

MINNESOTA'S ANTI-MUSLIM PROPAGANDA MILL



Exposing the
Financers,
Producers,
and Distributors
of Hate in Minnesota.



CAIR
MINNESOTA



ISAIAH

Faith in Democracy

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Exposing the Financers, Producers, and Distributors of Hate in Minnesota.

WRITTEN BY LOGAN CARROLL FOR



CAIR
MINNESOTA



ISAIAH

Faith in Democracy

ENDORSED BY



MUSLIM
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**JEWISH
COMMUNITY
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CTUL

MN 350

MNA
Minnesota Nurses Association
An Affiliate of National Nurses United



**NORTH STAR
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ESTABLISHED 1968



COPAL
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EL PODER Y LA ACCION LATINA



**THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**



CURE

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KEY FINDINGS

- Most anti-Muslim propaganda in Minnesota is created by a close-knit network of donors and activists as a long-term strategy of enacting conservative policies that extend far beyond questions of immigration and race relations.
- Vice Presidents of both General Mills and Comcast sit on the board of directors of a group producing radical anti-Muslim, anti-Somali and anti-black propaganda, along with owners and executives from a handful of mid-sized Minnesota businesses and half a dozen major law firms.
- The lazy and unethical Fox 9 KMSP-TV story "Millions of dollars in suitcases fly out of MSP, but why?" is modeled on propaganda, based on uncorroborated allegations by an unreliable source and is being used to advance a partisan agenda.
- The agenda of the network is closely aligned with mainstream conservative policy goals, but some members advocate for radical and regressive social policy.

INTRODUCTION

Minnesota's Anti-Muslim Propaganda Mill is a special report by CAIR Minnesota and ISIAAH that unmask the financiers, producers, and distributors of anti-Muslim propaganda in Minnesota today. It identifies the members of this network, analyzes their messaging, and documents their stated political agenda. The final section of this report is a case study tracing the development and distribution of a single piece of anti-Muslim propaganda, and how it has been used to advance a partisan political agenda.

All Minnesotans, whether black or white, Christian or Muslim, city or rural, want to be able to care for their families, live in healthy communities, and see their hopes and dreams crystalize into a pearl they can hold: safety, security, and happiness for them and their families. Minnesota has enough to go around — every Minnesotan can realize their aspirations. Unfortunately, a close-knit network of wealthy donors and activists foster a politics of division and fear as a long-term strategy to enact a host of policies, some of them truly regressive.

This relatively small network of wealthy and corporate political operatives have deployed a paranoid style of propaganda in Minnesota. This propaganda is intentional in its design and effective in its tactic of using dog whistle politics and divisive, conspiratorial and apocalyptic rhetoric to isolate communities along lines of

race, religion and ethnicity. The tactic is simple - to stoke distrust, cynicism and fear among neighbors so as to inflame distrust in communal efforts, public programs and government-by-the-people. The ultimate goal is to discourage even basic collective action or government regulation, to bolster their wealth and power. The first section of this report sketches a road map of the blogs, think tanks, individuals and institutions most closely connected to the propaganda network built around two Minnesota nonprofits: the Freedom Club and the Center of the American Experiment.

Scapegoating is the bluntest weapon in the arsenal of propaganda (perhaps from overuse.) In Minnesota today, Muslims, especially Somalis, are the most common villains of this political theater, but the propaganda is not based on the details of their religion or their identity. Rather, “radical islamic



John Hinderaker
President and CEO, Center of the American Experiment
Director, Freedom Club

terrorism” is just the latest face to be painted on the well-worn effigy of “invading parasitic subversives.” In the past, freemasons, Jews, Catholics, Italians and many more have served as models for the sneering caricature.¹ Invariably, the subject of propaganda becomes an apocalyptic threat to “traditional” values. The second section analyses the building blocks of conspiratorial propaganda; in theory and with contemporary examples from the Minnesota propaganda network outlined in the first section.

The network is a sophisticated operation to mold public opinion. The propaganda they produce is a tactic in the long-term strategy of enacting an array of conservative policies that extend far beyond questions of immigration and race relations. Mostly, this agenda is aligned with the mainstream conservative policy agenda, including union busting, deregulation and cuts to social service programs. Beyond that, it ranges from highly localized and wonkish (changes in how public pension costs are calculated) to medieval (enforcement of a “marriage norm” by punishing single parents, teen parents and unmarried couples who cohabit.) The third section examines

several key aspects of this agenda in detail, although the agenda itself is the product of compromise and not every policy is universally supported within the network.

The Center for American Progress has conducted extensive research into the national network that produces most anti-Muslim talking points in the United States. This network does not produce individual stories or give marching orders to regional networks such as the one operating in Minnesota. Rather, they develop talking points which lower-level operators localize and reshare like urban legends. One of these talking points, “Somalis fund terrorism with welfare,” traces its origin to the “welfare queen” catchphrase used to turn public support against

social safety nets in the 1980s and 90s. The final section of this report will deconstruct the latest and clearest example of this urban legend and trace its development and distribution, from its conception in a 2012 Danish newspaper, through its inception as the Fox 9 KMSP-TV story “Millions of dollars in suitcases fly out of MSP, but why?”, and ultimately to its use in a 2018 Minnesota gubernatorial debate.

“Textbooks in America must be approved by Islamist groups.”

Anonymous
Deplorable
Housewives of
the Midwest

the NETWORK

Since 2011, the Center for American Progress (CAP) has conducted research into the origins of anti-Muslim propaganda in the United States. Their work revealed that “a small, tightly networked group of misinformation experts guid[es] an effort that reaches millions of Americans through effective advocates, media partners, and grassroots organizing. This spreading of hate and misinformation primarily starts with six key people and their organizations, which are sustained by funding from a clutch of key foundations.”²

One of these six key individuals is David Horowitz, whose David Horowitz Freedom Center has been declared a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. As late as 2014, Horowitz insisted that Barack Obama

was a Muslim,³ and once said that “racism in this country that is the real problem is black racism” and “certainly not white people.”⁴

In 2018, Horowitz generated controversy by using inflammatory and false statements to criticize a project to document historical lynchings of African Americans. John Hinderaker defended Horowitz on his blog, *Power Line*. Hinderaker is the president and CEO of Minnesota-based conservative think tank Center of the American Experiment and a director of Freedom Club, another Minnesota-based nonprofit. In 2017, Freedom Club had hosted Horowitz as the featured speaker at their Spring Dinner.⁵

Just as the national network mapped by CAP comprises a relatively small number of individuals driving the creation and distribution of anti-Muslim propaganda in the United States, Center of the American Experiment (“the Center”) and Freedom Club drive most anti-Muslim propaganda in Minnesota.

