organizing efforts like Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC United) and Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart).²⁵

Each subsequent U.S. Chamber report builds on the insinuations and distortions of the previous ones. Common to all of them is an effort to redeploy the rhetoric and regulatory efforts developed over decades against unions to attack these varied immigrant and low-wage worker projects that, while gener-

ally small, have become among the most dynamic sites of the worker-organizing resurgence. The Chamber’s approach requires convincing the public, policy makers, and judges that so-called “worker centers” are more or less all the same—that they are functionally unions, trying to represent workers for the purposes of collective bargaining while evading the regulatory scrutiny and restrictions on their behavior and funding that unions must endure.

In reality, worker organizing groups use a variety of tactics to achieve their strategic goals: a community organization files a lawsuit to stop local police from using traffic stops to hand immigrant workers over to immigration authorities; a worker center holds workshops to train members to prevent wage theft; or a local domestic workers’ organization holds a rally to call for an end to deportations. In none of these cases is a worker organization “seek[ing] to negotiate with employers on behalf of employees,” as the WFI report asserts.²⁶

It is unsurprising that the corporate Right should want to fight on familiar ground. The loud “union front” accusation represents a clever bit of bait: an invitation for community groups to deny the charge of being unions (as if that were a bad thing) and thereby enter into a potentially endless cycle of defending themselves from that charge. In fact, the relationships between traditional unions and low-wage/immigrant worker organizing groups vary greatly: some have no working relationships with unions, some work occasionally and amicably with unions, and others engage with unions quite frequently and even openly aspire to become more union-like.

But the broad-brush labeling of “worker centers” could have potential legal and

regulatory consequences, too. The U.S. Chamber is using its reports—plus attack ads, articles from right-wing think tanks such as the Manhattan Institute, and op-eds in major newspapers echoing similar refrains—to persuade the public and the government that all low-wage and immigrant worker organizing groups should be subjected to the same financial reporting and internal struc-

The comparison of worker centers to ACORN may be a dogwhistle to business leaders that low-wage worker groups are vulnerable to the same take-down tactics, including pseudo-journalistic video exposés, congressional hearings, and public defunding. ACORN, which dissolved its national structure in 2010 in response to this onslaught, could be seen as a sort of cautionary tale for immigrant and low-wage worker organizing efforts: to avoid the same fate, they will need to recognize and strategically respond.

turing requirements that unions face. They aim to impose severe restraints on charitable contributions and to limit or ban secondary boycotts (among other activities). If their opponents are successful, the low-wage worker sector—including groups with no active relationships with unions—could be hobbled.

The Chamber is not only recycling anti-union tactics. In one particularly revealing statement in its first report, author Jarol Manheim compares the loose network of worker centers to the anti-poverty network ACORN, which was targeted and ultimately broken apart by right-wing attacks in the mid-2000s. Manheim names a foundation (Needmor) that supports “organizing to achieve social justice, and was once a major contributor to ACORN chapters in several communities. Between 2009 and 2011, its grantees included, among others, the Koreatown Immigrant Workers Association (KIWA).”²⁷

This comparison of worker centers to ACORN may be a dogwhistle to business leaders that low-wage worker groups are vulnerable to the same take-down tactics, including pseudo-journalistic video exposés, congressional hearings, and public defunding. As Lee Fang pointed out in an April article in the *Nation*, the case of ACORN, which dissolved its national structure in 2010 in response to this onslaught, could be seen as a sort of cautionary tale for immigrant and low-wage worker organizing efforts: to avoid the same fate, they will need to recognize and strategically respond to this national threat.

CHAMBER OF SECRETS

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's stated mission is "representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions," but watchdog groups say the U.S. Chamber represents the interests of a select few big industry groups that want to crush worker organizing.²⁸ In some states, where the local Chamber of Commerce and local business leaders tend to operate from the same playbook as the U.S. Chamber, anti-worker campaigns tend to proliferate. The California Chamber of Commerce, for example, has been actively lobbying to prevent the state legislature from passing a bill that would help to prevent wage theft. Watchdog groups such as ChamberWatch have had some success in persuading smaller Chambers of Commerce and even a few big corporations to leave and/or denounce the U.S. Chamber for its history of opposition to any regulation of corporate behavior, including environmental and safety regulations.²⁹

But identifying who is—and isn't—part of the U.S. Chamber can be a challenge. Unlike many local Chambers of Commerce, the U.S. Chamber keeps its member and donor lists secret. Despite its claim to represent three million busi-

nesses, watchdog groups have documented that its actual membership hovers around 300,000. What's more, local chambers of commerce have publicly denounced or left the U.S. Chamber by the dozens in recent years. U.S. Chamber-

The pattern of recent attacks against new worker organizations suggests a growing frequency, intensity, and nationalization of anti-worker campaigns. In addition to attacks by the corporate sector, some worker organizing efforts are under constant assault from nativist anti-immigrant groups. Other vectors of attack have come from cultural conservatives such as the American Life League, which has used smear tactics to pressure faith communities and congregations.

Watch reported that nearly 60 Chambers have done so since 2009. Though it does not disclose its donors, OpenSecrets has been able to track major donations to the U.S. Chamber from industry groups such as the American Petroleum Institute, the Associated General Contractors of America, and the Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce, itself a hardline, right-wing business association.³⁰

These and other industry groups are funding a broader, coordinated push to preserve the low wages and exploitative working conditions that now characterize many industries. Their targets include groups such as ROC United, which is a national network of worker centers that is challenging the American model of low-wage service sector employment.

ROC United "really carefully looked at the restaurant industry and thought about what it would take to improve wages and working conditions and standards," said Janice Fine, a scholar of labor studies and worker centers at Rutgers University. "They are doing a number of interesting innovative things."³¹ These include surveys of restaurant workers to find out what their wages and working conditions actually are; a code of conduct that employers can adopt to take the "high road" and treat workers better; picketing bad-actor employers;

and promoting "high road" employers to socially-conscious diners.

For their efforts, ROC United has been subjected to consistent and intense attacks from industry, and has fought back doubly hard. A January 16 *New York Times* article exposed the restaurant industry's PR campaign against ROC: "A prominent Washington lobbyist, Richard Berman, has run full-page ads attacking the Restaurant Opportunities Center, accusing it of intimidating opponents," according to the piece. "He has even set up a separate website, ROCexposed.com, to attack the group."³² Restaurant owners have also filed frivolous law-

suits against ROC, aiming to force ROC to spend money and time fighting in court instead of organizing.

In one 2005 case involving ROC's New York chapter, reports the National Employment Law Project (NELP), "Three restaurants filed a charge with the National Labor Relations Board claiming that ROC-NY's activities made it a labor organization subject to the National Labor Relations Act. If ROC-NY were subject to the Act, it would also be subject to a series of requirements ... and potentially jeopardize its tax exempt status. The restaurants said that ROC-NY's filing of litigation, and seeking settlements that provided for improvements in working conditions..., such as promotion policies or language access policies, made ROC a labor union."³³ Such lawsuits are another attempt to shut down new worker formations by calling them unions and seeking to restrict their activities accordingly.

