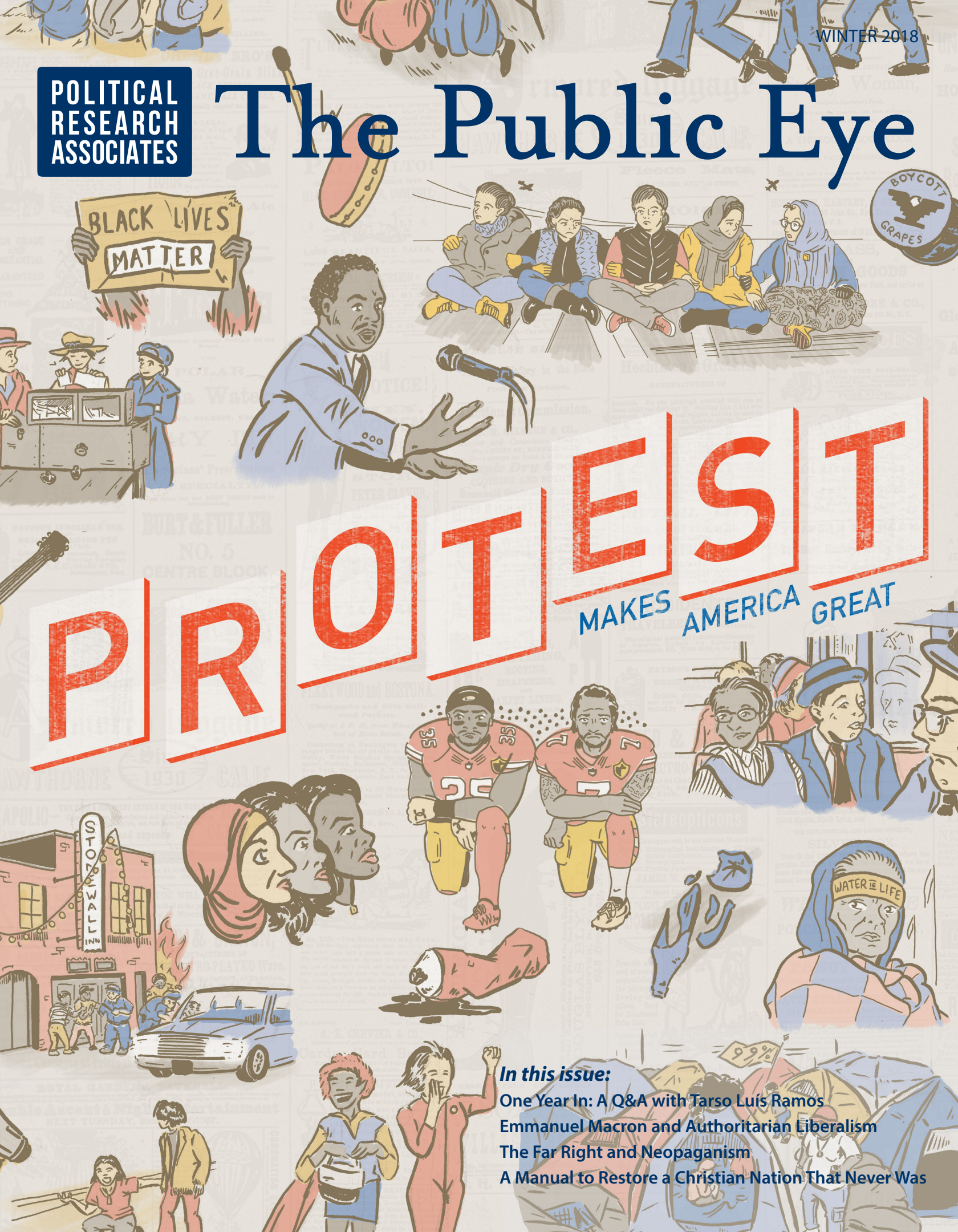


**POLITICAL
RESEARCH
ASSOCIATES**

The Public Eye



BLACK LIVES
MATTER

BOYCOTT
GRAPES

PROTEST
MAKES AMERICA GREAT

STONEWALL

WATER IS LIFE

In this issue:

- One Year In: A Q&A with Tarso Luis Ramos
- Emmanuel Macron and Authoritarian Liberalism
- The Far Right and Neopaganism
- A Manual to Restore a Christian Nation That Never Was

It's been a long year since Trump was elected, and the assaults on civil and human rights are almost too many to name. Some of what's happened has been "predictable in broad outlines, if not always the details," notes PRA Executive Director Tarso Luís Ramos in a discussion with *Public Eye*, "**One Year In**" (pg. 3). At the start of Trump's term, PRA warned that White supremacist and other bigoted groups would be emboldened, the Christian Right rewarded, and Trump's economic populist campaign promises abandoned to deliver culture war tokens in their stead. But there's "a gift in this moment," finds Luís Ramos, as masses of people "are newly aware of themselves as historical actors and are forming (or reforming) their sense of purpose in this extended moment of crisis." There's also a challenge: that anything-but-Trumpism doesn't convince progressives to settle for an old status quo that enables more right-wing victories down the road.

That threat is the subject of Ajay Singh Chaudhary's essay, "**In the Court of the Centrist King**" (pg. 6), about the rise of France's supposedly liberal savior, President Emmanuel Macron. Squared off against Far Right candidate Marine Le Pen, and in a European election season marked by a frightening array of xenophobic, nationalist and even neo-fascist candidates, Macron's victory was greeted with a nearly universal sigh of relief. And yet, in governance, Macron's regime has come to resemble an "authoritarian liberalism": rejecting civil rights and equal protection, committed to neoliberal economic reform, and skeptical about democracy itself. "While Donald Trump has been stymied in fulfilling many of his promises to suspend or abridge U.S. civil liberties," writes Chaudhary, "Macron, the supposed avatar of ideological opposition to Trumpism, is pulling it off with speed and efficiency in France."

In Shannon Weber's report, "**White Supremacy's Old Gods**" (pg. 11), the cross-Atlantic influence flows both ways, as some U.S. and European Far Right factions commonly find in neopagan beliefs a framework for anti-immigrant sentiment and violent White nationalism. While the reach of neopaganism in the U.S. is quite limited, it has an outsized influence in White supremacist circles. In part, that's because it offers White supremacists a belief system grounded in hypermasculinity, a sentimental connection to a mythic European past, and a justification for considering North America a White homeland. White supremacist neopaganism also strongly corresponds with bias-related violence, from attacks on Muslim schoolgirls in Oregon to vigilante Odinist squads in Finland to "black sun" flags at Alt Right rallies.

The more traditional version of the Religious Right—the Christian Right—has continued to work steadily over the last year to translate Republican dominance of all branches of government into victories for their agenda, chipping away at the secular state in dozens of ways at once. The effects of their work are clear; how they got to this position of influence, not so much. But in carefully reviewing an overlooked Family Research Council manual, Frederick Clarkson finds a grassroots playbook that's serving as a blueprint for today's Christian Right. In "**A Manual to Restore a Christian Nation That Never Was**" (pg. 17), Clarkson explores the underreported world of local churches' Culture Impact Teams—the cellular building blocks of a national Christian Right action network—and the dubious historical claims they use to justify a Christianity-first vision of religious freedom.

In between issues, PRA will continue its coverage and analysis of the Right, with new blog posts, online-only features, and reports every week, so make sure to follow us at politicalresearch.org.

Kathryn Joyce



THE PUBLIC EYE
QUARTERLY

PUBLISHER
Tarso Luís Ramos

EDITOR
Kathryn Joyce

COVER ART
Karl Orozco

LAYOUT
Gabriel Joffe

PRINTING
Red Sun Press

EDITORIAL BOARD
Frederick Clarkson • Alex DiBranco
Gabriel Joffe • Kapya Kaoma
Greeley O'Connor • L. Cole Parke
Tarso Luís Ramos • Zeina Zaatari

The Public Eye is published by
Political Research Associates

Tarso Luís Ramos
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sarah Burzillo
FINANCE MANAGER

Frederick Clarkson
SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST

Cloe Cooper
RESEARCH ANALYST

Gabriel Joffe
PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Kapya Kaoma
SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST

Greeley O'Connor
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

L. Cole Parke
RESEARCH ANALYST

Shayna Parker
OPERATIONS COORDINATOR

Zeina Zaatari
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

FELLOWS

Tope Fadiran • Spencer Sunshine • Mariya Straus

INTERNS

Konstantin Gorbunov • Elizabeth Rideout
Julia Taliesin

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dania Rajendra, *Chair*
Paulina Helm-Hernandez • Lynette Jackson
Hamid Khan • Jenny Levison • Scot Nakagawa
Moham Sikka • Zeke Spier
Carla Wallace • Susan Wefald

FOUNDER

Jean V. Hardisty, Ph.D.

1310 Broadway, Suite 201
Somerville, MA 02144-1837
Tel: 617.666.5300
contact@politicalresearch.org
© Political Research Associates, 2018
All rights reserved. ISSN 0275-9322
ISSUE 93

www.politicalresearch.org

BY KATHRYN JOYCE

One Year In

A Q&A with Tarso Luís Ramos

On the anniversary of Donald Trump's inauguration, PRA Executive Director Tarso Luís Ramos talks about some of what's changed in the past year, and what progressives should be alert to going forward.

PE: What should we make of this anniversary?

As relentless a year as it's been, the Trump camp accomplished less of its agenda than they might have. They've not been able to fully convert on GOP control of both chambers of Congress and it took them a full year to win a major—if devastating—legislative victory in the form of the tax heist. The widespread and fierce resistance to the Trump agenda from the Women's March onward compelled congressional Democrats to take a harder line of resistance than they could have, and deep divisions on the Right scuttled repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act and other administration initiatives. Trump has had to rely disproportionately on executive power, and by all accounts his is not a tight ship. This is all to say that things could be—and may yet become—much worse.

Of course, tremendous damage can and has been done through executive action and the full implications of changes at the various federal departments have not been fully felt. Yet looking back on what PRA anticipated from a Trump presidency, a lot of things that have come to pass were predictable in their broad outlines, if not always in the details.



Women's March on Washington, January 21st, 2017. Photo: Molly Adams / Flickr.

PRA warned that White nationalists would make a show of force; that the Christian Right would be rewarded with things like judicial appointments and pushback against LGBTQ communities. It was clear that Trump was going to engage in eliminationist policies, directed at Muslims, refugees, and immigrants, and expanded targeting of Black communities.

We also warned that Trump would not make good on his promises of economic populism and argued that it would be the job of progressives to reveal Trump's betrayals as quickly as possible. That nobody, including Trump voters, would deserve what was coming. Even we, who may have a reputation for gloomy forecasts, thought Trump would lead with the "carrot" of infrastructure (if in

a privatizing, crony capitalist way) before the "sticks" of Muslim and trans military service bans and so on.

Given the hollowness of his economic populism, it seemed inevitable that the regime would have to deliver tangible non-economic benefits to Trump's electoral base. And I think we've seen that: No student loan relief, but the revocation of guidelines for redress around sexual assault on campus, as well as challenges to higher ed access for Black and Brown students. No policies to revive manufacturing, but a crackdown on "Black identity extremism." No reining in of Wall Street excesses—people forget that was part of his stump speech, before the Goldman Sachs appointees—but Muslim bans and a steady drip

of antisemitism.

Yet after the election came a chorus of liberal critics calling on progressives to reject identity politics—by which they meant appeals to gender or racial justice—in favor of the supposed universalism of economic populism. We at PRA heard this as a call to a different sort of identity politics: White identity politics. The Trump campaign combined White racial grievance with toxic masculinity and economic populism. It linked, especially, race and the economy, blaming people of color and immigrants for the declining economic fortunes of White people. Trump campaigned on the lie that bigotry can bring prosperity. The challenge for progressives is not to shut up about race, gender, and sexuality, but to do a better job of addressing them

in relation to widespread economic inequality.

Is any of this similar to dynamics under the last Bush administration?

There are parallels, such as tax cuts for the rich, the crackdown on immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries, the “clash of civilizations” framework, and endorsement of torture in pursuit of national security goals. We’ll see wheth-

We have been in an extended social and economic crisis in the U.S., and now that emergency is being felt by a much broader segment of society.



Police presence during the presidential inauguration, January 20, 2017. Photo: Johnny Silvercloud / Flickr.

er Trump also leads the country into major military engagements.

But quite a bit is different from the George W. Bush period, including the more open-throated expression of an exclusionary, White definition of American identity. Many have noted that we’ve left behind the dog whistles for straight-forward racial and ethnic appeals. Also, where Bush was an heir to the Republican establishment, Trump ran a hostile takeover of the GOP from the outside. And while they each won support from the Christian Right, with Pence the dominionists appear to have even more influence in Trump’s government. Of course there’s also Trump himself—a demagogue and racist campaigner from a very different mold.

Another difference is the vast scale of

political real estate captured by the GOP in 2016—the executive branch, both chambers of Congress, and the lion’s share of the states. With that has come an opportunity to do deep, generational damage to the economy, as well as to any broadly felt experience of American democracy—something long denied to African Americans, Indigenous communities, and others, and that may now be

denied to an expanding number. Trump’s attacks on the institutional pillars of democracy—the judiciary, the vote, independent media—signal a potential descent into oligarchy or authoritarianism.

So there are continuities from the Bush era, as well as real ruptures that could make what’s coming unrecognizable to large swaths of the population.

Given the increase in violence grounded in bigotry, how should we think about “hate crimes” and “hate groups”?

There’s been a real surge in reported bias crimes—from desecration of Jewish cemeteries to physical assaults against African Americans, Latinx immigrants, and people perceived to be Muslim. Both the Trump camp and organized bigoted groups are successfully stoking hatreds based on race, religion, gender, sexuality, and so on. Their relentless demonization of targeted communities inevitably encourages individuals to act on their bigotries. Yet defining the problem in terms of “hate” and “hate groups” can obscure both the root issues and the appropriate responses.

Organized bigots, like the White na-

tionalist groups who mobilized to murderous effect in Charlottesville last August, have social and political goals beyond any simple notion of hatred. Richard Spencer and his ilk seek a racially cleansed White authoritarian state. Naturally, they are thrilled to see their agenda of ethnic cleansing reflected in Trump’s push for a southern border wall, Muslim ban and registry, crackdown on Black dissent, and an aggressive immigrant detention and deportation program. For these White nationalists, mobilizing racial resentment—and, yes, fostering hatred of other groups—is critical to movement building. But it’s not an end unto itself any more than “hate” sums up the agenda of the German Nazi Party.