Between them, the two organizations control or have close ties to four different online media outlets that regularly publish anti-Muslim content, not counting the Center’s branded publications that include a quarterly magazine and an online blog. At least two of the anti-Muslim urban legends developed by these sites have been given



Ronald Eibensteiner
Chair, Minnesota Republican Party, 1999-2005
Director, Center of the American Experiment

“As usual when such questions are asked in polls, the lack of support for free speech rights is discouraging. Only 15% of respondents agree that ‘People should be allowed to use Nazi slogans or symbols.’”

John Hinderaker
President and CEO
Center of the American Experiment

credibility by Fox 9 as evening news segments, which are then shared and re-shared by these blogs and others across the world.

This propaganda is funded by a small segment of political insiders and members of the state’s donor class. It is overseen by organizations whose boards of directors include executives of two Fortune 500 companies. The propaganda is used to demand legislative hearings,⁶ it becomes fodder for campaign ads,⁷ and shows up in debates as talking points.⁸

FREEDOM CLUB

The Freedom Club is an exclusive organization founded by Republican super-donor Robert Cummins. Their events (such as the one where Horowitz spoke) are closed to non-members, and membership starts at \$3000. According to their website, their membership consists of “CEO’s, business owners, attorneys, accountants, entrepreneurs, bankers, civic leaders and more.”⁹

They organize spending on behalf of conservative candidates and causes: ad

buys, door knocking, and donations to candidates.¹⁰ They describe the impact of these efforts on their website:

“In 2010 the Freedom Club led the way in putting the Minnesota legislature in Republican control for the first time in state history. Even though Minnesota has not voted for a Republican Presidential candidate since Richard Nixon, the Freedom Club has been able to help maintain a Republican presence for the last 20 years. Freedom Club was behind the 2014 rural Minnesota wins for Minnesota House and the historic State Senate Republican takeover in 2016.”

Notable members of their board of directors¹¹ include Richard Morgan, a partner at corporate law firm Bowman and Burke who is also on the board of the Center;¹² John Hinderaker, the president and CEO of the Center; and Robert Cummins, who is the president and CEO of Primera Technology. Their executive director is Alex Kharam.

Cummins founded and is the primary funder for Freedom Club.¹³ He has donated millions to conservative causes in recent years, but one of his most recent donations was to a group called Minnesotans for Bold Reform, which produced a series of pro-Jeff Johnson ads. According to campaign finance documents, the group has raised \$269,000 with \$200,000 of that coming from Cummins and his wife.¹⁴

Alex Kharam is the full-time executive director of Freedom Club,¹⁵ the manager of conservative political consulting firm The Greenbrier Group,¹⁶ and president of the right-wing blog *Alpha News* since its founding in 2015.¹⁷ When Alpha News began, Kharam was also an

GENERAL MILLS AND BRAD ANDERSON

Center of the American Experiment is not the first time an executive of General Mills has been connected to anti-Muslim propaganda in 2018. Former Best Buy CEO Brad Anderson resigned from their board of directors early in the year after the public learned of his donation to a group that produced anti-Muslim propaganda to support Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential race.

The group, Secure America Now, presents itself as a moderate non-partisan group, that simply wants to "bring critical security issues to the forefront of American debate." However, the content they produce is a playlist of typical extreme right-wing propaganda. It repeats debunked conspiracy theories about Benghazi, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Barack Obama.

One of their videos, "The Islamic State of France," repeats an idea common in anti-Muslim propaganda. This same idea is alluded to in one John Hinderaker's Power Line posts, "Will We Always Have Paris?"

employee of Civis Communication, a conservative political strategy firm owned by Cummins. Cole Mathisen was also an employee of Civis Communication and of Cummin's Primera Technology when he began producing videos for *Alpha News*.¹⁸ The site regularly publishes articles anonymously, and it was once caught redacting Kharam's byline.¹⁹ It has at least once required a contributor to sign a non-disclosure agreement that prevented her speaking about the site.²⁰

This inclination for secrecy and anonymity is shared by another right-wing blog, *Deplorable Housewives of the Midwest*, which uses a ".news" top level domain.

Like *Alpha News*, the domain was registered anonymously, and some articles are published anonymously under the username "deplorablehousewife." No information is given about the people who finance or run the site. Some contributors are named, including frequent *Alpha News* writers John Gillmore and Andrea Mayer-Bruestle.

Business filings list three registered agents: Mayer-Bruestle, Donna Azarian, and Susan Richardson.²¹ Like Mayer-Bruestle,²² Azarian²³ is a writer at *Alpha News*. Richardson publishes articles on the site and is a director of Minnesota Voters Alliance, a right-wing group that advocates for restrictions on voting.²⁴ Richardson also served with Robert Cummins on Ted Cruz's Minnesota Leadership Team during Cruz's 2016 presidential campaign.²⁵

CENTER OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

The Center describes itself as a think tank. It was founded in 1990 by Mitch Perlstein, a former staffer in the Department of Education under the Ronald Reagan administration. Perlstein said in an interview with *Thinking Minnesota* — the Center's quarterly magazine — that he tried to avoid controversial issues such as abortion, but also that he was interested in "questions of education, families, culture, and the like right from the start."²⁶

ARE ALL RIGHT-WING BLOGS PROPAGANDA MILLS?

Though clearly connected to the network, Intellectual Takeout distinguishes itself from the other media outlets connected to the Center and the Freedom Club in some important ways.

First, while they host much anti-Muslim content, they also host a small amount advocating tolerance. For example, one recent article is titled “5 Things Muslims and Christians Can Agree On.” Though an occasional overture toward tolerance does not mitigate the dangers of publishing anti-Muslim propaganda, none of the other blogs makes even a token gesture of respect.

The second way that the blog distinguishes itself is in the absence of coverage of the Fox 9 “Somali daycare” story.

Intellectual Takeout hosts some dangerous content, but it exhibits a degree of independence lacking from the propaganda mills detailed in this report.



Brent Robbins
VP and Deputy General Counsel, General Mills
Director, Center of the American Experiment

The Center frequently hosts celebrities from the political mainstream at their annual dinner. Margaret Thatcher, Colin Powell, and Mikhail Gorbachev have all keynoted the event.²⁷

Their board of directors²⁸ is large and comprised of high level executives from global finance firms, corporate law firms, and Fortune 500 companies. There are employees of seven law firms (all of which focus on business law and several of which focus on management-side labor law,) seven financial firms (investments include debt,²⁹ banks,³⁰ medical equities, and more,) two Fortune 500 companies (General Mills and Comcast,) and eight mid-sized Minnesota businesses (including an international manufacturing firm,³¹ an industrial dairy,³² and a business software developer.³³) Notable members of their leadership include:

- Ronald Eibensteiner, the chairman of the board for the Center, he was also the Minnesota Republican State Chairman from 1999-2005.³⁴
- Brent Robbins, a director of the Center and a vice-president and deputy general counsel at General Mills.³⁵
- John Gibbs, a director of the Center and the vice-president of state government affairs at Comcast.³⁶

- Rob Parish, a director of the Center and secretary of the Hendry Family Foundation, which has given thousands of dollars to the Center, to the David Horowitz Freedom Center, to right wing blog *Intellectual Takeout*, and to several organizations pushing for the privatization of schools including Better Ed.³⁷
- Richard Morgan, on the boards of both Freedom Club and Center of the American Experiment.
- John Hinderaker, the President and CEO. He serves on the board of Freedom Club, and is a co-founder of and contributor to the right-wing blog *Power Line*.

