


Vol. 3 Number 1 – Late Winter, 2021

# MAC Arrow

Unitarian Universalist  
Multiracial Unity Action Council  
(UUMUAC)



“For the Unity of the  
light and dark skinned  
people of the world.”

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## **The Mission Statement**

It is the mission of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus to carry out and foster anti-racist and multiracial unity activities both within and outside the Unitarian Universalist Association through education, bearing witness and other actions, and expansion of our membership both within and outside the walls of our congregations.

We also seek to defend our UU Principles against those who seek to undermine them.

## **The Vision Statement**

We envision our congregations, denomination, and society as not being color blind but color appreciative; as judging and treating members of the world’s rank and file by the content of their character, not the color of their skin or their cultural heritage; and as treasuring diversity in the context of the “Beloved Community.” We call this vision Multiracial Unitarian Universalism.

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## **Jay Kiskel, Co-Founder of the Fifth Principle Project, is running for a position on the UUA Board of Trustees**



My name is **Jay Kiskel**. I am asking you to support my petition to run for a position on the UUA Board of Trustees. Three new trustees will be elected at the 2021 virtual General Assembly in June.

Per the UUA bylaws, an individual may submit their name for consideration by obtaining 50 signatures with no more than ten signatures from a single congregation.

Typically, the slate of board candidates is identified by a Nominating Committee. If only a single candidate is identified for a board position, no vote is required to “elect” a board candidate. My candidacy will ensure that a vote by General Assembly delegates will be required thus returning the use of democracy to this process.

### **Who is Jay Kiskel?**

I have been a member of my home congregation, Northwest Unitarian Universalist Congregation, in the Atlanta area for 30 years. I have served on numerous positions on my congregation’s board of trustees as well as served on the Mid-South District board and the board of The Mountain, a UU identified camp and retreat center in North Carolina. I am currently the president of the Universalist Convocation which sponsors annual meetings so Universalists can gather and celebrate our Universalist heritage. After my retirement from a 35-year IT career, I have dedicated my time to gather, arrange, archive and write about Southern Unitarian and Universalist history. I am a member of the UU History and Heritage Society.

### **Why I Want to be a UUA Trustee**

Like many UUs, I had a distant relationship with our national leadership. My focus was on my local congregation. However, the 2017 controversy over the resignation of Rev. Morales, the UUA president, and the 2019 controversy at the Spokane General Assembly regarding the distribution of the book *The Gadfly Papers* caused me to look more closely at the decisioning process at the national level. I observed that there has been a breakdown of representative democracy that has left our UU leadership bereft of a diversity of voices. I am a liberal UU and hold a deep belief in the power of our Seven Principles and wish to represent those who share my beliefs on our UUA Board of Trustees.

I am a co-founder of the [FifthPrincipleProject.org](http://FifthPrincipleProject.org) and also ask you to join this grassroots effort to reinvigorate the right of conscience and renew the democratic process in the governance of our denomination. As one General Assembly delegate said in 2011:

*“We want more delegate choice, not the selection by a nominating committee. Remember that this morning we elected new UUA committee members without a single competitive race. We can do better than an inbred power structure.”*

**Your support of my petition and our Fifth Principle is warmly welcomed.**

## **Process for signing to support Jay Kiskel's candidacy for a position on the UUA Board of Trustees**

Individual church members only need to submit an email with the statement that they are supporting Jay Kiskel's candidacy, give their name and the name of their congregation. That email should be sent to [FifthPrincipleProject@gmail.com](mailto:FifthPrincipleProject@gmail.com)

A person from the congregation (minister, president, secretary or clerk) will verify that all people who submitted an email are current members on the Congregation. They will receive a copy of all the emails submitted so they can verify names (and emails if they want to). They will print out the provided form, fill in the bottom, scan it and email it back to [FifthPrincipleProject@gmail.com](mailto:FifthPrincipleProject@gmail.com).

### **"Pluralistic Identity, Not Victimhood Culture"**

a 5 star review by Dick Burkhart of

### **Don't Label Me How to Do Diversity Without Inflaming the Cultural Wars**

By Irshad Manji (2020)

#### **Introduction:**

This outstanding book is a welcome relief from the nastiness of identity politics. Though Manji herself is literally "diverse" (female, lesbian, Muslim), she, along with her playful alter-ego, dog Lily, is out to directly challenge the toxic practice of "diversity, equity, inclusion" by followers of Critical Race Theory. She is a very worldly person, a global citizen who came of age in Canada, now in the US, born in Uganda, with parents from India and Egypt.

To me Manji comes across as a humanist, but she advocates for an ancient tradition of enlightened Islam, now hidden from the public eye by radical Islam. Burned out as a TV debater, by taking on atheists (from the Left) and Muslim fundamentalists (from the Right), she now teaches how to muster "moral courage" to revive the empathy, respect, and civility needed to heal the bitter divides of the cultural wars.

Manji has done her academic homework and knows that "cancel culture" is not just an excess of fervor or a lapse of ethics. It's all about toxic ideologies of identity. Her solution is to replace the "binary" thinking of victimhood culture, such as presumed oppressor / victim relationships, by the realism of a plurality of identities in each of us, some better, some worse, but none defining our "essence". This means rejecting customary labels. As she says, "labels eclipse truth" (p xii) and "people are getting gamed...by our leaders" (think Trump), which won't end until "we stop gaming each other" (p xiv).

#### **Real Diversity versus Labels:**

First off, here's Manji takes on "diversity". "To do diversity honestly, we can't be labeling all of diversity's critics as bigots" (p 5). She reminds us that our national motto "E pluribus unum" requires a "diversity of viewpoints" learning to coexist. "Hate gets turbo-charged when those of us who bang the drum for inclusion drum out *reasonable* folks – merely because their opinions don't match ours" (p 9). "Much of today's polarized politics stems from the shaming that the diversity movement's been doing" (p 11), which flings a "double-dose of humiliation". And I'd add that the consequence is the anger of the white working class at the "condescending elitism" coming from university culture, as revealed by studies by Rabbi Michael Lerner, described in his book "Revolutionary Love".

The result is “negative polarization”, where people vote for Trump, “not out of faith in him, but out of fury with the others side” (p 12). A journalist attending Trump rallies heard people “spitting bullets about political correctness” (p 13). Manji reminds us that we need to “give respect in order to get respect” (p 14). Instead people feel they are “being scammed” (p 18), with good reason, given the severe impact of escalating inequality, long neglected by universities. In addition, “quota-driven diversity fails to love people for their own sake, and this signal failure has earned diversity a reputation for hypocrisy” (p 31). Instead she calls us to find a “common denominator” – “Call it the Tao. Call it evolution. Call it God” – fluid, not battle-hardened labels. (p 32).

Often Manji feels that when she’s labeled, instead of being treated as an individual, she becomes “an involuntary avatar of other people’s projections” (p 20), “a plaything of their broodings, the better to fuel their warring versions of reality” (p 21). She cites the philosophy of Bruce Lee: “If you attack the opposition head on, you harden its resolve to defeat you. But by developing harmonious individuality, both you and your opposition win. Think of it as self-defense without defensiveness” (p 22), or a “win-lose outlook, produces a lose-lose outcome” (p 23). Or “practice honesty diversity, listen without having to agree... act from a place of grace” (p 33). She reads the words of Barack Obama, MLK, Nelson Mandela, and more.

