

The Terrorists' Legal Team:

Case By Case, The Center for Constitutional Rights Undermines America

by Matthew Vadum

Summary: *The Center for Constitutional Rights is at the forefront of the legal left's push to give due process rights to America's terrorist enemies. The Center has a long history of anti-American litigation and activism.*

America's barbaric terrorist enemies have a friend in the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), an ultraleftist public interest law firm that for four decades has protected the supposed constitutional rights of those who would destroy the United States. From its founding in the tumultuous 1960s, CCR has used what it calls "innovative impact litigation" to aggressively attack U.S. anti-Communist policy, the war on Islamist terror, and American businesses. CCR lawyers agree with Islamic Fascists' critique of American society and ritualistically denounce the U.S. for its supposed hegemony and imperialism, denying that America has a right to defend itself and regulate its borders. CCR inhabits a paranoid, nightmarish parallel universe. In it, America is a land of breadlines, racism, and totalitarian tyranny. In today's America, "political dissent and protest are under grave attack... This political repression is accompanied by economic hardship for millions, while racism and environmental devastation flourish along with the fattened bank accounts of the war profiteers who run our government," wrote the Center's legal director, William Goodman, in its 2005 annual report.

After the Soviet Union collapsed under the weight of 70 years of failed socialist policies, the Center "made a seamless transition from an alliance with Communism to an alliance with Islamofascism in the name of the United



Clockwise from upper left: Terrorist enabler Lynne Stewart, the Madame Defarge of the legal left; Stewart's client terrorist leader Omar Abdel Rahman; CCR President Michael Ratner receiving Civil Rights Award from the terrorist-linked Council on American-Islamic Relations; "dirty bomber" Jose Padilla

States Constitution," the PowerLine weblog noted last year. The Center, which remains as committed as ever to the well being of those who would eradicate America and freedom around the world, has aligned itself with leftist dictators and Islamic terrorists. Ironically, far-left dissenters would run the risk of being imprisoned or executed as dangerous subversives in the society that Islamic militants want to build in the U.S. CCR also loudly supports disbarred attorney Lynne Stewart, a convicted terrorist conspirator.

CCR believes U.S. soldiers should be

globetrotting social workers. One Center pamphlet protests the current war in Iraq, denouncing President George W. Bush's "quest for world domination" and declaring

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that “the focus of our domestic and foreign policy should be eradicating hunger, poverty, disease, homelessness and environmental degradation and pollution.” Bush should be removed from the presidency and tried for war crimes, according to the Center. “Since 9/11 it has been clear that the principal enemy of democracy has been in the White House,” a narrator says on a video promoting CCR’s impeachment push.

CCR sues to make political statements. The Center litigated ad nauseam for Attica State Prison inmates after their violent 1971 uprising. It has sued to protect abortion rights, loitering by homeless people, and affirmative action programs. CCR has challenged in court the privatization of public hospitals and how women are depicted on television. It supports a proposal that the U.S. pay out slavery reparations even though the U.S. abolished slavery well over a century ago and no former slaves remain alive to collect any potential damages that might be awarded.

Origins

CCR, originally called the Law Center for Constitutional Rights, is located at the corner of Broadway and West 3rd Street in Manhattan’s Greenwich Village, a longtime enclave of radicals and trendy artists who

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romanticize Communism. Its mission statement pledges loyalty both to the U.S. Constitution and to socialist ideas alien to the American experience. The Center employs a staff of 27. Its 2005 budget was \$4 million.

The Center is dedicated “to advancing and



Center for Constitutional Rights co-founder William Kunstler (at right) with flag-burning client Gregory Lee Johnson outside Supreme Court

protecting the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” But it is far from clear how a group can advance and protect both the U.S. Constitution and the purported rights contained in the Declaration. The Constitution, fundamental law of the U.S., protects the rights of individuals, but the Declaration, which is not part of U.S. or international law, is a utopian socialist goodie bag that few thinking people take seriously. Adopted in 1948 by the United Nations, the Declaration claims to guarantee some rights mentioned in the Constitution, but also purports to protect other so-called rights, including the individual’s right to “social security,” “periodic holidays with pay,” “rest and leisure,” “a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family,” and “just and favorable conditions of work and...protection against unemployment.” U.N. enthusiasts claim the Declaration is a powerful tool for strategically shaming governments that violate its provisions, but CCR views the document as a means of transforming America into a very different country.