Hinderaker took over as president of the Center after founder Mitch Perlstein stepped down at the end of 2015. Hinderaker is a 41-year veteran and former partner of Faegre Baker Daniels (the largest law firm in Minnesota; formerly Faegre and Benson.³⁸) Hinderaker was chosen, in part, because of his work at *Power Line*, which received national attention in 2004 for playing a role in debunking a CBS story based on forged documents about George W. Bush's National Guard service.

Intellectual Takeout is another right wing blog with ties to the Center. Its founder, Devin Foley, was formerly the director of development at the Center.³⁹

Foley also founded Better Ed, a non-profit advocating for school privatization. The organization is closely linked with the blog; an old staff page for *Intellectual Takeout* identifies the

“Saint Cloud has been disfigured and in many ways ruined by refugee resettlement. The beneficiaries of these programs have little to offer the community, are welfare dependent and proudly seek not to integrate into America but to replicate the cultural conditions of their failed, backward cultures. In the teeth of this, local residents are told by the Regressive Left that it is they who have to change, not the newly arrived... This means you can't object when your children are bullied by feral Somali youth.”

John Gilmore
Writer, Alpha News
Writer, Deplorable Housewives

organization as “Intellectual Takeout/ Better Ed.”⁴⁰ Between 2014 and 2016, Better Ed and *Intellectual Takeout* together received \$80,000 from the Hendry Family Foundation.⁴¹

Sally Jo Sorensen's Bluestem Prairie blog was useful for background information about anti-Muslim activity in Minnesota and conservative organizations in the state.

MAPPING THE NETWORK

A detailed interactive map of the network is available online:

https://littlesis.org/maps/3431-the-anti-muslim-propaganda-mill-in-minnesota-draft/?In_Minnesota,_anti-Muslim_propaganda_paves_the_way_for_a_policy_agenda_that_benefits_corporations_and_the_ultra-wealthy_

the PROPAGANDA

“Propaganda” is a pejorative term, but it is accurate for the work produced by this network. In 2017, Alex Kharam, executive director of Freedom Club and president of *Alpha News*, contributed an article to *Intellectual Takeout* where he wrote: “While theologians typically deal in the realm of truth, political consultants like myself typically deal in the realm of power.” He tried to undercut the cynicism of that statement in the rest of the article, but advocated for a kind of non-violent political guerilla warfare.⁴²

The members of this media network routinely describe themselves as mainstream. Hinderaker described himself and other *Power Line* writers as “vigorous advocates” but mainstream, moderate, and respectful;⁴³ Freedom Club says it is “the premier non-profit organization making a difference in Minnesota;”⁴⁴ Center of the American Experiment says it is founded on “time-tested American virtues;”⁴⁵ *Deplorable Housewives'* tagline is “serving up a slice of truth;”⁴⁶ and *Alpha News* describes their news as “fueled by citizens and their interests.”⁴⁷

However, the work produced by these sites, funded by some of the wealthiest men and women in Minnesota and lended credibility by association with executives from Fortune 500 companies, belies their moderation. In



John Gilmore
Writer, Alpha News
Writer, Deplorable Housewives

one *Power Line* post, Hinderaker bemoans the results of a Holocaust awareness poll: “As usual when such questions are asked in polls, the lack of support for free speech rights is discouraging. Only 15% of respondents agree that ‘People should be allowed to use Nazi slogans or symbols.’” (Note that the survey did not ask if the government should ban the use of Nazi symbols, just whether their use “should be allowed.”)⁴⁸

Shocking as some may find this, it is not on its own propaganda. Propaganda is a campaign, a coordinated effort to sharpen a particular narrative into the keen edge of a wider agenda. There are five common components of this kind of propaganda: dualism, apocalypticism, conspiracism, anti-elitism, and authoritarianism.⁴⁹

DUALISM

Sometimes called “manichaeism” or “manichean dualism,” this is the belief that the world is divided into absolutes. The forces of goodness and light defend holy righteousness from the forces of darkness, comprised of brutal ignorant evil geniuses. There are no compromises or non-combatants:

One fact that shines through is that Dr. Virji, like many Muslims, resolutely refuses to admit that Islam has a problem. Terrorism? Extremism? Backward countries? Barbaric customs? Nothing to see here! Islam is just like Christianity, we all have our bad apples.

— John Hinderaker,
*Power Line*⁵⁰

Somali or Islamic, it is a distinction without a difference to women living in a free society. Within the Somali culture or under the totalitarian regime of Islam, women do not enjoy equality or individual freedom. This fact is not debatable.

— AJ Kern,
*Deplorable Housewives*⁵¹

Saint Cloud has been disfigured and in many ways ruined by refugee resettlement. The beneficiaries of these programs have little to offer the community, are welfare dependent and proudly seek not to integrate into America but to replicate the cultural conditions of their failed, backward cultures. In the teeth of this, local residents are told by the Regressive Left that it is they who have to change, not the newly arrived... This means you can't object when your children are bullied by feral Somali youth.

— John Gilmore,
*Alpha News*⁵²

DEMOCRATS AND THE "COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM" PROGRAM

This report is limited in scope to the role that a particular network plays in stoking anti-Muslim sentiment, but this is only one face of the problem.

On her official senate.gov website, Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar trumpets her advocacy of the Countering Violent Extremism program (CVE.) CVE is based on the bigotted notion that religion and nationality determine how likely a person is to commit violence. CVE spreads the idea that entire Muslim communities are responsible for the actions of individuals.

Beyond stoking anti-Muslim sentiment among the public, CVE is also used by law enforcement to target Muslim communities. The FBI, one of the main agencies involved with CVE, has concluded that engagement with radicalism is not a clear predictor of violence. However, they have used CVE as a pretense to increase surveillance, informants, and other targeting of Muslim communities not connected to any suspected wrongdoing.

CVE was the project of a Democratic president, and Klobuchar is one of its fiercest advocates in Minnesota. The subject of this report is a group of Republicans, but that should not be interpreted to mean that CAIR MN holds all Republicans guilty or all Democrats blameless for anti-Muslim sentiment in Minnesota.