If we misunderstand the problem as being limited to a small—if growing—number of violent militants, we’ll tend to use the wrong yardstick to measure White nationalists’ influence. Of concern is not only the number of militants they can mobilize, but how broadly influential their ideas have become. The president of the United States champions their eliminationist policies and provided political cover for overt White nationalists even after Charlottesville. Yet the “hate frame,” as PRA contributor Kay Whitlock calls it, relies mostly on legal and law enforcement responses to so-called extremists and avoids dealing with structural racism and other systems of domination.

As the Black Lives Matter and trans justice movements regularly remind us, police agencies are among the principal sources of bigoted violence. We should be wary of positioning law enforcement as the solution, particularly in a moment of “blue lives matter” backlash and a national security doctrine of counter-terrorism.

Is Trump’s engagement with White nationalists unprecedented in the presidency?

Yes and no. People don’t know or forget that the Reagan administration cultivated European fascist émigrés who came to the U.S. after World War II—a story PRA published decades ago. Pat Buchanan, a White supremacist, served in more than one administration. So there’s some precedent on the staffing. With Trump, it’s not just Bannon, Gorka, and Stephen

Miller; the administration has pulled in personnel from national anti-immigrant groups founded by White nationalist John Tanton to serve at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Trump's amplification of neonazi Twitter and his defense of the Charlottesville Unite the Right rally are extraordinary developments indeed. The White nationalists and fascists who marched in Charlottesville are part of a revolutionary movement seeking to overthrow the current political order. Even racist politicians who defend the current system of White dominance generally reject insurrectionists as treasonous. Trump has broken with that tradition.

How much of what we're seeing now are things that many people weren't paying attention to before?

Trump's campaign and election has been a wake-up call for many people. In a way Trump represents the fruition of the economic and social initiatives of the Hard Right in the 1960s and '70s that led to the election of Reagan and have continued ever since.

One way to think about this moment is to acknowledge that we have been in an extended social and economic crisis in the U.S., and now that emergency is being felt by a much broader segment of society. Suddenly, there is open and widespread discussion in mainstream media about whether the president is a proto-fascist and whether the U.S. is drifting toward autocracy. These are valid questions. Yet conditions were already quasi-authoritarian if you lived in a low-income African American community—in terms of things like policing, denial of due process, regulation of the body and family, deprivation of social services, and denial of education and economic opportunities. To get an idea of what a more authoritarian U.S. could look like, we should look not only at other nations' histories, but also more deeply into the American experience.

So there's both deep continuity and rupture in this moment. We believe there's a danger of descent into something more authoritarian but it's in no way inevitable. Some find the possibility novel and shocking while others view it

as an extension of current conditions. Holding those different perspectives simultaneously can be a challenge but is necessary to the project of building a mass movement—not only for resistance, but for transformative change.

What are your concerns about the normalization of Trumpism?

We can't allow what's happening under this regime to become normalized, but neither can we behave as if resistance to oppressive governance began in November 2016.

There's a gift in this moment: Tens of thousands of people are newly aware of themselves as historical actors and are forming (or reforming) their sense of purpose in this extended moment of crisis. There is tremendous opportunity for deep transformation there. There's also tension with movements that have long been in the struggle for transformational change. We are at an inflection point in the social, cultural, and political life of this country, in which simply having a well-formed opinion is insufficient.

Non-normalization involves grounding ourselves in shared values. In general, we have to practice deep solidarity: if the regime comes for any of us, they will have to come through all of us.

Is this a fight we can win?

People define the fight differently. For some, success might be getting back to what existed under Obama or Clinton. For others, including PRA, the levels of economic and social inequality; the violent, unprecedented deportation program; the military adventurism and reliance on drone warfare; the decimation of economic opportunities for the working and middle classes; the ongoing attacks on reproductive justice and LGBTQ rights; the system of mass incarceration—these were all unacceptable conditions even before Trump. For us, Trump represents an escalation of the local and global crisis of liberal democracies. The answer cannot be, as in France, defeating the Far Right at the ballot box with a supposed liberal whose austerity programs will worsen economic inequality and possibly strengthen opportunities for the Right down the road.

There should be no going backwards to unjust economic and social arrangements, however worse present circumstances have become. Russian meddling aside, the crisis of our political and economic systems facilitated Trump's rise to power. His explanation of the causes and remedies for our crises were and remain horrifyingly wrong, but he got a hearing in part because he connected his bigotry to an insistence that the economy is fundamentally broken for everyday people. Any victory over Trump that's worth fighting for should advance a more fundamental restructuring of our social, political, and economic lives.

Do I think it's possible? Yes, but there are many challenges, and a desperation for *anything but Trumpism* could lead to setting our sights too low. It took decades for the Right to consolidate this much power, and it will take more than one or two political cycles to produce transformational alternatives. We need to shore up institutional pillars of democracy, like the judiciary, that, however inadequate, are critical bulwarks against the worst excesses of the Right. At the same time, it's a moment to be bold about the need for fundamental changes, because the brokenness of our social and economic systems require more than a little tinkering. ☞

Kathryn Joyce is the editor of The Public Eye. She is also the author of The Child Catchers: Rescue, Trafficking and the New Gospel of Adoption and Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement. Her work has appeared in The New York Times, Highline, Pacific Standard, Mother Jones, and many other publications.

Tarso Luís Ramos is the Executive Director of Political Research Associates. He has been researching the U.S. Right for over two decades, contributing numerous articles and reports on Christian Right, anti-immigrant, anti-labor, and anti-environmental movements and campaigns. Ramos previously served as founding director of Western States Center's racial justice program.

In the Court of the Centrist King

Emmanuel Macron and Authoritarian Liberalism

On July 3, 2017, France experienced an unusual spectacle. With all the regal pomp that the French state and the Palace of Versailles can accord, newly elected President Emmanuel Macron addressed both houses of parliament, only the fourth such address since 1873.

Macron used his speech to lay out a program of severe transformations: breaking labor and enacting economic “reforms”; decreasing the number of parliamentarians; minimizing legislation and legislative oversight; and making permanent aspects of the constitutional “state of emergency” France has been under since the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. In other words, far from the image of a liberal democratic savior painted by the Anglo-American press, Macron outlined a program to maintain and consolidate minority-government rule. In terms that hovered between self-parody and pure mysticism, Macron called this an “efficient,” new “contractual republic.” From the dais of the Sun King, Macron proclaimed that we are all human capital now.

Macron’s program is anti-democratic in everything from its rejection of civil rights and equal protection to perfected neoliberal economic “reforms.”¹ It even takes aim at the democratic institutions of the state itself. In structure and even aesthetic, “Macronism” presents a post-modern pastiche of hyper-modern technocracy and *ancien regime* all at once. Understanding why this program is so attractive to the political center, and to liberals more broadly, is vital in order to understand the volatile political climate on both sides of the Atlantic. As with the supposedly “boring” political situation in Germany, where the neo-fascist *Alternative für Deutschland* party will now be the

first Far Right party to enter its parliament since the end of WWII, Macron also represents a rightward trend: a brand of authoritarian liberalism that emboldens the Right, facilitating its political maneuvering, and allowing even small radical right-wing movements outsized influence over national policy.

And yet, Macron’s election was met with near universal acclaim among nominally left-of-center politicians and media commentators across Europe and North America. “About as exciting and theatrical as electoral politics gets,” exclaimed *The New York Times*.² Macron’s movement was held up as an exciting prospect, a new “revolution” from the center, a response to “Trumpism” the world over. This despite the fact that, just as in the Netherlands and Austria, the French Far Right, while not winning the election, still received higher support in the national contest than ever before.

Political scientists Yascha Mounk and Roberto Foa have recently argued, citing public opinion polling data, that there are decreasing levels of support for liberal institutions and liberal democracy itself.³ Such commentators do focus on the existential threat the Far Right poses. But their arguments go further: if push comes to shove, better the “traditional” Right than the emergent Left. Mounk and likeminded thinkers imply that there is little difference between, say, enthusiastic English Labour Party supporters chanting for Jeremy Corbyn and torchlight parades in Charlottesville.⁴ They see the failure to uphold the “vital center” as the disease and men like Emmanuel Macron are the cure.

But if Macron is the bulwark against a looming authoritarian nightmare, why does his program look like an assault on the fundamental foundations of democ-

racy in France? If Macron is the defender of a broadly *liberal* dream, why do his policies look less like support for a multicultural, egalitarian liberal republic and instead, as Nancy MacLean recently wrote of midcentury American libertarians, more like “protecting capitalism from democracy”?⁵

A “NEW” KIND OF POLITICIAN

Macron cuts a strange figure on the French stage, but perhaps one more familiar to an American audience. A banker by trade, he uses his finance background as a stark contrast to the “inefficient” and hopelessly “weak” state. He embodies the increasing cross-spectrum enthusiasm in France for militarism, both in policy and aesthetic. In a weird echo of George W. Bush arriving in a fighter jet to his famously ill-conceived “Mission Accomplished” press conference, mere weeks into his presidency, Macron turned an ordinary naval inspection into a bizarre photo-op. In specially tailored, Macron-branded pseudo-military gear, he rappelled onto a nuclear submarine from a helicopter then had himself photographed in a commanding officer’s pose on the vessel’s bridge.⁶

In another strange episode, he engaged in a “handshake battle” with President Donald Trump in May 2017. “My handshake with him was not innocent...but a moment of truth,” he’d later explain. “We must show that we will not make small concessions, even symbolic ones.”⁷ Macron caused another scene a couple months later at a G20 photo-op where he awkwardly hugged, kissed, and elbowed his way to the front, right next to Trump.⁸ There are dozens of critiques of Trump’s hypermasculine behaviors during the 2016 presidential election, and rightly so. Yet Macron’s similar behavior makes

hardly a blip, and when it does, is often noted *approvingly* by center-left commentators.⁹

In addition to mirroring Trump's performance-art version of politics, Macron also rivals his U.S. counterpart in sheer narcissism and "will to power," comparing his rule to that of Jupiter, King of the Gods; and openly regretting the fall of France's monarchy in the French Revolution and, sounding quite a bit more like the conservative Edmund Burke or reactionary Joseph de Maistre than liberal John Rawls, openly lamenting democracy's inability "to fill this void."¹⁰

An apples-to-apples comparison of France and the U.S. is difficult. Even if Macron's wish list for curtailing French labor laws and welfare provisions comes to pass, what remained would still be enviable compared to the U.S. In basic social provisions—from welfare to health-care, public housing to paid leave—the United States lacks anything more than the most rudimentary forms of these vital social guarantees. But the importance of understanding Macron lies in the appeal of his political tendency—what Macron represents to so many delighted commentators—and the political formation he is trying to create: an anti-democratic, "authoritarian liberalism" as a possible future for "liberalism" itself.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

France's election *did* do something extraordinary: as the French versions of Republicans and Democrats both imploded, a "new," "neither Right nor Left" center-of-the-center candidate, Macron, rode middling support and the public loathing of Marine Le Pen's *Front National* into a situation of extraordinary power.¹¹ In addition to his sweeping powers as president, Macron's new *La République en Marche!* party—an amalgamation of the Right, the neoliberal wing of the disintegrating Socialist Party, and center-right politicians—effectively commands single party rule in the French parliament. Despite overwhelming voter disaffection (voter abstention in the second round of the parliamentary elections was close to an astonishing 65 percent, the highest in modern French history), Macron has taken support from a mere 11 percent of

the French electorate and transformed it into complete political domination.¹²

The *Republique en Marche!* program was hilariously opaque during the elections—draping itself in cant and Camus, technocratic derision and Deleuze.¹³ Since then, though, it has become crystal clear.¹⁴ Macron will proceed—with the incredible speed afforded by the French constitution, which grants the president unusually strong powers—toward a radical transformation of the French state and society. This is most apparent in three key areas: first, destroying French labor and instituting related economic "reforms"; second, making the current constitutional "state of emergency" *de facto* permanent; and third, enacting anti-democratic political reform.

If Macron is the bulwark against a looming authoritarian nightmare, why does his program look like an assault on the foundations of democracy?

French cultural issues and even its increasingly bellicose foreign policy seem secondary to the goal of outright consolidation of political power around Macron's weak, unpopular government, of maintaining minoritarian rule, and expanding state power of the police, intelligence, and military. This political consolidation is the means to enacting a series of "free" market reforms—a kind of massive neoliberal catch-up plan. And if it sounds familiar to American readers, it should. In a Venn diagram of the Republican Party and Trump's political objectives, Macron represents the vast area of agreement.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

France had been in a technical "state of emergency" since the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. The emergency suspended constitutional protections for citizens and residents and granted sweeping powers to executive bodies, from the president to the police. Then-President Hollande's declaration was the first of its kind in six decades, since the presidency was granted new powers during France's colonial war against Algerian independence in 1955.¹⁵ Despite an elec-

tion framed explicitly around the threat of fascism, it remains remarkably underreported that for two years France has already technically been in a period of constitutional abeyance: one of the textbook warning signs for more legal understandings of fascism and authoritarianism.

Under the state of emergency, thousands of warrantless raids have been conducted and hundreds of people placed under house arrest—overwhelmingly French citizens and residents of Muslim background and racial minorities. Police were given nearly limitless power of surveillance, search, and seizure. After these searches, only twenty actual charges were ever filed. And although people remain under house arrest to this day, no emergency house arrest has led

to any charges. Human rights NGOs like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have warned that these developments indicate that the rule of law in France is deteriorating. The emergency measures have been used not only for racial profiling but also to combat political dissent, such as at the COP21 treaty negotiations, in which protests were banned and 24 ecological activists *preventatively* detained to ensure the smooth negotiation of the market-friendly climate change treaty. One need not imagine how these powers could be used to suppress French unrest over changing labor laws or other political and economic reforms; since 2015, emergency powers have been explicitly invoked 155 times to prevent public demonstrations. Beyond the Muslim dragnet, 639 known political activists have been individually barred from public participation in assemblies and 574 of those cases targeted labor activists.¹⁶

In early July 2017, the state of emergency was extended until November and on October 3, the first institutionalization measures were passed. Although Macron campaigned on lifting the state of emergency, it is clear he is doing so in

name only. His proposals—which have already sailed through the French Senate—codify the power of the executive to ban public gatherings, close places of worship, search individuals, and confine people to house arrest, all without judicial oversight. A speedy judicial

A more precarious society has less time and fewer resources for democratic participation.

procedure—akin to the American FISA court—allows police to additionally raid any space, but the executive has full and absolute control over all information the court sees.¹⁷ A new national counterterrorism agency has been promised, intelligence-gathering powers enhanced, and a 10,000-officer expansion of police forces proposed.¹⁸ This codification—and in some cases intensification—of emergency rule provides a classic case of nearly every political philosophy argument against the very idea of states of emergency.¹⁹ But while Donald Trump has been stymied in fulfilling many of his promises to suspend or abridge U.S. civil liberties, Macron, the supposed avatar of ideological opposition to Trumpism, is pulling it off with speed and efficiency in France.