CCR emerged from the “New Left” movement of the 1960s and was founded in 1966 by

labor lawyer Morton Stavis, radical legal scholar Arthur Kinoy, and attorneys Ben Smith and William Kunstler, all admirers of Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. Kinoy, who in the 1950s represented executed Soviet spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, recognized the propaganda power of trials. “The test for a

people’s lawyer is not always the technical winning or losing of the formal proceedings. The real test is the impact of the legal activities on the morale and understanding of the people involved in the struggle,” said Kinoy.

Kunstler, the most famous of the quartet, was director of the American Civil Liberties Union from 1964 to 1972. A grandstanding, media-savvy lawyer, he rose to national prominence by defending the angry radical defendants of the “Chicago Seven” in their 1969 riot-incitement trial, which, in an act of self-aggrandizing puffery, CCR’s website calls “the trial of the century.” Kunstler claimed “the Constitution is my Bible,” but embraced lawlessness. Notable Kunstlerisms include “any criminal trial in this country is an oppression,” and “I don’t disagree with murder sometimes, especially political assassinations.” He once told students, “You must learn to fight in the streets, learn to revolt, learn to shoot guns...You may ultimately have to take that final step. You may ultimately be bathed in blood.” An indignant Kunstler once upbraided singer and anti-war activist Joan Baez for violating leftist etiquette by daring to criticize the totalitarian Socialist Republic of Vietnam, professing

that he “would never join in a public denunciation of a socialist country.” As commentator Mike Rosen noted after Kunstler died in 1995, the lawyer who depicted himself as a respectable civil libertarian was in reality “a classic, disenfranchised, anti-establishment America-hater of the left.” Kunstler represented notorious defendants “because he sympathized with their causes and because it gave him an opportunity to ‘get in the face’ of bourgeois society.”

Current Leadership

The current head of CCR, Michael Ratner, is an adjunct law professor at Columbia University and served as special counsel to Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a Marxist who was overthrown in 2004. Ratner’s family controls Forest City Enterprises, Inc., a nearly \$8 billion real estate development company that has been accused of eminent domain abuse. His brother, Bruce, is the owner of the New Jersey Nets.

Ratner is an avid Communist sympathizer and is especially fond of Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara. Cuba’s “accomplishments” under Castro have been “great,” Ratner said on CCR’s radio show, “Law and Disorder,” last month when Castro fell ill. Ratner denounced the U.S. “onslaught against the Cuban Revolution,” and the prosecution of the Cuban Five, spies convicted in Miami in 2001. The five spies, who have become national heroes in Cuba, came to the U.S. to gather information about anti-Castro groups. Ratner participated long-distance in the Havana press conference launching the Cuban government’s propaganda website, www.antiterroristas.cu. Radio Havana reported in September 2002. Ratner wrote in *Che Guevara and the FBI: U.S. Political Police Dossier on the Latin American Revolutionary*, that “it was Che Guevara, more than any other figure, who embodied both [the Cuban] revolution and solidarity with peoples fighting to be free from U.S. hegemony.”

Ratner abhors President Ronald Reagan for his anti-Communist foreign policy and bragged on Pacifica Radio’s “Democracy Now” radio show on June 9, 2004, that he spent “eight years, really, of my life, fighting everything Reagan did in Central America.” Ratner opposes putting Reagan’s portrait on U.S. currency. “They may want to put this

guy’s picture on a dollar bill—what does that tell you— on the \$10 bill. I’m going to have to hold that murderer’s dollars in my hands every day?”

Ratner, who has recruited hundreds of pro bono lawyers from outside CCR to represent those held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, favors putting the U.S. on



Michael Ratner of CCR at “Drive Out The Bush Regime” rally in 2005

trial for war crimes, but not deposed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. “If you want any kind of sense of legitimacy or fairness, you can’t just go after Saddam Hussein,” he told “Democracy Now” in 2003. In yet another example of leftists turning to the courts—even foreign courts—when they fail to win at the ballot box, Ratner personally traveled to Berlin, Germany to file legal papers against

CCR’s Ratner has worked for Haiti’s ousted Marxist strongman Jean-Bertrand Aristide, lauded Fidel Castro, called Ronald Reagan a “murderer,” and demanded that Saddam Hussein not be put on trial.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. His goal was to force German authorities, who have so-called universal jurisdiction to prosecute war crimes wherever they occur, to investigate Rumsfeld over the Abu Ghraib prison torture allegations. Germany has refused, but the Center vows to exhaust all available appeals.