They [refugees] also bring cultural and law enforcement challenges: The practice of polygamy and female genital mutilation, low workforce participation by men, and inexperience with the requirements of citizenship and voting.

— Kim Crockett,
*Thinking Minnesota*⁵³

While Islam and Somali people are frequently the foci of demonization, they are not the worst offenders; there is no bad/worse/worst, there is only superlative evil. The words “liberal,” “progressive,” and “Democrat” are used interchangeably and are joined with the forces of darkness. As the Countering Violent Extremism program demonstrates, Democrats are equally capable of spreading anti-Muslim sentiment, but in the world of right-wing propaganda, they are part of the grand conspiracy:

Minneapolis policeman and Somali diversity hire Mohamed Noor shot and killed Justine Damond last year... in court proceedings last week we learned astounding facts about the depravity of those who insist on “diversity” regardless of the price.

— John Gilmore,
*Alpha News*⁵⁴

The Democrat Party is no longer the party of peace, love and tolerance. It is the party of death, destruction, derangement, vindictiveness, vitriol, perversion, bullying, revenge, intolerance, spite, hypocrisy and dishonesty.

— Anonymous
(deplorablehousewife,)
*Deplorable Housewives*⁵⁵

Not all Republicans are responsible for spreading anti-Muslim sentiment, but members of the right wing who

reach out to Muslim communities are also demonized and targeted:

Many women will not feel comfortable attending the RLC convention [Republican Liberty Caucus convention held in the Dar Al Farooq community center] and will not ignore the fact that the RPM [Republican Party of Minnesota] has embraced a community that does not recognize ‘individual liberty’ and certainly not the ‘equality’ of women.

— AJ Kern,
*Deplorable Housewives*⁵⁶

APOCALYPTICISM

In the narrative written by right wing propagandists, the forces of good and evil are not in static balance but locked in war and hurtling toward a climactic showdown. The stakes could not be higher. In the extreme, life on earth itself is threatened (see sidebar page 15.) At the least, the forces of evil want to destroy the American Way of Life:

It’s as big a mistake to believe that Islam is a religion of peace as it is to believe that diversity is our strength. Countering those two poisonous and delusional narratives is the central challenge of our age. The ongoing battles take place along many fronts.

— John Gilmore,
*Deplorable Housewives*⁵⁷

Speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in 2011, [former director of the CIA James] Woolsey defined Sharia as a “theocratic dictatorship extremely opposed to democracy” and a movement to “eliminate and destroy western civilization.”

— Anonymous (Lil D,)
*Deplorable Housewives*⁵⁸



AJ Kern
Contributor, *Deplorable Housewives*

The Turks made a fearsome example of Khatun's family and the 1.5 million other Armenians who would not convert to Islam... The more I read about Sharia, the more I fear it. The more I fear it, the more I see it implemented into our American fabric. And then I think of Khatun and her family.

— Anonymous (Lil D),
*Deplorable Housewives*⁵⁹

They (the Muslim Students Association) are a threat to every campus and every community in which they exist. They are a part of the Muslim Brotherhood's network whose stated mission is to wage civilization jihad until our Constitutional Republic is destroyed and an Islamic state is established here.

— *Alpha News*, quoting John Guandolo, author of *Raising A Jihadi Generation: Understanding the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in America*⁶⁰

ANTI-ELITISM

In the Summer 2017 issue of *Thinking Minnesota*, Ron Eibensteiner wrote a column titled “The New Elite”

in which he described “a class of political elites in America that could be undermining American democracy.” These were not business owners or entrepreneurs; their class was not economically defined, that is, it wasn't wealthy people. Rather, it was “lawyers, media, government officials, and academics.”

It might seem odd that Eibensteiner — a millionaire financier and former chair of the Minnesota Republican party who has donated more than \$170,000 to politicians across the country⁶¹ — would accuse journalists and teachers of political elitism.

When the word elite is used in this kind of propaganda, it is better understood to mean *undeserving elite*. It is a core conservative belief that the free market acts as a just system of reward and discipline (though different strains of conservatism may apply caveats to that statement.) Wealthy elites, by definition, deserve their status. Relatively poor “elites” such as teachers, journalists, and civil servants have not proven their worth in the free market but instead sponge off the producers of wealth:

I thought they [three news articles] were a stark example of how malignant America's self-appointed “elites” are, even though, as we never tire of pointing out, they are anything but elite. In fact, they are below average. Which is why most Americans rightly don't think much of them.

— John Hinderaker,
*Power Line*⁶²

Allegations of elitism of this kind frequently pair with dualism and apocalypticism, and almost always pair

with accusations of conspiracy with an invading force of parasites:

Devaluing human beings, specifically white people, seems popular now days among the elites and the educated. The best educated in the West often lack wisdom and they have become morally confused which has given rise to evil ideologies. Education and intelligence alone without wisdom will be the downfall of American culture and the end of human civilization if this trend continues.

— Susan Richardson,
*Deplorable Housewives*⁶³

We've seen in abundance what has happened to Europe when elites open the borders of their countries without regard to the quality of the people admitted.

— John Gilmore,
*Deplorable Housewives*⁶⁴

And that's the problem: regressive cultural elites insist the wholesale importation of Muslims into secular western society is essentially the same as an American expat in Paris.

— John Gilmore,
*Alpha News*⁶⁵

CONSPIRACISM

Scholarship that studies conspiratorial propaganda begins with the assumption that adherents are no more crazy or stupid than other demographic segments. To accuse them of stupidity or to pathologize them en masse is bigotry. In his seminal essay, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," Richard Hofstadter commented that "It is the use of paranoid modes of expression by more or less normal people that makes the phenomenon significant."

ISLAMOPHOBIA

The term "Islamophobia" borrows its form from "homophobia," a word coined to counter-pathologize those who consider homosexuality a mental illness.

While Islamophobia is real, this report attempts to explain, in part, how rational people turn to acts of violence and extremism. We reserve the use of "Islamophobia" for anti-Muslim works so feverish that they have detached completely from reality.

Take, for example, this almost Lovecraftian passage by the Danish conspiricist Nicolai Sennels, translated from Danish:

Should our civilization collapse under Islamic aggression - helped by our own political correctness, cowardice, laziness - the only known place of intelligent life in this universe will be a dark and broken planet driving through space, populated by billions of mostly inbred people who live in total misery, made slaves of freedom-hating, death-loving, brutally mind-numbing sharia. What tragedy could be worse than that?

This passage is rightfully called "Islamophobic," as is Sennels.

Each of the preceding three aspects of right wing propaganda expresses itself as a project to document a vast conspiracy. In the past, there have been conspiracies of freemasons more loyal to their lodges than to the United States, Jesuits disguised as travelling vagabonds looking for weak communities to subvert, and communist agents infiltrating all levels of government. Today, it is "Islamists," aligned with teachers, journalists, and politicians who are alternately described as naively believing in the power of diversity or else cynically

profiting off votes acquired through “population replacement.” Whether malevolent or naive, tolerating Islam yields the same result:

The Democratic Party is now the party of open borders and population replacement. They’re nakedly honest about their goals and people refuse to see this threat at their, and our country’s, peril.

— John Gilmore,
*Deplorable Housewives*⁶⁶

Written by The Muslim Brotherhood in 1991, The “Explanatory Memorandum” explains in the document that it was created as a strategy to destroy America through our own leadership. The document’s “mission statement” clearly states that it plans to conduct “Civilization Jihad” by co-opting the leadership of the United States into believing a counterfactual understanding about Islam and the nature of the Muslim Brotherhood, forcing our leaders to enforce the Muslim Brotherhood narrative on their subordinates.

— Anonymous
(Alpha News Staff),
*Alpha News*⁶⁷

The world described in this anti-Muslim propaganda is a cyclopean machine of wheels within wheels. The larger plot to destroy western civilization is advanced through a project of smaller conspiracies:

Not a single story about who [Linda] Sarsour is, what she has said and what she has done has appeared in any Twin Cities media outlet. This is by design because to cover Sarsour would lead to [Ilhan] Omar’s association with her...

— John Gilmore,
*Deplorable Housewives*⁶⁸

Textbooks in America must be approved by Islamic groups.

— Anonymous (Lil D),
*Deplorable Housewives*⁶⁹

It has long been reported that the Obama administration had ties with Islamic leaders. A 2015 article by Breitbart reported that in February 2015, fourteen Muslim “leaders” met with Obama in the White House.

— Andrea Mayer-Bruestle,
*Deplorable Housewives*⁷⁰

[Ilhan] Omar has publicly identified Ahmed Hirsi as her cultural husband and father of her children. However, Omar is currently married to Ahmed Nur Said Elmi. Elmi’s name follows the Somali custom of being named after his father, which is the same name as her father.

— Christine Bauman,
*Alpha News*⁷¹



Alex Kharlam
Executive Director, Freedom Club
President, Alpha News

AUTHORITARIANISM

Each of these blogs is branded libertarian, so displays of authoritarianism are accessorized with hedge language and cloaked in insinuation. Perhaps the starkest example of authoritarian posturing came from Hinderaker when he equated freedom of speech with acceptance of nazism. A softer way of calling for authoritarianism is to insinuate that Islam is not a legitimate religion, and therefore Muslims should not be afforded basic religious freedom:

American employers and schools are met with demands for time and space for Islamic prayer and the American banking system now has Sharia compliant financing.

— Anonymous (Lil D),
*Deplorable Housewives*⁷²

Are the growing number of mosques in America, such as the Bloomington mosque, a breeding ground for a new wave of terrorism?

— AJ Kern,
*Deplorable Housewives*⁷³

This insinuation is sometimes achieved by juxtaposing legitimate religious considerations with invented demands:

Sharia law is the very basis for every demand that Muslims make on society today. Whether it be special treatment in hospitals, books being vetted, women wearing headscarves, the ownership of their bride, four male witnesses to provide a testimony against a rape.

— *Alpha News*,
quoting Republican gubernatorial candidate Christopher Chamberlin⁷⁴

A final example is an 11-part series on *Power Line* arguing in favor of racial profiling. The first part declares that “racial disparities reflect underlying behavioral disparities,” and “blacks are disproportionately subject to arrest, conviction, incarceration, and sentencing because they are disproportionately perpetrators of the corresponding criminal behavior.”⁷⁵

THE ANTI-MUSLIM SPEAKING CIRCUIT

There are some connections between the blog network and the "anti-Muslim speakers circuit," as the Star Tribune labelled it.

The Tribune identified several individuals active on the circuit, including AJ Kern, Clare Lopez, and Jeffrey Baumann. Kern, who has written for *Deplorable Housewives*, is frequently cited in news reports about the circuit. Baumann participates in debates in the *Alpha News* comment section. Lopez was the subject of an in-

depth interview by John Gilmore published by *Alpha News*.

John Guandolo has spoken in both rural Minnesota and the Twin Cities. Guandolo's book *Raising A Jihadi Generation* was quoted at length by an anonymous *Alpha News* contributor.

Gilmore has praised the work of Raheel Raza. Raza has been connected by the Southern Poverty Law Center to multiple hate groups.

The rhetoric espoused by the speakers follows the same pattern as the writers of anti-Muslim propaganda, though they can be even more naked in their sentiment. Guandolo told a crowd in Warroad, MN, that Muslims had taken over the state, and used military imagery to urge them to fight back:

"I'm telling you. Marines, we fight for hills. We take them back. It's time to put freedom back on the offensive where it belongs."

In a 2015 interview with MinnPost, the outgoing president of the Freedom Club gently mocked the paranoia that frequently informed writing about the club: “There’s no secret handshake.” Their main area of focus is “economic freedom,” he said. “I don’t think it’s much of a secret plan; it is what members of our club are passionate about having a voice on — less government involvement and less taxes.”⁷⁶ There is something underhanded in the way Freedom Club hides their involvement with Alpha News, but they are transparent about their agenda. As is the Center:

“It not only researches and produces papers on Minnesota’s economy, education, health care, the family, employee freedom and state and local governance. It also crafts and proposes creative solutions that emphasize free enterprise, limited government, personal responsibility and government accountability.”⁷⁷

More details of their agenda are apparent in the projects, publications, and endorsements of the Freedom Club and the Center. For example, Freedom Club runs a project called “MakeMNRed” that organizes voters to support conservative candidates. (MNGOP party chair Jennifer Carnahan writes on the party website: “We invite you to learn more about our values and join our movement to Make Minnesota Red.”)

Their agenda is mostly in line with that of mainstream conservatism. For example, United States conservatives have sought to weaken unions for decades, and in recent years have had success at the state level. In Minnesota, the Center marshalls several anti-union campaigns.

They are also the force behind MNPCA, a hazy organization that claims to represent personal care assistants (PCAs), but which takes great lengths to hide its backers. Their address is a PO Box, their phone a VOIP number from Skype or Google Voice, and their website was registered through a proxy.⁷⁸ There are no names given for agents or officers of the group on the website. However, they work with Douglas Seaton,⁷⁹ senior counsel at a law firm that “exclusively advises

“They [refugees] also bring cultural and law enforcement challenges: The practice of polygamy and female genital mutilation, low workforce participation by men, and inexperience with the requirements of citizenship and voting.”