CRUSHING LABOR

The French Center-Left and Right have long dreamed of breaking the near legendary power of French labor unions. France has followed the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Coordination (OECD) trend in decreased participation in organized labor—moving from a mid-1970s high of around 30 percent of the workforce to a current level of approximately 11 percent, heavily dominated by public sector unions. This is almost a mirror of labor union participation in the United States (while as of 2014, Scandinavian countries have above or even well above 50 percent, the UK about 25 percent, and the OECD a nearly 17 percent average).²⁰ However, what has distinguished French labor even amid this relatively low level of union participation is its militancy. Although the French propensity to strike may be the butt of many jokes, its vital labor protections and ad-

mirable working conditions (not to mention its standard 35-hour workweek) were largely secured and maintained through fierce union struggle.

France's economic situation today is dire. Unemployment has held steadily at around 10 percent for many years. One in four French youth are unemployed, with a similar level of unemployment found among immigrants. Nearly half of all unemployed citizens are long-term unemployed.²¹ Because of its extensive social welfare system, France has not yet faced the extraordinary decline in quality-of-life indicators that are seen in the U.S.²² But the overall structure of the European Union will likely soon make many of these social provisions increasingly difficult to maintain. For example, France has been in violation of European GDP-to-debt ratio rules since 2009. While France's political and economic position as the key "second" power in Europe (after Germany) has given it considerable room to maneuver, recent EU and European Community (EC) reactions—particularly to the Greek debt crisis and Brexit—have demonstrated the EU's ongoing commitment to a strictly neoliberal austerity regime. It's difficult to foresee a future in which French social provisions are not sharply curtailed without a revolutionary transformation of the EU and EC.

Macron's initial round of labor laws, put into swift effect by presidential decree, weaken national collective bargaining, end sector-wide union representation, allow for swift and easy firing of employees, particularly employees at smaller French firms (over 50 percent of the workforce), and broadly circumvent unions and encourage "modern," "flexible" employment.²³

Macron's labor and economic reforms will have the twin effect of bringing France closer to overall EU compliance and, to some extent, alleviating aspects of its dire economic portrait. Liberalizing the job market should bring unemployment down, but almost certainly through an explosion of American-style precari-

ous employment for not only youth and the long-term unemployed reentering the workforce, but also for a significant portion of the currently stable labor sector as well. Macron is aware of this, acknowledging in 2014 that his proposed labor reforms mean "young people will experience ten to twenty changes in their careers, they will work longer, their wages will not increase, not all the time."²⁴ Already, the initial reforms Macron helped pass under the government of former President François Hollande have produced a pattern where 86.4 percent of new hiring is for temporary employment.²⁵ This increase in precarious employment—and in social precarity overall—is not simply an economic hardship for French workers. It has an additional, fundamental political impact: a more precarious society quite literally has less time and fewer resources for democratic participation.

Macron seems likely to secure his policy victories with the same sorts of measures that have been used in the U.S.—those pioneered by American Republicans and emulated by the DLC-style Democrats of the 1990s and their contemporary successors. His tax and welfare reduction policies—couched in retro-chic Reaganite language, fretting about "the weakest" becoming "wards of the state"—are another near pitch-perfect imitation of Republican policies, promising to starve the state into "proper" form.²⁶ If successful, a more precarious society is precisely what he will get.

ENDING CHECKS AND BALANCES

Perhaps the most audacious of Macron's plans is his proposal to overhaul the French parliament altogether, decreasing its number of deputies, oversight, and even the amount of legislation it should consider. This parliamentary reform remains the vaguest part of Macron's program, but he has promised to reduce the size of both houses by a third, to introduce measures to speed legislation through more quickly, and even to move some powers either to the executive or to subcommittees which could bypass parliament altogether. In an echo of U.S. Republicans' demands to "deregulate," he used his simulacrum State of the

Union address to call on France to “try to put an end to the proliferation of legislation.”

Macron’s popularity—ginned up by his image as the foil to Marine Le Pen—is already plummeting. He knows very well that his party is new and untried and that, as many neoliberals before him have noted,²⁷ his program will never find broad support beyond the technocratic and professional elite. While he has not quite reached Trumpian levels of popular disdain, Macron’s support stands at the lowest all-time for a new French president: 42 percent as of late October 2017. And so it seems he sees labor repression, emergency powers made permanent, and a “kinder, gentler” semi-authoritarian state as the key legs of Macronism into the future.

THE DEMOCRATIC VOID

The Austrian economist and key neoliberal theorist Friedrich Hayek was ever fearful of the encroachment of democratic majorities on “individual liberty”—a concept he carefully distinguished from “political liberty” (which he defined as “the participation of men in the choice of their government, in the process of legislation, and in the control of administration”²⁸). What Hayek and modern-day neoliberals value above political liberty is a vision of human beings as completely free within the market and further, since the 1970s, as themselves “human capital”: existing as objects for “investment” to generate profit and not the full, rights-bearing citizens envisioned by classical liberalism.²⁹ The threat that democracy poses for private property is one of the key foundations of neoliberalism.

Democracy, for Hayek et al., is not about majority rule, self-governance, and certainly not achieving egalitarian outcomes (or even equal opportunity). Democracy in this sense is purely functional. It allows for a smooth transition of power and provides the necessary checks on majoritarian power and other citizens for the flourishing of property, as cultivated by entrepreneurs. As Hayek once said in an interview:

Democracy has a task which I call “hygienic,” for it assures that political processes are conducted in a sanitary fash-

ion. It is not an end in itself. It is a rule of procedure whose aim is to promote freedom. But in no way can it be seen as the same rank as freedom. Freedom requires democracy, but I would prefer temporarily to sacrifice, I repeat temporarily, democracy, before having to do without freedom, even if temporarily.³⁰

One must keep in mind that “freedom” for Hayek and for his later followers means market freedom above all.

While the history of liberal thought includes many cautions about simple majoritarian rule—sometimes warranted, as for the protection of minority racial, religious, sexual, and ethnic groups from potential bigotry—Hayek’s chief concern is with *preventing any* rule of the majority to demand a change in the overarching social contract. In this conception, humans are bound forever to the only true vision of freedom—market freedom—and the state’s role is in enforcing that “freedom.” As with small government arguments—from Hayek to “state’s rights”—the rhetoric is deceptive. The state, under his vision, won’t necessarily shrink. It may, in a technical sense, become not clearly sovereign, but its coercive apparatus—through policing, surveillance, and programs to promote business—may, in fact, expand.

Macronism seeks to fill what he calls the “emotional abyss” of democracy, dug apparently by the French Revolution, with a neofeudal monarchial spirit of the “free market.” Instead of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, Macron seeks to instill a business-friendly alternative: the “efficiency, representativity and responsibility” of his “contractual republic,” all under his careful, well-educated, “Jupiterian” gaze.³¹ In the heart of technocracy, one finds a postmodern *ancien regime*.

What Macron cannot change is the fundamental nature of the neoliberal project. Capitalism extended its lifespan with deregulated finance, the return of boom and bust cycles, and the squeezing of any remaining value out of a nearly fully commodified society—but it can no longer artificially prop up growth rates nor solve the long-term productivity crisis in the economy. Having once intensified the life of post-war capitalism past

the crises of the 1970s, neoliberalism has become increasingly tenuous since its heyday in the 1990s, when there truly “was no alternative” between the feel-good brands of Blair and Clinton or the more hardnosed, “law and order” varieties of Major and Bush. Since the 2008 financial crisis—in which the state was forced to reveal its vast role in both maintaining the economic status quo and explicitly failing to intervene for the vast majority of individuals and communities—the neoliberal political project has held together largely through continued market and political consolidation, and subsequently, greater direct coercion and repression.

What lies at the center of Macronism is the lesson the U.S. Right learned nearly 50 years ago and that Hayek and his followers have always known: this political program, fully exposed, could never gain popular support. In the U.S., Republicans have responded to this reality by working, since the 1960s, to decrease the size of the electorate, disenfranchise racial minorities, and make voting as difficult (and pointless) as possible for poor and working-class Americans.³² Democrats eyeing Macron as a model for sustained commitment to the neoliberal program must know full well that they would be embracing Republicans’ outlook on democratic participation and rights.

For weary spectators across the Atlantic, Macron *looks* like a welcome relief from rising right-wing monsters and sheer gross incompetence. But while liberal commentators like Mounk see Macron as shoring up support for liberal democracy,³³ they fail to understand that Macronism cedes the entire “democracy” side of the equation—sometimes even the very idea of popular government—to the Far Right. Simultaneously, the Left is denigrated as expressing populist anti-liberal attitudes that might undermine the one right—property—that is the *raison d’être* for the regime. For Mounk, for example, popular European Left parties like Spain’s Podemos or Greece’s SYRIZA offer “simplistic” solutions and “inflammatory rhetoric.”³⁴ They have the dangerous temerity to question the realities of “meritocracy.” They seek to “overthrow” the system unlike, well, Em-

manuel Macron.

Macron demonstrates what it will take for the “center to hold”: nothing short of one-party, technocratic “liberal” authoritarianism, of the kind many OECD countries have been sliding towards for 40 years.³⁵ But as a political program to extend capitalism through crisis conditions, sluggish growth, and growing instability, such a project must become increasingly coercive, short-lived, or both. It would seem that the only opposition it can tolerate—in a version of Hayek’s ersatz democracy—is that of the Far Right. But if the neoliberal center can offer up only ever closer approximations to the right-wing project, there are few other possibilities it can pursue (and ever decreasing political prospects). As the great political economist and socialist organizer Rosa Luxemburg proposed in the 20th Century, the choice was simple—socialism or barbarism. This, the 21st Century center tells us, is oversimplified. There is also the choice of extended misery.

THE CORBYN-MACRON PARADOX

During the ecstatic trans-Atlantic jubilation for Macron there was another election right around the corner. Following the Brexit referendum, UK Prime Minister Theresa May called early elections to solidify the position of her new, hard-right nationalist Tory formation. May, who has become one of Trump’s leading international supporters, had married David Cameron’s austerity program with the nativist elements from Nigel Farage’s UK Independence Party. That orientation made it strange that many liberal commentators who’d welcomed Macron as an antidote to the Far Right were either silent about the contest between May’s Conservative Party and Jeremy Corbyn’s newly recommitted left-wing Labour Party, or openly contemptuous of Corbyn.

The liberal response to Corbyn is all the more strange given that he and similar political figures of the reinvigorated Left are more consonant with *liberal* tradition writ large than their faux-liberal counterparts of the increasingly authoritarian center. Corbyn’s 2017 Labour Manifesto was the most full-throated major party platform to call unequivocally for both economic democracy and full liberal

rights of the individual; for investment in universal public goods and identity-focused programs that specifically addressed the unique social repression faced by women, racial and religious minorities, LGBTQ people, and the disabled. It did so within a coherent political framework as well: the flourishing of individuals through the flourishing of society, understanding the interconnection of formal *liberal* equality claims and demands for recognition, and the social equity and democratization necessary for their realization.³⁶ Corbyn was not attacking basic liberal rights or the democratic process; Theresa May was. And yet the self-appointed defenders of “liberal democracy,” who had championed Macron and his authoritarian liberalism, were silent.

The irony of the Corbyn-Macron paradox, for those in the business of carving out a future for liberal democracies, is that only with policies like Corbyn’s can those phantasmagorically ascribed to Macron possibly come to fruition.

LATE TO THE FUTURE

“America is the original version of modernity. We are the dubbed or subtitled version,” the French postmodernist Jean Baudrillard wrote in his 1986 travelogue *America*. “We are condemned to the imaginary and to nostalgia for the future,” he continued. “What we see here [in the U.S.] are merely the inescapable results of an orgy of power, and an irreversible concentration of the world that has followed upon its extension.”³⁷

Although Baudrillard’s arguments are slippery, he stumbled onto a truth, almost a funhouse mirror anticipation of Francis Fukuyama’s post-Cold War declaration that here, in Reaganite and Thatcherite “liberal democracy,” was the “end of history.” Baudrillard proposes instead that America is always already the future. It is where the “idea” of history, where *Geist*, already landed. And—in good postmodern fashion—Macron proves him both right and wrong. Macron is the overdubbed Ronald Reagan, several decades late and better educated. He’s the subtitled Bill Clinton, without the popular appeal or charm. But for once the French—perhaps because, as

the work of Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez reminds us, vestigial feudalism has finally caught up with the times—are indeed ahead. Macron is the centrist vision for a baroque future better suited to the Palace of Versailles than the gleaming skyscrapers of New York. The greatest irony of all: for all this consolidation of power, for all the pomp and delusions of grandeur, Macron is auditioning himself, and France, for, at best, a number two role, to be forever in hock to Germany through the current mechanisms of the EU. Macron will truly be a king without a crown.

Without substantive advances for actual democracy, liberal rights lose even their formal meaning. They become charity bestowed by benevolent autocrats, by Jupiterian kings of the center, parceled out or withheld on whim. There is a dialectic of technocracy and its fruition is a new feudalism. Hiding within every good technocrat is a feudal lord who catches the scent, in Baudrillard’s phrase, of the “primitive future”—of a new-old barbarism just on the horizon. Macron’s appeal to political actors and thinkers is that he is the distilled essence of this spirit; he represents a future, hollowed-out liberalism relieved of all but the most cosmetic vestiges of democracy.