Ratner believes the United Nations ought to have a veto over U.S. military action. Without the permission of the U.N., “the use of force by the United States against Iraq, even with the recent congressional approval given for that war, would be flatly illegal under international law,” Ratner wrote in an article published on Z Magazine’s website in

late 2002 as the U.S. and its allies prepared to liberate Iraq.

Attacking the War On Terror

Americans were reminded that the federal government needs to have tools to fight terrorism last month when British authorities uncovered an ambitious plan by Islamic extremists to blow up ten airplanes en route to the U.S. Yet CCR would deprive the government of its powers to protect America. Indeed the Center has enjoyed success in its campaign to undermine the Bush administration’s efforts at combating Islamofascism. It is currently suing to stop the wiretapping of terrorism suspects, and it has been on the winning side in three of the four major war-on-terror cases to come before the U.S. Supreme Court, representing a group of alleged terrorists in one case and filing amicus curiae (meaning “friend of the court” in Latin) briefs on behalf of others.

CCR has argued repeatedly against the U.S. government’s practice of detaining terrorists without affording them the normal rights accorded to prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention of 1949. The Bush administration has responded, citing legal precedents and international law, arguing that terrorist fighters—such as al-Qaeda operatives—who fail to meet criteria such as wearing a uniform

or identifying insignia are “unlawful combatants” not entitled to protection under the law of war. The reason such deception by belligerents has long been considered immoral and illegal is because it endangers the civilian population by making it difficult to distinguish civilians from enemy soldiers. The law of war thus attempts to shield civilians and to restrict warfare to legitimate military targets. The Bush administration maintains that when terrorists expose civilians to harm by operating outside the law of war, their conduct is so dangerous and morally reprehensible that they should not be elevated to prisoner of war (or “lawful combatant”) status when captured. President Bush also argues that America’s terrorist enemies

should not be able to waste U.S. resources by weighing down the civilian legal system in endless litigation. Wars are supposed to be waged on battlefields, not in U.S. courtrooms.

But CCR is determined to give America's terrorist enemies access to the U.S. civilian justice system—and it is succeeding. The Center scored a major legal victory in 2004 when the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 in *Rasul v. Bush* that its clients, 16 foreign nationals captured during U.S. hostilities with the Taliban in Afghanistan, had the legal right to challenge their detentions in U.S. civilian courts. Of the 16 clients, 14 reportedly remain in U.S. custody at Guantanamo. To assist in CCR's legal campaign, the Atlantic Philanthropies announced this year that it will donate \$2.25 million to the Center through 2010. The Ford Foundation recently gave CCR \$200,000 to advocate for the due-process rights of Guantanamo prisoners, the August 3 issue of the Chronicle of Philanthropy reported.

CCR also participated in three other key cases testing presidential wartime authority:

* In *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, CCR filed an amicus brief on behalf of unlawful combatant Salim Ahmed Hamdan who was captured with Taliban forces in Afghanistan. Hamdan was Osama bin Laden's driver. The Supreme Court in June 2006 voted 5-3 to halt the military commission established to try Hamdan on conspiracy charges, finding its structure ran afoul of U.S. law and the Geneva Convention.

* In *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, the Center filed an amicus brief with a federal appellate court in 2002 on behalf of 140 law professors and 19 organizations including the National Lawyers Guild, Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Freedom Socialist Party. The case concerned Yaser Esam Hamdi, a dual U.S.-Saudi citizen who was captured with Taliban forces in Afghanistan. Hamdi was born in

Louisiana while his Saudi father was in the U.S. on a temporary work visa. In 2004 the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that the government has the power to detain unlawful combatants, but found that detainees who are U.S. citizens must have the ability to challenge their detention before an impartial judge.