Kim Crockett
Vice President,
Senior Policy Fellow, and General Counsel,
Center of the American Experiment

and represents employers in labor and employment matters,” according to its website.⁸⁰ The firm, Seaton, Peters & Revnew, is represented on the Center’s board of directors.⁸¹ The Center co-host MNPCA press conferences.⁸² State Senator Michelle Benson attended the Center’s fall briefing several months before introducing the PCA decertification bill currently being debated in the legislature.⁸³

The nexus of anti-Muslim propaganda and anti-union activism within the network is clear. The producers include owners and managers of some of the biggest businesses in the state - who would gain the most from decreased union strength. And union busting has long been seen as a way of weakening the funding base of the Democratic party.

After the Supreme Court decision *Janus v. AFSCME*, conservative groups around the country began a coordinated campaign to encourage teachers to opt-out of the teachers union.⁸⁴ In Minnesota, this campaign has been undertaken by the Center through their project “Educated Teachers MN.”⁸⁵

The Freedom Club is also fundamentally anti-union. In 2011, they undertook extensive polling to measure how receptive Minnesotans were to right-to-work legislation.⁸⁶ In 2012, Cummins threatened to cut off all financing of the state Republican party over their failure to pass a right-to-work bill.⁸⁷ He followed through on his promise. He had given \$430,000 to the party in the 2011/2012 cycle, and nothing in 2013/2014. He also donated to 40 percent fewer candidates in



Mitch Perlstein
Founder, Senior Policy Fellow, and Director,
Center of the American Experiment

2013/2014 than in the previous cycle. However, he made the maximum contribution to Jeff Johnson’s gubernatorial campaign.⁸⁸

The Center regularly makes policy recommendations. In 2014, they published a comprehensive policy blueprint for Minnesota. Many policies are wonkish: disincentivizing cycling and public transportation in favor of car use;⁸⁹ matching public employee contributions to retirement plans rather than investing a defined amount;⁹⁰ creating an internet-based database to provide more detailed and objective economic and demographic analysis for Minnesota policymakers and businesses.⁹¹

Other proposals would result in a radically smaller government and substantially fewer public services: abolishing corporate taxes and lowering

“One fact that shines through is that Dr. Virji, like many Muslims, resolutely refuses to admit that Islam has a problem. Terrorism? Extremism? Backward countries? Barbaric customs? Nothing to see here! Islam is just like Christianity, we all have our bad apples.”

John Hinderaker
President and CEO,
Center of the American Experiment

the tax rate on top earners;⁹² replacing MinnesotaCare with a premium subsidy program;⁹³ and abolishing the Met Council.⁹⁴

One report published by the Center is titled “Restoring a Marriage Norm.” The report tries to solve the problems of increasing divorce rates, unmarried cohabitation, and out of marriage pregnancies. It jokes that perhaps the solution to the problem is for higher income Americans with college educations — among whom, we are told, marriage is alive and well — to tell everyone else to “shape up.” Those most in need of intervention, according to the report, are poor people and African Americans. It advocates social stigmatization or legal punishment of single parents, those who live together before marriage, and divorcees, demanding that “violators must pay a price.”⁹⁵

It is incongruous that the Center — which purports to be dedicated to libertarian principles — would be so

blatantly authoritarian. And that the network would stoke fever-dreams of Islam impinging on public life while working to legislate a regressive kind of Christian morality. But this opinion does not come from a fringe of the group, nor is it outdated. The report was published in January, 2018, and begins with a glowing introduction by the Center’s founder.

“Family fragmentation” is a common theme within the network, especially as an explanation for racial disparities. *Power Line*, in the 2015 series arguing in favor of racial profiling, says that racial disparities arise because of “behavioral disparities” which arise in part because “in Africa itself nuclear family ties were weak.”⁹⁶

This is just a small sampling of the causes that Freedom Club and the Center have advocated. Cummins was the main financial sponsor of the 2012 marriage amendment. He donated extensively to the authors of both the Senate and House versions on Minnesota’s 2012 voter ID amendment. The Center’s magazine has had cover stories that argued against green energy, alleged a conspiracy of indoctrinating school children to be tolerant of transgender people, and opposed racial equity in schools.

Both the Freedom Club and the Center were early supporters of Republican gubernatorial candidate Jeff Johnson. Robert Cummins, his wife, and fellow Freedom Club member Phillip Lindau together contributed \$225,000 to a group called Minnesotans for Bold Reform that produced two pro-Johnson ads during the primary, and conducted market research to learn

what would motivate people to vote for Johnson. And Hinderaker wrote on *Power Line*:

Johnson's campaign was based largely on work done by my activist policy organization, Center of the American Experiment. Jeff spent two hours with me before he launched his campaign, doing a deep dive into state policy issues. He adopted our themes and repeated, over and over, our data.⁹⁷

Johnson has made many statements lifted directly from the Center's publications. At the beginning of 2017, the Center wrote that local communities are burdened by the refugee resettlement program and that:

There is perhaps no clearer example of this than Minnesota which not only receives the highest number of refugees but also receives a high number of 'secondary migrants' who move to Minnesota after brief stays in other states.⁹⁸

In July 2018, Jeff Johnson penned an editorial for *Alpha News* attacking the refugee resettlement program:

In 2016, Minnesota accepted 3059 refugees from other countries. We also, however, became home to many "secondary" refugees – those who are originally placed in other states but then move to Minnesota. In the two-year period ending in 2015, Minnesota became home to more secondary refugees than all other states combined.⁹⁹



Jeff Johnson
Republican Gubernatorial Candidate

Other aspects of Johnson's platform lifted directly from the Center include dismantling the Met Council,¹⁰⁰ turning MinnesotaCare into a subsidy program,¹⁰¹ and cutting taxes and government programs.¹⁰² While Johnson uses more traditionally populist rhetoric when describing his tax plan, the end result would disproportionately benefit the wealthiest individuals and corporations, such as those on the boards of the Freedom Club and the Center.

"Millions of dollars in suitcases fly out of MSP, but why?"

CASE STUDY

The Center of American Progress has concluded that most anti-Muslim propaganda in the United States originates with a small group of individuals and organizations. In this section, we will trace the development of one anti-Muslim story from its conception in a 2012 Danish news article to its inception as Fox 9 KMSP-TV's wildly unethical "Millions of dollars in suitcases fly out of MSP, but why?" After following the story through the networks, both national and Minnesotan, we will look at some of the ways this story has been used to advance the agenda of the Minnesota network as outlined in the previous section.

On May 13th, 2018, Fox 9 ran a segment on their nightly news that purported to expose massive welfare fraud. The report claimed to be "based on public records and nearly a dozen government sources who have direct knowledge of what is happening." However, only four sources were named and only one, a retired Washington state police officer named Glenn Kerns, affirmed the story's key assertion.

The Fox 9 story closely follows a template laid down by right-wing propagandists as early as 2012. The template is a variation on the "welfare queen" story. It spreads like an urban legend — the basic structure stays the same but details are localized — and

juxtaposes unrelated factoids to imply a sinister conspiracy:

- 1) Factual stories or statistics about crime committed by people of Somali heritage.
- 2) Factual stories or statistics about Somali people receiving welfare.
- 3) An assertion that at least some welfare money falls into the hands of terrorists. The claim is so cloaked in hedge language that it is both unprovable and irrefutable. Hawala, Al Qaeda, and Al Shabaab are frequently named.

In 2012, Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published a story "Police: Danish millions fund terror." Within days, portions of the article were translated into English and molded into propaganda by notorious European islamophobe Nicolai Sennels (see sidebar on page 15.) Sennels' post was hosted on *Jihad Watch*, a member of the propaganda network identified by CAP. In this post, we see the outline of the Fox 9 story:

Only 43.3 percent of male Somali immigrants and 33 percent of female Somali immigrants in Denmark have a job. It is therefore fair to guess that social benefits from the Danish states finance terror against Denmark. On May 27, two Somali immigrants were arrested for planning terror against Denmark.¹⁰³

Note that while two of the above statements may be factually correct, they are non-sequiturs welded together with a

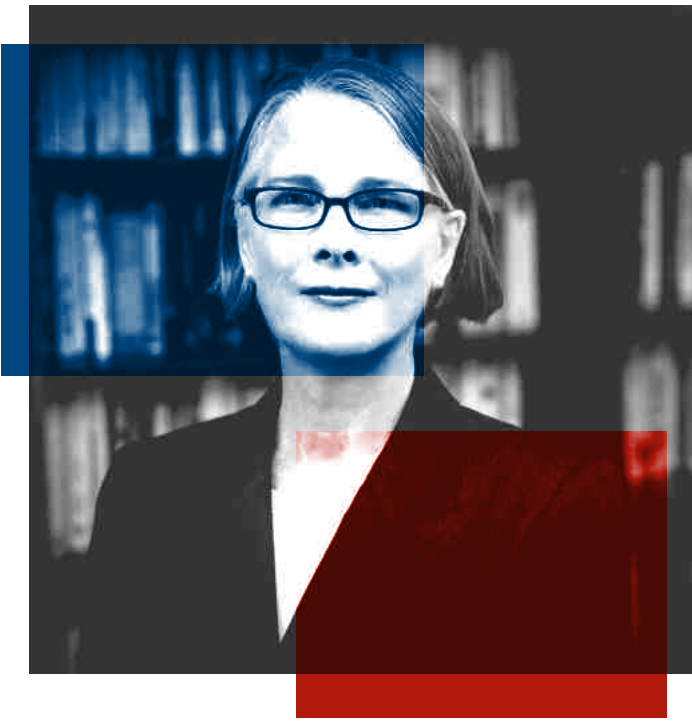
2013, to 5,950. At the same time, food assistance participation increased 98 percent, to 17,300 adults and children, which does not include U.S.-born Somalis.”¹⁰⁶

The similarity in language is not coincidental, but a requisite part of the story. Technically factual but unrelated statistics buttress airy implications of sinister forces. This story doesn't mention crime, but stories of crime committed by people of Somali heritage are endemic on *Alpha News*. Less than two weeks after the above post was published, the site ran an article titled "More Somali daycare fraud in Minnesota, could abuse have been prevented?"¹⁰⁷

It is well known that the Fox 9 story was a rewrite of "Suitcases full of cash leaving Sea-Tac Airport," a 2016 story by Seattle television news station King 5. Both stories are lazy, unethical, and base their most salacious allegations on the uncorroborated word of Glenn Kerns.

At the top, the King 5 story admits there is nothing illegal or even unusual about cash being shipped via airport. Then, buried deep in the story, is a statement from a source within the U.S. Attorney's Office in Seattle. The source said they looked into Kerns' allegations of Somali welfare fraud and terrorism financing and that there was no case. They recommended steps to potentially develop a case, but Kerns did not follow up.

A simple internet search of Kerns turns up a blog post by Jeff Siddiqui, a Muslim-American activist who describes an encounter he had with Kerns in 2010. Siddiqui writes that the then-detective "launched into how Somalis by nature are criminals and



Kim Crockett
Vice President, Senior Policy Fellow
and General Counsel,
Center of the American Experiment

baseless assertion written in such equivocal language that it cannot be refuted. The story was picked up a week later by right wing blog *Money Jihad*, which linked to the *Jihad Watch* post.¹⁰⁴ This was, in turn, linked to by *Terror Finance Blog* in a 2014 post arguing that hawala funds Al Shabaab.¹⁰⁵

In 2015, *Alpha News* published an article about hawala being used to send money to Somalia. In it, the anonymous contributor alleged that:

Without a secure and stable government there is absolutely no way to ensure the money doesn't end up in the wrong hands. If the Congress members get their way, then it's fair for Minnesota taxpayers to question whether their money, via welfare cash assistance programs, is being sent overseas. According to the Star Tribune, new Somali refugees in Minnesota using the "family cash assistance program jumped 34 percent from 2008 to

terrorists and cannot be trusted and how he could never tell whether a family had five children or twelve and they were all scamming.”¹⁰⁸ Neither Siddiqui nor Chris Ingalls, who reported the King 5 story, responded to multiple requests for comment.

Despite the complete lack of substance, the King 5 story lent credibility to right wing propaganda. It was shared around the world on right wing blogs as far away as New Zealand.¹⁰⁹

In 2018, the King 5 story was repurposed, localized with old stories of crimes committed by Minnesotans of Somali heritage, and breathlessly presented as “the worst scandal in Minnesota history,” as John Hinderaker wrote. He concluded with a call to “totally revamp both our immigration policies and our welfare system.”¹¹⁰

The Fox 9 story reproduced the template of the urban legend: technically factual stories of Somali people receiving welfare are juxtaposed with technically factual stories of crime committed by Somali people, connected only by an assertion insulated from factual rebuttal.

In this iteration, the hedge language is replaced by a source-of-a-source:

“We had sources that told us, 'It's welfare fraud, it's all about the daycare,'" said Kerns.

Since its release, the Fox 9 story has been the focus of five stories on *Alpha News*, six on *Power Line* (including a three-part series,) and two on *Deplorable Housewives*. It has been mentioned in many more stories on all three sites.

In 2016, Fox 9 retracted another story that first appeared on *Power Line*. It repeated a feverish conspiracy theory about Ilhan Omar falsely attributed to a U.S. attorney.¹¹¹

The story has also been used to directly support political causes. It was used by Robert Cummins and Minnesotans for Bold Reform in their early pro-Jeff Johnson ads.¹¹² Johnson has adopted it himself, tweeting about it several times and using it as a talking point in a debate with Tim Walz.¹¹³

Though Minnesota is facing a deeply underfunded healthcare system, some legislators are using the Fox 9 story to argue, along with the Center, for still deeper cuts.¹¹⁴

OBLITERATE NUANCE

The stories about hawala financing terrorism provide a clear example of how propaganda shapes opinion by obliterating nuance.

A professional association for people involved in preventing financial crimes, ACAMS, released the report "A guidance to understand hawala and to establish the nexus with Terrorist financing" in March 2018. The report stressed that those who operate hawalas are running a legitimate business. Further, it observed that

while hawala is increasingly being used to fund terrorism, the problem is not in the system itself but the result of crack-downs on traditional western financial institutions, a lack of regulatory oversight, and a general lack of understanding of the system.

In the United States, hawalas are classified as money services businesses and regulated as such. Hawalas maintain detailed records when properly regulated as they are in the United States. There are

simple steps that regulators can take to prevent money laundering, but these are similar to traditional western financial institutions. For example, by watching for unusually high turnovers of funds.

Hawala poses unique challenges for those working to prevent financial crimes, including the funding of criminal organizations. However, it is hardly the shadowy, conspiratorial system propagandists describe.

CONCLUSION

Those who consume anti-Muslim propaganda are not crazy, stupid, or bigoted. They make rational decisions about the world in which they live. Like most of us, they live in the world created by the media they consume. To the extent that they consume right wing propaganda, that media is the product of a coordinated propaganda campaign. In the world created by this propaganda, preemptive violence towards Muslims is not only defensible and necessary, it is rational.

On April 8, 2016, the Investigative Project on Terrorism published a blog post: "Islamic University of Minnesota a Hotbed of Extremism." The Project is a main producer of anti-Muslim content in the United States according to CAP. In the post, they state that "Dar al-Farooq Islamic Center and Al-Farooq Youth & Family Center have produced at least five young members who left to fight for ISIS." ¹¹⁵

On May 21, 2016, Scott Johnson posted a blog for *Power Line* where he wrote "In an April 3 recording of Abdurahman and Farah at Dar Al-Farooq Mosque in south Minneapolis, Farah mocked the deaths of American soldiers fighting in the Middle East." ¹¹⁶

On July 26, 2016, Andrea Mayer-Bruestle penned an article for Alpha News about Dar Al Farooq. The article accused the community center of violating their land use ordinance by hosting normal Islamic religious

observances. The article said residents "fear for their personal safety" when using the park near Dar al Farooq and that the center is responsible for speeding cars that cause "fear and concern for the children and other residents in the residential neighborhood." ¹¹⁷

At the end of 2016, the Center for Security Policy — another major producer of anti-Muslim propaganda in the United States according to CAP — published a book called *Mosques in America*. The introduction says:

"Mosques in America is a how-to manual for patriotic Americans who are ready to counter the leading edge of Islamic supremacism: its infrastructure-building through the construction of Sharia-promoting mosques that serve to alienate and radicalize." ¹¹⁸

The book includes several case studies to demonstrate the threat. "Case One" is the Dar Al Farooq Islamic Center.

On August 5, 2017, Dar Al Farooq was the target of right wing terrorists who broke a window and threw a firebomb into the imam's office. When they were arrested several months later, according to the affidavit, they said they wanted to "scare [Muslims] out of the country ... because they push their beliefs on everyone else."

The media focused on the crime, the anti-Muslim statements of the

perpetrators, and the fact that one of the perpetrators submitted a bid to build “Trump’s border wall,” as the Chicago Tribune reported.¹¹⁹ In researching this report, we could not find a single media outlet that asked how the men had learned of the existence of Dar Al Farooq, a neighborhood community center in a city eight hours away from their small town.

Mercifully, no one died in the attack on the Dar Al Farooq center. The community was able to rebuild. They enjoyed an initial outpouring of support from their neighbors, from politicians, and from people across the state. But when the supporters left, the harassment began.

Alpha News continued to spin conspiracy theories about the mosque, alleging that the bombing had been a hoax until the white supremacist perpetrators were caught. Then, they denied they said what they had said, insisted that the truly intolerant were those trying to hold them accountable for their words and actions, and declared themselves to be the real victims. “The attacks by Sorensen, Davis and MPR are designed to silence us, to exact a cost for the simple act of paying attention,” John Gilmore wrote on Alpha News in a lengthy post.¹²⁰

Mohamed Omar, imam at Dar Al Farooq, knew that the politicians had all the power, but he wanted his community to have the power to

defend themselves. He sought out a different kind of support, which he found with ISALAH. At a training, he began to understand that the bombing wasn’t the threat facing his community.

I felt the bomb was the biggest thing happening to us. I thought the islamophobia, the systematic racism — is all this bomb. The bomb was a symptom. It was the effect, it wasn’t the cause. The cause was the system behind this thing, creating this hate filled environment where innocent or ignorant people are getting or catching this kind of feeling. They’ve never heard or saw a Muslim person, but someone is telling them “this is your enemy.”

— Mohamed Omar
Imam, Dar Al Farooq

Omar and others at Dar Al Farooq recognized that they did not need a service organization to help them or politicians to save them, but partners to build power with them. They have found partners in other Mosques, in Christian communities, and in Unions such as SEIU Local 26. They have tapped into a wider community, including the organizations who have endorsed this report, and are building the power to fight back against those who would profit off hatred and fear.

Those who organize and finance anti-Muslim propaganda have insulated themselves from scrutiny. They have built a network of nonprofits, carefully maintaining respectable brands while actively guiding the creation of vitriolic, cynical, embarrassing

“They’ve never heard or saw a Muslim person, but someone is telling them “this is your enemy.”

Mohamed Omar
Imam,
Dar Al Farooq
Islamic Center

propaganda. The publishers and profiteers must be held to account, not just interchangeable, generic propagandists such as John Gilmore.

Brent Robbins, the VP from General Mills; John Gibbs, the VP from Comcast; Robert Cummins, the largest donor in the Minnesota Republican party; John Hinderaker, the President and CEO of the Center of the American Experience and former partner at Faegre Baker Daniels; Kim Crockett, VP of the Center and

frequent contributor to local newspapers including the Star Tribune and Pioneer Press; Ronald Eibensteiner, the former chair of the Minnesota Republican party; Mitch Perlstein, the founder of the Center; Alex Kharam, the Executive Director of the Freedom Club; Jeff Johnson, the Republican Gubernatorial candidate; and everyone one else who sits on the boards of or works for Freedom Club and Center of the American Experiment merit public condemnation from across the political spectrum.

MINNESOTA'S ANTI-MUSLIM PROPAGANDA MILL

Exposing the
Financers,
Producers,
and Distributors
of Hate in Minnesota.



CAIR
MINNESOTA



ISAIAH

Faith in Democracy

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