When Margaret Thatcher was asked about her greatest achievement, she replied: “New Labour.”³⁸ In that she was both witty and incisive. It was only with the capitulation of the Center-Left that neoliberalism truly became entrenched as the only alternative to the Right. While Macron reshapes France into the perfect European vassal state and centrists around the world applaud, I can imagine the Iron Lady laughing as she wonders just how much more the *Front National* wins the next time around. ☞

Ajay Singh Chaudhary is the executive director of the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research and a core faculty member specializing in social and political theory. He has written for The Los Angeles Review of Books, Quartz, Social Text, Dialectical Anthropology, The Jewish Daily Forward, Filmmaker Magazine, 3quarksdaily, among other venues.

BY SHANNON WEBER

White Supremacy's Old Gods

The Far Right and Neopaganism

In 2014, a White supremacist leader, Frazier Glenn Cross, Jr. (also known as F. Glenn Miller), killed three people outside Jewish organizations in Overland Park, Kansas. Although all three were actually Christian, Cross's intended target was clear, as was the religious justification he found for his supremacist beliefs. Cross, founder of the Carolina Knights of the KKK, which later became the White Patriot Party,¹ was a convert from Christianity to a neonazi interpretation of the pre-Christian, Northern European and Germanic religion of Odinism. In his self-published 1999 autobiography, *A White Man Speaks Out*, he wrote:

I'd love to see North America's 100 million Aryan Christians convert to the religion invented by their own race and practiced for a thousand generations before the Jews thought up Christianity. / Odinism! This was the religion for a strong heroic people, the Germanic people, from whose loins we all descended, be we German, English, Scott [sic], Irish, or Scandinavian, in whole or in part. / Odin! Odin! Odin! Was the battle cry of our ancestors; their light eyes ablaze with the glare of the predator, as they swept over and conquered the decadent multi-racial Roman Empire. / And Valhalla does not accept Negroes. There's a sign over the pearly gates there which reads, "Whites only."²

Cross' hateful manifesto on the eve of the 21st Century represents more than just the ramblings of one violent terrorist. His argument that White people need to embrace their pre-Christian roots in service of the White race is one increasingly being adopted by White supremacists across Europe and North America. More than a decade ago, in 2003, com-



Shannon Weber, "White Supremacy's Old Gods," photo collage, 2018.

parative religion scholar Mattias Gardell wrote that racist forms of neopaganism were already outpacing traditional monotheistic versions of White supremacy.³ Today, they're even more prevalent, as White supremacists exploit political instability driven by anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment in Europe, and the racist backlash surging under Donald Trump in the United States.

Only about 0.3 percent of the U.S. population follow beliefs related to neopaganism, an umbrella term for modern interpretations of polytheist and pantheist religions that predate Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.⁴ Within that figure, an even smaller number—just 7,878 people according to one community census—practice Scandinavian and Germanic forms of neopaganism known as Hea-

thenry.⁵ Perhaps the most recognized Heathen faith is Ásatrú, a polytheist religion venerating old Norse gods and goddesses. However, despite its small numbers—in 1996, religion scholar Jeffrey Kaplan estimated fewer than 1,000 U.S. adherents⁶—Ásatrú has come to figure prominently in modern U.S. White supremacist movements.

While most U.S. Ásatrúar (followers of Ásatrú) are inclusive,⁷ there exists a divide within Heathen communities about who should be allowed to take up ancient Scandinavian and Germanic spiritual practices. Those who eschew racism and invite potential members regardless of ethnic background are termed "universalists." Conversely, those groups calling themselves "folkish" stipulate that only members with Northern European

or Germanic ancestry may join. Many of these “folkish” groups are overtly White supremacist, claiming that Ásatrú is the true religion of the superior “Aryan race.”

White supremacists practicing Ásatrú may also use the term Odinism, named after the god Odin, though not all self-identified Odinist groups are White supremacist, and there are ongoing debates within Ásatrú communities about the differences implied by the terms. Others use the name Wotanism. The late White supremacist and convicted murderer David Lane promoted the term Wotanism to serve as an explicitly racist form of Odinism. Lane, who also created the “14 Words” slogan widely cited by White supremacists—“We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children”⁸—favored Wotanism in part because, he explained, “W.O.T.A.N. makes a perfect acronym for Will Of The Aryan Nation.”⁹

By whatever name, the ties between some neopagans and organized racist movements are clear. “The most cursory glimpse at White-racist publications, Web pages, and White-power lyrics,” warned Gardell, “reveals muscular heathens, pagan gods and goddesses, runes and symbols, magic, and esoteric themes in abundance.” Racist versions of paganism had already become so popular among White supremacists that, by the time Gardell’s book, *Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism*, was published in 2003, they were displacing organizations like the Ku Klux Klan and national socialist parties, and were rendering “earlier racist creeds, such as Christian Identity, to the status of an ‘old man’s religion.’”¹⁰ Since that time, the explosion of the Alt Right has only amplified this threat.

Many of those drawn to Odinism seem to fit the popular image of the angry, disaffected White men who voted for Trump: lacking in status,¹¹ searching for a sense of identity and community, and insistent that White people are under attack as a group. In the face of economic despair and entitled, hypermasculine White rage, embracing a religion that seems to be all about White male victory can be appealing.

The numbers of incarcerated White

supremacists finding themselves drawn to Ásatrú are also growing. Odinism was introduced to the American prison system in the late 1980s¹² by adherents such as Danish immigrant Else Christensen, who traveled through the U.S. spreading the word about Odinism and setting up Odinist prison groups.¹³ In 2002, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported that Ásatrú was “one of the faiths that incarcerated White supremacists found most often.” For example, David Lane, who was sentenced to 150 years in prison for his role in the murder of a Jewish radio host, heavily promoted Ásatrú during his incarceration, before dying in prison in 2007.¹⁴

In addition to the “true believers” drawn to Odinism, the religion has also become a useful organizational tool in providing White supremacists behind bars a chance to gather under the guise of religious worship. This strategy is common for many ethnically-based prison gangs, who are legally permitted to congregate with inmates dispersed across the prison only when united in worship. The Latin Kings, for example, organize under the cover of Santería, while Italian gangs organize under the facade of Catholic worship services. Given that the only jewelry prisoners are allowed to wear are wedding bands and religious insignia, wearing a Thor’s Hammer necklace (as Heathens have been legally permitted to do since 2005) can serve as a signal to other White supremacists in a prison environment structured by de facto racial segregation and interracial violence.¹⁵

THE POWER OF VINLAND

For many White supremacists, the ability to connect with a religious identity they see as indigenously White is alluring. Ásatrú, especially for men, is a celebration of virile Northern European hypermasculinity, a chance at re-enacting the glory of their presumed Viking ancestors. Followers in the U.S. take the idea of this legacy one step further through their notion of “Vinland,” the portion of North America (most likely eastern Canada) explored by Vikings prior to the conquest of Christopher Columbus.¹⁶ In Vinland they are able to envision a past in which they were both

victors and victims, beating Columbus in the race for conquest yet not given their proper historical due.

Many “folkish” Ásatrúar, Odinists, and Wotanists defend their desire to restrict the religion to those with Northern European ancestry as akin to Native Americans practicing indigenous religious beliefs. The difference between the two groups, of course, is one of power. Native Americans strive to maintain their cultural and religious practices in the aftermath of centuries of colonization and genocide. White Odinists, by contrast, benefit from White supremacy and deny others membership out of concerns about White “purity” rather than cultural survival in the face of mass slaughter, forced sterilization,¹⁷ and the kidnapping, abuse, and cultural “reeducation” found at American Indian boarding schools.¹⁸

Given that White people were the perpetrators of this colonization and genocide—and do not have an original claim to the land—professing a connection to Vinland enables White supremacist Odinists to “asser[t] a historical claim over North America,” according to David Perry, associate professor of history at Dominican University in Illinois.¹⁹ In other words, by laying claim to Vinland, Odinists tap into the idea of indigenous belonging while conveniently glossing over their status as settlers on stolen land.

As religion scholars Jennifer Snook, Thad Horrell, and Kristen Horton argue, when it comes to defining indigeneity, “Heathens in the United States certainly do not count.” But claims of indigeneity serve a powerful rhetorical purpose:

[C]laiming indigeneity offers an opportunity to understand oneself not as a global villain, an invading destroyer of distinct and diverse cultures and a spreader of global mono-culture, but rather as a fellow victim of these historical atrocities. Most Heathens recognize that their ancestors were global conquerors. Most of these seem to celebrate the fact as an indication of their people’s potency and power. This allows the maintenance of their settler identity...²⁰

To put it another way, White suprema-

cist Odinists assert their claims as “rightful” inhabitants of North America by paradoxically emphasizing their Northern European ancestry. At the same time, their adherence to Whites-only Odinist beliefs and hypermasculinity aids them in strategically celebrating their presumed ancestors’ conquest of foreign lands. In so doing, they are able to maintain the contradictory idea that they are both indigenous Vinlanders and powerful White invaders.

Above all, writes Perry, “They use the myth of Vinland to position themselves as righteous defenders in the wars of race and religion they believe are coming.”

CONNECTIONS TO ANTISEMITISM: THE RIGHT FINDS ODINISM

While White supremacist Odinists use their religion as a way to play at the bygone glory of hypermasculine Viking culture, they see Christianity, by contrast, as a “self-destructive theology created by Jews and forced on White people who were by nature supposedly very different,” in the words of Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) senior fellow Mark Potok.²¹

On its face, it might seem illogical for Odinists to embrace antisemitism. After all, as John Yeowell, a leading Odinist community figure and author on modern Odinism in the U.K. (also known by the pen name “Stubba”),²² writes:

[A]ntisemitism is a Christian aberration and in no sense a product of the heathen tradition ... In the pre-Christian period the Jewish diaspora had not yet spread to the still heathen lands of northern Europe and therefore the question of antisemitism does not arise in the historic tradition of Odinism.²³

However, the contemporary White supremacist revival of Odinism is deeply rooted in antisemitism and Nazism.

The veneration of ancient Scandinavian and Germanic religions has a long history in modern Europe, particularly in Germany since the 19th Century. Amid a backlash against the Industrial Revolution and German modernity, the 19th and early 20th Centuries saw the rise of the *völkisch* movement in Germany: a renaissance of romanticized notions about the “German people,” their history and

folklore, and a yearning to return to a mythical agrarian past.²⁴

During Weimar-era Germany, writes Kaplan, some contingents of the German Youth Movement embraced Odinist beliefs that would later flourish in Nazi Germany, as well as “sympathizers abroad whose antisemitic beliefs would lead them to conclude that, as Christianity is built on a Jewish foundation, it too must be swept away in the construction of a millenarian ‘New Order.’”²⁵

During World War II, the “neo-völkisch” movement constituted a revival of this *völkisch* sentiment, as well as the heavy investment of prominent Third Reich leaders in Odinism. Adolf Hitler’s Schutzstaffel, or SS, for example, relied on Odinist mythology in their initiation rituals and cosmology. After the war, “völkisch ideology in general [was] discredited” in Germany, writes German literary scholar Stefanie von Schnurbein, yet Odinist groups in West Germany were also able to rebuild thanks to the restoration of constitutional protections for the freedom of religion.²⁶ In the U.S., the American Nazi Party was founded with Odinist influences in 1959,²⁷ followed by the first U.S. Ásatrú and Odinist organizations in the 1970s. In short order, the new groups would become divided between their White supremacist and universalist contingents.

By 2003, racist forms of neopaganism were already outpacing traditional monotheistic versions of White supremacy.

Stephen McNallen, who became interested in Heathenry as a college student in Texas in the late 1960s,²⁸ formed the Viking Brotherhood circa 1972 with Robert Stine.²⁹ This group in turn became the first American Ásatrú organization, the Asatru Free Assembly, about four years later.³⁰ By 1978, McNallen sought to lessen Odinism’s association with Nazism though he expressed sympathy for the “legitimate frustrations of White men who are concerned for their kind.”³¹ He ultimately shut down the Asatru Free Assembly in 1987 before founding the

folkish Asatru Folk Assembly in 1994. (McNallen is most recently responsible for forming the Wotan Network, a White nationalist Odinist group dedicated to spreading White nationalist Heathen memes.)

Shortly after McNallen disbanded the Asatru Free Assembly, White supremacist Valgard Murray formed the Asatru Alliance (AA) to take its place. Murray was a former member of the American Nazi Party who, until the 1960s, signed his letters with the phrase “Heil Hitler!”³² He also had a history of violent rhetoric: Viking Brotherhood co-founder Robert Stine, a fellow member of the Asatru Free Assembly and former member of the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi Party, claimed that Murray once threatened to kill a gay man at an official Asatru Free Assembly gathering.³³ While the current bylaws of the AA claim that the organization “do[es] not practice, preach, or promote hatred, bigotry, or racism,”³⁴ Murray has served as its chief religious leader since 1997,³⁵ as well as its treasurer³⁶ and public contact.³⁷

THE “THUG REICH”

Murray’s threats of violence weren’t an isolated example. Odinist groups that use Vinland as a defining part of their organizational identity, such as Vinlanders Social Club—who go by the slogan “Thug

Reich”³⁸—and Wolves of Vinland, have frequently embraced violence. Vinlanders Social Club, according to the ADL, is “one of the larger racist skinhead groups in the United States and has a high association with violence, including multiple murders.”³⁹ They were formed in 2003 in the U.S. Midwest by one-time members of the Outlaw Hammerskins, a breakaway faction from the Hammerskin Nation coalition of White supremacist skinhead groups.⁴⁰ Decrying what they see as the downfall of Western civilization, the group has developed a reputation for us-

ing brute force to intimidate and control those they perceive as enemies, including other White supremacists.

The Wolves of Vinland, based outside Lynchburg, Virginia, haven't been shy about either their ritual practices (posting a photo to Instagram in 2015 of a dead sheep they had sacrificed⁴¹) or their members' violence (in 2012, member Maurice Michaely pled guilty to setting a Black church on fire⁴²). But they've nonetheless gained entrée to the Nazis-in-suits political world of the Alt Right. Member Jack Donovan made an appearance at the White supremacist National

In the face of economic despair and entitled, hypermasculine White rage, embracing a religion that seems to be all about White male victory can be appealing.