* In *Rumsfeld v. Padilla* and a later, related case, *Padilla v. Hanft*, CCR filed amicus briefs with the Supreme Court and a federal appeals court on behalf of the would-be "dirty bomber" Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen. Padilla, a convicted murderer, gang member, and Islamic convert also known as Abdullah al-Muhajir, allegedly plotted to detonate a bomb designed to disperse radioactive material over a wide area. The Bush administration argues it has authority to detain U.S. citizens on U.S. soil during times of war, but in a brief CCR rejected the president's efforts to protect the nation by keeping Padilla locked up. The Center argued that leaving in place a ruling maintaining Padilla's detention would hurt "disfavored minorities" and be "a stain on the judicial history of the Republic." Padilla is currently awaiting trial in Florida where he was criminally indicted for conspiring to aid terrorist organizations.

to block the U.S. bombing of enemy targets. The Center opposed Operation Babylift in 1975 in which the U.S. rescued more than 2,000 children from South Vietnam before North Vietnamese Communist forces swamped that country. CCR's website absurdly refers to the victory of Ho Chi Minh's Viet Cong as a "victory of the Vietnamese people."

In *Crockett v. Reagan* (1981) CCR sued to prevent the deployment of U.S. military advisers to El Salvador to help train soldiers to fight against the local Communist insurgency. In the 1987 case *Linder v. Calero*, the Center sued the Nicaraguan anti-Communist force known as the contras. CCR's 1983 lawsuit, *Greenham Women Against Cruise Missiles v. Reagan*, attempted to block U.S. nuclear weapons from a site in the United Kingdom. The suit failed but it generated publicity for the unilateral disarmament movement, a leftist crusade in the 1980s that sought to disarm the U.S. while leaving the USSR's nuclear missiles intact. In 1991 the Center filed suit in *Dellums v. Bush* to halt the deployment of troops to the Persian Gulf that drove Iraqi forces from occupied Kuwait. Years later CCR sued, challenging President George W.

Whittling away at presidential war-fighting powers, the Center is at the forefront of the legal left's campaign to give "unlawful combatant" terrorists the same legal rights as ordinary criminal defendants. A string of legal victories shows it is succeeding.

Undermining American Foreign Policy

CCR has a long history of anti-American activism. When the Soviet Union was pointing nuclear missiles at U.S. cities during the Cold War, CCR was trying to sabotage U.S. foreign policy. During the Vietnam War, the Center repeatedly challenged military draft policies in court. CCR claims to have inspired legal activists when it applied for an injunction against President Richard Nixon in 1972

Bush's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

CCR has also tried to use the courts to pick the deep pockets of corporations in order to advance its foreign policy agenda. In one civil action that might vie for the title of Most Transparently Vexatious Lawsuit In American History, CCR sued Illinois-based heavy-machinery maker Caterpillar, Inc., after the death of Rachel Corrie, a 23-year-old American protester who was run over by an Israeli military Caterpillar D9 bulldozer on a mission in the "no man's land" near the Egyptian border in 2003. Corrie put her body in the path of the bulldozer, hoping to obstruct its progress. The Israeli government claimed the tragic event was an accident. But even if the Israelis were covering up their own wrongdoing,

For frequent updates on environmental groups, nonprofits, foundations, and labor unions, check out the CRC-Greenwatch Blog at

www.capitalresearch.org/blog

ing, how would that make Caterpillar responsible for Corrie's death? A federal judge had similar concerns and dismissed the suit in 2005, but CCR has appealed the dismissal. CCR has also sued private contractors CACI International Inc. of Arlington, Virginia, and Titan International of San Diego, California, for their alleged connection to the 2004 prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib prison.