"It's a sign of their effectiveness," Fine said.³⁴ And, indeed, the workers' groups are winning in court. The National Guestworkers Alliance, a network that advocates for guestworkers who are brought in from other countries to work for a specific employer, won more than \$200,000 in back wages and damages for a group of McDonald's employees

who had been forced to live in a manager's basement and were paid sub-minimum wages and denied overtime. ROC United, according to an issue brief from the United Workers Congress, also has had a significant track record of court victories on behalf of workers: "The Restaurant Opportunities Center has won 18 campaigns against exploitation in large, high-profile restaurant corporations that resulted in higher wages and better benefits for these workers, as well as \$9 million in recouped wages."³⁵

Even if these numbers don't significantly affect the bottom line of megacorporations such as Walmart or Darden Restaurants (which owns the Red Lobster and Olive Garden chains), Fine said, the undeniable power of workers winning back their rightfully earned wages is pulling public opinion over to the workers' side. "Before, they might have been irritants, but not enough to raise the ire of big, corporate dark-money groups like the National Restaurant Association and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce."³⁶

Another approach that worker organizers have taken, following the U.S. Supreme Court's 2002 *Hoffman Plastic* decision—which stripped undocumented immigrants of the right to win any back pay that is withheld during a unionization campaign—is to seek relief from workplace abuses under international human rights law. The *Hoffman* decision has had real consequences for workers trying to organize themselves into unions to combat wage theft and other abuses. "Workers have abandoned trade union organizing campaigns because of the fear instilled by the *Hoffman* decision," wrote Human Rights Watch in a 2005 report on human rights violations in the meat-processing industry.³⁷

In addition to the attacks from the corporate sector, some worker organizing efforts have been under constant assault from nativist anti-immigrant groups. These include groups like FAIR, Judicial Watch, and NumbersUSA. Other vectors of attack have come from cultural conservatives such as the American Life League, which has used smear tactics to pressure faith communities and congregations into withdrawing their support for the Interfaith Worker Justice coalition of worker centers.

A GATHERING STORM

If halting low-wage and immigrant worker organizing efforts is the goal, then it appears corporations and industry groups are testing out a variety of strategic models for achieving this goal.

Previous attacks have generally targeted specific worker centers or specific organizing campaigns through legal strategies or PR campaigns. The pattern of recent attacks against new worker organizations suggests not only a growing frequency and intensity but also a kind of nationalization of the attacks. The flurry of op-eds, attack videos, legal briefs, and state legislative interventions draw on a broad range of right-wing infrastructure and tactics. (See related timeline at PRA's website.)

One example is the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's recent series of reports purporting to "expose" worker centers as being well-funded efforts to unionize low-wage workers.

So far, it appears that the organized opposition to the resurgence in low-wage and immigrant worker organizing has not landed on the kind of PR, legal, and policy package (e.g. "right-to-work," "paycheck protection," anti-public employee collective bargaining) that has proven devastating to unions and other anti-poverty groups such as ACORN. But the Chamber, NRA, and others are moving aggressively to box in and take down any challengers to their corporate dominance.

Meanwhile, big businesses are finding that former campaign managers for Mitt Romney and other GOP candidates are willing to act as PR attack dogs to spread rumors that worker centers are corrupt, or "commies," or fronts for unions. "Picking fights with restaurant workers has been good business for out-of-work GOP operatives," writes Lee Fang in a recent article in the *Nation*.³⁸

And so the battle is joined. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Workforce Freedom Initiative is staffed with lobbyists who, along with consultants like Kefauver, visit local and state-based industry associations, presenting worker centers as a threat to business. Meanwhile, members of Congress use their subpoena power on Capitol Hill to advance the anti-worker organizing cause.

In September 2013, Reps. Phil Roe and John Kline, two Republican House committee and subcommittee chairs, convened a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions titled "The Future of Union Organizing," which featured speakers from lobbying groups claiming to represent small business owners, as well as anti-union lawyers. Speakers called on Congress to subject worker centers to same restrictions as unions.

Earlier in the summer, Roe and Kline had also penned a letter to Labor Secretary Tom Perez, requesting that he designate six specific worker centers as labor organizations under the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA). Perez refused; but had he fulfilled their request, legal experts say it could have resulted in worker-organizing groups losing the right to picket bad-actor employers, loss of their tax exempt status, and other restrictions.

And should additional industry groups and big companies decide to join the U.S. Chamber's campaign to squash worker organizing, recent events have made it clear they will find eager friends in high places. At that April 16 U.S. Chamber event hosted by staff at the Workforce Freedom Initiative, the chief of staff for Steve King (R-IA), a right-wing representative who carries the flag for anti-immigrant groups, took the microphone during the Q&A period. He asked a question that low-wage worker organizations and the foundations that fund them might view as a chilling signal that the recent wave of attacks may be mere prologue to an intensified onslaught. "Is there something on Capitol Hill," the Congressional aide asked the panel of industry lobbyists and lawyers, "we could be doing?"³⁹ 🗨️

Mariya Strauss is a Maryland-based writer who researches economic justice issues for Political Research Associates. Her investigative journalism and commentary pieces have been published in The Nation and at the GlobalComment blog, among others. You can follow Mariya on Twitter at @mariyastrauss.

Rumblings of Theocratic Violence

Some Christian Right activists, including a high-level GOP operative, have lost hope that a Christian nation can be achieved in the United States through the formal political process. They are calling for martyrs and thinking about religious war.

If the American experiment with freedom is to end after 237 years,” wrote Republican campaign strategist David Lane in an essay published on a popular conservative website in 2013, “let each of us commit to brawl all the way to the end.” Quoting Winston Churchill from the darkest days of the German bombing of Britain during World War II, Lane added that “upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization.”¹

Such rhetoric is so common on the farther reaches of the Right that it can be easy to dismiss. But something has changed in recent years. Such disturbing claims are appearing more frequently, more prominently, and in ways that suggest that they are expressions of deeply held beliefs more than provocative political hyperbole.² What’s more, there are powerful indications in the writings of some Christian Right leaders that elements of their movement have lost con-



As its long-held dream of a national “return to Christ” seems to fade, the Christian Right is considering violent and secessionist alternatives. Photo courtesy of Joel Kramer.

confidence in the bright political vision of the United States as the once and future Christian nation—and that they are desperately seeking alternatives.

The 59-year-old Lane, who generally keeps a low media profile, epitomizes the trend. Lane has been a key strategist in the conservative movement and a behind-the-scenes power broker and adviser to GOP presidential candidates for two decades.³ His main vehicle has been “Pastors’ Policy Briefings,” in which conservative Christian clergy and their spouses are provided expenses-paid trips to (usually) closed-door, invitation-only conferences. Speakers at these events included top GOP politicians and office holders, as well as Christian Right ideologues such as David Barton and experts in the mechanics of church-based electoral mobilization. During the 2010 midterm elections, such events were held in six states (Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Iowa). The elections swept unprecedented numbers of Christian conservatives into state legislatures and the Congress, largely under the rubric of the Tea Party, helping catalyze the successful effort to oust three pro-marriage equality justices of the Iowa Supreme Court.⁴

The Iowa Renewal Project, which hosted a briefing in October 2013, is one of several state-level units of the American Renewal Project—which is, in turn, a political development and mobilization project of the Mississippi-based American Family Association. Its most prominent figures are founder Don Wildmon and the abrasive radio host Bryan Fischer. Lane told the *Dallas Morning News* that the goal of the event, which featured Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus and U.S. Sens. Rand Paul (R-KY) and Ted Cruz (R-TX),⁵ was the same as the others: “the mobilization of pastors and pews to restore America to our Judeo-Christian heritage and re-establish a Christian culture.” Lane said: “We’ve been in 15 states now, largely under the radar, and we’ve had 10,000 pastors plus spouses that we’ve put up overnight and fed three meals. The purpose is to get the pastors—the shepherds in America—to engage the culture through better registration and get out the vote.”⁶

In one sense, little has changed since the methods that have defined the Chris-

tian Right were developed in the latter part of the twentieth century. But the heyday of high-profile, mediagenic leaders like Jerry Falwell, James Dobson, Pat Robertson, and Phyllis Schlafly—and their national organizations—is long gone. Their legacy is a generation of hands-on political operatives who now sustain a more decentralized Christian Right. No one now qualifies as the “leader” of the Christian Right. Instead, a constellation of smaller, electorally focused organizations has emerged, and others have evolved.