Policy Institute's biennial Halloween event in 2015, which was held at the National Press Club, two blocks from the Obama White House.⁴³ Given how White supremacist violence has become more mainstreamed during the Trump era, especially after the lethal violence in Charlottesville, Wolves of Vinland and groups like them seem bound to grow. And with the token inclusion of gay male members of the Alt Right, such as Donovan and Milo Yiannopoulos,⁴⁴ these movements also have the potential to attract members from a community typically thought to be excluded from right-wing movements. (Of course, there have long been gay men among the leadership of right-wing groups, although they've often been easily disposed of, such as Ernst Röhm, the head of the Nazi Brownshirts, who was ultimately assassinated during the Night of the Long Knives in 1934.⁴⁵)

Other White supremacist Odinists have been linked to multiple high-profile acts of violence and murder in recent years.⁴⁶ Anders Breivik, Norway's worst mass killer who murdered 77 people (mostly youth) in 2011, more recently revealed that he has long considered himself an Odinist. Potential signs of Breivik's Odinism may not have been as well understood in 2011, prior to the rise

of the Alt Right. But during his trial in 2012, Breivik explained how he'd named various of his possessions after Odinist religious beliefs. In 2016, he removed all doubt, declaring during a court proceeding, "I'm an Odinist, I believe in the only god, Odin." He added that he "had never truly believed in Christianity."⁴⁷

Since the public rise of the Alt Right, there has been a string of White supremacist, pagan-inflected crimes in 2017.

In March 2017, Vinlanders Social Club cofounder Brien James led another White nationalist group he'd founded, The American Guard—formerly the In-

diana chapter of Soldiers of Odin⁴⁸—to show up at an Indianapolis rally for Donald Trump. They bore shields with White supremacist symbols and claimed they were there "to provide 'security' for the march against the threat of left-wing protesters."⁴⁹ James, who is also involved in the "Alt Light" organization the Proud Boys and their "tactical defense arm"⁵⁰ the Fraternal Order of the Alt-Knights (FOAK), has a violent past going back to at least 2000, when he was allegedly involved in beating a man close to death for failing to *sieg-heil* during a party.⁵¹ (James has even found a way to monetize his hatred, as creator of American Viking Clothing, a White supremacist t-shirt company.⁵²)

The month after James' American Guard appeared at the Indianapolis Trump rally, in April 2017, street-fighting between White nationalists and anti-fascist groups in Berkeley, California, attracted neonazis who carried flags embossed with a black sun, a symbol of Odinism that was widely adopted by Nazi and neonazi groups.⁵³ The symbol, used during the Third Reich and known in German esoteric circles since the turn of the 20th Century,⁵⁴ would also surface in June during a White supremacist rally in Houston, Texas,⁵⁵ and again in August,

carried by Vanguard America during the infamous and deadly "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville.⁵⁶

In May 2017, an intoxicated White supremacist named Jeremy Christian killed two men and seriously injured a third on a Portland, Oregon, light rail train, after the men had intervened to stop Christian from harassing two teenaged Muslim girls, variously yelling "Get the fuck out," "I don't care if you are ISIS," and "Free speech or die!" Earlier that month, Christian had posted to Facebook, along with various neonazi rants, "Hail Vinland!!! Hail Victory!!!"⁵⁷

Then in August came the White supremacist terror in Charlottesville, which in addition to featuring Odinist symbolism also drew the support of Odinist leaders like Stephen McNallen of Asatru Free Assembly.⁵⁸ Odinist involvement in the terrorist clash, which involved assaults on Charlottesville residents and left 32-year-old counter-protester Heather Heyer dead,⁵⁹ is a sobering reminder of the White supremacist Heathen glorification of and capacity for violence.

THE SOLDIERS OF ODIN

While examples of White supremacist, neopagan violence are plentiful, central to any discussion of these connections is the Soldiers of Odin. Originally formed in late 2015 in Kemi, Finland—against the backdrop of increasing White supremacist and right-wing radicalization across Europe that targets immigrants, refugees, and Muslims as defiling the European "way of life"—just two years later the group has a presence in more than 20 countries worldwide,⁶⁰ including the U.S.

From its inception, Soldiers of Odin was linked to violent White supremacy. Its founder, Mika Ranta, a White supremacist with connections to the neonazi Finnish Resistance Movement, was convicted of racially aggravated assault for attacking two immigrants in 2005,⁶¹ as well as assault and aggravated assault in 2016.⁶²

The stated purpose of the Soldiers of Odin is to "protect" citizens from refugees through deploying vigilante street patrols. By February 2016, they had reached the U.S., thanks in large part

to social media, with at least 42 state chapters, some of which have only a few adherents, and others with at least 75 members.⁶³

Some members of Soldiers of Odin are notable for their associations with other racist groups, such as Jason Tankersley, founder of the Maryland Skinheads, and Bradley Jenkins, an Alabama neonazi KKK leader. Foreshadowing the violence that would unfold in Charlottesville, 27-year-old Jani (no last name given), one of the group's leaders in Kemi, told the U.K.'s *Daily Mail*, "The Government screwed things up so bad, and we are the consequence. Politicians are allowing migrants to rape our women, and they are doing nothing about it. There will be a war on the streets, and we are ready to fight."⁶⁴

In some regards, that war on the streets may have been underway already. In 2016, Finnish police opened an investigation into three men who had worn Soldiers of Odin jackets while assaulting a man in the city of Imatra.⁶⁵ Immigrants in Finland report fearing for their safety as a result of the menacing patrols; Kurdish migrant Hasim Keles explains, "We [asylum seekers] don't go into town any more, particularly in the evenings, because we're scared of getting beaten up by the Soldiers of Odin."⁶⁶

Juha-Matti Kinnunen, a Soldiers of Odin chapter leader in Joensuu, Finland, felt comfortable telling a British journalist, "If things carry on like this, ethnic cleansing will be necessary"⁶⁷—an ominous statement that can hardly be seen as a hollow threat on a continent haunted by genocide, whether during the Holocaust, the Bosnian war, or the Armenian Genocide.

Lari Kuosmanen, another Joensuu chapter leader, claims, "The cops say they hate us, but on the street they often give us the thumbs-up...Some of them would probably join us if they could."⁶⁸ In a similar claim, Soldiers of Odin USA also boast of being the "eyes and ears" of the police, characterizing their patrols as "observe-and-report" operations.⁶⁹ This is special cause for concern given FBI reports from 2006, 2009, and 2015 on the infiltration of White supremacists into law enforcement roles.⁷⁰

GENDERED VIOLENCE IN RIGHT-WING NEOPAGANISM

Soldiers of Odin's leaders say their founding motivation was to protect White women's "honor" in the face of an epidemic of sexual violence allegedly being committed by Muslim refugees in Europe. Between December 2015 and January 2016, women in Helsinki, Finland, and in several German cities reported multiple incidents of sexual harassment and assault, by men who appeared to be Middle Eastern or North African, during holiday festivities. German police connected many of these reports instead to gang activity by men gathering near train stations for the purposes of mugging; and, as journalist Alex Shams points out, "Germans have only to look to Oktoberfest...or other mass drunken gatherings to remember that, unfortunately, misogynist men from many different cultural backgrounds engage in sexual harassment."⁷¹ Still, the damage had been done, as anti-refugee extremists used the reports to justify assaulting asylum seekers and burning down refugee centers.⁷²

"Where are the Freikorps when we need them?" Stephen McNallen wrote in response on Facebook, referencing the right-wing German-aligned mercenaries responsible for political assassinations after World War I. Many Freikorps members went on to become loyal servants of the Third Reich in the *Sturmabteilung*, the Nazi Party's original paramilitary wing, colloquially known as the Brownshirts.⁷³

In April 2016, a Soldiers of Odin USA Facebook group with more than 4,000 members declared that "it stands in opposition to the hordes of 'refugees' that have invaded Europe and will soon be coming to America, bring[ing] massive waves of rape and crime with them."⁷⁴

Contradicting previous assertions that they would serve only as the "eyes and ears" of the police, one graphic from the Facebook group declared:

We are not a nice, polite group that will do nothing but report outrages to the police. The police are overworked as it is, and hamstrung by the dictates of law. WE ARE NOT. We will BEAT THE LIVING SHIT out of any we catch raping American women and terrorizing American citizens.⁷⁵

However—and unsurprisingly—the claimed concerns about protecting women from violence at the hands of immigrants and refugees also exist alongside a clear pattern of gendered violence at the hands of Odinists themselves. There was Vinlanders Social Club member Michael Parrish, who in 2009 murdered his girlfriend and their two-year-old son,⁷⁶ for which he entered a guilty plea in 2010.⁷⁷ Also in 2010, Vinlanders members Travis Ricci and Aaron Schmidt were indicted in Arizona⁷⁸ after murdering a White woman walking at night with her Black boyfriend the previous fall.⁷⁹ Separately, in 2011, Ricci was sentenced to 22 years in prison for slamming his girlfriend's head into a wall during a party and stabbing two men who tried to intervene.⁸⁰

Underlying these attacks are threads of misogyny throughout a male-dominated movement—one study found that Odinists in the U.S. are 65 percent male⁸¹—where women simultaneously serve as the rationale for outward-directed bigotry and violence and internal targets of domestic violence.

The misogyny within the movement makes sense for a culture that goes hand in hand with the hypermasculinity and rejection of femininity that's common in the groups' literature⁸² (and its social media, as Wolves of Vinland and other Odinists often add "#brosatru" to their posts, a play on the words "bros" and "Ásatrú"). It's also in their disparagement of Christianity as a feminine, weak religion. Followers see the Norse gods, in contrast, as "the big tough white guys who, when they see a woman they want, grab her by the hair and pull her in the cave," says Potok. "It's seen as this ultra-male, super muscular religion, which is antithetical to Christianity and Judaism ... It's a comic book religion in a lot of ways."⁸³

UNIVERSALISTS FIGHT BACK

The good news is that, despite this growing movement of violence, a large contingent of anti-racist Heathens are fighting to take back control of their religion. Given that universalist Heathens are already positioned as a mysterious minority within the West's Christian-dominated religious landscape, the asso-

ciation of Ásatrú with White supremacy presents an embarrassing image problem. On a deeper level, universalists have collectively become fed up with their religious beliefs being used to justify bigotry and violence. These Heathens, despite being comprised primarily of White members, see the old Norse gods as deities who might call out to anyone, and they identify their community not through shared Whiteness but shared commitment to Heathen cosmology. Increasingly, they see it as their duty to not only distance themselves from White supremacist movements but to vocally denounce and organize against White supremacist Odinists.

The major universalist Ásatrú organization is The Troth, formerly the Ring of Troth. The Troth emerged in 1987, as religion scholar Jeffrey Kaplan writes, “from the wreckage of the Asatru Free Assembly,”⁸⁴ and it represented remarkable diversity, with Jewish, Black, and LG-BTQ members.⁸⁵ As the group noted on its website, “membership in the Troth and participation in our activities is open to worthy folks regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender or sexual orientation, and we do not permit discrimination on these grounds.”⁸⁶

An important turning point came in 2012, when a group called Heathens United Against Racism (HUAR) emerged to unite Heathens opposed to the “co-optation of our beliefs, traditions, and lore by racist groups.”⁸⁷ Ryan Smith, one of HUAR’s co-founders, told PRA that the group first started as a discussion and educational space for Heathens to collectively unpack the troublesome problems of bigotry that have so long plagued their communities.⁸⁸ “For a long time the racist, fascist types have effectively hogged the microphone and set the tone for how Heathenry is perceived, shouted down any opposition, and effectively marginalized all protest,” said Smith. “This was also made possible by a lot of self-identified moderates and liberals who wanted to be fair-minded, not cause strife in the community, or were defending personal relationships.”

Over time, HUAR’s mission became one of taking bold stances against White supremacy and fascism. Although in previous years, the White nationalist wing of Heathenry engaged in what Smith called “very careful plausible deniability,” he continued,

As we stepped up our efforts and the Alt Right became more visible, the [Asatru Folk Assembly] became more blatant in their rhetoric and positions and more actively linked itself to the rising Alt Right. They effectively self-radicalized and in the process also self-isolated, making it easier to rally opposition and support for genuinely inclusive community.

Women simultaneously serve as the rationale for outward-directed bigotry and violence and internal targets of domestic violence.

HUAR members’ increased education about these issues, and the AFA’s increasingly visible alignment with the Alt Right, caused HUAR to “shif[t] in the direction of exposure, denunciation, and in some cases direct action in solidarity with movements like Black Lives Matter” and antifa, Smith says. HUAR has also sought to hamper Soldiers of Odin’s organizing by publicizing any information they obtain about Soldiers of Odin’s members and supporters, internal organizational structure, and key leaders. Their efforts have sometimes resulted in venues pulling their support from Odinist events, for instance persuading The Cotillion Room and Garden, an events center and wedding hall in Independence, Missouri, to cancel a book-signing event with author and Asatru Folk Assembly member Bryan Wilton.⁸⁹

Smith says HUAR has developed “a substantial, international support base,” including chapters in the U.S., U.K., and Canada, and online connections with the Scandinavian Heathen group Svinfylking.⁹⁰ This international networking has enabled them to coordinate multiple intercontinental actions. In May 2016,

according to Smith, HUAR organized an event called Light the Beacons, in which Heathens lit candles and bonfires at over 200 locations across four continents to demonstrate solidarity with inclusive Heathenry. The same year, HUAR took part in signing Declaration 127, an open letter approved by 180 Heathen organizations in 20 countries that publicly disavowed and broke ties with the Asatru Folk Assembly based on the AFA’s “long and well-documented history of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, sexuality, and gender identity.”⁹¹

As White supremacist Ásatrúar, Odinists, and Wotanists continue to grow in number and influence across North America and Europe, it will be essential to better understand, document, and track their growth. It is critical to have a full view of the connections between racism, antisemitism, and misogyny that animate White supremacist appeals to pre-Christian European religion as activists and researchers develop best practices for countering their recruitment strategies. Going forward, anti-racist advocates will need to continue challenging and dismantling pseudoscientific theories of Aryan racial purity and superiority, ahistorical claims about the nature of pan-European White identity, and teachings that pit marginalized groups against one another. Above all, advocates will need to continue their sustained and vocal pushback on the increasing prominence and validity given to these types of groups by the Trump administration and those adjacent to it. Through these means, as well as through partnering with anti-racist Heathen groups like HUAR, White supremacist Odinism can be countered. ☪

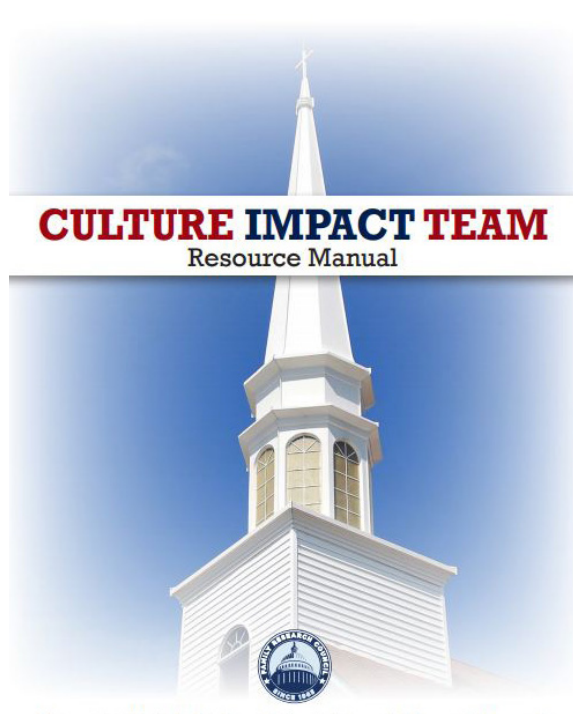
Shannon Weber, Ph.D, is a Boston-based writer and researcher on U.S. politics, social movements, feminism, and spirituality. A former gender studies professor, she is also a recognized expert and published scholar in the interdisciplinary field of gender and sexuality studies.