Imaginary Legal Process and Political Show Trials

CCR complains that an unjust U.S. legal system subjects its heroes –like terrorist enabler Lynne Stewart and convicted cop killer Mumia Abu-Jamal— to political show trials. But CCR and the legal left are surprisingly enthusiastic about conducting their own simulated political show trials. In January, CCR's Ratner addressed the "International Commission of Inquiry On Crimes Against Humanity Committed by the Bush Administration," where he compared the president to Adolf Hitler and accused him of formulating a "plan for what has to be called a coup-d'etat in America." The commission, organized primarily by self-described revolutionary Maoist C. Clark Kissinger and the Revolutionary Communist Party, found the Bush administration guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Earlier, in 1999, the Center filed a petition with the toothless human rights arm of the Organization of American States "charging the United States with violating the economic and social rights of a large sector of the American public," by enacting the federal welfare reform law of 1996. At a three-day-long "National Truth Commission on Poverty in the United States of America," a piece of political theater held in Cleveland in July, CCR Vice President Peter Weiss defined torture the way only someone who believes in the pie-in-the-sky Universal Declaration of Human Rights could. "If your stomach growls, that's torture, and if you don't have a home, that's being treated in an inhumane way," said Weiss, a so-called truth commissioner.

Ties To Treason

CCR employs as a staff attorney Rachel Meeropol, granddaughter of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed as Soviet spies in Sing Sing prison on June 19, 1953. On the golden anniversary of the execution,

Meeropol denied that her grandparents did anything wrong and called their saga "the injustice" and "the terrible situation that they had been placed in." Meeropol said she was proud her grandparents refused to implicate other Soviet spies when pressed by the authorities. "I always grew up with a sense of pride in the fact that they refused to do that," she told Pacifica Radio's "Democracy Now."

Rachel's father, attorney Robert Meeropol, is also active in radical politics. Like CCR, Meeropol signed on as a sponsor of the "International Commission of Inquiry On Crimes Against Humanity Committed by the Bush Administration." The youngest son of the Rosenbergs, Meeropol took his adoptive parents' surname. He now heads the Easthampton, Massachusetts-based Rosenberg Fund for Children. The fund provides "for the educational and emotional



Robert Meeropol (far left) and Rachel Meeropol (far right) at Rosenberg Fund's 2003 event, "Celebrate The Children of Resistance"

needs of children whose parents have suffered because of their progressive activities and who, therefore, are no longer able to provide fully for their children," according to its website. (For more about the Rosenberg Fund, see Capital Research Center's *Foundation Watch*, March 2001). The group's online mission statement states dramatically: "In a time when civil liberties are under attack, the Rosenberg Fund for Children has provided assistance for and raised the hopes of children and activist families who have been targeted because they have worked to improve society for us all." The statement also glosses over the Rosenbergs' espionage activities, declaring that the fund's namesakes "were executed because they refused to implicate others by falsely confessing to giving the 'secret' of the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union."

Links To Lynne Stewart, Legal Enabler of Terrorism

CCR is an outspoken supporter of self-described radical human rights lawyer Lynne Stewart. Last year a Manhattan jury convicted Stewart of conspiring to provide material support for Islamic terrorists. Stewart's comments, and those by her comrades at CCR, offer a window into the tortured reasoning that leftists use to rationalize their defense of Islamist totalitarians.

Stewart was counsel for convicted terrorist Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, a blind Muslim cleric and the spiritual leader of al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group, in English), which has ties to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda. The group subscribes to a radical interpretation of Islamic law, considers the United States an enemy, and seeks to overthrow the Egyptian government and replace it with an Islamic state. Rahman was convicted in 1995 of plotting to bomb New York City landmarks, including the headquarters of the United Nations, the institution CCR so admires. He is serving a life sentence in a maximum-security prison. Several Rahman followers participated in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. After Rahman personally issued a fatwa condemning Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to death, Islamic fundamentalists assassinated Sadat in 1981. Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, which is the largest militant group in Egypt, tried to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in 1995. In an effort to force the release of Rahman, the group carried out an attack in Luxor, Egypt in November 1997 that left 62 people dead and dozens wounded. The victims were variously shot, stabbed, beheaded, and disemboweled.

While she was representing Rahman, Stewart agreed not to communicate with the news media on behalf of her client. The restrictions on Rahman, called "special administrative measures," regulated the sheikh's contact with the outside world. Attorney General Janet Reno imposed them in April 1997 because she recognized that the terrorist leader's words still resonated with his followers. But in 2000, following a meeting with Rahman, Stewart violated both the agreement and anti-terrorism laws by informing the media that Rahman had withdrawn his support for a ceasefire that had suspended terrorist operations by al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya.