Manji’s conclusion is that “people have to risk giving offense” to “drill deeper than labels” – “Let’s equip a new generation to grow trust in relationships” (p 40). She says, let’s ask tough questions, such as “How can racism recede if we continue relying on categories invented by racists?” (p 51). Or, “for diversity defenders to shame cis, white, males, ... then accuse them of fragility when they fight back, or ... resent them for not being fragile enough..., is beyond passive-aggressive. It’s Trump-grade gaslighting” (p 55). She reminds us how “Humiliation can radicalize...ask young Muslim men across Europe” (p 56). In the US the alt-right “counts on recruiting kids being hunted by the liberal language police” (p 58), as she warns against “competitive victimhood” (p 60).

### **Integrity and Pluralism versus Victimhood:**

Astonishingly “white people” are invisible in the new American tapestry (of Critical Theory). One girl said, “I’m white. I’m nothing.” Another, “I’m white. I have no culture” (in the context of multiculturalism) (p 69). Meanwhile “even highly educated people scamper into pods of purity, where they can bask in emotional warmth” (p 77). In reality, “empathy for the Other is compassion for ourselves”. Instead, “When liberators cleave to a rigid identity, they contort themselves into bigots” (p 109). In this situation, “Any threat to my view becomes a threat to me...that’s why the politics of identity – whether Trump’s or ours – devastates democracy” (p 117).

Manji opts for integrity: “I’m for exhibiting that our justice that is positive rather than punitive...that it’s doable on the ground, not pickled in the brine of theory” (p 121). She concludes that “puritanical purity will destroy whatever it’s meant to defend” (p 127). How? “White folks step back and stew. White nationalists step in and spin. Diversity’s battalions fiercely condemn them but deploy rhetoric that feels to loads of white folks like they’re being indicted for every one of the nation’s ills” (p 128). My note: Some Critical Race Theorists actually do blame a supposed “white supremacy culture” for all oppression and indict all white people as complicit, leading some to “deaths of despair”, others to the Proud Boys, others into anxiety or depression, others to simply vote Trump as an act of rebellion.

Proclaiming the virtues of pluralism of identity and thought, Manji says, “Committed plurals are conscious renegades...For plurals, free speech is more a gift to pay forward, than an inheritance to squander” (p 137). “Unlike dogma, faith breathes. It squirms. It holds tension” (p 169). In regard to “safe spaces”, she cites how Google rethought psychological safety: “When project members trust that no one is going to jump down their throats for a hair-brained thought, self-censorship fades” (p 178). As to external censors, “Microaggression monitors speak for no one but themselves”, to counter the trend that “Inside the diversity posse, it’s cool to be offended”. “A suggestion to the next generation: Unfollow the fad of taking offense as an avenue to power” (p 180).

As to “power”: “A lot of people who think of themselves as marginalized actually wield power”, even if unconsciously. “As a result, power is exercised poorly, even destructively” (p 189). Then, taking a swipe at Robin DiAngelo, “If you treat white students as individuals, not as avatars of racism, you’ll set expectations that they’ll be far more motivated to meet” (p 197). Moreover, abuse of power comes from Critical Theory, not just Trump: “When authorities assert what’s true, they’re exerting the raw power to frame reality and fake truth” (p 199).

Then Manji poses a daring question: “Did Women Co-Create the Alt-Right?” citing the work of Angela Nagle about how the alt-right spread in response to cyberbullying on the Left: “This virtual partnership of group and gripe germinated from the keyboards of young women more than anybody else” (p 200). Even more amazingly, these young women “added mental illnesses to their online identities” as badges of victimhood honor, attacking community members who showed a lack “of sensitivity” to their labels. This is also referred to as “cry-bullying”, playing the “age-old game of abusing one’s power while claiming powerlessness” (p 201). However, Manji missed the similar historical role of women in “gossip” – the social media of yore.

Boys actually get more sympathy: “Insecure boys can’t become secure men if they are constantly being monitored and reprimanded” (p 202). About one boy, “Nobody knew that he had framed his white male privilege as a positive, as a blessing to do some good with” (p 203) – a time-honored response among “privileged” advocates for justice to the cynical label of “oppressor”.

### **Honest Diversity versus Multiculturalism and Allyship:**

Next Manji takes on “multiculturalism” and how it has ended up in Canada as a slogan to “preserve and protect” minorities, words that “freeze, not free, individuals...conflating diversity with labels ... rewarding cultural anxiety” (p 224). She also notes that in practice, the status of being “multicultural” is often extended only to certain “marginalized” cultural groups, excluding European and Islamic cultures, for example, and the cultures of competing geopolitical powers like Russia or China.

By contrast she cherishes Pierre Trudeau’s championship of “individuality” - “the principle that by being myself I can enrich my society” (p 226). She notes that in America, “Diversity is a means to an end” - *E pluribus unum* - but that “neither multiculturalism or individualism” (p 228) serves that purpose. What does “pluralism”, citing Thomas Jefferson as a “provocative plural” - the champion of the form of civics known as “Jeffersonian democracy” – civic duty grounded in working men and their small holdings combined with enlightened leadership.

As to “cultural appropriation”, Manji says, “Only a transactional mind-set would suggest that cultures can be owned and therefore embezzled from their owners...cultures are endlessly kinetic, combining influences from near and far” (p 273). As to “intersectionality”, she says, “combinations and permutations of labels still leave labels calling the shots” (p 288). As to allyship, she says “allies tend to get valued only for their usefulness to the cause, not their intrinsic humanity” and an unspoken rule of allyship is “that listening means unquestionably agreeing with how victims perceive their situation”, meaning “sit down, shut up, and follow the script” (p 270).

Manji develops the concept of “honest diversity”: To achieve it, “gently offend yourself” instead of others by “breathing slowly” and resolving “to communicate in ways that at least some of your detractors can relate to” while “standing with reason” (p 242). She reminds us not to “confuse the proliferation of progressive terminology with empathy and engagement” – “we are nobody’s savior except our own” (Payam Ahkavan , p 238).

### **Moral Courage:**

To summarize, Manji teaches “moral courage” - *to engage with empathy*, and the consequences when we fail. That is, “If the Other doesn’t feel heard, eventually he’ll feel humiliated...Perceived humiliation fuels identity-obsessed warriors, whether they rampaging for the ethno-state or the caliphate” (p 251). Now dig deeper - ask not just “who’s suffering and how do I help them?” but also “who benefits from



the suffering and how do I reach them?" (p 255). And "to develop trust in a relationship, don't just stand ready to help; proactively ask for help" (p 262), and "to rumble effectively (for the truth), be humble immediately" (p 266). Developing these skills of justice can take years of practice and coaching.

### **Thoughts about the proposed "8<sup>th</sup> UU Principle from the Rev. Craig Moro**

Here is the language of the proposed "8<sup>th</sup> Principle". "We will journey together toward spiritual wholeness by building a diverse, multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

Here's how it would look in the context of our established Principles:

#### **The Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association (proposed new language in green)**

*We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:*

- The inherent dignity and worth of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part
- **We will journey together toward spiritual wholeness by building a diverse, multi-cultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.**

First of all, this proposed "8<sup>th</sup> Principle" is not a *principle*. Longer than the first three principles combined, it is a *policy statement* that calls for active involvement in an existential conflict between (and within) persons. Here's how a *principle* is defined:

**principle** | noun: • a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning. • a rule or belief governing one's personal behavior.