A Manual to Restore a Christian Nation That Never Was

In October 2017, I was perusing the exhibit area of the Values Voter Summit, the annual political conference of the Family Research Council (FRC), when I was buttonholed by John Méndez, national coordinator for the Christian Right giant's network of church-based political committees. As a white-haired White guy in a blazer, I must have seemed like a good prospect, because he wanted to know if I was interested in forming such a committee in my church.

He reached under the display table and pulled out a box containing copies of *Culture Impact Team Resource Manual*: a 200-page three-ring binder of instructions and resources for setting up such groups in local churches. He gave me two copies: one for my pastor, whose buy-in would be essential for organizing a Culture Impact Team, or "CIT." They were so bulky they barely fit in my conference tote bag. But I was glad I managed. Originally published in 2011, the manual—which includes, among other things, sample voter guides and instructions for church-based voter registration drives—has served as the primer for church-based, Christian Right political action for the past seven years. It certainly played a role in the 2016 elections, and will no doubt continue to be used for the foreseeable future.

While the manual has been promoted at other conferences and is available to download online, it's gathered little notice beyond the Christian Right. Nevertheless, it has been an important grassroots playbook and ideological manifesto, serving as both the contemporary blueprint for a central element of the infrastructure of today's Christian



The Culture Impact Team Resource Manual has served as the primer for church-based, Christian Right political action for the past seven years.

Right and an integrated historical and theological justifications for its political agenda.

After Donald Trump received 81 percent of the White evangelical vote in the 2016 presidential election, there was substantial polling and reporting on what issues concerned this demographic. But there was comparatively little reporting on the theological and historical justifications that underlie those issues and animate the movement more broadly. Similarly, there has not been much reporting on how the Christian Right has been organized, and how the church-based model encouraged by the manual may be playing a role.

But alongside this influence, the manual inadvertently reveals an underap-

preciated weakness. It illuminates the Christian Right's dynamic political theology but also shows how its theological justifications rest in part on false historical interpretations. These assumptions, which generally fall under the idea that America was founded as a Christian nation, have become commonplace in conservative evangelical culture, even as the anti-democratic ideology and distorted historical narrative in the manual expose a cracked and vulnerable foundation that can't support the movement forever.

THE MATURATION OF A MOVEMENT

FRC was founded in 1983 and soon became the political and policy arm of James Dobson's Focus on the Family. It later became independent, and under the leadership of Tony Perkins, has grown into Washington, D.C.'s premier Christian Right political organization. It serves as the national hub of some three-dozen state Family Policy Councils, most of which are also affiliated with Focus on the Family's current political offshoot, Family Policy Alliance. All also partner with the Christian Right legal network, Alliance Defending Freedom.¹ Taken together, they constitute the leading coalition of the evangelical wing of the Christian Right. FRC's Values Voter Summit has become Washington's most important Christian Right political conference, drawing major political figures, including, in 2017, President Donald Trump and then Alabama Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore. Since Trump's election, FRC has grown even more influential, becoming a guiding force in policy and personnel development in the administration. As

Perkins told the *New York Times* in 2017, “I’ve been to the White House I don’t know how many more times in the first six months this year than I was during the entire Bush administration.”²

Unsurprisingly, the administration is festooned with Christian Right figures, notably Vice President Mike Pence, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, CIA Director Mike Pompeo, and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. All of these, along with other top administration officials, attend a weekly Bible study led by Christian nationalist pastor Ralph Drollinger. (An additional Drollinger-led Bible study is attended by many Members of Congress.)³ Cabinet members’ embrace of Christian nationalism has profound policy implications. DeVos, for example, has long viewed school privatization schemes as a way to “advance God’s kingdom,”⁴ and Trump’s education plan seeks to redirect billions of dollars in federal funds away from “failing government schools” towards private, including religious, schools.⁵

Trump has also rewarded this constituency in other ways. His appointment to the Supreme Court of Neal Gorsuch, an appellate court judge who sided with Hobby Lobby stores in the company’s historic suit against the contraception coverage mandate in the Affordable Care Act, delighted the Christian Right.⁶ They were similarly gratified when Trump issued an executive order on religious liberty, prompting Attorney General Sessions to draft religious liberty guidelines for all federal departments,⁷ allowing religious employers “to employ only persons whose beliefs and conduct are consistent with the employers’ religious precepts”—a dictate interpreted by many as allowing federal contractors to discriminate against LGBTQ people.

In a fundraising letter, FRC identified Trump’s executive order as its top accomplishment of 2017. But long before the Christian Right joined the top ranks of governmental power, it was reshaping itself, drawing on the lessons of the past in pursuit of permanent dominance in American public life. The manual epitomizes this, weaving detailed theological and historical justifications into a narrative in which today’s conservative evan-

gelicals are carrying forward the mission of both God and the leaders of the American Revolution. This grounding provides church CITs with the direction and know-how to build an effective grassroots infrastructure. The goal is to turn parishioners into voters, voters into activists, and activists into issue specialists and candidates who might implement godly principles in law.

CHURCH-BASED POLITICAL COMMITTEES

The CITs are the basic unit of the Family Policy Councils/Family Policy Alliance state political network. FRC claims to have nearly 5,000 such groups. While there is no independent confirmation of that number, nor of how active the groups are, FRC has dedicated a number of national staff to develop and maintain this network. FRC president Tony Perkins has gone so far as to declare, “Operating under the authority of the church’s leadership, CITs serve as the command center for a church’s efforts to engage the culture.”⁸

The job of CITs is to create and build upon extant church political committees, across denominational lines: with a Baptist focus but an ecumenical intent. In 2011, when the manual was released, FRC was reorganizing and refocusing their political base in the run-up to the 2012 election season and beyond, and CITs were the building blocks to make that possible.

The manual was compiled by Kenyn Cureton, FRC Vice President for Church Ministries and a former official of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the nation’s largest Protestant denomination. Cureton has been with FRC since 2006 and claims a network of 41,000 activist pastors, recruited under the rubric of Watchmen on the Wall, who are also encouraged to form CITs. In a training video, Cureton explains that once established, CITs work to inform, equip, alert, and mobilize church members on public policy and electoral engagement.

To that end, his manual includes sample voter guides—an updated version of voter engagement materials he’d originally developed with Richard Land of the SBC’s Ethics and Religious Liberty

Commission—as well as instructions for how churches should use them. The collaboration behind that project itself illustrates an evolution in Christian Right strategy, from externally organized partisan political development to building an ecumenical political program with a common message to be shared among different movement groups, and which is compatible with existing church thought and structure.

A more recent example of such collaboration occurred between FRC and the Texas-based Christian Right group Vision America. Together the two groups mapped the nature and level of engagement of individual congregations, with their permission and, notably, for their internal use. As Vision America’s John Graves and Rebecca Berry explained in a 2016 CIT training video, they partnered with individual churches’ CIT leaders to compare congregations’ membership lists against a database of registered voters. The national groups obtained data for voter mobilization, and the pastors and individual CITs received a portrait of their congregation’s political participation that could help them organize their church towards maximum political impact.

A 21ST CENTURY APPROACH

Many of the CIT tactics explained in the manual may seem like contemporary takes on old ideas, recalling the efforts of the Christian Coalition in the 1980s and ‘90s. Key to the Coalition’s method was obtaining and comparing church membership lists with voter registration and mailing lists of anti-abortion, gun rights, and other issue groups to create voter files for political and electoral development. In the 1990s, the Coalition built on an earlier concept called “in-pew voter registration” with events they called “Citizenship Sundays.” Today’s CITs stage an annual event of the same name, similarly aimed at voter registration.⁹ (In 2016, the event was held on September 18, shortly before registration for the November election closed.)

There are subtle but important differences in these approaches, though, that shed light on how the movement has grown. Since the decline of the Chris-

tian Coalition and other national groups with aging leaders, and especially since Barack Obama's election in 2008, the Christian Right has needed to reorganize, thanks to generational changes in leadership, institutionalization of a fractious but dynamic movement, and the typical adaptations that any social and political movement faces after losing a national election. This has partly meant revising, retooling, and updating the mechanics of their political operations. And the primary distinction between the old and new forms of organizing is where the movement thrust is coming from.

The Christian Coalition worked primarily *outside* of churches in its effort to mobilize conservative Christians into politics, sometimes alienating pastors and congregations with tactics like aggressively leafleting church parking lots with voter guides during Sunday services. The approach of today's Christian Right is to work primarily from *within*: the manual encourages individual churches to connect their resources with a greater public movement, in their own way, at their own pace. It's a method intended to have longer-term effects, as Christian Right activism becomes more of an organic part of local congregations' beliefs and actions that flow from them. A Facebook post by the South Dakota FRC affiliate, Family Heritage Alliance, epitomized this when promoting a seminar on CITs in November 2017: "The Culture Impact Team is indigenous to your church. Focusing on the local church allows us to be able to come along side you to be a source of information, equipping, alerting, and mobilizing you and your church as we engage our communities, state and nation."¹⁰

But even as FRC and its affiliates assure churches that they are in control, they see churches as a potent part of their political plans; the Family Heritage Alliance hoped to train its state's CITs to fight religious liberty issues as a 2018 priority.¹¹

Similar efforts are ongoing in other states. In 2012, FRC teamed up with their Ohio state political affiliate (Citizens for Community Values), the Alliance Defending Freedom, and Focus on the Family's political unit, then called CitizenLink

(now Family Policy Alliance), to organize six CIT training conferences to prepare for the 2012 election and in anticipation of a referendum on marriage equality in 2013.¹² In 2014, FRC organized a series of 12 rallies for pastors across North Carolina, partly with the intention of organizing CITs.¹³

In August 2015, a Baptist church in Louisiana hosted a "pastors luncheon" to promote the formation of new CITs in other congregations. The event featured as speakers Tony Perkins (who headed the state's FRC/Focus on the Family political affiliate before becoming the national FRC leader); then-Senator David Vitter (R-LA); and Mike Johnson,¹⁴ an attorney who'd be elected as a state representative that fall. Johnson's appearance at this catalytic event demonstrated another role that the CITs play: providing an electoral base—and arguably a launching pad—for aspiring Christian Right pols who go on to advance their agenda. Shortly after his election, Rep. Johnson proposed a bill titled the Marriage and Conscience Act, similar to Indiana's controversial 2015 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which would have made it easier for businesses to claim religious exemptions to anti-discrimination laws. The bill was tabled, but Johnson went on to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he serves on the House Judiciary Committee.

And on January 16, 2016—Religious Freedom Day—FRC hosted a national four-hour seminar called the Freedom to Believe Broadcast.¹⁵ Republican Presidential candidates Jeb Bush, Mike Huckabee, Ted Cruz, Ben Carson, Marco Rubio, Carly Fiorina, Rick Santorum and Donald Trump were slated to send video messages about their views on religious freedom.¹⁶ Speakers included FRC leaders as well as Ronnie Floyd, the President of the Southern Baptist Convention. Some 160 churches hosted viewings and discussion groups in all 50 states.¹⁷ The announcement declared that churches should "Use this event to gather a group of believers interested in joining or forming a Culture Impact Ministry in your church."¹⁸

THE MYTH OF CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

All of this organization is in service of a seamless theological and pseudo-historical narrative, which both mobilizes lay conservative Christians and provides the framework for their political agenda. When the manual approvingly quotes Richard Land as saying that it is up to Christians to "restore once again to America a biblically based legal system that protects all human life from conception to natural death,"¹⁹ its author is appealing for the restoration of a Christian nation that never was—what historian Frank Lambert calls a "usable past" that justifies the politics of the present.²⁰

This usable past suggests a transcendent vision of a Christian nation, mandated by God and ordered by the Founding Fathers. It's a powerful appeal, yet one based on self-serving distortions of history. "On July 4, 1776 in Philadelphia," Curreton writes in the manual, "our Founding Fathers signed a document declaring our independence from the tyranny of those who would enslave the minds, the souls, the lives of men. But what many Americans don't realize is that with the same document, we not only declared our *independence* from Great Britain, we just as strongly declared our *dependence* upon Almighty God."

This argument is part of the manual's larger conflation of God and the intentions of the Founding Fathers, deployed to justify contemporary Christian Right views of what the Constitution requires on such matters as religious freedom and separation of church and state.

History doesn't bear out the argument that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. God, the Bible, and Christianity are nowhere mentioned in the Constitution. The sole reference to religion is in Article VI, which proscribes religious tests for public office, and thereby established a principle of religious equality that has, over time, similarly precluded religious tests for citizenship and voting, or for immigrants and refugees.

Because the story of the Constitution does not bear out their claims, Christian nationalists usually avoid talking about it and often rely on the Declaration of Inde-

pendence as proof that the country was founded as a Christian Nation, to be governed under biblical laws. They frequently conflate the religious references found in the Declaration with the intentions of the Framers of the Constitution. But in fact, the Framers' approach to matters of religion and government are not rooted in the Declaration of Independence.