Lane’s method turns on the role of clergy in inspiring, sustaining, and expanding the electoral capacity of Christian conservatives. By Lane’s analysis, about half of eligible evangelical voters are either not registered or do not vote—and he believes pastors are the key to changing this, and thereby to sustaining the Christian Right’s strategic capacity for skillful voter mobilization, and exercising outsized political influence *en route* to dominant political power and governmental authority.⁷ As such, Lane epitomizes the long-haul political vision of the Christian Right. He has promoted Mike Huckabee at similar events since his runs for statewide office in Arkansas in the 1990s, and as a presidential candidate in 2008.⁸ Lane also masterminded the 2011 prayer rally that drew 30,000 people to launch Texas Gov. Rick Perry’s short-lived 2012 campaign for president.

Like many other evangelicals, especially those influenced by the Neocharismatic movement known as the New Apostolic Reformation,⁹ Lane is counting on a revival—another Great Awakening—to sweep Christians of the right sort into positions of power. This would result in the kind of Christian nation that he and his close ally, the historical revisionist (and accused fabulist) David Barton—whose books and interpretations are influential among conservative evangelicals—believe was intended by the nation’s founders. Barton is well known, for example, for his claim that the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state is a “myth,” as well as the variation that the wall is “one directional,” that is, intended only to protect the church from the state.¹⁰ A Bartonesque Christian nationalism is the vision that animates Lane’s work across the election calendar.¹¹

But for all the energy he invests in traditional electoral work, Lane clearly is not convinced that his shining vision of America is likely—or even possible. Hence his doubt-filled essay about “the American experiment with freedom” possibly ending. The piece, “Wage War to Restore a Christian Nation,” was published on *World Net Daily (WND)*, a leading and influential news site of the farther secular and religious Right. *WND* quickly removed the essay in June 2013 after bloggers called attention to it,¹² but Lane soon demonstrated that it was not an aberration. He told conservative Iowa radio talk show host Steve Deace the following month that “car bombs in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. and Des Moines, Iowa” would be merciful punishment from God for legalized abortion and for “homosexuals praying at the Inauguration [of President Obama’s second term].” Without such divine mercy, Lane suggested, America might “get judgment like Nazi Germany.”¹³

Lane’s apparent lack of confidence that the Christian Right’s efforts to establish theocratic governance can succeed by using the tools of democracy epitomizes his belief that martyrdom and elections are not mutually exclusive, and that horrific confrontations lie ahead. Indeed, Lane opened his *WND* essay with a quote from a leading thinker who does not believe that the United States can be salvaged via conventional politics: the theologian Peter Leithart, 55, a Christian Reconstructionist (hardline theocrat) who makes even David Barton seem meek and mild by comparison.¹⁴ “Throughout Scripture,” Leithart declared in a passage from his 2012 book *Between Babel and Beast*, “the only power that can overcome the seemingly invincible omnipotence of a Babel or a Beast is the power of martyrdom, the power of the witness to King Jesus to the point of loss and death.”¹⁵

“You ask,” Lane wrote in his *WND* essay, elaborating on Leithart’s theme, “What is our goal?” To wage war to restore America to our Judeo-Christian heritage with all of our might and strength that God will give us. You ask, “What is our aim?” One word only: victory, in spite of all intimidation and terror.”

Lane’s essay is a clarion call for a contemporary religious war against the supposedly pagan government of the United

In 2013, influential GOP operative David Lane wrote an essay titled “Wage War to Restore a Christian Nation,” a clarion call for a contemporary religious war against the supposedly pagan government of the United States. Lane later told a radio host that car bombs in U.S. cities would be “merciful judgment” from God for the nation’s tolerance of legalized abortion and homosexuality.



Christian Right leaders have been particularly provoked by the Supreme Court’s 2013 ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act. Photo courtesy of Southern Reformation.

States. And his notion of war is not just a metaphor for politics. He even called for a contemporary “Gideon” and a “Rahab the Harlot” to rise to the occasion. Gideon is the Biblical figure who leads an Israelite army in an ethnic cleansing of the Midianites, who were both oppressors and worshiped false gods. The story of Rahab turns on how she sheltered two Israelite spies in preparation for the sacking of the city of Jericho by Joshua’s army, resulting in the massacre of everyone but Rahab and her family. One does not invoke Gideon and Rahab in this way if one is simply calling for religious revival, or seeking to advance a legislative agenda.¹⁶

Coming from a top GOP operative, such exhortations to religious war are extraordinary. Lane’s articulation demonstrates an alarming degree of militancy at a high

level of American politics. As such, it is a bellwether of an ideological reorganization, or at least reconsideration, now taking place within the Christian Right. It sounds like an expression of the cognitive dissonance experienced by a man whose job is to mobilize political constituencies toward common goals—but who doubts that the enterprise can succeed.

At least some of the historic culture warriors of the Christian Right seem to be considering an ostensibly unlikely coalition with the Neo-Confederate movement. The coalition would lead their followers in religious and political directions in which violence is as likely as the outcomes are uncertain. It is an unlikely coalition, not necessarily because the Christian Right and most Neo-Confederates differ much on issues, but because

Christian nationalism is so fundamentally at odds with the notion of fracturing the nation due to a loss of hope and faith in the role of the United States in God’s plan.

WITNESS AGAINST AMERICA

The accelerating advance of LGBTQ rights, especially marriage equality, has become a flashpoint for the Christian Right’s revolutionary impulses. In the wake of the Supreme Court’s striking down part of the Defense of Marriage Act in *United States v. Windsor* in 2013, Peter Leithart took to the influential blog of the journal *First Things* (founded by the late neoconservative Catholic thinker Richard John Neuhaus) to declare that the decision “presents American Christians with a call to martyrdom.”¹⁷

Leithart is the former dean of graduate studies at New Saint Andrew’s College, whose founder and *eminence grise* is Douglas Wilson. (Leithart remains an adjunct fellow at the school, which is based in the university town of Moscow, Idaho.) In 2012, Leithart struck off on his own, founding a small school and related think tank, Trinity House, in Birmingham, AL. It seeks to serve as a center for a new Reformed Protestantism, called Federal Vision, whose leading lights include Neo-Confederate authors Wilson and Steven Wilkins.¹⁸

Together, Wilson and Wilkins have probably done more than anyone to construct the theology now animating much of the Neo-Confederate movement. Wilkins was one of the founders of the League of the South, the leading organization of contemporary Neo-Confederatism.¹⁹ As scholars Edward Sebesta and Euan Hague have written, the League views the Civil War as a “theological war” that continues in contemporary America. The heart of their argument is that the old Confederacy was an orthodox Christian nation fighting for the future against the heretical and tyrannical Union states. Sebesta and Hague also report that that *New York Times* best-selling author Thomas E. Woods, a traditionalist Catholic and a founder of the League, has argued that “struggles against liberalism, big government and the New World Order comprise ‘Christendom’s Last Stand.’”²⁰