The statement in green matches none of these descriptions of a "principle". It is a house of cards that stands only if we agree that there is substantial "racism" already (or permanently) present in ourselves and our (UU) institutions. (We're not talking about the KKK or the real estate industry!) It is a draft notice that sends us all into battle—into joyless, endless warfare

And it is ugly, in both its wording and its hostile intent: ugly, noisy, restless, urgent. It is like graffiti sprayed at the bottom of a set of 7 principles that move in a beautiful arc from the individual to the Cosmos and back again—an open, expanding circle that includes everyone and everything. As the current Principles statement ends, we are left in reverent silence, within the "interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part".

We need to ask ourselves: Since when do Unitarian Universalists embed conflict, anger, and a desire to win a battle into a faith statement, or a statement of principles? Since when do we “affirm and promote” engagement in an existential conflict between persons? Don’t all of our other 7 principles deny any real or lasting basis for such a conflict? “We all are *one*. Our *differences* matter less than what *connects* us.” Is this not the thrust of our current statement of Principles, Sources, and Purposes—harmonious existence within ourselves, with other persons, and with the natural world? Yes, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Source statements speaks of prophetic persons confronting “powers and structures of evil” but reminds us that they do so “with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.”

How does a “combat-ready” proclamation stand up to the brilliant 4<sup>th</sup> Source statement’s guidance that we honor teachings from named faith traditions that “call us to respond to God’s love by loving our neighbors as ourselves?” It does not urge us to honor, promote or even repeat “faith tradition” teachings that call us to do otherwise (and there are plenty of those!) By contrast, the “8<sup>th</sup> Principle” embodies the worst of the world’s religious traditions, their tribalism and narrowness. It’s just the old “children of light vs. children of darkness” story in a newly “woke” package.

### **A temporary alternative “holding place” for this proposed language?**

On the other hand, we who oppose the misapplication of “principle” to such language *must not seek to shame or punish those to whom it appeals*. An alternative approach is right in front of us. The UU **Purposes** Statement is essentially our mission statement, and such statements are reviewed on a much more regular basis than core principles (usually every 5 years or so). We could suggest that—since it seems so important to a large number of us to speak these words liturgically and to see them in print on documents—they might have a temporary home in the UU Purposes statement. The logical place is just before the closing paragraph that disavows and prohibits any “creedal test” for UUs:

### **“Purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association (proposed new language in green)**

The Unitarian Universalist Association shall devote its resources to and exercise its corporate powers for religious, educational and humanitarian purposes. The primary purpose of the Association is to serve the needs of its member congregations, organize new congregations, extend and strengthen Unitarian Universalist institutions and implement its principles.

The Association declares and affirms its special responsibility, and that of its member societies and organizations, to promote the full participation of persons in all of its and their activities and in the full range of human endeavor without regard to race, color, sex, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin and without requiring adherence to any particular interpretation of religion or to any particular religious belief or creed.

**We will journey together toward spiritual wholeness by building a diverse, multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.**

Nothing herein shall be deemed to infringe upon the individual freedom of belief which is inherent in the Universalist and Unitarian heritages or to conflict with any statement of purpose, covenant, or bond of union used by any society unless such is used as a creedal test.”

With this alternative placement in a safe holding place on offer as an option we could focus on the question of whether we are truly comfortable with the idea of “accountably” dismantling “racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.” To whom must we make such an *accounting*? Under threat of what sanctions, punishment, or other discipline? Who makes the determination about what is “racism” or in what, where, or whom we find it? Each individual UU? Or will there be a panel (or local panels) of judge inquisitors—a priestly class of those who know “racism” when they see it—to whom we all must defer?

Here's a proposal by Ibram X. Kendi:

"To fix the original sin of racism, Americans should pass an anti-racist amendment to the U.S. Constitution that enshrines two guiding anti-racist principals: Racial inequity is evidence of racist policy and the different racial groups are equals. The amendment would make unconstitutional racial inequity over a certain threshold, as well as racist ideas by public officials (with "racist ideas" and "public official" clearly defined). It would establish and permanently fund the Department of Anti-racism (DOA) comprised of formally trained experts on racism and no political appointees. The DOA would be responsible for preclearing all local, state and federal public policies to ensure they won't yield racial inequity, monitor those policies, investigate private racist policies when racial inequity surfaces, and monitor public officials for expressions of racist ideas. The DOA would be empowered with disciplinary tools to wield over and against policymakers and public officials who do not voluntarily change their racist policy and ideas."

Please read this statement carefully and give it some thought. Is the UUA proposing some version of Kendi's "DOA"? Would most of our members be comfortable with such a permanent department at the UUA, or such a committee in their local congregations? Or perhaps it would be some sort of traveling "Racism Assessor" appointed by the UUA to check on our ideas and use "disciplinary tools to wield over and against" us when we disagree with their assessment of our thoughts, words, and actions? Are we happy with this authoritarian vision of "the faith of the free"?

### **Warriors of "Accountable Dismantling"**

"Accountable dismantling" may lead some in troubling directions. If we are measuring and keeping accounts now as part of our UU experience, those who dismantle more "racism" might seem to "count" more than others among us. They would hold more in their "accounts" than the rest of us. The more "racism" I dismantle, the higher I will stand, the more I will "count". As an active **Dismantler UU** I will count more than an inactive or indifferent dismantler UU. Will our prowess at "dismantling" now be assessed and measured as a regular part of our UU experience? Should we all expect to receive grades at the end of each church year, or titles? *Dismantler Level One, Dismantler Level Two*, etc. Is this what we really want? What's next?

What could come next? Make no mistake about this: The most numerically countable/accountable way to dismantle institutional oppressions would be *to reduce the number of oppressor organizations and/or the number of their members*. Such notions of "accountable dismantling" under a *religious* mantle have become very familiar to us since 9-11-2001. By the measure of the "8<sup>th</sup> Principle", the best UU would be the UU who does the most "dismantling": the anti-racist **Martyr Dismantler** who dies in battle or perhaps in an act of suicide terror.

If this seems exaggerated, please consider recent actions by the new Inquisitorial version of the UU Minister's Association as it has worked to destroy the careers and reputations of minister after minister in recent years. (UUMA victims have also suffered health effects ranging from ulcers to liver cancer.) Look at the attempts to physically destroy their books and to encourage social media "pile-ons" in which hundreds of so-called ministers condemn a book that they could not have possibly read. Look at some of the vicious, violent comments they have posted on militant websites.

### **Some concrete process demands:**

1) Return to a free UU "press"

Our 5<sup>th</sup> Principle is "the right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and in society at large". Let's not allow a constantly growing body of UUA "administrators"—whose salaries we pay—stifle our voices and change our principles as they violate the ones we hold most dear.



After the death of King John Sigismund, Catholic rulers tried to crush the early Unitarians by denying them access to the printing presses that they had used so skillfully. Some, like Andrew Eössi, responded by distributing handmade copies of hymns, sermons, and essays so they could continue to speak and share their truth.

Recently I found in my files an old (2004) copy of the *UU World* magazine and noticed that it included seven pages of letters to the editor, mostly voicing courteous dissent from views expressed in earlier articles or proposals made by UUA leaders while offering thoughtful alternative views/proposals. Along with the dissenting and questioning articles that used to appear in the magazine, these letters provided a healthy representation of diverse viewpoints among our members. Seven pages!

But take a look now at any recent copy of the *World*, and try to find *any* letters to the editor, let alone a letter of dissent. Try to find even one *word* of disagreement with recent UU management policies or executive actions. Dissenting opinions or alternative proposals from UU lay members now have no place in our "official" publications or our annual General Assembly.