The actual story of religious liberty in the U.S. is rooted not in the Declaration's appeals to God, but in other work of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. After serving as the principal author of the Declaration in 1776, within a year of his returning to Virginia, Jefferson wrote and introduced in the state legislature what eventually became the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. The point was to promote religious equality under the law, such that citizens may believe as they will and that this "shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."²¹ As historians Edwin S. Gausstad and Leigh E. Schmidt wrote in their classic, *The Religious History of America*, the development of religious freedom in Virginia "determined the course that the nation itself chose to follow."²² Yet there is nothing in the Virginia Statute holding a special place for Christianity or that otherwise supports Cureton's claims.²³

Nevertheless, the fundamentals of Christian nationalist ideology are part of what FRC wants its grassroots activists to build upon. And the failure of most of the rest of society to engage with this body of misinformation has effectively ceded the public debate, treating these distortions as esoteric matters best left to the academy and the most persistent advocates of separation of church and state.

History is powerful. That's why it is important for the rest of us not just to know how the Religious Right is wrong, but also that the Framers of the Constitution intended to inoculate the country against the ravages of religious supremacism.

DOMINIONISM AND THE CULTURE MANDATE

Other key texts in the manual refer to the "cultural mandate" or the "cultural commission"—terms that in other contexts are used interchangeably with the "dominion mandate." This idea de-

rives from the biblical book of Genesis, in which God declares that man shall "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Over the past half-century, the phrase has become the watchword for the religious vision of Dominionists, who believe that, regardless of means, timetable, or theological camp, God has called conservative Christians to exercise dominion over society by taking control of political and cultural institutions.²⁴

The implications of these terms, considered the foundation for a "biblical worldview" (used interchangeably with a "Christian Worldview"), and the activities related to attaining Christian domination over every area of life are discussed in the manual. This frank theocratic language is remarkable in itself since so much of what we hear is couched in vaguer terms like "family values" and "values voter." Cureton's essays in the manual, by contrast, epitomize contemporary Dominionism, as when he writes:

This God-given responsibility and authority to have dominion is all inclusive. As vice-regents of God, we are to bring His sovereign rule (i.e., His Kingdom) to bear on every sphere of our world, not just the sacred, but also the secular. God's dominion is to hold sway over all human endeavors and institutes, such as religious practice, ethics, education, government, science, medicine, the arts, the environments, entertainment, etc.²⁵

The manual's worldview was given voice at the 2017 Values Voter Summit, where plenary speaker Dr. Frank Wright, CEO of the D. James Kennedy Center for Christian Statesmanship in Washington, D.C., explained the biblical justification for political action. "[T]he Great Commission and the Cultural Mandate together comprise the ethic of Christian cultural engagement," Wright declared. He emphasized that God is sovereign over all of the institutions of culture, "including and maybe especially government and politics."²⁶ Wright's Center for Christian Statesmanship seeks to train members of Congress and staff in this approach to government and governing.

WRONG ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Writing in the manual, Cureton equates religious liberty solely with advancing the mission of conservative evangelical Christianity, especially on abortion, sexuality, gender, and marriage. As Cureton sees it, religious freedom amounts to this: "God has given every human being the basic freedom of being able to relate to and worship Him both privately and publicly, a freedom which is enshrined in our First Amendment."²⁷ No mention is made of the religious freedom of others.

Such a narrow and self-serving claim relies on a shaky foundation not supported by history. A focus of this revisionist campaign is a long-term siege against Thomas Jefferson's famous phrase, "wall of separation between church and state," and related constitutional principles. Historian John Ragosta writes that prior to the modern notion of Christian nationalism, the idea of separation of church and state was little questioned. It had been central to Supreme Court jurisprudence since 1879.²⁸

In keeping with this siege on the metaphorical wall, Cureton grossly distorts the idea of church-state separation, its history and the motives of its defenders. The distortions involve the claim that religion generally and Christianity in particular need protection from the alleged creeping tyranny of the secular state. Unfortunately, these and other such claims have not been contested as widely as befits their central role in the religious and political identity of members of the Christian Right.

In 1802, President Jefferson wrote to the Baptist Association of Danbury, Connecticut, to assure this religious minority of his support for religious freedom. At the time, Connecticut had yet to disestablish the Congregational Church, and Baptists were effectively second-class citizens. Jefferson promised them, in a letter vetted by his Attorney General, that they could be so assured because the First Amendment had erected a wall of separation between church and state.

But Cureton claims, in one of several essays in the manual, that the "true meaning of Jefferson's 'wall'" is that he intended it as "a protection of people of faith from government intrusion."²⁹

This echoes a long-debunked notion that the metaphor was intended as a “one-directional wall” to protect religion from government, when in fact the purpose was for the protection of both from one another.³⁰ Cureton is evidently aware of this, complaining that the Supreme Court has “ignored the original intent of the Founding Fathers” and “trashed four centuries of America’s Judeo-Christian heritage” in “declaring a two-way ‘Wall of Separation’ between church and state.”³¹

Unsurprisingly, Cureton therefore claims that the so-called “culture war” is a war against both Christian beliefs and against “our nation’s Christian heritage.”³² He questions the patriotism of anyone who holds different views. “Nobody,” he concludes, “ought to claim to be a good citizen, a patriot who takes Christianity out of culture, God out of government.”³³

This dualistic framing pits the people of God against a secular government whose actual purpose is to protect the rights of all. Indeed, Cureton claims that defenders of church-state separation are trying to silence Christians who speak out about the issues of the day:

[H]ave you noticed how the critics cry foul, claiming “Separation of Church & State,” and saying “You don’t have a right to speak about public policy and law! Go cower in your church, lock yourself in your little stained glass prison, and stay there!”³⁴

Of course, few if any ever say such things. And consistent with Cureton’s method, he cites no examples of anyone who ever has.

THE VIRTUAL REALITY OF “CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW GLASSES”

Cureton and his ilk believe that there are three areas of God-ordained governance: civil government, the family, and the church.³⁵ And while he insists that the godly institution of civil government must be obeyed, he also says that when it strays out of conformity with God’s laws, it is incumbent on Christians to resist. How far this resistance should go is the question.

The influential evangelical theologian Francis Schaeffer’s 1981 book, *A Christian Manifesto*, served as a catalyst

for the evangelical antiabortion movement, the broader Christian Right, and the creeping theocratization of the Republican Party.³⁶ Cureton cites the book in denouncing an apolitical stance on the part of some conservative Christians as “unbiblical,” declaring that, “it is in fact a heresy, a doctrine of demons.” The answer, Cureton asserts, is “to recover a biblically based worldview that rightly places all of life under the rule of God.”³⁷

While Schaeffer claimed to support religious pluralism and to oppose theocracy, his work inspired the political activism of many who later became full-fledged Dominionists. Although he didn’t share the belief, held by Christian Reconstructionist followers of theologian R.J. Rushdoony, that society should eventually be reorganized according to Old Testament biblical laws, he nonetheless warned of a profound threat to contemporary Christianity by secular government, and called for massive resistance.

Cureton, like many others, follows in Schaeffer’s harsh rhetorical wake, calling judges “black robed tyrants” who are engaged in “radical secularization” of the public square, promoting homosexuality, which he calls a “deceptive perversion,” and attacking the “sacred institution of marriage.”³⁸

Cureton’s manual thus casts the ordinary struggles of public life in terms of religious war. And in so doing, it does not just idly employ military and apocalyptic rhetoric the way some people speak of politics as a horse race. Rather, the meaning is more literal, as he states, “we are soldiers on a battlefield of a much grander scale fighting in a War that has been waged since the beginning of time with an enemy that desperately seeks to stop God’s kingdom from coming...”³⁹

“It is only when you put on your ‘Christian worldview glasses,’” Cureton declares, “that you can see the current culture war for what it really is.”⁴⁰

Following this, Cureton denounces the idea of religious tolerance, and anything other than a “black and white” view of good and evil, as a “subtle, sinister brainwashing process” that seeks “peaceful co-existence with evil.”⁴¹ Therefore, he concludes, sometimes, “we must stand up to our government...if the government

commands what God condemns, then you are obliged to disobey.”⁴²

Justifying what he calls the “last resort” of Christian civil disobedience, he attributes a quote to George Washington: “Government... is a troublesome servant and a fearful Master.”⁴³ Tellingly, it’s a line taken from a larger statement that the Washington Library at Mt. Vernon has debunked as “spurious.”⁴⁴

THE MANUAL FOR THEOCRATIC DOMINION

The religious vision of the manual—of conservative Christians laboring toward political dominion—and the many Christian Right catchphrases it deploys, are familiar to anyone engaged in public life. Many of its false historical claims are also familiar. Taken together they provide a clear snapshot of the ideological presumptions of the Christian Right and merit careful study as well as the development of thoughtful responses.

Culture Impact Teams serve as the ground troops of a formidable political army, now waging its war from the center of politics and government, where they’ve been empowered to advance a dangerous suite of theocratic and persecutory policies. What’s often lost amid the consternation over Trump’s support among White evangelicals, is that it they are not just a mystifying demographic, but a politically well-organized one as well. When people refer to “the base,” they are an important element; when they refer to the infrastructure of the Christian Right, CITs are part of the foundation. And when we say that the Christian Right is promoting theocratic Dominionism, FRC’s manual is Exhibit A in demonstrating how this ideology is shaping national policy, as well as the Christian Right’s plan to continue building their base into the future. ☹

Frederick Clarkson is a Senior Research Analyst at Political Research Associates. He co-founded the group blog Talk To Action and authored Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy. Follow him on Twitter at @Fred-Clarkson.

- March," Southern Poverty Law Center, March 15, 1998.
32. Ibid.
33. Jeffrey Kaplan, "The Reconstruction of the Ásatrú and Odinnist Traditions," in *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*, ed. James R. Lewis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 203-204.
34. "Bylaws," The Asatru Alliance, accessed September 3, 2017, <http://www.asatru.org/aabylaws.php>.
35. See "Valgard Murray Biography: ABOUT VALGARD MURRAY," World Tree Publications, accessed November 1, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130501220434/http://www.worldtreepublications.org/page009.aspx>.
36. See "Asatru Alliance Althing 36," The Asatru Alliance, accessed November 1, 2017, <https://www.asatru.org/althing36.php>.
37. See "Contacts of the Asatru Alliance," The Asatru Alliance, accessed November 1, 2017, <https://www.asatru.org/contact.php>.
38. "Do You Want Bigots, Gavin? Because This Is How You Get Bigots," Southern Poverty Law Center, August 10, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/08/10/do-you-want-bigots-gavin-because-how-you-get-bigots>.
39. "Vinlanders Social Club," Anti-Defamation League, accessed October 3, 2017, <https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/vinlanders-social-club>.
40. Stephen E. Atkins, *Encyclopedia of Right-Wing Extremism in Modern American History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 117-118.
41. Woodruff, 2015.
42. Ibid.
43. Will Rahn, "Inside the White Supremacists' Halloween Bash," *The Daily Beast*, November 2, 2015, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/inside-the-white-supremacists-halloween-bash>.
44. Donna Minkowitz, "How the Alt-Right Is Using Sex and Camp to Attract Gay Men to Fascism," *Slate*, June 5, 2017, http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2017/06/05/how_alt_right_leaders_jack_donovan_and_james_o_meara_attract_gay_men_to.html.
45. Matthew Wils, "Ernst Röhm, the Highest-Ranking Gay Nazi," *Jstor Daily*, March 27, 2017, <https://daily.jstor.org/ernst-rohm-the-highest-ranking-gay-nazi/>.
46. Jenkins, 2015.
47. Carless, 2017.
48. Jordan Fischer, "Who are the American Guard: Patriotic Nationalists, or Skinheads in Disguise?" *The Indy Channel*, May 25, 2017, <https://www.theindychannel.com/longform/who-are-the-american-guard-patriotic-nationalists-or-skinheads-in-disguise>.
49. "Behind the American Guard: Hardcore White Supremacists," Anti-Defamation League, March 30, 2017, <https://www.adl.org/blog/behind-the-american-guard-hardcore-white-supremacists>.
50. Bill Morlin, "New Alt-Right 'Fight Club' Ready for Street Violence," Southern Poverty Law Center, April 25, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/04/25/new-alt-right-fight-club-ready-street-violence>.
51. "Do You Want Bigots, Gavin? Because This Is How You Get Bigots," Southern Poverty Law Center, August 10, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/08/10/do-you-want-bigots-gavin-because-how-you-get-bigots>.
52. See <https://shop.americankivings.com>.
53. Natasha Lennard, "The Violent Clashes In Berkeley Weren't 'Pro-Trump' Versus 'Anti-Trump,'" *Esquire*, April 16, 2017, <http://www.esquire.com/news-politics/news/a54564/the-violent-clashes-in-berkeley-werent-pro-trump-versus-anti-trump/>.
54. Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity*, New York: New York University Press, 2002, 136.
55. Shane Burley, "Disunite the Right: The Growing Divides in the Pepe Coalition," Political Research Associates, September 19, 2017, <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/09/19/disunite-the-right-the-growing-divides-in-the-pepe-coalition/>.
56. "Flags and Other Symbols Used By Far-Right Groups in Charlottesville," Southern Poverty Law Center, August 12, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/08/12/flags-and-other-symbols-used-far-right-groups-charlottesville>.
57. Jason Wilson, "Suspect In Portland Double Murder Posted White Supremacist Material Online," *The Guardian*, May 28, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/may/27/portland-double-murder-white-supremacist-muslim-hate-speech>.
58. McNallen was scheduled to speak at the rally, and he also publicly endorsed the event on Twitter through his Wotan Network account: <https://twitter.com/WotanNetwork1/status/89638216736538113>.
59. Christina Caron, "Heather Heyer, Charlottesville Victim, Is Recalled as 'a Strong Woman,'" *The New York Times*, August 13, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/13/us/heather-heyer-charlottesville-victim.html>.
60. Jonathan Montpetit, "Inside Quebec's Far Right: Soldiers of Odin Leadership Shake-Up Signals Return to Extremist Roots," CBC News, December 14, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-far-right-soldiers-of-odin-1.3896175>.
61. Tom Porter, "Soldiers of Odin: Name of Far-Right Group Patented for Use by 'Glittery Unicorn' Clothing Range," *International Business Times*, May 18, 2016, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/soldiers-odin-name-far-right-group-patented-use-by-glittery-unicorn-clothing-range-1560781>.
62. Tom Porter, "Mika Ranta: Founder of Far-Right Soldiers of Odin Vigilante Group Convicted of Aggravated Assault," *International Business Times*, May 19, 2016, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/mika-ranta-founder-far-right-soldiers-odin-vigilante-group-convicted-aggravated-assault-1560987>.
63. "Soldiers of Odin USA: The Extreme European Anti-Refugee Group Comes to America," Anti-Defamation League, 2016, <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/Soldiers-of-Odin-USA-Report-web.pdf>.
64. Jake Wallis Simons, "Exclusive: Nazi Daggers, SS Hats and a Hangman's Noose: On Night Patrol with the 'Soldiers of Odin', Neo-Nazi Led Vigilantes Vowing to 'Keep Europe's Women Safe from Migrant Sex Attacks,'" *Daily Mail*, February 4, 2016 (updated 7 February 2017), <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3426685/Nazi-daggers-SS-hats-hangman-s-noose-night-patrol-Soldiers-Odin-neo-Nazi-led-vigilantes-vowing-Europe-s-women-safe-migrant-sex-attacks.html>.
65. "Soldiers of Odin USA," Anti-Defamation League, 2016.
66. Simons, 2016.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. "Soldiers of Odin USA," Anti-Defamation League, 2016.
70. Alice Speri, "The FBI Has Quietly Investigated White Supremacist Infiltration of Law Enforcement," *The Intercept*, January 31, 2017, <https://theintercept.com/2017/01/31/the-fbi-has-quietly-investigated-white-supremacist-infiltration-of-law-enforcement/>.
71. Alex Shams, "Neither Taharrush Game Nor Sexism Are Arab 'Cultural Practices,'" *Huff Post*, accessed December 19, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/alex-shams/sexism-isnt-arab-cultural-practice_b_9022056.html.
72. "Soldiers of Odin USA: The Extreme European Anti-Refugee Group Comes to America," Anti-Defamation League, 2016, <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/Soldiers-of-Odin-USA-Report-web.pdf>.
73. "Enough is Enough," *Patheos*, January 16, 2016, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/throught-hegrepevine/2016/01/enough-is-enough/>.
74. "Soldiers of Odin USA," 2016.
75. Ibid.
76. Dan Berrett, "Differing Pictures Emerge of Pennsylvania Slaying Victim," *Times Herald-Record*, July 17, 2009, <http://www.recordonline.com/article/20090717/News/307179900>.
77. Given the fact that Parrish also worked as a Pennsylvania corrections officer, it is worth considering to what extent those employed by the prison industry are also "buying into" the promises proffered by incarcerated Odinnists.
78. "2 Men Charged in Phoenix Hate-Crime Shooting," *AZFamily.com*, September 30, 2010, <http://www.azfamily.com/story/28328488/2-men-charged-in-phoenix-hate-crime-shooting>.
79. Stephen Lemons, "Can France Save a Phoenix Neo-Nazi and Accused Murderer from the Needle? Let's Hope Not," *Phoenix New Times*, January 31, 2017, <https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/news/can-france-save-a-phoenix-neo-nazi-and-accused-murderer-from-the-needle-let-s-hope-not-9037127>.
80. Stephen Lemons, "Neo-Nazi Travis Ricci Just Pulled Two Decades in the Joint, As The Specter of His Death Waits," *Phoenix New Times*, May 26, 2011, <http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/news/neo-nazi-travis-ricci-just-pulled-two-decades-in-the-joint-as-the-specter-of-his-death-waits-6448951>.
81. Helen A. Berger, Evan A. Leach, and Leigh S. Shaffer, *Voices from the Pagan Census: A National Survey of Witches and Neo-pagans in the United States* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 16.
82. "Soldiers of Odin USA: The Extreme European Anti-Refugee Group Comes to America," Anti-Defamation League, 2016, <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/Soldiers-of-Odin-USA-Report-web.pdf>.
83. Jenkins, 2015.
84. Jeffrey Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America: Millenarian Movements from the Far Right to the Children of Noah* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 21.
85. Ibid.
86. "Frequently-Asked Questions About The Troth," *The Troth*, February 3, 2017, <https://www.thetroth.org/faq.html>.
87. See https://www.facebook.com/pg/HeathensUnited/about/?ref=page_internal.
88. Ryan Smith (Co-Founder, Heathens United Against Racism), interviewed by Shannon Weber via Facebook Messenger, November 2, 2017.
89. Max Londberg, "White Supremacists Coming to Independence? Community Outcry Halts Fringe Group's Event," *The Kansas City Star*, August 16, 2017, <http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article167494937.html>.
90. See <https://www.facebook.com/HeathensUnited/>.
91. "Declaration 127," Huginn's Heathen Hof, accessed October 3, 2017, <http://www.declaration127.com/>.

A Manual to Restore a Christian Nation that Never Was, p. 17

- Frederick Clarkson, "EXPOSED: How the Right's State-Based Think Tanks Are Transforming U.S. Politics," *The Public Eye*, Winter 2013. See FRC State Family Policy Councils; Focus on the Family's political arm, Family Policy Alliance's State Family Policy Councils.
- Jeremy Peters, "Trump Keeps His Conservative Movement Allies Closest," *The New York Times*, August 2, 2017.
- Katherine Stewart, "The Museum of the Bible Is a Safe Space for Christian Nationalists," *The New York Times*, January 6, 2018; Peter Montgomery, "Leader Of Trump Cabinet Bible Studies Aggressively Expanding Right-Wing Proselytizing To Government Officials," *Right Wing Watch*, November 27, 2017.
- Katherine Stewart, "Betsy DeVos and God's Plan for Schools," *The New York Times*, December 13, 2016.
- Kristina Rizga, "Betsy DeVos Wants to Use America's Schools to Build 'God's Kingdom': Trump's education secretary pick has spent a lifetime working to end public education as we know it," *Mother Jones*, March/April, 2017.
- Steve Vladeck, "Hobby Lobby and executive power: Gorsuch's key rulings," CNN, February 1, 2017.
- Department of Justice, "Office of Public Affairs, Attorney General Sessions Issues Guidance On Federal Law Protections For Religious Liberty," October 6, 2017.
- Tony Perkins, "Doubting Thomas: Libs Take on Jefferson's Legacy," *Washington Watch*, January 15, 2018.
- Rebecca Berry and John Graves, "Pastors 2028 Project - Practical Implementation," YouTube, Posted March 10, 2016; See Culture Impact Team training video 10.
- Family Heritage Alliance, "Culture Impact Training, Rapid City," Facebook, retrieved January 7, 2018.
- Dana Ferguson, "Conservative group will argue for new governor to push transgender bill," *Argus Leader*, September 27, 2017.
- Brian Tashman, "Anti-Gay Groups Prepare for Potential Ohio Referendum on Marriage Ban," *Right Wing Watch*, July 27, 2012.
- Posmo, "Rabid anti-gay 'Pastors 4 NC,'" *blue nc*, June 27, 2014.
- Brian Blackwell, "Culture Impact Teams help churches influence society," *The Message*, April 1, 2015.
- "Free to Believe Broadcast," Family Research Council, YouTube, January 16, 2016.
- John Wright, "WATCH LIVE: Eight GOP Presidential Candidates to Speak During Anti-Gay Web Hatecast," *Towleroad*, January 16, 2016.
- Family Research Council, "Family Research Council's Free to Believe Nationwide Broadcast to Reach Over 160 Churches in 50 States," January 14, 2016.
- "Free to Believe," Culture Impact web site.
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Biblical Basis: Firm Foundation for Cultural Impact Ministry," Pgs. 18-19. Included in Kenyn Cureton, "Culture Impact Team Resource Manual: How to Establish a Ministry at Your Church," Family Research Council, 2011.
- Frank Lambert, "Separation of Church & State: Founding Principle of Religious Liberty," Mercer University Press, 2014. Pg. 13.
- Quotes from Thomas Jefferson, "Monticello."
- Edwin S. Gaustad and Leigh E. Schmidt, *The Religious History of America*, Revised Edition, Harper Collins, 2002. Pg. 123.
- John Ragosta, *Religious Freedom: Jefferson's Legacy, America's Creed*, University of Virginia Press, 2013; Edwin S. Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar of God: A Religious Biography of Thomas Jefferson*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996.
- Frederick Clarkson, "Dominionism Rising: A Theocratic Movement Hiding in Plain Sight," *The Public Eye*, Summer 2016.
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Biblical Basis: Firm Foundation for Cultural Impact Ministry," Pgs. 3-4.
- Frank Wright, Video Archive, Values Voter Summit, 2017.
- Kenyn Cureton, "Culture Impact Team Resource Manual: How to Establish a Ministry at Your Church," Family Research Council, 2011. Pg. 24
- John Ragosta, *Religious Freedom: Jefferson's Legacy, America's Creed*, University of Virginia Press, 2013. Pgs. 1-3.
- Kenyn Cureton, "Culture Impact Team Resource Manual: How to Establish a Ministry at Your Church," Family Research Council, 2011. Pg. 37.
- Robert Boston, "Sects, Lies and Videotape: David Barton's Distorted History," *Church & State*, April 1993.
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Christian Citizenship Sunday: How you Can Have Maximum Patriotic Impact," 2011. (Pg. 8 of an unpaginated document).
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Biblical Basis: Firm Foundation for Cultural Impact Ministry," Pg. 1.
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Christian Citizenship Sunday: How you Can Have Maximum Patriotic Impact." (Pg. 8 of an unpaginated document).
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Christian Citizenship Sunday: How you Can Have Maximum Patriotic Impact." (Pg. 4 of an unpaginated document).
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Biblical Basis: Firm Foundation for Cultural Impact Ministry," Pg. 19.
- Charles S. Broomfield, Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Force Behind the Evangelical Takeover of the Republican Party in America*, (University of Missouri - Kansas City, 2012).
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Biblical Basis: Firm Foundation for Cultural Impact Ministry," Pg. 2.
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Christian Citizenship Sunday: How you Can Have Maximum Patriotic Impact." (Pgs. 5-8 of an unpaginated document).
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Biblical Basis: Firm Foundation for Cultural Impact Ministry," Pg. 7.
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Biblical Basis: Firm Foundation for Cultural Impact Ministry," Pg. 7.
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Biblical Basis: Firm Foundation for Cultural Impact Ministry," Pg. 15.
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Christian Citizenship Sunday: How you Can Have Maximum Patriotic Impact." (Pg. 4 of an unpaginated document).
- Kenyn Cureton, unbylined essay, "Christian Citizenship Sunday: How you Can Have Maximum Patriotic Impact." (Pg. 4 of an unpaginated document).
- Digital Encyclopedia, "Spurious Quotations," Mount Vernon.

The Art of Activism

As a Filipino-American printmaker, illustrator, comic artist, and educator, Karl Orozco's work often grapples with the legacy of colonialism, seeking to "challenge assumed notions of race, family, migration and power." The Queens, New York-based artist's comics typically follow characters of color as they migrate, build community, and confront environmental crisis. Grappling with multifaceted topics such as identity and colonialism, Orozco is fascinated by how symbols change in meaning based on context, pointing out that, "To one person a palm tree could conjure the words 'exotic' or 'foreign,' and to another, 'motherland.'"

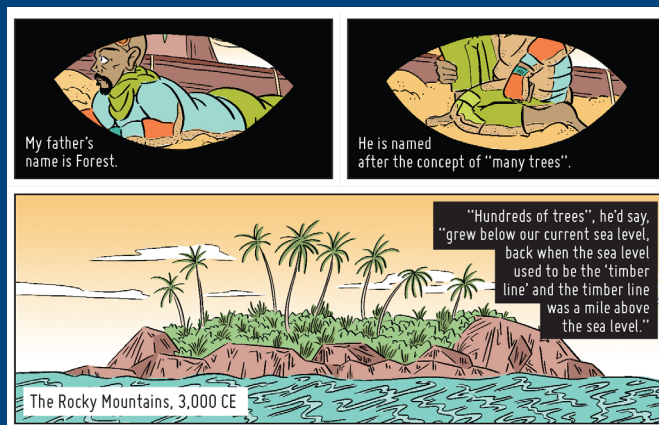
Orozco's creative process usually starts at the library. He likes to gather references on a topic, and then fill his sketchbook with ideas. "I try to fill a full two-page spread with relevant pictures and quotes. When complete, I step back to see if any new connections arise and use those in-betweens as starting points." One recent comic, "Low Tide," took inspiration from science fiction authors Octavia Butler and Chang-Rae Lee to tease out conversations about the desire to discover other Earth-like planets, the history of colonialism, and how they relate to marginalized communities. "As this planet becomes less and less inhabitable," he

noted, "I worry about who gets left behind in the quest for survival."

When he's not making comics, Orozco creates promotional materials for racial justice organizations such as the Asian Arts Initiative, 18 Million Rising, and Anakbayan New York-New Jersey, a Filipino youth organization. For him, art can convey advocacy messages with a power that other formats often lack. "An organizer once told me that art is like a flower," Orozco said. "Its appearance is like petals, which beckon the honeybees and hummingbirds, but its influence is small without a message—or seed—to spread. Artists serve as interpreters for complex ideas and are key in engaging audiences outside our movements."

After the 2016 election, Orozco left his graphic design job for the Queens Museum, where he teaches art to middle-school students. "I have always loved working with youth and find art extremely important in navigating our current political and social climate," he said. "I want youth to feel agency over their futures by cultivating a sense of pride and power in themselves and their communities."

-Allison Puglisi



Karl Orozco, Panel from "Low Tide," featured in *New Frontiers: The Many Worlds of George Takei*, 2017. See more at: karlorozco.com.

POLITICAL
RESEARCH
ASSOCIATES

Political Research Associates (PRA) is a think tank devoted to challenging the Right and advancing social justice. Visit our website, www.politicalresearch.org, to access past issues of *The Public Eye*, connect with us through social media, and donate. You'll also find in-depth reports, web-only features, and our Eyes Right blog. Need to renew or purchase a subscription? Go to politicalresearch.org/subscribe. Call 617.666.5300 or email us at contact@politicalresearch.org for more information.

Your support makes *The Public Eye* possible. Subscribe and donate today!