Not surprisingly, when a jury assessed the evidence last year, it held Stewart to account. Asked what she would tell “people on the street” if given two minutes to explain her case, Stewart told *Monthly Review*, a Marxist magazine, that she would say: “‘Listen. I did nothing wrong. I’m a lawyer. I did what lawyers do.’ There are a hundred lawyers who would do exactly what I did. There are a million lawyers who would do almost exactly what I did, because this is the way you have to represent clients.”

But in the case of *U.S. v. Ahmed Abdel Sattar, Lynne Stewart, and Mohammed Yousry*, prosecutor Anthony Barkow begged to differ. “Lynne Stewart crossed the line that separates lawyering from crime,” Barkow told the jury January 11, 2005. “No, Lynne Stewart obliterated that line,” he said. Stewart “lied”

ment on the terrorists. “I’m not sure that I want to second-guess what methods other people use.”

When she’s not cheering Islamic fundamentalism, the Madame Defarge of the legal left spends her time pontificating. Stewart supports the use of violence for political ends and claims that American society desperately needs “radical surgery.” Violence and revolution are needed to cleanse the U.S. of the economic and racial injustice of capitalism, she said. “I don’t believe in anarchistic violence, but in directed violence. That would be violence directed at the institutions which perpetuate capitalism, racism, and sexism, and at the people who are the appointed guardians of those institutions, and accompanied by popular support,” she said in a revealing 1995 *New York Times* profile. Perhaps Stewart believes the

Curiously, Stewart, who is arguing that she is too old to be punished with imprisonment, lied about her age on the radio show, giving it as 68 in a rambling statement in which she accused authorities of ganging up on her:

The government and the probation department have teamed up as only they can, with very little reason and with a great many begging of the question, to ask for a 30-year sentence, which is the equivalent of a death sentence, because I’m 68 years old, I’m not in great health, even though I’m feeling good, and it’s just unlikely, jail is a very hard place for elderly people, a hard place for anyone, it’s an inhumane place.

Stewart’s own website lists her birth date as October 8, 1939, which would make her 66

As punishment for her attempt to incite a terrorist attack, which Stewart says she would do again “in a minute,” the “grandmotherly Maoist” favors a slap on the wrist. Home confinement or reading stories to children would suffice, she says.

and “issued the blessing of a return to violence from a terrorist leader...[which] has nothing to do with lawyering.”

According to Stewart, Islamist terrorists are misunderstood freedom fighters. In the *Monthly Review* interview, Stewart hailed Muslim fundamentalists as “basically forces of national liberation,” and said “we, as persons who are committed to the liberation of oppressed people, should fasten on the need for self-determination, and allow people...to do what they need to do to throw off that oppression.”

In an interview published by the political journal *World War 3 Report*, Stewart discussed passing the sheikh’s ceasefire-killing message to the world and boasted she “would do it again in a minute.” She bragged that Rahman was too important a figure to be silenced by the U.S. government. “I think somebody like the sheikh, just like Joe Doherty [an Irish Republican Army militant extradited to Northern Ireland in 1992] and the Irish prisoners, has a right to be heard,” said the zealous attorney. When asked if it would be a good thing for al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya’s attacks to resume, she refused to pass judg-

fundamentalist Islamic terrorists she supports are the right people to perform the surgery she claims America needs.

Stewart loves freedom of speech, unless the speaker advocates the wrong ideas. She told *Monthly Review* she supports Communist governments locking up political opponents. “I don’t have any problem with Mao [Zedong] or [Josef] Stalin or the Vietnamese leaders or certainly Fidel [Castro] locking up people they see as dangerous,” she said. At a 2003 National Lawyers Guild convention, Stewart hailed Ho Chi Minh, Mao, V.I. Lenin, and Castro as “modern heroes,” and denounced the “poisonous [U.S.] government that spreads its venom to the body politic in all corners of the globe.”

During a two-part discussion of her legal predicament broadcast in July on CCR’s weekly radio program “Law and Disorder,” Stewart was unrepentant. After acknowledging she could be sentenced to 45 years in prison, Stewart argued she should get a slap on the wrist. “My lifetime of service to the underprivileged or to the persons that are underserved and to the politically despised should count for something,” she gushed.