Our press has been seized, and our access to it denied, although our money is still warmly welcomed during this *crackdown* on free thought and discussion!

***We demand that our press be returned to us and assert our right to speak freely at all UU assemblies.***

## 2) Informed universal voting on any change to our core documents

Right now, the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> principle is being pushed by UUA administrative officials who do not offer any real opportunity for discussion. Their so-called "information" page functions more as a promotion page that offers no real analysis and raises no serious questions.

Changing our core principles is a momentous act that should not be entered into lightly. When I moved from Illinois to Oregon, I was very impressed to witness this state's ballot initiative process, especially the opportunity to read pro and con statements in the voter pamphlet. A lasting—if not permanent—change to the fundamental document of a religious movement like ours should never be made without similar vigorous discussion, including thorough presentations both for and against and also about process. Nor should it be made without a well-informed vote from every member of every UU congregation instead of the tiny fraction of our folks who attend the General Assembly.

***We demand the distribution of such voter's pamphlets and that every UU have an opportunity to vote by secret ballot, not a public show of hands susceptible to the pressures of "group-think".***

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**"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.  
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."**

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

**Sunday program: "Accountable Dismantling" and the Proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle**  
**Submitted by Rev. Craig Moro**

Here is a simple framework for a member-led program on the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle and "accountable dismantling". Modify according to your needs!

- Begin with a reading of your choice on freedom of thought or restrictions on such freedom, perhaps from Orwell's *1984*. Sing your favorite "freedom" hymns throughout.
- Share the modified policy proposal below, perhaps suggesting that it was found at the Justice Department after Trump's departure, in a drawer in the Oval Office, whatever—be creative!

"To fix the original sin of *socialism*, Americans should pass an anti-socialist amendment to the U.S. Constitution that enshrines...guiding anti-socialist principals... The amendment would make unconstitutional ...socialist ideas by public officials (with "socialist ideas" and "public official" clearly defined). It would establish and permanently fund the Department of Anti-socialism (DOA) comprised of formally trained experts on socialism and no political appointees. The DOA would be responsible for preclearing all local, state and federal public policies to ensure [compliance], monitor those policies, investigate private socialist policies when social inequity surfaces, and monitor public officials for expressions of socialist ideas. The DOA would be empowered with disciplinary tools to wield over and against policymakers and public officials who do not voluntarily change their socialist policy and ideas."

- Invite discussion for a few minutes. Invite participants to reflect on whether they are certain that they can recognize "socialism" when they see it. Ask whether they are comfortable with empowering a department of "formally trained experts on socialism"—who are not answerable to voters—making such decisions for the rest of us, "empowered with disciplinary tools to wield over and against policymakers and public officials who do not voluntarily change their socialist policies and ideas."

- Share this counter-proposal, perhaps suggesting that it has been proposed by someone in the new presidential administration and leaked to the press:

"To fix the original sin of *fascism*, Americans should pass an anti-fascist amendment to the U.S. Constitution that enshrines...guiding anti-fascist principals...The amendment would make unconstitutional ...fascist ideas by public officials (with "fascist ideas" and "public official" clearly defined). It would establish and permanently fund the Department of Anti-fascism (DOA) comprised of formally trained experts on fascism and no political appointees. The DOA would be responsible for preclearing all local, state and federal public policies to ensure [compliance], monitor those policies, investigate private fascist policies when social inequity surfaces, and monitor public officials for expressions of fascist ideas. The DOA would be empowered with disciplinary tools to wield over and against policymakers and public officials who do not voluntarily change their fascist policy and ideas."

- Invite discussion, as before. Shoe's on the other foot now: Is it okay to smash the right foot with a hammer, but not the left? Who is confident of what constitutes a "fascist" idea, or with empowering a department of "formally trained experts on fascism"—who are not answerable to voters—making such decisions for the rest of us, "empowered with disciplinary tools to wield over and against policymakers and public officials who do not voluntarily change their fascist policies and ideas." (Remember, we're talking control of ideas, not goons with guns and zip-ties.)

•Now share the actual proposal from which the first two were derived:

"To fix the original sin of *racism*, Americans should pass an anti-racist amendment to the U.S. Constitution that enshrines two guiding anti-racist principals: Racial inequity is evidence of racist policy and the different racial groups are equals. The amendment would make unconstitutional racial inequity over a certain threshold, as well as racist ideas by public officials (with "racist ideas" and "public official" clearly defined). It would establish and permanently fund the Department of Anti-racism (DOA) comprised of formally trained experts on racism and no political appointees. The DOA would be responsible for preclearing all local, state and federal public policies to ensure they won't yield racial inequity, monitor those policies, investigate private racist policies when racial inequity surfaces, and monitor public officials for expressions of racist ideas. The DOA would be empowered with disciplinary tools to wield over and against policymakers and public officials who do not voluntarily change their racist policy and ideas."

--Ibram X. Kendi

•Invite discussion as before. Invite participants to reflect on whether they are certain that they can recognize "racism" when they see it. Ask whether they are comfortable with empowering a department of "formally trained experts on racism"—who are not answerable to voters—"empowered with disciplinary tools to wield over and against policymakers and public officials who do not voluntarily change their racist policies and ideas."

•Read the proposed "8<sup>th</sup> Principle out loud: "We will journey together toward spiritual wholeness by building a diverse, multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions." You can choose to read this aloud by itself, or begin with the 7 established principles which will help raise the question of whether any addition is really needed.

•Ask: Is the UUA proposing some version of Kendi's "DOA"? Would most of our members be comfortable with such a permanent department at the UUA, or such a committee in their local congregations? Or perhaps it would be some sort of traveling "Racism Assessor" appointed by the UUA to check on our ideas and use "disciplinary tools to wield over and against" us when we disagree with their assessment of our thoughts, words, and actions? Are we happy with this vision of "the faith of the free"?

•Move to end by showing this video featuring Coleman Hughes' response to Kendi's proposal (or show during an after service discussion, as time permits): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMAYJUMpStY>

[For Hughes' response in text form, see: <https://www.city-journal.org/how-to-be-an-antiracist> ]

•Closing words—The 5<sup>th</sup> UU Principle, perhaps?

•Have time for a post service discussion, and have fun!



from Dr. Sheri Slezak of Baltimore MD.

Our dear friends,

The Afghan Women's Fund (led by Fahima Gaheez) has a special goal in 2021: to build a small school in the Achin district of Nangarhar province in Afghanistan. This area was destroyed by the [most powerful conventional bomb](#) in the American arsenal in 2017. In 2019, Fahima/AWF built an outdoor school here, the first girls' school in over 4 decades! The school has 200 students meeting in the open and under a rented patio cover, and there are 500 girls on the waiting list to attend. As we all recover from the pandemic, let us remember that many areas of the world have such significant challenges. We take school, even if it is virtual, for granted but many, especially girls, are not able to go to school at all. The villagers want to reclaim their independence and educate their children so they will have a better future. The villagers have donated the land for the school and they have promised to protect it.

In 2008, Second Presbyterian Church of Baltimore helped Fahima build a girls' school in Logar, Afghanistan. At that time, only a little over 500 students attended, now over 2,000 girls attend the school. That project has helped hundreds of girls per year for over 12 years now. Why couldn't other people of faith build another? We need \$80,000-120,000 to build and furnish the school but we are halfway there. Sheri Slezak and Mary Nickerson have worked with Fahima to fund the first \$45,000 of the Achin school. We need your help to finish it. We need matching donations to buy bricks, cement, building supplies, and school supplies. Whereas none of us individually can build this school, there is power in community to affect the lives of the girls in Achin for years to come.