Wilson and Wilkins are notorious for

a booklet they published that claimed that slavery was not so bad. Nick Gier, a professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Idaho, observes that they made a number of historically inaccurate but ideologically significant claims, notably that, “By the time of the [Civil] War, the leadership of the South was conservative, orthodox, and Christian,” and that the leadership of the North had become “radical and Unitarian.” While the Confederates were righteous, “the abolitionists in the North were ‘wicked’ and were ‘driven by a zealous hatred for the Word of God.’”²¹

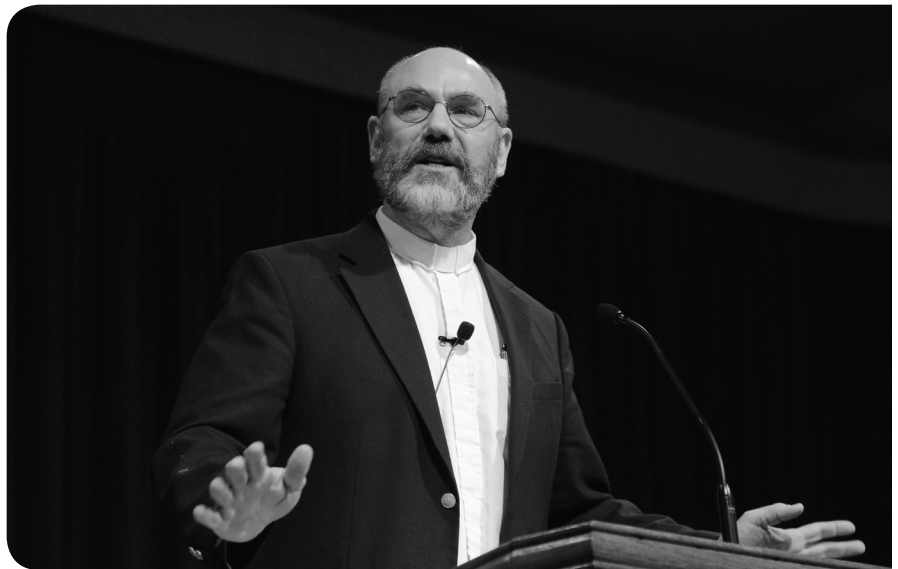
In his *First Things* piece, Leithart avoids calling too directly for Christians to risk their lives (perhaps because of the flap over David Lane’s essay). But his call to martyrdom is clear enough. “In Greek, *martyria* means ‘witness,’ specifically, witness in a court,” he wrote. “At the very least, the decision challenges American Christians to continue to teach Christian sexual ethics without compromise or apology. But *Windsor* presents a call to martyrdom in a more specific sense. There will be a cost for speaking the truth, a cost in reputation, opportunity, and funds if not in freedoms. [Supreme Court Justice Antonin] Scalia’s reference [in *Windsor*] to the pagan Roman claim that Christians are ‘enemies of mankind’ was probably not fortuitous.”

“The only America that actually exists,” he continued, “is one in which ‘marriage’ includes same-sex couples and women have a Constitutional right to kill their babies. To be faithful, Christian witness must be witness *against* America.”²²

“If America is to be put in its place—put right,” he concluded (in David Lane’s hair-raising invocation of a passage from Leithart’s book *Between Babel and Beast*), “Christians must risk martyrdom and force Babel to the crux where it has to decide either to acknowledge Jesus as *imperator* and the church as God’s *imperium* or to begin drinking holy blood.”²³

In *Between Babel and Beast*, Leithart declared that Christians must respond to the heresy of “Americanism,” by which some conflate the nation with Christianity itself. He called for repenting of Americanism and beginning to cultivate “believers who are martyrs in the original sense of ‘witness’ and in the later sense of men and women ready to follow the

The accelerating advance of LGBTQ rights, especially marriage equality, has become a flashpoint for the Christian Right’s revolutionary impulses. “The only America that actually exists,” Christian theocrat Peter Leithart has written, “is one in which ‘marriage’ includes same-sex couples and women have a Constitutional right to kill their babies. To be faithful, Christian witness must be witness *against* America.”



Leithart has called for Christians to “risk martyrdom and force Babel” to either acknowledge Jesus or “begin drinking holy blood.” Photo courtesy of Zac Calvert.

Lamb all the way to an imperial cross.”²⁴

Significantly, Leithart has also proposed “the end of Protestantism” in a way that suggests a growing affinity for the kind of Catholicism expressed by George Weigel—a U.S. Catholic culture warrior, neoconservative, signer of the *Manhattan Declaration*, and fellow *First Things* blogger. Leithart also proposes the related notion of a “Reformational Catholicism,” which foresees a Rome-based Christian unity.²⁵ He envisions this mutual accommodation as a kind of Christian maturity necessary for Christendom not only to survive but to prevail.

Leithart’s make-or-break vision would either end what he describes as anti-Christian tyranny or, failing that, build a new Christian nation—or nations. He is less concerned with the ups and downs of

single issues than with the long-term advance of Christendom. This is consistent with the revolutionary visions of an influential Catholic thinker, Father C. John McCloskey, who believes that regional American strongholds of conservative Christianity may be necessary in light of the culture of religious pluralism and the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state.

ENDING THE TYRANNICAL REGIME

McCloskey, a 61-year-old priest in the conservative order Opus Dei, is best known for his role in the religious conversions of Gov. Sam Brownback (R-KS), Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, and various other prominent and influential conservatives, including Newt Gingrich, Robert Bork, economist Lawrence

Kudlow, financier Lewis Lehrman, and the late journalist Robert Novak.

McCloskey told columnist Terry Mattingly in July 2013 that “the United States is no longer a Christian country.” Because this is so, he explained, traditionalists will need to cluster in states that are more congenial to their views on such matters as abortion, marriage, parents rights, and homeschooling. “No one in this country has ever really suffered for their faith in any meaningful way,” McCloskey said. “Those days are ending, especially in certain states . . . Among Catholics, we may soon find that many are Americans more than they are Catholics.”²⁶

McCloskey predicted in 2001, and again in 2012, that conservative Catholics and evangelicals would need to band together in a civil war of secession. The “secession of the ‘Culture of Life’ states,” he predicted, would emphasize “the fundamental issues of the sanctity of marriage, the rights of parents, and the sacredness of human life,” and that the secession would precipitate “a short and bloody civil war” that would break the country into what he calls “the Regional States of America.”²⁷ He repeated this general view in an essay in January 2014, in which he discussed separating from the “tyrannical regime” in Washington, D.C.²⁸ McCloskey, a fellow at the Washington, D.C.-based Faith and Reason Institute, has not said how he thinks this might happen, but he has said that the civil war may be all over by 2030. (Unsurprisingly, McCloskey has favorably reviewed one of the books of the prominent Catholic Neo-Confederate Thomas E. Woods.²⁹)

McCloskey, like the rest of the Republican-oriented Christian Right, believes that the current electoral strategy of seeking political control of the Red states might sufficiently reduce the number of abortions without having to overturn *Roe*. But he avers that while people from those states who seek abortions “retain the option of traveling to the nearest blue state,” there is “much hope in this area

for at least regional decreases in abortions.”³⁰

McCloskey finds encouragement in nullificationist activity in the Red states against what he considers “unjust laws” that protect abortion rights and access. He points to Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback,³¹ who in 2013 signed legislation that defined life as beginning at conception as part of a bill that severely restricts, but doesn’t ban, abortion.³² Brownback

Centuries of political and military conflict between Christian factions are being set aside in favor of strategic alliances that target the culture and constitutional structure of religious pluralism—and the supposedly “tyrannical” federal government. It may be more a matter of how, rather than when, the conversation about secession unfolds.

has promoted nullification as a strategy of resistance to what is viewed as federal intrusions on state sovereignty regarding, among other things, gun control.³³

“The red state/blue state dichotomy could—perhaps sooner than we might think—result in states opting to pull out of the union,” McCloskey wrote in January 2014. He wondered about what secession might mean for a superpower such as the United States, and about how the armed forces might react. “[B]ut ultimately,” he concluded, “the protection of innocent life trumps any tyrannical regime.”³⁴ McCloskey has said he hopes that it will not come to the violence he has predicted, but for more than a decade he has openly said that a conflict with what he calls “the atheistic American Herods” is probably inevitable.³⁵

This kind of thinking is not new within the farther reaches of the religious and political Right. The Christian Right theorist and prolific author Gary North, for example, wrote about the long-term revolutionary implications of what he and others were doing. North objected to the 1994 assassination of a Florida abortion provider and his escort by a fellow Christian Reconstructionist, Paul Hill,

who had also authored a manifesto in which he called for Christian militias to rise up against the federal government.³⁶ North argued that the assassination was premature and that the foundation for theocratic Christian revolution had not been properly laid. Nevertheless, North felt that something serious was already underway. “For the first time in over 300 years,” he wrote in 1987, “a growing number of Christians are starting to view themselves as an army on the move. This army will grow.” He concluded: “We are self-consciously firing the first shot.”³⁷

It is not clear that the Christian Right is any more ready to revolt now than it was in 1994—a period that was marked by a wave of arsons, bombings, and assassinations against abortion providers, as well as the rise of the militia

movement. (Post 9/11, these violent movements were largely neutralized by federal law enforcement.) But as the 2009 *Manhattan Declaration* and other compacts created between Christian conservatives in recent decades have shown, the religious wars that have pitted Christian factions against one another for millennia, politically and militarily, are being resolved in favor of strategic alliances against the culture and constitutional structure of religious pluralism, and against the allegedly “tyrannical” federal government.³⁸ Thus the Catholic/evangelical conversation may be taking a surprising turn.

It may be more a matter of how, rather than when, the conversation about secession unfolds. Some see restoring the Christian nation (which arguably never was) as a hopeless cause. Others hope that a revival-powered wave of Christian nationalism will propel a profound cultural and political transformation. But if such a transformed America is not to be, a coalition with the avatars of Confederate revivalism will become more appealing, and will be well-aligned with McCloskey’s vision of the secession of conservative states.

THEOLOGY OF NEO-CONFEDERATISM

Those who have long lived at the intersections of the Christian Right and the Neo-Confederate movement will find much in common with the culture warring, secessionist, violent visionary sensibilities of Lane and McCloskey, if variations on the theology of Neo-Confederatism gain further traction. Pastor David Whitney, 56, who leads the small Cornerstone Evangelical Free Church in Pasadena, MD (near Washington, D.C.), may epitomize the trend.

Though not widely known, Whitney is a well-connected figure on the Far Right. He is chaplain of the Maryland chapter of the League of the South and is a signatory of the “Covenant” of the six-year-old Southern National Congress, which openly seeks an “independent republic.”³⁹ He travels the country as the senior instructor at the Institute on the Constitution, which offers theocratic interpretations of U.S. history, and he is a perennial candidate for political office who has run on the Republican and Constitution Party tickets. In 2014 he ran in a Democratic primary for county council.

Like Lane and McCloskey, Whitney is revealing himself to be increasingly revolutionary.⁴⁰ He declared on Independence Day 2010, for example, that if government does not conform to God’s law, “the people have a right to secede” from the “wicked regime in Washington, D.C.” and its “despicable and evil tyranny.” He believes that we therefore may eventually have to make the “same difficult decision which our forebears reached on that hot July day in Philadelphia.”⁴¹

Whitney has become only more overtly militant since then. In February 2011, he threatened secession in testimony before the Judicial Proceedings Committee of the Maryland State Senate. For example, he claimed that passage of marriage-equality legislation would delegitimize the state government, such that state laws should not be obeyed; that the state courts and executive branch have no authority; that taxes should not be paid; and that “we should from this point forward consider it as our Founders considered King George III.” If the legislation passed, he said, “multitudes” would want to secede from the state.⁴² While there is no obvious secessionist uprising seeking

to fracture Maryland in the wake of the passage of marriage-equality legislation, that issue is hardly Whitney’s only concern—and his seething sensibility has taken a turn to vigilantism.

In a June 2013 sermon, he justified the murder of abortion providers. In discussing a Christian’s duty to defend life, he said that this included the prevention of “the murder of the unborn” and that “we need to understand that there is such a thing as Biblically justifiable homicide.”⁴³ This places him in a distinct lineage of justification for murder that goes back at least to Paul Hill and was specifically rejected as a legal defense by the Florida courts. Hill had advocated the notion of justifiable homicide for more than a year before he decided to take action himself.⁴⁴

A May 2013 sermon helps to establish the context for Whitney’s notions of extrajudicial killings. “When you talk to people about God’s law being restored in America,” he declared, “they say, ‘Awww, you’re some ayatollah. Awww, you want a theocracy.’” He explained that, “Well yes, I want obedience to God’s law because that is where liberty comes from. Liberty comes from God’s law. Tyranny comes when God’s law is rejected by a society as it has been rejected in our day.” He went on to say that any law that “contradicts God’s law ... is not law at all.”⁴⁵

Consistent with his deeply theocratic bent, Whitney wrote in February 2014 that we should “restrict citizenship” to Christians of the right sort: Christians who—whether voting or serving as jurors, government officials, or “in the Militia”—operate according to “God’s Law.”⁴⁶ In October 2013, he preached that “God’s word is wise in how to structure a human civil government. Because if a human civil government allows a tyrant to control an army, you are going to lose your freedom. It’s only when you, the people, are armed in a militia structure that you can prevent that kind of tyranny from overwhelming the country.”⁴⁷

In a sermon in March 2014, Whitney called for imprecatory prayer against the White House staff (presumably including President Obama), apparently because of the Affordable Care Act. “There are many enemies that we could pray against them that God would do unto them what they

are seeking to do unto us,” he told his congregation. “There are those, including those in the White House, through their death panels, who intend to kill us. May God do to them what they intend to do to us.”

SUCH WORDS AS THESE

It could be argued that the so-called culture wars have been long on metaphor and relatively short on violence. That would be fair, even when we consider the violence directed against LGBTQ people and the four decades of arsons, bombings, and assassinations directed at abortion providers since *Roe*. But the protagonists of the story of the various elements of the Christian Right see themselves as playing a different role than that cast by visionaries of perpetual social progress. There are also clear tensions between those who can live with the social changes taking place in the country, those who can’t, and those who do not see the battle as one of single issues, but one of the survival of Christendom—and whether or not Christians are willing to fight for it.

Taken singly, the views of any of the Christian Right leaders described here would not necessarily signal a trend. But taken together, the commonalities of their views take the edge off of their many differences and reveal distinct, overlapping factions of a dynamic movement towards the ideas of nullification and secession—and the possibility of violence and revolution.

One does not have to believe that secession or revolution of any kind would be successful, or that widespread violence is likely anytime soon, to recognize that the political tensions preceding any major matters of nullification, and moves towards secession by any state, would likely beget violence of many kinds. Which is why ignoring Lane, Leithart, McCloskey, Whitney, and their like—or assuming that they are anything less than deadly serious—could be an error of historic significance. ☹

*Frederick Clarkson, a senior fellow at Political Research Associates, is co-founder of the group blog Talk To Action (www.talk2action.org) and the author of *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy* (Common Courage Press, 1997).*

BY REBECCA SULDAN

Reproductive Justice for All: An Interview with Lynn Paltrow

Discussions of reproductive rights too often focus exclusively on access to abortion and contraception. But across the country, prosecutors and antichoice activists are seeking to criminalize not only abortion but also, in certain cases, the decision to go to term. A study in the *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and the Law* by Lynn Paltrow and Jeanne Flavin documents hundreds of such cases. More recently, in late April, the Republican governor of Tennessee signed into law a bill that enables prosecutors to charge pregnant women with the crime of fetal assault. Women who use illegal opiates are particular targets of this law. Meanwhile, the Alabama Supreme Court has used cases involving the arrests of drug using women to write opinions that not only make it a crime to for women to use any controlled substance (including those prescribed by their doctors) but also to set out the biblical law that requires overturning *Roe v. Wade* and treating those who have abortions as murderers. National Advocates for Pregnant Women (NAPW) fights these attacks on reproductive justice through litigation, public-education initiatives, and support for grassroots organizing. It focuses on all pregnant women—whether they go to term or choose to have an abortion—and works at the intersection of women’s rights and drug policy, seeking to ensure that addiction is treated as a health issue rather than a crime. NAPW’s founder and executive director, Lynn Paltrow, emphasizes the organization’s holistic vision of reproductive justice, since people cannot access reproductive health care—or defend their rights—if they are not assured of racial, economic, and social justice. Paltrow is a graduate of New York University School of Law. She founded NAPW in 2001.



How did you begin working on behalf of pregnant and parenting women?

As an attorney, I started out defending the right to choose abortion, but I also took on cases where anti-abortion arguments were being used to hurt women who *didn't* want to end their pregnancies. Those cases included Angela Carder, a woman who at 25 weeks of pregnancy was forced to have caesarean surgery, even though the judge understood it could kill her. The judge believed he had an obligation to give the fetus a chance for life. The fetus was born alive but died within three hours, and Angela Carder died two days later, with caesarean surgery listed as a contributing factor. For me, it was a real education in the difference between pro-life in the singular (advocating only for the fetus) and pro-lives in the plural (recognizing the value of the pregnant woman’s life as well).

So what led you to found a new organization? What makes NAPW different?

While I was allowed to work on these cases, the organizations I worked for were interested in them for the implications they might have for abortion, and were not really interested in, or supportive of, addressing equally salient issues like drug policy and racism. Especially in the 1990s, the targets of arrests were almost always African-American women.

Working in leading prochoice organizations, I also observed a lack of connection to women of color leaders and that there was really no connection between litigation and organizing. At NAPW, we focus particularly on the women most vulnerable to state control and punishment—low-income women, women of color, and drug-using women—and we seek to defend the status of all women as full members of the constitutional community.

What’s the relationship between the “war on women” and the “war on drugs?”

If you prohibit alcohol, you turn law-abiding citizens who drink alcohol into criminals. When abortion was criminalized and there was “prohibition” of abortion, between 200,000 and 1.2 million women still had abortions. If *Roe* is overturned, it will transform law-abiding mothers (61 percent of women who have abortions are already mothers) into criminals. They will do what they have always done, which is to take responsibility and care of their reproductive lives. People have always taken drugs to address pain, to relax, to change their consciousness. Drug prohibition has not stopped people from using drugs, but it has provided the government with the power to apply those laws selectively, in particular to communities of color.

If your intent is to establish precedent so that you can ultimately overturn *Roe*, then you start with some of the “least popular” women, including drug-using pregnant women. For example, in South Carolina, they charge Cornelia Whitner with “child endangerment” for giving birth to a healthy baby who tested positive for cocaine. The court interprets the law to punish this woman who went to term and gave birth to a healthy baby to be sentenced to prison for eight years. That precedent is then used to punish women who become pregnant and use marijuana; then women who become pregnant and use alcohol; then women who become pregnant and attempt suicide and experience miscarriages or stillbirths. And then it is used to threaten pregnant women with arrest if they do not follow their doctor’s advice to have cesarean surgery.

This has been a way of expanding the war on drugs to pregnant women’s wombs. It has also been a way of setting prece-

dent for depriving pregnant women of their human rights and civil liberties, and for eventually overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

What are the implications of mass incarceration and the prison-industrial complex for reproductive justice activists?

It is impossible to understand what is going on with reproductive rights outside the context of mass incarceration.

Both right-to-life and prochoice people—from Father Pavone and Priests for Life to fundraising letters from NARAL—refer to what will happen if *Roe* is overturned. The pro-criminalization movement claims only doctors will be arrested, not pregnant women. And then our side says you have to defend *Roe*, because we're going to go back to the days of back-alley abortions. That's not untrue, but in 1973, we did not have a system of mass incarceration, and women pretty much weren't arrested for anything. Before 1973, the total number of people incarcerated in this country was 300,000. Now we have 2 million, and 200,000 of them are women. A million women are under probation and parole, and percentage-wise, they are the fastest growing group of people being incarcerated.

As Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, writes, you come out of prison relegated to a permanent underclass. You lose your right to vote, to access public housing, and to get any kind of a job. And if the government can empower prosecutors, police, and all kinds of state authorities to treat fertilized eggs, embryos, and fetuses as if they're separate, it empowers the state to establish a permanent underclass of women who become pregnant or could become pregnant. It is fundamentally impossible to add fertilized eggs, embryos, and fetuses to the Constitution without subtracting pregnant women.

PRA's research often focuses on the organized opposition. In addition to judges and state legislators, who are some of the key players using fetal personhood laws to criminalize pregnant women? And what are their strategies?

When they first started arresting pregnant, drug-using women, it did not seem like a coherent strategy. But these things have to connect because, ultimately, they have the same goal—to control certain populations. According to MSNBC's coverage of a protest by Abolish Human Abortion, outside of a Norman, Oklahoma High School, its co-founder, Toby Harmon, said about women who have abortions, "Their [fetus's] death should be treated like the death of other people. We want the laws of murder to apply to all people." And increasingly, women who have abortions are described as exactly the same as murderers who should be punished as such.

Personhood USA claims that extending separate constitutional status to eggs, embryos, and fetuses is just a continuation of the great U.S. tradition of expanding the community of constitutional persons. But what's different is that expanding the Constitution to include former African American slaves did not deprive former slaveholders or White people of their life, liberty, or bodily integrity. Adding women to the Constitution didn't take away from men their right to bodily integrity or medical decision-making or privacy. But there is no way to treat fertilized eggs, embryos, or fetuses as entirely separate without doing something we've never done explicitly in the United States,

which is to subtract people from the protection of the U.S. Constitution. In fact, Personhood USA is increasingly admitting that, as a result of their point of view, women should go to jail.

Defending drug-using pregnant women can often be an uphill battle in the face of junk science, stigma, and stereotypes. How does NAPW push back?

We believe that it is all of us or none of us. When any one group is oppressed, we are all potentially oppressed. We have to advocate for drug-using women because they are human beings, and they are people who love their children as much as other parents. At the same time, it is clear that if one group of people loses their rights, many of us are also at risk of losing our rights.

Part of dehumanizing people is believing that decisions about them do not need to be based on facts or science. While it's an uphill battle in a country fighting against education and scientific thinking, we work with scientists and often represent leading medical groups as friends of the court in amicus briefs. The NAPW staff has started a social media campaign and is promoting the #ScienceNotStigma hashtag so that every time media misrepresent information about pregnant women and neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), there is a response with links to scientific sources. And occasionally we've actually gotten retractions.

There seems to be growing social and legal acceptance of mainstream lesbian and gay identities, while we lose ground on abortion access and reproductive justice. Why? And what lessons can we learn from LGBTQ organizing efforts?

There's an oversimplification in the comparison of the two movements. The LGBTQ movement includes men—White men—and I think it makes it possible for someone like Supreme Court Justice [Anthony] Kennedy to identify with, and see the humanity of, gay people. Justice Kennedy can use terms like dignity and talk about all the respect that gay people are entitled to. But when you look at his decisions on abortion, the only form of life he acknowledges as deserving of dignity is unborn life.

What the gay rights movement does, in part, is to insist on the humanity of LGBTQ people and their right to love and respect. What the prochoice movement has done is defend abortion, not the humanity of the women who sometimes have abortions. Once we understand that that's the issue—that this is what the fight is about—then we can build the campaign that will ultimately win.

You recently gave the keynote address at the Take Root: Red State Perspectives on Reproductive Justice conference in Oklahoma. Why the focus on "Red" states?

In every one of those states, there are potential progressive and reproductive justice advocates. There is a pervasive attitude that says, "Why even waste energy there?" But in every one of those states there are fabulous activists who need to feel that they can stay where they are to bring about justice. They have to be able to stay connected to their families, and they don't need to hear, "Why don't you just move?" And with more than 400 activists attending the fourth annual conference this past February, we know that a vital, vibrant, and effective reproductive justice movement is being built. ☪

Dirty Money, p.2

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43. Adele M. Stan, "Anti-Choice Proponent of 'Justifiable Homicide' Vies for Spot on Democratic Council," *RH Reality Check*, Feb. 28, 2014, <http://rhrealitycheck.org/article/2014/02/28/anti-choice-proponent-justifiable-homicide-vies-spot-democratic-council>. The church has taken down this sermon (and others) since PRA ran the original story, but we have a copy.

44. Clarkson, *Eternal Hostility*.

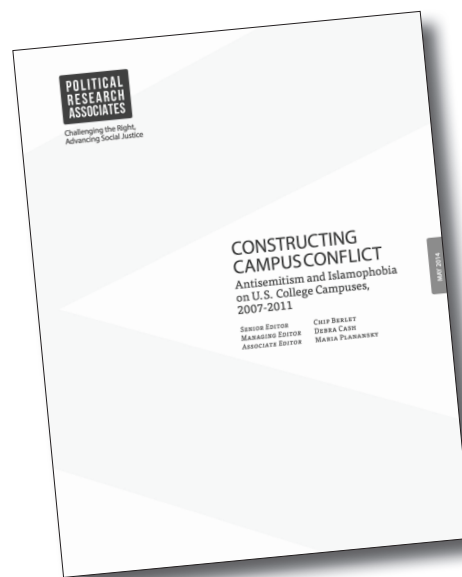
45. David Whitney, "The Price of Liberty," Sermon, May 5, 2013. Retrieved from <http://cornerstone.dn-salias.org:8000/Cornerstone/CEFC.htm>. The link to this sermon is no longer available, but PRA has the excerpt posted on YouTube. See "David Whitney says if it's not God's law, it's 'pretend law,'" YouTube, www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAV_Deg7Cfw.

46. David Whitney, "Rethinking Citizenship," *Western Journalism Center*, Feb. 21, 2014, www.westernjournalism.com/rethinking-citizenship.

47. David Whitney, "The American View Sermon Series - March 16, 2014," YouTube, Mar. 16, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z_HzA20Z6s.

Constructing Campus Conflict:

Antisemitism and Islamophobia on U.S. College Campuses, 2007-2011



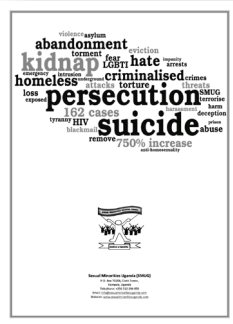
From student protests to faculty tenure debates, campuses have become flashpoints for public controversies regarding antisemitism and Islamophobia. PRA's recently released report, the culmination of years of research, seeks to explore issues and incidents in a way that will ameliorate aggression, intimidation, and assaults on campus—which are never appropriate or acceptable in the quest for knowledge.

To read the full report, visit our website:
www.politicalresearch.org/reports

From Torment to Tyranny

Enhanced Persecution in Uganda Following the Passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2014

sexual minorities uganda, may 2014



The Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA), first introduced in 2009 and passed by the Ugandan Parliament in December 2013, persecutes those involved in “aggravated homosexuality,” “the promotion of homosexuality,” and “aiding and abetting homosexuality.” Punishable offenses include consensual same-sex sexual acts, the renting of property to LGBTI people, and even the existence of HIV/AIDS organizations that treat LGBTI individuals.

In May, Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) released an alarming report that documents how the AHA has exacerbated what was already a dangerous climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in Uganda. The legislation has led to job losses, eviction from (and the burning of) homes, suicide, blackmail, death threats, family abandonment, physical attacks, torture, and other forms of harassment, violence, and intimidation. SMUG verified 162 incidents of persecution directed at LGBTI people in the first four months of 2014 alone. Of those, 30 percent involved violence (kidnap, torture, physical threats), and at least 41 percent involved intimidation tactics, most often on the part of the police.

The AHA’s passage has also had a devastating impact on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment efforts. In April 2014, police raided and subsequently shut down the Walter Reed Project, a non-profit AIDS foundation in Uganda, thus depriving Ugandans of access to anti-retroviral medications and condoms. Many non-profits and foundations have been raided and others have shut down, either because they were forced to do so or because they feared for the safety of those affiliated.

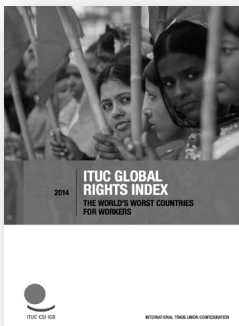
The report recommends fostering dialogue between African LGBTI activists and Parliament and cabinet ministers; increasing legal support and financial resources for those facing criminal prosecution to make bail payments and launch successful appeals; securing housing support and visas for those seeking asylum; and supporting partnerships with non-LGBTI entities. (PRA’s recently published guidebook, *American Culture Warriors in Africa*, exposes some of the U.S. actors responsible for promoting persecution overseas, and it aims to equip U.S. audiences to take responsible action.)

-Tiffany Xie

ITUC Global Rights Index

The World’s Worst Countries for Workers

international trade union confederation, may 2014



Workers around the world continue to face systematic violations of their rights, as the ITUC’s recently released Global Rights Index documents. The report ranks 139 countries on a scale of 1 to 5 and presents a bleak picture for far too many workers, who are often dismissed without notice from jobs, paid less than the living wage, and exposed to harmful and unsanitary conditions. (A 5 is the worst for countries with a functioning government, while a 5+ rating is given to countries where the rule of law has completely broken down.)

Cambodia is an example of a country with a rating of 5. Its labor law “fails to cover many civil servants, there are undue restrictions on the right to elect union representatives, and in 2013 the government responded with lethal force to demonstrators seeking a decent wage and working conditions.” Beyond Cambodia, governments in 35 countries have arrested or imprisoned workers over the past year in an attempt to intimidate them from demanding decent wages and safer working conditions. In at least nine countries, there have been reports of workers who have disappeared and/or been murdered.

Despite traditional discourses contrasting a “progressive” West with countries in the “underdeveloped” Global South, the report gave the United States a ranking of 4 for widespread violations of worker rights. As Sharan Burrow, ITUC’s general secretary, put it, “Countries such as Denmark and Uruguay led the way through their strong labour laws, but perhaps surprisingly, the likes of Greece, the United States, and Hong Kong lagged behind. A country’s level of development proved to be a poor indicator of whether it respected basic rights to bargain collectively, strike for decent conditions, or simply join a union at all.”

PRA’s own research and writing on low-wage worker organizing echoes the ITUC’s sobering assessment of the state of workers’ rights in the United States. (See “Dark Money, Dirty War” in this issue). Senate Republicans recently blocked a proposal to raise the federal minimum wage; the Chamber of Commerce and corporate giants like the National Restaurant Association have launched legal, PR, and legislative attacks in attempt to destroy worker centers; and the American Legislative Exchange Council continues to advocate for state-level pre-emption bills that ban paid sick days.

Through exposing abusive governments and companies, ITUC seeks to build momentum among the international trade union movement and general public toward improving worker conditions. As the report asserts, “The guarantee of the free exercise of workers’ rights is also a guarantee of a more equal and a more prosperous society.”

-Tiffany Xie

Breach of Privilege Spying on Lawyers in the United States

traci yoder • national lawyers guild, april 2014

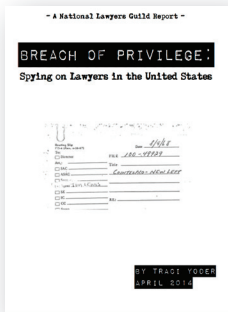
Edward Snowden's leak of National Security Administration files has attracted widespread media coverage, but the extensive use of surveillance by the state has been clear for decades. An April 2014 report by the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) outlines the surveillance the organization has been subjected to since its founding in the 1930s.

The FBI has reportedly tapped NLG phones on 40 occasions, broken into the offices of NLG chapters, and invaded the homes of members. It also repeatedly used informants to target the organization, strategically placing an informant on its board of directors. The FBI-led campaign caused it to lose members, income, and a number of regional chapters. Organizations like the ACLU, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), and the People's Law Office in Chicago suffered similar ordeals.

State surveillance has become particularly widespread—and tolerated, apparently—in the post-9/11, post-PATRIOT Act world. The implications for activist legal efforts are profound. For example, Lynne Stewart, a lawyer from New York State, was sentenced to 10 years in prison based on discussions with a client in prison—a discussion that would have been illegal to record before 2001.

The report calls attention to the "chilling effect" that state surveillance may have on progressive legal organizations and ends with a plea to end mass, state-sponsored surveillance. As former NLG President Barbara Dudley said, "The government wins if their surveillance keeps even one of us from speaking up or taking action."

-Owen Jennings

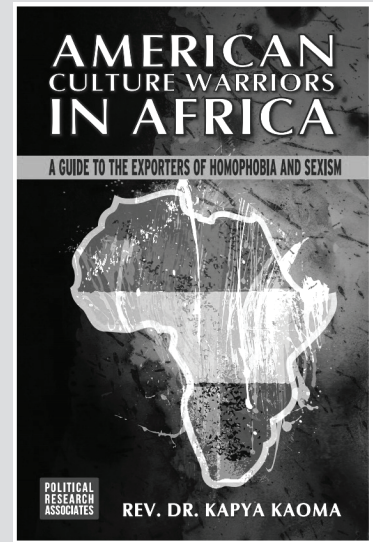


American Culture Warriors in Africa: A Guide to the Exporters of Homophobia and Sexism

PRA just released a new book! Written by PRA's senior religion and sexuality researcher, Rev. Dr. Kapyra Kaoma, *American Culture Warriors in Africa* is designed to educate U.S. audiences and motivate all people of conscience to take action that interrupts the persecution of women and sexual minorities overseas.

The book includes:

- Profiles of the American bad actors most responsible for the international assault on LGBTQ people and reproductive justice
- An overview of ongoing culture war campaigns in Africa
- Guidelines for concrete action we can take here in the U.S. to interrupt the continued exportation of American culture wars abroad—including a case study in effective local organizing



Here's what others are saying:

"Each of us has a role in stopping the persecution of sexual minorities across the globe. I highly recommend *American Culture Warriors in Africa* as an excellent starting point for all who are committed to ending oppression and sharing the true message of God's all-inclusive love."

-Archbishop Desmond Tutu

"As people learn more about Americans driving anti-LGBTQ animus and legislation in Uganda and beyond, they ask 'What can I do to stop this?' *American Culture Warriors in Africa* is the perfect companion piece to *God Loves Uganda*, and should be read by anyone who wants answers to that question."

-Roger Ross Williams, Director of *God Loves Uganda*

"No one has done more to illuminate American evangelical efforts to bring the culture wars to Africa than Rev. Dr. Kapyra Kaoma of Political Research Associates."

-Mariah Blake, senior reporter at *Mother Jones*

***American Culture Warriors in Africa* is available now!**

**For more details and information about ordering,
visit www.politicalresearch.org/africa.**

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.

This issue's cover artist, Rommy Torrico, is the graphics and new media director for the Collier County Neighborhood Stories Project (CCNSP), based in southwest Florida. Torrico is a queer, undocumented artist born in Chile. She and her sister co-founded CCNSP in 2011.

Collier County has been a particular focus of the 287(g) immigration-enforcement program, which gives local police the power to enforce immigration law. In 2012, about 50 Florida-based organizations signed a letter to politicians in the state, demanding an end to 287(g). They wrote that it created "fear and a marked mistrust of police among both documented and undocumented individuals in the Latino community."

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement scaled back the program in 2013—but at the same time escalated the "Secure Communities" program, in which the fingerprints of people arrested by police are checked against a federal database. Suspected immigration violators are then detained for investigation by federal au-



Torrico's poster for the 2013 National Day of Action March for Dignity and Justice. Image courtesy of artist.

thorities. The *Sun Sentinel* newspaper reported in February 2014 that "a program intended to remove illegal immigrants who are felons and terrorists has resulted in nearly 6,000 people with no known criminal records being deported from Florida over the past five years."

CCNSP, which is a grassroots effort run by volunteers, responds to the challenges and abuses faced by immigrants in southwest Florida. It attempts to "engage and empower immigrant community members to enter in dialogue about the police abuses they have experienced and witnessed in their daily lives." The project's volunteers believe that through storytelling, "people empower themselves and their peers to move forward in creating tangible change to local practices that result in abuses."

CCNSP also arranges and coordinates visits by volunteers to immigrant detention centers and helps undocumented youth in southwest Florida navigate the transition from high school to higher education and work.

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