Lynne Stewart

years old. Perhaps Stewart, currently a cancer patient, sees potential legal or political advantage in transforming herself from someone who only recently qualified for Social Security payments into a near-septuagenarian.

Stewart also told “Law and Disorder” that if she receives a prison sentence for her attempt to incite a terrorist attack in Egypt, she should be allowed to serve it on weekends. As an alternative to prison, the woman the *Washington Post* called a “grandmotherly Maoist” earlier this year suggested she be placed under house arrest for up to three years, or be

sentenced to read stories to children in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn.

After the charges were filed, CCR stood by Stewart, who studied under Center co-founder Kinoy at Rutgers University School of Law. During the trial, the Center filed an amicus brief attacking the charges. In an unpublished 2002 letter to the editor of the New York Times, William Goodman, CCR's legal director, publicly affirmed that the Center "does indeed support the defense of Lynne Stewart." The prosecution of Stewart is part of "a strategy designed to weaken the Bill of Rights and to frighten lawyers who might represent unpopular and even distasteful clients," Goodman wrote in the letter, which Stewart posted on her website.

Even now, CCR refuses to distance itself from Stewart. On the July 24, 2006 edition of "Law and Disorder," Ratner described the government's case against her as "a legal and political outrage sending a message of fear into the heart of every lawyer who tries to defend their client." Co-host Michael Smith, a radical New York City lawyer associated with CCR, described Stewart's trial as a "show trial," noting that it took place "in the same courtroom, actually, where the Rosenbergs were framed up and convicted — and [the] same thing happened to Lynne about a year ago." Smith mocked the charges against Stewart, saying they were based on the fact that she spoke to a reporter about "a renowned, quote, Muslim terrorist, the blind sheik."

Treason and Terror Help Pay CCR's Bills

CCR is funded by foundations and individual donors, according to financial data culled from databases that track nonprofit groups, foundation websites, and the Center's annual reports.

A traitor's wife and a dazzling array of Hollywood entertainers fond of radical causes have contributed to CCR, according to its annual reports. The estate of Isabel Johnson Hiss, second wife of Alger Hiss, gave CCR as much as \$99,999 in 2002. In 1948 former Communist Party operative Whittaker Chambers accused Alger Hiss, a State Department official, of giving him sensitive U.S. documents, which he passed on to the USSR. Hiss denied both his Communist connections and spying for the Soviets, but a jury convicted him of perjury in 1950 for lying about giving Chambers the documents. Hiss died in 1996; Mrs. Hiss,

whom he married in 1984, died in 2000.

Academy Award-winning actress Susan Sarandon gave CCR as much as \$9,999 in 2002, and her charitable foundation gave up to \$2,499 in 2005. Sarandon's common-law husband, the moody actor-director Tim Robbins, also an Oscar winner, gave up to \$4,999 in 2002. Hollywood director Sidney Lumet gave CCR up to \$249 in 2005. The late actor Ossie Davis and his wife, actress Ruby Dee, gave up to \$2,499 in 2002. Singer Natalie Merchant, formerly of the rock band 10,000 Maniacs, gave as much as \$99,999 in 2005. Radical folk singer Pete Seeger and his wife Toshi gave up to \$249 in 2005. The 87-year-old Seeger is a former Communist Party member whom detractors once dubbed "Stalin's songbird."

Tycoon Peter B. Lewis gave CCR as much as \$99,999 in 2005. Lewis, friend of George Soros and chairman of Progressive Casualty Insurance Company, the nation's third largest automobile insurer, is also a member of Democracy Alliance, a group of deep-pocketed donors that aims to reinvigorate America's political left. (For more about Lewis, see *Foundation Watch*, May 2005; for more on the Democracy Alliance see *Foundation Watch*, March 2006.) Noam Chomsky, the MIT linguistics professor and radical critic of U.S. society, gave CCR as much as \$249 in 2002.

Groups suspected of ties to Islamic terrorists also have donated to CCR. Two organizations in Virginia, Safa Trust Inc. and the International Institute of Islamic Thought, each gave CCR donations of up to \$99,999 in 2005. Federal authorities have accused Safa of funneling money to terrorist groups. Federal agents investigating terrorist financing raided the offices of both organizations in 2002. The Ohio branch of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), gave CCR up to \$2,499 in 2005. Five of CAIR's employees and board members have been arrested, convicted, deported, or otherwise tied to terrorism-related charges and activities, according to analysts Daniel Pipes and Sharon Chadha. (See *Organization Trends*, August 2005.) In 2005 CAIR gave CCR's Ratner its Civil Rights Award. Safa Trust, the IIIT, and CAIR all say they have no connection to terrorism.