Please donate to AWF for Achin:

- \$5000 can build a classroom in the building
- \$1000 can buy 30,000 bricks
- \$500 can buy the doors and windows
- \$200 can buy cement and sand
- \$100 can buy classroom blackboards
- \$50 can buy textbooks for a class
- \$30 can buy uniforms and shoes for a student for a year
- \$20 can buy notebooks for students

Together, with your contributions, we can do this!

**AWF**  
**1321 Maple Ave**  
**Verona, PA, 15147**  
**[www.afghanwomensfund.org](http://www.afghanwomensfund.org)**





## Letter to Faculty of UU Seminaries

by Richard Burkhart

### **Introduction:**

I've become disturbed that many of our new ministers seem to lack grounding in basic ethics and our Seven Principles, let alone sound scholarship and scientific reasoning, leading to the intolerance, bias, and conflict that often comes with identity politics. The results have included disastrous actions and failed programs within the UUA, such as "cancel culture" replacing dialogue and due process, insulting racialized language, and failed diversity training. On the inside, this has divided congregations, while on the outside, it has inflamed the cultural wars and cemented political gridlock. As a longtime UU activist and scholar/scientist for social and economic justice, for Gaia and democratic global governance, I'm upset that the Left, especially in academia, has contributed to this dysfunction by failing to question certain toxic ideologies.

In other words, in this time of high anxiety and fading dreams, we need to keep our own house in order and not just point the finger at the Other. We need to exercise our critical thinking skills (see [www.newdiscourses.com](http://www.newdiscourses.com)), not mindlessly promote purity competitions and crude ideologies like Critical Theory. We must become far more aware of the visceral disrespect and backlash engendered by the practices of Critical Race Theory. I'd much rather be working on the Green New Deal and saving the planet. Instead demagoguery has fed off the cultural wars, fueled by political correctness on the Left and fundamentalism on the Right, driven by escalating economic inequality underneath.

### **Identity:**

I've been astonished at how the UUA has promoted Robin DiAngelo's book "White Fragility", currently the most popular exposition of Critical Race Theory, despite its frontal assault on our UU Principles. On p. 89 she condemns individualism and color-blindness as "ideologies of racism". That makes our first principle "The inherent dignity and worth of every person" racist on two counts. Yet for most UUs, like myself, this principle represents the very essence of racial equity, in keeping with both the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the "black and white together" vision of MLK. Personally my three daughters are biracial from my first marriage (Euro-Asian); I live (by choice) in one of the most diverse zip codes in the US, and have house-shared for years with a leader of the Somali community.

Note that MLK rejected DiAngelo's concept of "whiteness" as some kind of demeaning trait, moral failure, or original sin. Instead he embraced integration, equality, and mutual respect, not the concept of "assimilation as racist" proclaimed by Ibram Kendi. Nor would he agree with Kendi's dogma that, though not explicitly anti-white like DiAngelo's, leaves up to 99% of US adults (the non-woke) to be labeled as "racist" due to insufficient "anti-racist" activism.

I found a far superior approach in the "pluralist identity" of Irshad Manji's recent book "Don't Label Me". Manji comes across as a UU-type humanist, though she identifies with an ancient tradition of enlightened Islam. Burned out as a TV-debater, she now teaches how to muster the "moral courage" to revive the empathy, respect, and civility needed to heal the bitter divides of the cultural wars. Why not hire her as a visiting faculty member?

As Manji says, "to do diversity honestly, we can't be labeling all of diversity's critics as bigots". She reminds us that our national motto "E pluribus unum" requires a "diversity of viewpoints" learning to coexist. As a practical matter, note that the Jacobin magazine, no less, has an excellent review of several studies debunking DiAngelo-type diversity training (<https://jacobinmag.com/2020/09/workplace-anti-racism-trainings-trump-corporate-america>) due to the failure of her explicit practices of blaming and shaming.

### **Democracy:**

Another huge problem is the subversion of the democratic process by supposed "authentic voices". We should certainly listen to voices representing a diversity of viewpoints and backgrounds. But to follow a tiny fraction of those voices simply because they claim to be the authentic on certain issues, or because Critical Theory assigns them that role, is entering dangerous territory with strong cultish and fascist features. For example, in a recent survey only about 2% of African Americans identified themselves as "progressive activists", a rough approximation to the tiny elite of "woke" individuals anointed by of Critical Race Theory. Do they really represent the vast majority of African Americans, let alone



other people-of-color? No.

In fact, recent surveys show that most blacks (about 80%) want better policing, not “defunding”. Not only are there black intellectuals like McWhorter and Steele who oppose of Critical Race Theory, but black public leaders, like Obama and Van Jones, oppose “woke” attitudes - after-all they experience the backlash firsthand. And plenty of black business people oppose smashing and looting, which some UU ministers have defended, apparently again out of deference to radical voices, certainly not working class voices or UU values. Rabbi Michael Lerner, in his book “Revolutionary Love”, tells how, through the course of many interviews, he discovered the “condescending elitism” toward white working class Americans, eventually driving them toward Trump. Critical Race Theory is ground zero for that elitist anti-white rhetoric.

### **Conclusion:**

Within the UUA itself, the ceding of democratic due process and basic ethics to the toxic practices of victimhood culture has been extremely damaging, not just to open and honest dialogue, but to the moral integrity itself of the UUA. I need only cite the resignation Rev Peter Morales as UUA president in 2017 over unfounded racial accusations, especially after he justifiably called for “more humility and less self-righteousness, more thoughtfulness and less hysteria.” This happened again 2019 with the witch-hunt against Rev. Todd Eklof for distributing his book “The Gadfly Papers”, again based on false accusations combined with the hysteria generated by whispers of “don’t read this book”.

*And I am personally aware of situations where such violations of the norms of democracy and trust continue right up to the present moment, with at least tacit support from the UUA hierarchy. Have we become a fundamentalist church which worships at the altar of Critical Theory?*

### **Sent to:**

Meadville Lombard Theological School. *President:* Elias Ortega ([eortega@meadville.edu](mailto:eortega@meadville.edu)). *Faculty:* Mark Hicks, Michael Hogue, Nicole Kirk, Pamela Lightsey. *Visiting faculty:* Elyse Ambrose, Julie Taylor.

Starr King School for the Ministry: *President:* [Rosemary Bray McNatt](mailto:RosemaryBrayMcNatt@sksm.edu) ([rbraymcnatt@sksm.edu](mailto:rbraymcnatt@sksm.edu)). *Core Faculty:* Gabriella Lettini (glettini ), Sofia Betancourt, Christopher Schelin. *Faculty:* Som Pourfarzaneh, Ashley London Bacchi (ashleylb...), J. Tyson Casey (tcasey...), Taya Shere, Tera Klein, Christine Fry, Devorah Greenstein, Meg Richardson, Betty Jean Rueters-Ward (bjruetersward...), Hugo Cordova Quero (hquero...)

## **Not White Supremacy, White Guilt**

Rev. Richard Trudeau

I first heard the claim that UUism had a culture of “white supremacy” when reading the blog of Christina Rivera, a Latina layperson, in the spring of 2017. She was then a member of the UUA Board of Trustees and was the UUA’s Secretary-Elect—both volunteer positions—and had applied for the (salaried) position of Lead of the UUA’s Southern Region. She was told that she was “fully qualified” for the job—meaning that she was a finalist—but she understood this as meaning that the job was hers. She told her children, and was upset when she had to tell them later that the UUA had hired someone else (a white male minister). In a post to her blog, she blamed his selection on UUism’s culture of “white supremacy.”

( <https://uuchristinarivera.wordpress.com/.../on-being-a.../> )

There followed a frenzy on social media of support for Ms. Rivera and criticism of UUA staff, which led (to me, inexplicably) to the resignation of the UUA president, Peter Morales—himself a Latino with only three months left in his final term. The UUA Board of Trustees named three people of color to replace him as interim “co-presidents,” and recommended that a “Commission on Institutional Change” be created to make suggestions on how to “dismantle” UUism’s now presumed “white supremacy culture.” (My one-star review of the Commission’s 2020 report, Widening the Circle of Concern, is on Amazon.) At the same time Ms. Rivera and two colleagues led an on-line “teach-in” on racial issues that enrolled hundreds of UU congregations. At that year’s General Assembly, Ms. Rivera and her colleagues were feted as

heroes, and the Commission on Institutional Change was empowered.

The term “white supremacy,” formerly reserved for groups like the Ku Klux Klan, owes its new meaning to an ideology known as Critical Race Theory (CRT), which has underlain UUism’s racial-justice efforts for the last quarter-century. In CRT there is little focus on the universal—the notion that all people share a common humanity—and little focus on the individual; instead, the primary focus is on “categories of oppression.” In CRT what primarily defines a person is the category (or categories) within which the person is included. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously dreamed of a day when what would matter was not the color of a person’s skin, but the content of their character; but in CRT, what matters more is the color of one’s skin.

I want to introduce you to two people, to whom I will return later. Ann is a 30-year-old Black lesbian. Bob is a 55-year-old straight white man.

According to CRT, what I’ve just told you about Ann and Bob are by far the most important things about them. Ann is triply-oppressed. She is in three categories of oppression: the category of females, the category of Black people, and the category of gay people. And Bob is triply-privileged. He is in three categories of privilege: the category of males, the category of white people, and the category of straight people. Ann and Bob met a few months ago at an evening class in Boston.

CRT maintains that racism is everywhere, “like the air we breathe”; accordingly, in every interaction between a person of color and a white person the question to be asked is not, “Is racism present here?” but rather “How is racism present here?” I’ll return to this question later.

In an essay of mine posted last June (<https://trulyopenmindsandhearts.blog/.../uus-in-the-pews.../>) I said that I found the behavior of UUism’s national leaders to be incomprehensible. Struggling to understand, I said it felt as if they had been infected by a “mental virus” that had impaired their judgment. The “virus” is CRT, which by focusing on categories—labels—has the effect of dividing people instead of uniting them. What baffled me was why our leaders had become devoted to CRT.

Today, I think I finally understand. Our national leaders have become committed to CRT because it benefits them personally. For those who are people of color, the benefit is that CRT induces white people to defer to them. For those who are white, the benefit is that embracing CRT reduces their white guilt.

By “white guilt” I mean the discomfort that many whites feel whenever they recall what some white people have done in the past (and to some extent are still doing) to some people of color (especially Black people). It can be acute among white people who rise to leadership in UU circles, because UU leaders, both lay and ordained, tend to be idealistic, concerned with social justice, and aware of our religious movement’s past successes and (especially) failures fighting racism.

Over the quarter-century that I have been expressing discomfort with the UU approach to racial justice, others frequently have proposed that white guilt is the principal factor underlying the stance of our national leaders, but I was not convinced. At last, I am. I now believe that the troubles our overwhelmingly-white UU movement is experiencing are not the consequences of “white supremacy” but of white guilt.

Am I claiming to be able to know the minds, and see into the hearts, of UU leaders across the nation? Not at all. The reason I am suddenly convinced that white guilt is the key to understanding what’s been going on since the mid-’90s, and especially since the spring of 2017, is that I have come to appreciate its explanatory power.

What do I mean by “explanatory power”? In the first half of the 1500s, when Copernicus decided that the sun, and not the earth, is the center of what we now call the solar system, there was no physical evidence supporting his view. Galileo’s telescopic observations, which would provide evidence, were not made until the early 1600s; and Newton’s physics, which would

explain how Copernicus' theory could be true, wasn't developed until the late 1600s. In fact, all the physical evidence available to Copernicus pointed in the opposite direction: we have no sensation that we ourselves are moving, and what we see in the sky is a moving sun.

Yet numerous astronomers—including Galileo, before he constructed his telescope—decided that Copernicus was correct. Their reason was that his theory explained the many apparent motions that can be observed in the sky in a more conceptually simple way. Copernicus' theory, in other words, had greater explanatory power.

The reason I attribute the craziness of UU racial-justice strategy to white guilt is that white guilt explains so much, and explains it so simply. Racked with white guilt, and obsessed with UUism's past missteps, our white leaders have been effectively kneeling before people of color in abject apology, willing to do anything to be absolved of their guilt, offering even—so the speak—the denomination's principles, wallet and the keys to the building. Is it any wonder that some politically-ambitious people of color have taken advantage of this?

At the 1997 UUA General Assembly in Phoenix, when "Journey Toward Wholeness"—which was then the UUA's label for CRT—came up for approval, I was sitting next to an influential lay leader of the congregation I served. He voted in favor, along with virtually everyone else in the hall; I and a few others voted against it. "You just canceled my vote," he joked to me. I asked him why he had voted in favor. He said that he wanted to fight racism, and that our leaders had endorsed "Journey Toward Wholeness" as a means to that end. He trusted the judgment of our leaders. I replied that I wanted to fight racism, too, but I had a feeling that our leaders were making a mistake.

At the time I couldn't articulate the basis for my feeling, but now I can. Our white leaders have in effect said to people of color, "Tell us what to do!" and a few ambitious people of color have assured them that CRT is the ticket. But plainly it isn't, because it divides people instead of uniting them. And there's no evidence that CRT works, in contrast with the playbook of Dr. MLK Jr., which has led to considerable success. CRT has even been the midwife for new racial segregation in the UU movement, by encouraging the development of exclusively-Black worship services and discussion groups.

And the commitment to CRT is leading our white leaders, out of their desperation for absolution, to sacrifice UUism itself. Logic and reason are now officially downplayed, because CRT can't withstand logical analysis. Democratic process is lately in short supply, because our leaders know that a majority of UUs, once they understand CRT, will reject it. And there is a push by some to "decenter" the inherent worth and dignity of every person because attention to individuals is inconsistent with CRT's focus on the categories (male, female, white, Black, straight, gay, cis, trans, etc.) to which people belong. ( <https://www.uua.org/.../2018-2022-csai-undoing...> )

I'd like to tell you about Ann and Bob as individuals, and to ask, concerning their relationship, the CRT question: "How is racism present here?"

Bob is the fourth son of an Alabama sharecropper. He dropped out of school early and is functionally illiterate. Beginning in his teens he spent almost thirty years migrating north: he would move to a city, find a job, then, after being laid off or quitting, move to another city further north. At age 45 he landed in Boston, where he met and married a Puerto Rican woman, a widow with two teenage sons. He still changes jobs a lot, but has settled in Boston.

It's now ten years later, and Bob's stepsons have married and are having children of their own. His wife is after him to learn how to read. He's the only grandfather her grandchildren will ever know, and she thinks his illiteracy will set a terrible example for them. And Bob himself is ashamed that he can't read to them. So, a few months ago Bob started to attend a literacy project one evening a week. This is where he met Ann. Ann is not a fellow student. She is Bob's tutor. Ann has a doctorate in sociology. She is a professor at the Boston campus of the University of Massachusetts. One evening a week, she volunteers at the literacy project.

“How is racism present here?” It isn’t—Bob has come to know, and appreciate, numerous Black people over the years. At the beginning there was some homophobia, though; Ann didn’t come right out and say that she was gay, but Bob sensed there was something different about this woman. Then in casual conversation Ann mentioned that she was married, too, and to a Puerto Rican woman. That broke the ice—they both have Puerto Rican wives! Ann and Bob have been getting along comfortably ever since. Ann is a good tutor, and Bob is a hard worker. And in their growing appreciation of one another they are reminded of their common humanity. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said that this is how multiracial unity comes about: when individuals see in one another their common humanity.

The solution to the racial-justice mess in UUism is that we re-commit to a multiracial Unitarian Universalism and the Seven Principles

### **“A Racially Inverted Fascism”**

a 4 star review by Dick Burkhart of

### **How Fascism Works** **The Politics of Us and Them**

By Jason Stanley (2018)

This book gives a good survey of the political and psychological tactics of fascist states in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe but notes that key elements of fascism have a much broader scope. Fascism from the Right is by far the most visible threat in the US and globally today, but this review will examine aspects of fascism emerging on the Left, especially in ideologies such as Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT has recently become the driving doctrine behind many controversies, such as “cancel culture” and certain kinds of diversity training and affirmative action.

I was led to CRT by my shock at witnessing a witch-hunt type cancellation (see “The Coddling of the American Mind” by Lukianoff and Haidt), rooted in racial anxiety and white guilt, but expressed through hysteria and slander. Reading books like Robin DiAngelo’s “White Fragility” I immediately saw how CRT promoted an identity politics of egregiously unethical behavior, claiming to be anti-racist but suspiciously racist in itself, striking me even as fascist in some sense. I picked out this book to get a better grasp on that sense.

Stanley’s very first point is that fascism is about “Targeting of ideological enemies, without restraint” (xiii), a pretty accurate description of cancel culture. These actions, often on social media these days, rarely target real racists or white supremacists, who are usually too distant, but jump on close-by liberals (see the book on “Victimhood Culture” by Campbell and Manning). Sometimes the fuse is just an inadvertent “politically incorrect” wording, but other times it’s more principled – open objection to the dogmatism and bigotry of CRT, to the means, not the worthy ends of racial justice and equity. This was the case when the Rev. Todd Eklof passed out copies of his new book “The Gadfly Papers” at the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in Spokane in 2019, quoting from the Lukianoff and Haidt book and critiquing the DiAngelo book. This blew up into a witch-hunt almost overnight, baffling those of us who decided to actually read the book.

A second key point of fascism is “Loyalty to a leader or ethnic identity” (xix) and that fascism “dehumanizes segments of the population” (xxix). In the case of CRT there is no dominant leader but it is all about ethnicity, with loyalty to “people of color”. The presumed dominant group of “white people is to be denigrated, if not fully dehumanized, conspicuously omitting enormous differences in class. That is, whites may be accused of ambiguous notions of racism and white supremacy, intimidated or humiliated in diversity training, subjected to “canceling”, etc. This is what makes CRT a kind of inverted racial fascism, in contrast to Hitler’s extolling of Aryans while vilifying Jews.



A third key point of fascism is “Conflicts in *principle* with expertise, science, truth” (xx). This comes from the nihilism of French postmodern philosophy which has guided the development of the doctrines of Critical Theory. Postmodernism is explicitly opposed to the “liberal philosophy” of the Enlightenment, which is the foundation for the modern law, ethics, and science of Western Civilization. Thus when science does not support dogmas such as “all whites are racist”, the science is denigrated as a product of “white supremacy culture”. False and misleading reasoning, classically referred to as sophistry or casuistry, is normal in CRT because the key to knowledge is viewed as the “lived experience” of oppression of marginalized peoples, not evidence and logic as developed in rigorous scholarship. Robin DiAngelo’s book on “White Fragility” has been heavily critiqued for these reasons, one of the few popular books whose best-liked Amazon reviews are all one star.

A fourth key point is that “Fascism in power seeks to make rhetoric into reality” (xxi). Before this last decade, CRT was primarily an academic endeavor, but now it has gone mainstream in a ruthless, power seeking way. Even though it is a highly controversial ideology, almost a theology, in direct violation of key principles of American democracy, followers in the universities are now teaching it like revealed truth and spreading it in stealthy ways. For example, CRT has now taken over the hierarchy of Eklof’s denomination, without any democratic dialogue, causing escalating damage in the form of congregational splits and conflicts, inflaming the cultural wars instead of developing practical policy.

A fifth key point of fascism is “Using crisis as an anti-democratic opportunity” (xxi). In this case, the crisis is the election of Trump, which has raised racial anxiety to a very high level and along with it white guilt. That is, CRT feeds off white guilt and so is now in full bloom.

A sixth point is that “Fascist politics does not necessarily lead to a fascist state, but it is dangerous nonetheless” (xxviii). Under Trump, traditional fascism from the Right has been a full blown threat, yet the checks and balances have held, at least so far, though they’ve taken quite a beating. So it’s not likely that the inverted racial fascism of CRT will take over the state, and the backlash is now building, but significant damage has been done, especially in the universities and the media.

A summary point of Stanley’s book is that “Fascist politics includes many distinct strategies: a mythic past, propaganda, anti-intellectualism, unreality, hierarchy, victimhood, law and order, sexual anxiety, appeals to the heartland, and dismantling of public welfare and unity” (xxix). In fact these are the subsequent chapters of the book. Many, though not all, of these strategies apply to CRT.

As to the “mythic past” chapter, CRT postulates the purity of a non-European world of relatively harmonious multicultural diversity, ignoring the endemic warfare and often slavery, even slaughter, among non-European cultures throughout human history. Fascism views the present as weakened by “universal values such as equality” (p 4). CRT agrees because different identity groups are assumed to be in oppressor/victimhood relationships, with “equality” as a principle only serving to strengthen the oppressor, instead of as the basis for justice, as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus in CRT, people of color are assigned superior rights and moral stature, setting up a wider competition of identity for the benefits of victimhood status.

This is the basis for a key power play of CRT, where certain elite “woke” individuals of color are regarded as “authentic voices”, like oracles, whose perceived sentiments of harm guide their “white allies”. This guidance must be followed even in the absence of objective evidence or reason, overriding legal due process and traditional ethics. Often this results in conflicts, divisions, and cancellations, rejecting well-known methods of conflict resolution, presuming rather than verifying power imbalance and prejudice. The Eklof incident serves as a prime example.

CRT justifies such attitudes and actions by assuming no progress on racial issues since the Civil Rights era, suppressing evidence to the contrary. So in the context of US history, the mythic past and present are both regarded as evil or degenerate, unlike traditional fascism where the past is pure. Yet it is like traditional fascism in that the present is falsely accused, blaming racism for oppression instead of escalating economic inequality, which has hit the white working



class much harder than their black brothers and sisters. The 1619 project is a good recent example of historical revisionism to create a mythology of racial original sin.

This chapter also comments that “ the central tenets of a fascist ideology are authoritarianism, hierarchy, purity, struggle” (p 5). This is a perfect match for CRT, in its rejection of democratic process, assumption of rigid racial hierarchy, purity of the “woke”, and demands for purity over reconciliation. Later, purity is rephrased as “fascist politics rejects pluralism and tolerance” (p 151).

Chapter 2 on Propaganda notes that “We find the enemies of liberal democracy employing propaganda, pushing freedom of speech to its limits and ultimately using it to subvert others’ speech” (p 32). Acolytes of CRT openly promote anti-white language, taking wordings such as racist and white supremacist that apply to only a few in 2020, and weaponizing these wordings to accuse whites generally by “redefining” the words in dubious ways to broaden their scope. But when someone pushes back, perhaps by describing these weaponized accusations as racist in themselves, they’ll be attacked with these very words.

Stanley says that “Hitler, in *Mein Kampf*”...described his “realization that life is a battle for power between groups in which reason and objectivity have no role” (p 35). Of course, CRT is all about identity politics, not going as far as Hitler, but still in the same vein of power intentionally subverting due process in the pursuit of an abstract goal based on a mythological conception of history.

Chapter 3 on Anti-Intellectualism puts this in another way: “When education, expertise, and linguistic distinctions are undermined, there remains only power and tribal identity” (p 36). Chapter 4 on Unreality continues this line of thought: “Regular and repeated obvious lying is part of the process by which fascist politics destroys the information space” (p 57). In this case, CRT claims that we are, even in 2020, a “racist nation” living under the yoke of a “white supremacy culture”, when this is ludicrous according to the standard meanings of those words..

Chapter 5 on Hierarchy continues: “Equality, according to the fascist, is the Trojan horse of liberalism” (p 88), referring to liberal philosophy. This is a position embraced by CRT, in its cynicism, but rejected by MLK. “Empires in decline are particularly susceptible to fascist politics because of this sense of loss (of hierarchal status)” (p 90). For the US this is more of a relative decline, due the rise of China, resurgence of Russia, etc., but internally this has hit hard as the “shrinking middle class”, as the rich only get richer, giving rise to fascist politics on both ends of the political spectrum. This is noted later by Stanley: “fascist politics is most effective under conditions of stark economic inequality” (p 172).

Strangely, Stanley looks only at Right wing fascism, not the Left versions found in Stalinism and Maoism, and the final chapters are less relevant to CRT. That is, the face of fascism has changed in certain particulars after a century of social and economic changes. Nationalism continues, though not as strongly, and more on the Right than the Left. Fear of racial cross-breeding is disappearing, following the dramatic increase in integration. The supposed decadence of urban life, versus rural, is also disappearing, following the vast increase in urbanization. But as we’ve indicated above, critical features of fascism appear in extremes across the political spectrum.

## **Comments on Identity Politics**

*By Alan Spector, Chicago Area*

With all due respect, and I mean this sincerely, to the efforts of many to oppose the destructiveness of Identity Politics, I have to strongly disagree with the "false equivalency" between Rightwing fascist ideology and practices and militancy by many on the Left. Calling for the imprisonment and even extermination of people based on characteristics they were born with (as well as political opponents) is very different from the Identity Politics group, whose followers include many with contradictory beliefs and certainly different from basically everyone who identifies as "left.". For starters, the "left" does not have the power to enforce racist neo-segregation in this country.

Some in the Identity Politics group, of course, are outright fascists --such as the Nation of Islam (NOI, so-called "Black Muslims") who put forward a theory that "white" people were created in a laboratory by the devil (!) although they sometimes claim to not exactly believe that. In any case, there is nothing "LEFT WING" about them. The same could be said for extreme religious fundamentalism in politics, whether it is Christian, Islamic, Hindu or Jewish.

The *core* of "left wing" philosophy is egalitarianism based on the belief that all people are entitled to equality. Besides claiming racial superiority, the NOI has been quite the "capitalist" organization, creating an empire worth tens of millions of dollars based on exploiting the labor of many of its own (black) members.

It gets complicated because "egalitarianism" means opposition to racial discrimination and the racist ideology that supports it. Many, many sincere "grassroots, rank-and-file" people take that to mean that the opinions of POC should always be privileged above the opinions of "white" people.

Here is where it gets more complicated.

In some situations, the opinions of mistreated/oppressed/damaged people should be given extra weight. A counseling group of female rape survivors should have the right to exclude from some of their discussions a male who has no grasp of their trauma. Indigenous people in various places in Asia, Africa and Latin America deserve to have special attention paid to their opinions when making policy that affects them.

But like all "truths", it depends on context. The life experiences of most black people are certainly more oppressive than the life experiences of most white people in the USA, And it is somewhat based on "from birth" characteristics. BUT -- while we may pay special attention to the opinions and interests of oppressed/mistreated groups--this runs into serious problems when the word "group" is also defined by "from birth" characteristics. And even more problematic when various "leaders" claim to speak for all of them.

At best, it is a defensive policy of self-ghettorization and when proposed by POC and especially by various "white" folks, it is actually walking AWAY from the struggle against racism!

At worst, and this happens too often, it becomes a way for certain people to claim to be the "spokespeople" for the oppressed as they work to build fiefdoms/even kingdoms where they can be the leader (often enriching themselves in the process **at the expense of the oppressed they claim to help.**)

The separatism is problematic in many ways. Way, way back, four decades ago, I was making a criticism of some well-known figures in the black political movement and a white person told me that I had no right to criticize a black person. My response was: ***"What do I have to do? Do I have to get a black person to stand next to me and say that he agrees with me? Then what will you do???** Will your head explode because you don't know WHICH black person you are required to agree with?"*

Good-hearted people who don't want to critique any black people, especially leaders, are walking away from the struggle. The highest compliment, the highest respect we can have for someone is to argue/debate (in as civil a way as possible) with them if we believe they are making a mistake -- even if the argument/debate means that we might lose their friendship. We trust that they can understand us, or at least their motives, rather than distrusting them and just patronizing them. We want to do what's best for people--NOT WHAT WILL GET PEOPLE TO LIKE US. Hopefully they are the same! But if not, failure to critique amounts to bribing them with flattery (or millions of dollars) so that they will "not give us any trouble."

When grassroots, rank-and-file make that mistake, it is out of concern, even fear, that someone will not like them. It is insulting, ***actually racist against POC*** to refuse to treat POC as equals, but it is a carry-over of societal racism and many sincere white folks do fall into that erroneous way of thinking . Including many who identify with "the Left" in their desire to end the oppression of POC.

But when leaders (whether white or POC) adopt this to enhance their status or position, that is another story. It becomes corrupt or even outright vicious as they resort to force of a certain kind to suppress those who disagree. It is obvious that this is happening within the UU.

The philosophy of "post-modernism" is actually no philosophy at all. By claiming to be "the most revolutionary because they criticize everything", they actually are "privileging" the conservative status quo! If everyone is a racist, then nobody is more responsible than anyone else, and a white student on my campus who works 30 hours/week and whose grandpa came over from Serbia and worked in a steel mill is considered "equally guilty" as a corporate executive or politician who makes decisions that do materially oppress thousands of black working class people. (And by the way many of those execs are POC.) Not only does this unfairly blame many white working class people, **IT ALSO LETS THE MAIN PERPETRATORS AND BENEFICIARIES OF RACIST OPPRESSION OFF THE HOOK!** This second point is often not emphasized enough. **IT ALSO LETS THE MAIN PERPETRATORS AND BENEFICIARIES OF RACIST OPPRESSION OFF THE HOOK!**