Although the Trans Arab Research Institute, which gave CCR up to \$2,499 in 2005, is not accused of having ties to terrorism, in 2004

it expressed its "deepest sorrow" upon hearing of the death of Palestinian terrorist mastermind Yasser Arafat.

Some large donations have come from the Atlantic Philanthropies (\$2.25 million in 2006), the Ford Foundation (more than \$1.7 million since 1988), JEHT Foundation (\$637,500 since 2003), the HKH Foundation (\$300,000 since 2002), and the CS Fund/Warsh-Mott Legacy (\$180,000 since 2001). Since 2002 George Soros's Open Society Institute has provided CCR with two grants each of up to \$99,999. The Tides Foundation gave the Center up to \$24,999 in 2002 and up to \$99,999 in 2005. The Funding Exchange forked over up to \$99,999 in 2005.

Conclusion

Since at least the Progressive Era, left-wing lawyers have tried to lead America down the path to socialism by subverting the Constitution through attacks on limited government, property rights, and freedom of contract. Today those who want to undermine the Constitution, and American institutions in general, have their champion in the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Matthew Vadum is Editor of Organization Trends.

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Terrence Scanlon, President



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BrieflyNoted

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) reports that its members are sending rescue teams into **Hezbollah**-controlled southern Lebanon to evacuate all species out of harm's way. "Kind people know that hungry animals don't have political alliances," said PETA's **Michelle Rokke**. It is unclear whether PETA's actions run afoul of U.S. laws against assisting terror organizations.

Retailing giant **Wal-Mart Stores Inc.**, the perennial piñata of left-wing nonprofit advocacy groups, has opted for a two-pronged strategy to fend off attacks from the left: hire them, and capitulate to them. The company has tapped spin doctor **Leslie Dach** to sell its message to Blue State America. Dach, who as vice chairman of the **Edelman** public relations shop, fought off advocacy groups' attacks on Wal-Mart, will assume the soon to-be-created position of executive vice president of government relations and corporate affairs at the company, the Wall Street Journal reported July 24. A former senior communications consultant for the **Democratic National Committee**, **John Kerry's** 2004 presidential campaign, and the **Clinton** administration, Dach worked for environmentalist groups for close to a decade. The hiring of Dach came months after **Leo Scott**, CEO of the world's largest retailer, vowed to increase the efficiency of its vehicle fleet by 25%, and reduce by 30% the energy used in stores and by 25% the solid waste its stores generate. Conservatives and business advocates fear Wal-Mart will use its market clout to bully its 60,000 suppliers into adopting its new environmentalist agenda.

Activist group **ACORN**, a longtime proponent of a "living wage" for workers, has been stiffing its own employees, the Baltimore City Paper reported July 26. **Sandra Stewart**, a \$250 a week intern at the Baltimore branch of the group, complained to the newspaper that the advocacy group had failed to pay her for six weeks of work. "I find it completely ironic that an organization that fights for social justice" has trouble paying its workers, Stewart wrote in a letter to the paper that sparked its interest in the story. The paper reported that other ACORN ex-employees have also complained about not being paid back wages.

Local officials in Stafford, Texas, are complaining that they have too many churches, the Los Angeles Times reported July 31. Nonprofit groups have been drawn to the city, which has a population of 19,227, because it has been growing rapidly and has minimal deed restrictions. "It's thrown everything out of balance, plus providing zero revenue. Somebody's got to pay for police, fire and schools," City Councilman **Cecil Willis** was quoted saying.

The U.S. Treasury Department is reportedly taking steps to freeze the assets of the Saudi Arabia-based **International Islamic Relief Organization**, which it alleges funnels money to **al-Qaeda**. "It is particularly shameful when groups that hold themselves out as charitable or religious organizations defraud their donors or divert funds in support of violent terrorist groups," said Stuart Levey, Treasury's undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence.