

*Chapter 18: Feminism beyond Left and Right*

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There was a time fairly recently when it was being argued that politics in advanced capitalist nations, the self-styled ‘democracies’, had moved beyond Left and Right<sup>1</sup> (Bobbio, 1996; Giddens, 2007; McKnight, 2005). At the time I disagreed with this thesis, on the grounds that dispensing with the Left/Right distinction was a way of avoiding having to deal with domination, i.e. those social arrangements that operate in the interests of some at the expense of the basic human rights of others (Thompson, 2009).

For a brief discussion of what I then believed was involved in the Left/Right distinction, see: Thompson, 2001: 29-31.

In the light of how each side of the distinction has dealt with the transgender phenomenon (although not only for that reason), I have come to the conclusion that there *is* a politics that is beyond Left and Right. That politics is feminism.

Of course, feminism is not a politics like malestream politics. There are no political parties, no bureaucracy, only short-term, volunteer organisations focused on challenging particular egregious moves on the part of the male supremacist environment; and it is possible that bureaucratising feminism might destroy it. And feminism has been so trivialised, distorted and traduced that it is not easily recognisable in the wider society.

Nonetheless, feminism has always been beyond Left and Right, even before this latest betrayal by the Left and the surprising agreement with the Right around the transgender issue. Its account of power and capability has always included more than the conventional political categories, originating as it did outside those categories, in women’s personal lives, perceptions and experiences; and feminism exposed the existence of male domination, relations of power that are either ignored or euphemised into ‘inequality’ (of women with men) by the political categories of both Left and Right. Normally, those categories have no place for women (except when women have interests that coincide with men’s, or when women can be seen to be serving male interests); and both are male-dominated, at best oblivious to what women need or want, at worst adamantly, even violently, hostile. As Kaeley Triller Harms (2020) put it, ‘Misogyny transcends political values’.

The distinction might remain at least partly relevant for feminism in attempts to engage with the malestream—as long as the Left remains true to its traditional constituency (although that looks like a lost cause with the influence of neo-liberalism), and the Right includes subordinating women to men (although their resistance to transgenderism suggests a capability of recognising limits to which the Left is oblivious). But feminism’s adherence to the left-wing of the politics should not prohibit it from looking elsewhere for support for feminist meanings and values. That those meanings and values in relation to transgender have been found on the political Right is astonishing but not incredible if they are evaluated in their own terms (rather than being peremptorily dismissed because of their origin).

Feminism owes no loyalty to a political Left that has betrayed women so shamelessly so often and so recently. That does not mean that feminism therefore belongs on the Right, despite the fact that the feminist position on transgender has been found

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<sup>1</sup> I capitalise (political) Left and Right in order to separate out the political meanings from the ordinary-language meanings.

within right-wing circles, and despite the fact that all resistance to transgenderism has been characterised as ‘extreme right-wing’ in the public media. (Neither does feminism belong in any putative political Centre, which is a euphemistic way of denying that Left and Right are polar opposites that cannot be reconciled). Malestream categories usually don’t work for feminism. (It’s doubtful that they work for conventional politics either, as the self-styled Left takes on more and more of the values of the Right, in order to maintain political relevance in the face of the success of neo-liberalism). As Jo Bartosch said, ‘We didn’t make the rules within which we’re forced to play, nor did we choose the game’ (Bartosch, 2022).

But betrayal by the Left is not the reason feminists have found common cause with the Right on transgenderism. The reason is that that is one place where feminist meanings on this issue are to be found. The goal of the trans agenda is to change the meaning of ‘women’ to include men. The feminist resistance to that agenda is both to defend the traditional meaning that does not, and cannot ever, include men, and to expose the concept of ‘trans’ as an illusion based on the lie that people can change sex. Feminism is wherever that set of meanings is to be found, even among those whose political commitment is otherwise right-wing.

Another sign that feminism is beyond Left and Right (or ought to be) is that well-intentioned women are being accused by other feminists of being right-wing, even racist. But these accusations rest on the offensive assumption that those accused have abandoned their feminism, whereas finding common cause with (some sections of) the Right doesn’t mean that they have therefore embraced any right-wing values. No one’s feminism has been compromised by those temporary and strategic relationships confined to that single issue. (See the discussions of WoLF and Kellie-Jay Keen below).

Sometimes the accusations rely on terms defined by, for and about men. The Left’s anti-racism is so focused on what men want, that what happens to women in ‘minority cultures’ is often ignored (although not usually by feminists). Criticising men in ‘minority cultures’ for their treatment of women can perhaps sound like the racist Right, but appealing to the Left’s version of ‘anti-racism’, i.e. defending men despite what they do to females, doesn’t help the feminist cause. Feminist motives are different from those of the Right, and so are their recommendations for what is to be done. Feminists don’t recommend violence, for example, or riot in the streets. Feminism should treat the Left/Right distinction with caution. It’s another example of those occasions when ‘the master’s tools will [not] dismantle the master’s house’ (Lorde, 1984).

For an approving response to the decision by film-makers, Reality Matters, not to accept the invitation by The Tucker Carlson Show on Fox News, to be interviewed about their film ‘Adult Human Female’, because Fox News is right-wing and ‘does not conform to even the basics of truth telling’, see: Green, 2022;

for criticism of the negative reactions on the part of left-wing feminists to Matt Walsh’s film *What Is a Woman?*, to Walsh himself and to those feminists who liked the film, together with disagreement with Reality Matters’ decision not to appear on The Tucker Carlson Show, see: Brunskell-Evans, 2023;

for a criticism of the Left for its embrace of ‘gender ideology—a denial of material reality akin to creationism’, see: Lesnick, 2022;

for arguments justifying transgender's feminist critics for finding common cause with certain segments of the Right, not only because that is where criticism of transgender is to be found, but also because what J. K. Rowling calls 'progressive male class warriors' have abandoned women (and not for the first time), see: Moore, 2020; Rowling, 2024.

## Summary

In what follows I discuss a number of issues arising out of feminism's relationship with the Left/Right distinction. There are two main parts. The first deals with the male Left and its embrace of transgender at women's expense, the second with the connections feminists have made with the Right.

I start the first section, 'Transgender and the male Left', with a discussion of Caroline Norma's account of the male Left's tactic of disguising their antagonism to feminism as some form of 'social justice', transgender being the latest example.

I go on to discuss Andrea Dworkin's account of why left-wing men are so attached to pornography—it siphons off the rage men feel towards other men (eroticised because they've all got penises) and directs it towards women instead. I also discuss John Stoltenberg's assertion that Dworkin was a 'trans ally'. I argue that it's not true, despite certain statements Dworkin herself made, given the general tenor of her writings and the implications of her subsequent statements.

The next part of the first section is devoted to examples of the embrace of transgender by leftist political parties in Australia and the UK. I conclude this section by suggesting that the Left's embrace of transgender is due to its defeat by neo-liberalism. Transgender provides the Left with a substitute for its lost original constituency—the working class.

The second main section, 'Feminism and the Right', discusses the feminist connections with the Right. It begins by pointing out that the latest connections in relation to transgender are different from earlier alleged connections around pornography. In the more recent case, the connections are actually happening, whereas there was no connection between feminism and the Right in relation to pornography. The section continues with some examples of challenges to transgender from the Right in Australia and the UK.

Then there is a lengthy discussion of WoLF's connections with the Right. It argues that the criticisms directed against them are untrue, and that those connections were limited and strategic and in no way compromised their feminism. This section also looks at the criticisms levelled at Kellie-Jay Keen ('Posie Parker') and finds them not only wanting, but in some instances disgraceful in their allegiance to 'anti-racist' tropes of the male Left. I do, however, strongly disagree with Keen's publicly-voiced support for the election of Donald Trump to the US presidency. I can only conclude that she is politically naïve, despite her insightful interventions into the transgender agenda.

I conclude this chapter with a discussion of some limits to any connection with the Right, giving as examples: voting or supporting for Trump simply because he has criticised transgender; and open-ended, on-going connections with right-wing organisations and groups that say they are opposed to 'cancel culture', while ignoring the other values that dominate those groups.

## **Transgender and the male Left**

The political Left is where feminism belongs (if it belongs anywhere in malestream politics), as long as the ‘Left’ means resistance to the ‘diswelfares’ of the capitalist system—the obsolescence of skills, redundancies, premature retirements, accidents, many categories of disease and handicap, urban blight and slum clearance, smoke pollution, and a hundred and one other socially generated disservices’ (Titmuss, 1967: 151). But the Left has never been a champion of women, and with its embrace of the transgender agenda, it has once again betrayed us. The left-wing, ‘progressive’ position on trans is to accept without question its claims of ‘marginalisation and vulnerability’, and to defend it vigorously, even viciously, against any criticism. As one feminist critic put it:

Today, the left is promoting the regressive and harmful gender norms, the mutilation of gender-nonconforming children, violence against lesbians, the silencing of women who speak out, male-centered sex-positivity, and the buying and selling of women—all for male gain. Women are supposed to shut up and vote “Labour” or “Democrat” or whatever their country’s version of the “lesser evil” is, so that things don’t get worse (Fain, 2019).

Another critic said:

I was used to being alienated and held at arms’ length by the right-wing patriarchy, but nothing could have prepared me for the intensity of the punishing onslaught from leftist patriarchs (Harms, 2020).

There are some left-wing organisations and individuals resisting the hegemony of the transgender agenda, e.g. Contemporary Marxist Analysis; Deep Green Resistance;<sup>2</sup> Redline (Ó Catháin, 2019; Redline, 2019; Rivers, 2019; Stewart, 2019);<sup>3</sup> the Spanish Socialist Party;<sup>4</sup> the Communist Party of Great Britain (Brar et al, 2019; London Communist Sisters, 2020; Ziggy, 2020). But most self-styled ‘progressives’ have taken up the transgender cause with enthusiasm, and most leftist men are silent about the harms to women (Moore, 2021).

This recent transgender-inspired obliviousness to the needs and interests of women on the part of what J. K. Rowling (2024) called ‘progressive male class warriors’ is not surprising to anyone who has been paying attention. Although feminism qualifies as left-wing in the sense that it defends the interests of the oppressed, it has never been welcome in the malestream Left when it challenged male prerogatives. Too often, the Left has been either overtly antagonistic, or just plain indifferent, to the needs of women. When those needs conflict with what men want, no matter how trivial, absurd or destructive those desires are, the Left can be virulently misogynist (e.g. their defence of prostitution, pornography, surrogacy, and now men’s transgender claims to be ‘women’); and when women’s needs are different from men’s, they are ignored in social arrangements by, for and about men.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://deepgreenresistance.org/en/who-we-are/faqs/radical-feminism-faqs#lies-about-lierre-keith-dgr>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Redline-contemporary-Marxist-analysis-2516624195078886/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://womansplaceuk.org/2020/07/16/statement-spanish-socialist-party-sex-based-rights/>

Caroline Norma (2015) saw transgenderism as ‘just the latest weapon in the Left’s covert battle against feminism’. She said that the male Left has never welcomed feminism, or feminists, within its ranks, ‘at least since the sexual revolution of the 1960s’, but that they cannot afford to be too open about their antagonism. Feminist issues, such as abortion rights and opposition to the ‘global male crimes of incest, rape, prostitution, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, child marriage and acid attacks’, are too popular with people concerned about the Left’s core politics of fighting against injustice and oppression. So the male Left’s hostility to feminism has to be covert. It has to be disguised as a fight for social justice.

Norma couches this in terms of a ‘wedge politics’ that divides politically motivated women into hostile opposing camps. When feminism exposes as exploitative an aspect of male supremacy that left-wing men ‘love and need’ (or think they do), the male Left redefines that exploitation as ‘women’s rights’. This gives women who want to remain male allies an excuse to see themselves as feminists. If it’s women’s rights it must be good. But the price is the betrayal, not only of other feminists, but of the very meaning of feminism itself. Its motivation, as Robyn Morgan pointed out over 50 years ago, is an ‘eagerness to be acceptable to [the men] whose revolutionary zeal no one would question’ (Morgan, 1978: 127-8). Another price paid by women who allow themselves to be taken in by this tactic is intellectual bad faith. You can do it only if you don’t allow yourself to think.

Norma (2015) said that the first use of this tactic, in the 1980s, was around pornography (women have a right to do what they like with their own bodies as paid ‘actors’); prostitution was the second, in the 1990s (women have a right to do what they like with their own bodies as ‘sex workers’), and the third is transgender (it supposedly challenges those sex roles that many feminists believed were the ‘root cause’ of women’s oppression). A moment’s reflection, however, should be all that is necessary to realise that any position that defends pornography, prostitution or transgender is anti-feminist. The wedge is not so much between two kinds of feminists, but between women who see through this tactic and those who do not. The male Left tries to con women with what looks superficially like a feminist position, in order to hide its real misogyny. In the case of transgender, that misogyny takes the form of the destruction of feminism by destroying the meaning of the category of ‘women’. If men can be women, there is no separate category for women.

For the bullying behaviour of the leftist groups Land Justice Network, the anarchists, and Antifa towards at least one woman critic of transgenderism, see: Bartosch, 2019.

### *Dworkin on left-wing men and pornography*

This is not the first time the male Left has abandoned women (Morgan, 1978). Its defence of prostitution and pornography was (and is) a betrayal of women. As in the case of transgenderism, the male Left’s defence of pornography and prostitution is a defence of institutional arrangements that oppress women. Early in this second wave of feminism, Andrea Dworkin asked why left-wing men (‘so-called radical men’ and ‘the sons’) loved and needed pornography. She did not accept the reasons the men themselves (and their female acolytes) gave for their approval of pornography—that it was simply a matter of pleasure, freedom and free speech:

the sons claimed that pornography was pleasure, all the while turning it to profit. Proclaiming a creed of freedom the sons made and sold images of

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women bound and shackled ... images of women humiliated and mutilated ... images of rape to terrorize women into silence. Proclaiming the absolute integrity of the First Amendment, the sons used it to browbeat women into silence (Dworkin, 1988c: 220).

From a stance of human decency, men cannot be free as long as women are subjugated, and not everyone is equal in the domain of 'free speech'; and 'pleasure' that involves shackling, mutilation, rape and terrorising of women (and children) hints at another, much murkier reason for the love and need of pornography on the part of left-wing men.

For Dworkin, that reason arose out of relations between men. In a Freudian-like reference to the primal relations of power between men under conditions of male supremacy (although Dworkin didn't mention Freud), she said that pornography served to deflect the rage the young men ('sons') felt for the old men ('fathers') who had sent them to kill or be killed. Dworkin was specifically talking about the young radical men of her own generation ('boys ... who fought against the Viet Nam War. The flower children. The peaceniks. The hippies ... Draft resisters', etc.). But she could also have been talking about left-wing men more generally, whose political activism involves challenging the men in power.

While much of this challenge is rational—strikes, demonstrations, emigration, various kinds of rebellion, etc.—rage against and the subjugation of women is not. Both powerful men and powerless men have an interest in deflecting the rage, the powerful men because the sons' rage might succeed in destroying them, the powerless men because they might get destroyed instead:

The fathers, who wanted sons, not daughters, at some point recognize that, like wretched King Midas, they have gotten their way. There before them are the sons who are the same as they, sons who will kill for power, sons who will take everything from them, sons who will replace them (Dworkin, 1988c: 215).

The source of power is the penis, but the 'sons' are also penis-bearers and can turn against the 'fathers' in patricidal, homosexual rape. But there is an alternative. Because the inciter of patriarchal power is the penis, the rage is erotic, and the appropriate target for male eroticism is women: 'Do it to her, [the fathers] whisper; do it to her, they command' (Dworkin, 1988c: 219). On Dworkin's account then, left-wing men love and need pornography as an outlet for their rage at all the slights of subordination at the hands of other men, without getting into confrontations with powerful men that they (the subordinated ones) could not win. They can find satisfaction in doing to women who can't fight back, what they would prefer to do to powerful men if only they were strong enough.

It might seem that Dworkin's account is overblown, a just-so story that doesn't really accord with what actually happens. It has been argued that consuming pornography while masturbating alone has no relevance in the wider world. But what men are depicted doing to women is not confined to pornography consumption in isolation. It happens everywhere: in the making of pornography where real women (and children) are used; in the trafficking, enslavement and torture of women and children across nations; in the prostitution industry, another left-wing sacred cow in the name of a spurious 'freedom' (of 'sex workers'); in the sexual demands porn-addled men impose

on women; and in the murderous epidemic of male violence against women and children.

For their attempts to get legal redress for the women used and abused in pornography, Andrea Dworkin—and her colleague Catharine MacKinnon—were traduced, vilified and censored by the male Left, who ignored Dworkin’s warning that they ‘cannot have [their] whores and [their] politics too’, and worked with the rest of malestream society to ensure that the abuse of women in pornography would continue unfettered. As Caroline Norma pointed out, ‘the direct beneficiary of this win against feminists of the 1980s [was] the global sex industry’ (Norma, 2015). The male Left views the activities depicted in pornography with equanimity, and embraces them with pleasure and as some kind of ‘human’ entitlement. They purport to uphold the interests of the poor, the marginalised and the oppressed, yet when it comes to women, the male Left is at the very least, oblivious; at worst, it can be as viciously misogynist as any right-wing extremist.

In Dworkin’s account, women are used in pornography (and prostitution) as scapegoats and alibis in battles for ascendancy among men. Her reference to ‘fathers’ and ‘sons’ implies that it is yet another example of an age-old bond, that highly ambivalent relationship between powerful men and powerless men involving both desire and fear. Because we live under male supremacist conditions (of which pornography is a graphic representation), the nature of the father-son bond is repressed—denied and dehumanised—and reappears as a lethal eroticism that both the murderous father and the enraged son deflect onto women. So in Dworkin’s account, men ‘need’ pornography as a way of managing their rage against other men by displacing it onto women. Pornography involves a contract between men on every level of the male supremacist hierarchy agreeing to channel their murderous impulses away from each other and onto women.

#### *Dworkin on transsexuals*

Before continuing with a discussion of the male Left’s embrace of transgenderism, I want to address the claim by John Stoltenberg, Dworkin’s long-term partner, that she was a ‘trans ally’ (Stoltenberg, 2017, 2020). The original claim was made in a 2014 paper that no longer exists. Although Stoltenberg had originally called this paper ‘Andrea Dworkin on living beyond gender’, he agreed with the editors of the journal it was published in, *Feminist [sic] Times*, to change it to ‘Andrea Dworkin was not transphobic’. [B]eing a longtime magazine editor myself, I could appreciate what is needed to get people to read stuff, he said (Stoltenberg, 2017).

For feminist criticisms of Stoltenberg’s argument, see: Craft, 2016a, b.

From the evidence of Dworkin’s own writings, it might seem at first sight that he is correct. In wording that would not look out of place in a transgender manifesto, Dworkin once saw transsexualism as a challenge to ‘the fiction that there are two polar distinct sexes’ (Dworkin, 1974b: 175).

“man” and “woman” are fictions, caricatures, cultural constructs ... As roles they are ... demeaning to the female, dead-ended for male and female both. Culture legislates those fictive roles as normalcy ... [among other research,] work with transsexuals ... provide[s] basic information which challenges the notion that there are two discrete biological sexes ... *We are, clearly, a multi-sexed species which has its sexuality spread along a vast fluid*



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*continuum where the elements called male and female are not discrete ...*  
Transsexuality can be defined as one particular formation of our general  
multisexuality which is unable to achieve its natural development because  
of extremely adverse social conditions (Dworkin, 1974b: 174, 183, 186—  
original emphasis).

She was convinced that, ‘in the culture of male-female discreteness ... [e]very  
transsexual, white, black, man, woman, rich, poor, is in a state of primary emergency  
... as a transsexual’ (p.186), and she went on to make ‘three crucial points’, of which  
the first two were:

One, every transsexual has the right to survival on his/her own terms.  
That means that every transsexual is entitled to a sex-change operation,  
and it should be provided by the community as one of its functions ...  
Two, by changing our premises about men and women, role-playing, and  
polarity, the social situation of transsexuals will be transformed, and  
transsexuals will be integrated into community, no longer persecuted and  
despised (Dworkin, 1974b: 186).

Her third point, however, stepped out of the trans agenda and undermined what had  
seemed like her previous support:

Three, community built on androgynous identity will mean *the end of  
transsexuality as we know it*. Either the transsexual will be able to expand  
his/her sexuality into a fluid androgyny, or, as roles disappear, the  
phenomenon of transsexuality will disappear and that energy will be  
transformed into new modes of sexual identity and behaviour (Dworkin,  
1974b: 186-7—emphasis added).

Hence, Dworkin was not arguing that ‘transsexual’ was just another kind of human  
being, but rather, that transsexuality was itself to be transcended, along with the ‘two  
polar distinct sexes’. Stoltenberg seemed to be unaware of the implications of  
Dworkin’s third point, since he quoted all three points, referring to the whole section  
as ‘prescient and empathetic’ (Stoltenberg, 2020). But to predict that transsexuality  
will disappear is unlikely to please the trans mob, who already complain that radical  
feminists are saying that trans people don’t exist.

Still, much of Dworkin’s argument was indeed compatible with the transgender  
agenda, at least, at first sight. As well as the first two points quoted above, she tried to  
argue away the importance of the biological differences between the sexes. She listed  
a number of sources of information that ‘threaten[ed] to transform the traditional  
biology of sex difference into the radical biology of sex similarity’. She also agreed  
that there were many ‘genders’ (although she said ‘sexes’): ‘That is not to say that  
there is one sex, but there are many’ (Dworkin, 1974b: 175). She gave fourteen  
reasons why the sexes were more similar than different, most if not all of them  
appealing to some biological factor as evidence of the similarity, e.g. body structure,  
foetal development, gonads, chromosomal sex, hormones (pp.176-9). This was a  
common feminist argument at the time. Ann Oakley (1972), for example, also  
assumed that women’s oppression was caused by sex differences, and then proceeded  
to argue those differences away.

For a detailed critique of Oakley’s arguments, see: Thompson, 1991: 34-40.

But despite her seeming demolition of biology, what Dworkin was talking about was  
‘sex roles’, as she explicitly said—see the first two points above. Oakley was also

talking about sex roles. It was the phenomenon of sex roles, i.e. the culture, that was responsible for the sex differences. Either biology proved that sex roles weren't real (Oakley), or because sex roles weren't real, neither were those particular aspects of biology that were used to justify them (Dworkin).

The 'sex role' terminology was a common way of naming the problem feminism was facing. Mary Daly said, for example, 'I use both of these terms [feminine and masculine] to refer to roles/stereotypes/sets of characteristics which are essentially distorted and destructive' (Daly, 1978: 26). Again, Janice Raymond said that sex roles are 'the fabric by which a sexist society is held together', with transsexualism an expression of the 'sex-role stereotyping' characteristic of 'the patriarchy' (Raymond, 1980: xviii-xix). And Sheila Jeffreys said, 'Transsexualism ... is deeply reactionary, a way of preventing the disruption and elimination of gender roles which lies at the basis of the feminist project' (Jeffreys, 1997: 56-7). But while these writers argued that transsexualism reinforced sex roles, Dworkin argued that it disrupted them, at least in the context of her three points mentioned above.

However, what Dworkin was objecting to was not so much the existence of the two sexes. She was objecting to the fact that they were polarised, and that that polarisation was the 'root cause' of male domination and women's subordination. She was criticising the asymmetry of sex differences, whereby the male represented neutrality as well as goodness and positivity, and the female, lack and negativity. '[O]nce we do not accept the notion that men are positive and women are negative', she said, 'we are essentially rejecting the notion that there are men and women at all' (Dworkin, 1982b: 110, quoted in Stoltenberg, 2020). She went on to say: 'our revolutionary task is to destroy phallic identity in men and masochistic nonidentity in women' (p.110, not quoted in Stoltenberg, 2020). Here she confused the actual existence of two sexes with the meanings that fact has acquired, and the uses to which it is put, under male supremacist conditions. The feminist project is not to abolish sex differences but to change their meaning, so that they are no longer used to justify male domination and women's subordination.

According to Stoltenberg, Dworkin maintained her positive views of transsexuality until she died (in 2005): 'In the 31 years we were together those views did not change; she never retracted them', he said (Stoltenberg, 2017). However, her own contemporary writings suggest that, far from supporting the transgender agenda, she would have utterly rejected it. She may have continued to defend transsexual individuals against discrimination and harassment, but it is unlikely that she would have supported transgender's linguistic dictates and law changes. Given her objection to '[s]ex as the power dynamic between men and women' (Dworkin, 1974b: 183), she would be unlikely to accept the overweening male entitlement of the men who demand entry into women's spaces by claiming they are 'women'. Nor would she have supported the male masquerade of femininity, given what she said about men and fetishism in *Pornography*:

she is the thing in contradistinction to which the male is human. Without her as fetish—the charmed object—the male, including the male homosexual would be unable to experience his own selfhood, his own power, his own penile presence and sexual superiority. Male homosexual culture consistently uses the symbolic female—the male in drag, effeminacy as a style, the various accoutrements that denote female subjection—as part of its indigenous environment, as a touchstone

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against which masculinity can be experienced as meaningful and sublime. Male homosexuals, especially in the arts and in fashion, conspire with male heterosexuals to enforce the male-supremacist rule that the female must be the made thing against which the male acts to experience himself as male (Dworkin, 1983: 128).

It is true that she is talking here about men treating actual women as fetishes, not about donning a fetishised femininity themselves (apart from the drag queens). But her point about femininity functioning ‘as a touchstone against which masculinity can be experienced as meaningful and sublime’ is still relevant to the current transgender agenda, where men are proclaiming themselves ‘women’ while retaining their male genitalia.

I would also suggest she would have been horrified at the medicalisation of children, especially the mutilation of girls’ bodies, given what she said about mastectomy in the treatment of breast cancer:

our breasts and the whole musculature of our chests are removed with enthusiastic abandon ... Why are women still being mutilated so promiscuously in breast surgery; why has this savage form of mutilation, radical mastectomy, thrived if not to enhance the negativity of women in relation to men? (Dworkin, 1982b: 100)

Dworkin’s approach to transsexualism, then, was not quite as Stoltenberg has presented it. Yes, she said a number of things that could be interpreted in support of the transgender agenda. But she died (in 2005) before the transgender agenda developed into what it has become today. (Although Janice Raymond had warned us in 1979, even she could not have predicted the enormity of the problem).

As well as ‘transsexuals’, Dworkin also had positive things to say about other proclivities—‘transvestism’, ‘bestiality’ and ‘incest’—that at the time were seen to promise to subvert the dominant notion of heterosexuality as ‘human nature’. Transvestism was similar to transsexuality, she said, in the sense that it was ‘costuming that violates gender roles’, and like transsexuality, it would disappear once sex roles were no more. The term ‘bestiality’ is an unfortunate choice of words for what she was talking about, which was sensuous and kind relationships between people and animals, not ‘fucking between people [sic] and other animals’ (and perhaps she would now say ‘men’ instead of ‘people’). As for incest, it was an argument against the incest taboo as a denial of ‘essential fulfillment with the parents whom we love with our primary energy’ (Dworkin, 1974b: 187-93). While it is not entirely clear what that means, it certainly does not mean father-daughter rape. ‘Perhaps incestuous rape is becoming a central paradigm for intercourse in our time’, she was later to say. ‘Women are supposed to be small and childlike’ (Dworkin, 1988a[1987]: 229). These are all unfortunate choices of words, rather than recommendations for some of the worst forms of male sexual fetishism.

Dworkin was writing in the early days of the twentieth-century wave of feminism, still too close to the terminology and ideas of the sexual liberation movements (for men) of the 1960s. Feminist theory was still in its infancy, still searching for appropriate ways to say what male supremacy renders unspeakable. It would not be surprising if she sometimes got it wrong and made mistakes that she would have repudiated if she had lived long enough. One thing is certain: on the evidence of her life’s work, she would not have approved of the transgender agenda—with its overweening male

entitlement, its insistence that men with male genitalia are ‘women’, its mutilation of children, its lies, censorship, insults, verbal abuse and violence—however sympathetic she might have remained to transsexual individuals.

In fact, testimony by Janice Raymond clearly indicates that Dworkin had some awareness of the problematic nature of transgenderism. In speaking about her own relationship with Dworkin, Raymond said that, far from deploring her (Raymond’s) work in *The Transsexual Empire*, Dworkin had written an endorsement of it that appeared on the cover of the paperback edition (Raymond, 2021: 41). Raymond also pointed out that, in the rest of her work and contrary to transgender ideology, Dworkin consistently ‘recognized ... [that] women’s bodies materially exist and significantly affect the conditions of our lives’ (p.42). Raymond also said that Dworkin admitted that she no longer agreed with the views of ‘transsexuals’ (etc.) in *Woman Hating*. In a 1989 interview, she said that she thought that there were ‘a lot of things really wrong with the last chapter in *Woman Hating*’ (p.46). Raymond concluded her discussion by saying that she believed ‘that Andrea, were she alive today, would have recognized and named the dangerous direction that transgenderism has taken and would never have condoned [it]’ (p.46).

### **Transgender as a left-wing project**

The Left is completely smitten with the trans narrative, utterly impervious to any argument, evidence or just plain common sense; and self-styled ‘centre-Left’ political parties—Labor in Australia, Labour in the UK, Democrat in the US, and Greens Parties everywhere—carry its message into the political arena. What follows are some examples of the ways in which so-called ‘centre-Left’ political parties have succumbed to the transgender agenda.

#### *The Australian Labor Party*

The Australian Labor Party is commonly regarded as ‘left wing’ and ‘progressive’ by both supporters and detractors, even though they have been as enthusiastic supporters of the neo-liberal economic agenda as any avowedly ‘conservative’ (i.e. right-wing) Party. However, although they have been complicit with the political drift to the Right during the last decades of neo-liberal rule, they are left-wing in their stance against inequality (rhetorical and not actual though it might be), as is their history as the party of the labour movement: ‘Our history is intertwined with the history of Australia’s democracy labour movement’.<sup>5</sup> They have monumentally betrayed that movement as they grapple for power in an electoral system massively arrayed against any politics of human decency, but they are still seen as the ‘progressive’ wing of politics, as is the equally treasonous Democratic Party in the US; hence their embrace of the ‘transgender’ cause.

The Australian Labor Party was the federal government when the trans-friendly amendments to the 1984 *Sex Discrimination Act* were passed in June 2013, and the *Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender* was issued in July of the same year. Australian state Labor Parties have been just as enthusiastic. In Victoria and Tasmania, it is the Labor Party, sometimes aligned with the Greens, that has enabled people to change the sex on their birth certificates to match the ‘gender’ they say they are, without any requirement for surgery or other medical interventions.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.alp.org.au/policies>

As one voice from the Right put it: ‘Labor and Greens MPs are leading the charge to legislate the lie that birth sex can be changed’ (Oriel, 2019).

*The Victorian Greens Party*

The trans issue had already been ‘simmering for years’ in the Victorian Greens party, according to one journalist (Sakkal, 2022. See also: Le Grand and Carmody, 2023), when a private Facebook post criticising the state government’s ‘conversion therapy’ legislation, by Melbourne Greens councillor, Rohan Leppert, was leaked towards the end of March, 2022. This elicited the usual screams of outrage from the trans mob, along with a letter to the executive of the Victorian Greens complaining about “trans-exclusionary influences on the party” (Sakkal, 2022).

Then the Party refused to accept the results of a ballot that elected Linda Gale as the Victorian state Convenor. Two days after the results of the election were announced (on 11 June 2022), a Party member, local government councillor and Port Phillip deputy mayor, Tim Baxter, posted the usual whinging complaint on social media, saying that her election “sends a clear message [that] trans people are not safe in this party”. This post was ‘liked’ and shared among the members over and over again. The usual ‘transphobic’ was bandied about, referring to her co-authoring of an internal discussion paper responding to a proposal called “Trans Exclusionary Rhetoric”. In that response, Gale had asked about the implications of that proposal for women—in sport, in intimate medical settings, in women’s refuges, in hospitals and prisons (Gale, 2022a; Leppert, 2022).

The Party’s parliamentarians added fuel to the fire by demanding Gale’s election be set aside. The onslaught was led by then-Senator Janet Rice (her husband, who had died in September 2019, had decided he was a ‘transwoman’) (ABC, 2019). She was abetted by Senator Lidia Thorpe (she who had tried to attack Kellie-Jay Keen in Canberra) (see the ‘More havoc—police’ chapter). To calm things down, the Party could have pointed to their well-established record on support and advocacy for ‘LGBTIQA+ rights’, but they did not. Four days after the attacks on Linda Gale began, the leader, Samantha Ratnam, overturned the election. Gale herself commented that ‘[t]he Greens party is too important to abandon it to social media mobs’ (Gale, 2022a). But mob rule is transgender’s favoured tactic, indeed, its only tactic, given that it cannot appeal to reason, argument or evidence, and that its appeal to the ‘vulnerability’ of adult heterosexual men is hardly credible.

For more women expelled or suspended from the Party for refusing to accept that men can be women, together with a mention of Bronwyn Winter, a founder of Australian Feminists for Women’s Rights (AF4WR), see: Baxendale, 2022;

for Gale’s email to Party members telling them of the results of the subsequent election after her dismissal and of pro-trans outsiders filibustering branch meetings, while entreating members not to resign but to stay and fight, see: Gale, 2022b;

for a number of reasons why there should be debates about ‘sex or gender identity’, despite the Party’s refusal to debate, see: Greens Against “No Debate”, 2022.

In April 2023, the Party doubled down on its support for the transgender cause, introducing a new ‘engage in transphobia’ clause into its ‘code of conduct’. This clause defined ‘transphobia’ as ‘do[ing] something that harms or seriously risks harming trans people’. This would be unexceptionable (leaving aside the fact that

there are no ‘trans people’ because no one can change sex and men can’t be women), except that ‘harming’ includes ‘misgendering trans people’ (i.e. insisting that men are men not women), and ‘denying that non-binary genders exist’ (as indeed they don’t since everyone is either female or male) (Victorian Greens, 2023. See also: Carmody and Smethurst, 2023; Le Grand and Carmody, 2023). The hubris of arguing reality away by fiat is typical of the trans-smitten. But arguing away reality is a dangerous ploy for a Party that needs to attract more support. As one journalist said, ‘Despite recent electoral successes, the Greens aren’t considered a party of government’ (Smethurst, 2023). While their main problem is the way the electoral system is structured through two main parties, their embrace of transgender is hardly likely to appeal to the general public.

For a report of dissension in the ranks that concluded there was no evidence of ‘anti-trans sentiment being rife within the Greens’, see: Le Grand, 2023.

### UK

The political Left in the UK, as Sarah Ditum (2020b) has said, ‘has felt like a hostile environment for feminism’ since at least 2015. ‘[A]nyone who expressed doubts about gender identity as a solid basis for legislation’, she said, ‘would find out very fast that they had placed themselves firmly outside acceptable thought on the Left’.

One example of that hostile environment is the approving use of the abusive word ‘terf’ by election candidates for the (vaguely) left-wing political parties. Fair Play for Women, a group that works to protect the rights of women and girls, found that its use was prevalent. Just before the British election in December 2019, they searched the Twitter accounts from 2015 on, of all the candidates standing for election. They found that 21 candidates had used the word ‘terf’ during that time—seven from the Labour party, seven from the Liberal Democrats, four from the Green Party and three from the Scottish Greens. Another six had made accusations of ‘transphobia’ and ‘hate’ against individuals who disagreed with or criticised the transgender agenda. No candidate from the Conservative Party, the Scottish National Party or the Welsh party, Plaid Cymru, was found to have used the word. Although the numbers are small, the frequency of the usage did seem to be increasing. There was only one candidate who had used it in 2015, two in 2017, ten in 2018, and eight in 2019 (FPFW, 2019). Despite the small numbers, the fact that the word ‘terf’ can be used in this way by public figures at all, is a testimony to the power and influence of the transgender agenda and the political Left’s obliviousness to the needs and interests of women.

### *The UK Labour Party*

Another example of that hostile environment is the UK Labour Party’s embrace of the transgender cause. As Ditum pointed out (2020b), the Labour Party likes to portray itself as ‘the natural home of women’s rights’, as evidenced by its passing of the *Sex Discrimination Act* in 1975 and the *Equality Act* in 2010 and its all-women shortlists. But its endorsement of ‘gender self-identification’ has undermined any benefit those initiatives might have had for women, since men are now included as ‘women’. Anyway, the Party has now abandoned them because the majority of its MPs are now female (although not supporters of women’s sex-based rights), and the Party would be breaching the 2010 Equality Act by giving preference to women (Samuelson, 2022).

The Labour Party's support for the notion that men who claim to be 'women' actually are women, is open and shameless. In May 2018, the Party confirmed their policy that men who say they're 'women' were eligible for posts reserved for women (Wearmouth, 2018). At the time, the Party's website contained the following statement by the National Executive Committee regarding All Women Shortlists, women's officers and minimum quotas for women: "The Labour Party's All Women Shortlists are open to all women, *including self-identifying trans women* [i.e. men]. Similarly, women's officers and minimum quotas for women in the Labour Party are open to all women, *including self-identifying trans women* [ditto] (emphases added).<sup>6</sup> The phrase, 'self-identifying trans women', means that these men still have male genitals. They do not have to have had castrating surgery to qualify as 'women' in the official Labour Party mind (not that even castrating surgery would make a man into a woman).

The inclusion within the category 'women' of men who say they are, was not just a pious wish. The Party had already been putting it into practice even before it was made official policy (Mason, 2018). The favourable treatment of 'Lily' Madigan (original name, Liam) exemplifies the Party's enthrallment to the transgender agenda (although by 2024 he appeared to have vanished from the political scene).<sup>7</sup> In November 2017, the then 19-year-old boy was elected as women's officer for the Rochester and Strood Constituency Labour Party in Kent.

This was not the first time Madigan had been successful in getting his own way. At the age of 18, he had threatened to sue his Catholic high school because he was not allowed to dress in the girls' uniform or to use the girls' changing rooms. The lawyer he hired took the case *pro bono* because it was 'a pretty clear case' of discrimination, given the Equality Act and the Human Rights Act. The school caved in and this teenager got everything he wanted, including a lot of support from his fellow students, more than 200 of whom had signed a petition in his favour (Koman, 2016).

Later, he joined a campaign of harassment against a Labour Party women's officer, Anne Ruzyllo, who was outspoken in her objections to the Party's transgender policy. His complaint that she be removed because of her 'transphobic' posts on Twitter was unsuccessful, but she resigned anyway, along with the whole Executive Committee of her Party branch, citing the harassment that "has been continuous and ongoing for months" (Bannerman, 2017. See also: Whelan, 2017). It appeared not to worry the Labour Party that they lost an entire branch executive because of their failure to rein in the bullying of transgender activists.

Early in 2018, it was revealed that the Party had a secret 'hit list' of women who had openly criticised the transgender agenda. Madigan denied at one point that he had anything to do with it, saying that he was 'only vaguely aware of a list'. However, this was clearly a lie, given that there were screenshots of him discussing the list in detail. By January 2018, at least two women on the list had been suspended, and the Party was warned that their transgender policy was likely to lose them thousands of women members (Manning, 2018). Again, this appeared not to worry anyone in the Labour

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<sup>6</sup><https://labour.org.uk/about/how-we-work/nec-statement-women-shortlists-womens-officers-minimum-quotas-women/>— This is no longer available.

<sup>7</sup> Having been copiously quoted from 2017 to 2018 saying he was going to be the first 'trans woman' MP in the UK, his name doesn't appear among either the successful or the unsuccessful candidates in the 2024 election (<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10009/>)

Party, and Madigan was permitted to continue his campaign of turning the British Labour Party into a lackey of the transgender cause with, it must be admitted, the eager acquiescence of the Party hierarchy. He went on to be elected national women's officer for Labour Students.

He also applied to the Jo Cox Women in Leadership Programme, 'a training programme for passionate and experienced women members who are ready to lead in the Labour Party'.<sup>8</sup> He was unsuccessful, but his application had been accepted, and it was supported by a number of senior Labour figures, including former leader Ed Miliband, *Guardian* columnist Owen Jones, and MPs Wes Streeting and Angela Rayner. The latter was quoted saying that she had "no doubt [Madigan] will be a great Labour MP" (Oppenheim, 2018; Williams, Joanna, 2020). The former Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn, was also one of Madigan's supporters, as well as of the transgender cause in general, along with Harriet Harman, former deputy leader. Corbyn posed for at least one photo with Madigan (e.g. Mason, 2018) (the same photo is reproduced in multiple publications), as well as a photo with another 'trans activist' (i.e. a man posing as a 'woman') (Wearmouth, 2018). While still Labour Party leader, he appeared at a *Pink News* award ceremony in October 2019, and announced, 'My name is Jeremy Corbyn and my pronouns are he/him' (Bindel, 2019).<sup>9</sup>

Corbyn's political demise did not mean the demise of the Labour Party's commitment to the transgender cause. On 10 February 2020, the Labour Campaign for Trans Rights was launched. It was 'founded by transgender and non-binary Labour members in order to advance trans liberation through the Labour Party'. As part of the launch, the Party was presented with 'a set of [12] pledges for all Labour Party members to sign'. A number of prominent Party members signed, including Rebecca Long-Bailey, Lisa Nandy, Emily Thornberry, Dawn Butler and Angela Rayner (Parsons, 2020). Among the 12 pledges was the demand to 'Accept that trans women are women, trans men are men, and non-binary people are non-binary' (no.4). The list also included a demand that the Party 'Organise and fight against transphobic organisations such as Woman's Place UK, LGB Alliance and other trans-exclusionist hate groups' (no.9) (UK Labour, 2020).

This is yet another example of the transgender agenda's insistence on interpreting disagreement as 'transphobia' and 'hate'. There is nothing that these two named organisations do that can be rationally interpreted as hatred. Both of them are working tirelessly to overturn the transgender agenda, Woman's Place UK because of the implications for women and girls, the LGB Alliance because of the implications for lesbians and gay men. Both of them disagree that anyone can be born in the wrong body, that people can change sex, that many 'genders' can replace the fact of two sexes. But this is disagreement, not hate.

There are signs that the Party's commitment to the transgender agenda is harming the Labour Party. They did win the 2024 election, but that win was more about getting rid of the Tories than a vote for Labour (despite the comparative success of Farage's

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<sup>8</sup> <https://labour.org.uk/members/jo-cox-women-leadership/>. It was set up in memory of Jo Cox, the Labour member of parliament who was murdered by a far-right extremist man in June 2016.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/16/jeremy-corbyn-pronouns-lgbt-equality-pinknews-awards-eastenders/>. This publication has been renamed 'Prick News' (or alternatively 'Penis News') by radical feminists disgusted by its rank misogyny.



extreme right-wing Reform Party). Voter turn-out was down and Labour won its seats only on 21% of the electorate (Siaroff, 2024. See also: Safdar, 2024). There was, of course, no mention of the transgender issue in any of the subsequent commentary on the election. But that doesn't mean it wasn't influential in discouraging people to vote for Labour, or even to vote at all. The Scottish National Party did badly, but it's not clear if that was a consequence, even in part, of their attempt to pass a 'Gender Recognition Reform bill' (vetoed by Westminster), and to place double rapist, 'Isla' Bryson, in a women's prison. It is mentioned in a BBC article about SNP Leader, Nicola Sturgeon's, resignation, but no weight is given to it as a deciding factor (Jackson, 2023).

However, the results of a small political psychology study in February 2020 (Kaufman, 2020) indicated that people were less likely to vote Labour after they had been exposed to information about the trans pledges. The researcher divided his sample of 214 people into two groups. One group (the control group) were simply asked whether or not they were going to vote Labour. The other group read a paragraph from a newspaper article about the pledges before they were asked whether or not they would vote Labour. Of those who said they would vote Labour, there was a nearly 10% difference between the two groups—42.6% of those who didn't read about the pledges, and 32.7% of those who did.

This was a small study and as far as I know it hasn't been replicated. But there is support for its findings from other directions. There was the resignation of the entire Executive Committee branch Anne Ruzyllo belonged to, and there have been a number of reports about members leaving the party. In 2018, around 300 members resigned over the inclusion of transgender men (who claimed to be 'women') in all-women shortlists (BBC, 2018). The tags, #labourlosingwomen, #expelme, etc., have many statements by people saying they are leaving the party over the issue. It is impossible to judge how many there might be. There's the usual absence of research, and at one point Twitter had banned accounts in this thread for 'violating the rules'.

The Labour Party appears to be unconcerned about this resistance to their transgender agenda. Madigan was even jubilant at the departure of people who did not agree that he was a woman. He was reported to have said that he 'welcomed their departure as anyone holding such views did not belong in the party'. On 1 May 2018, he tweeted: 'Today, approximately 300 transmisogynist women left the Labour Party. Today is a good day' (BBC, 2018). The Party hierarchy seemed to be quite comfortable with these sentiments since, as far as I am aware, he was not reprimanded for this. Anyway it is unlikely that he would have been reprimanded, given that the Party continued to reaffirm and even strengthen its pro-transgender stance.

There is resistance. In October 2019, a group of women members of the Labour Party started a movement 'to raise the profile of women's sex-based rights within the Labour Party and wider socialist movement'. They circulated a petition called the Labour Women's Declaration in support of women's sex-based rights (without, however, any explicit mention of the transgender erosion of those rights).<sup>10</sup> Initially it had 300 signatories, but soon gained thousands more. In October 2020, they posted on their website two lists of candidates for the Labour Party's National Executive

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<sup>10</sup> <http://labourwomensdeclaration.org.uk/>

Committee elections.<sup>11</sup> One list of eight comprised those who, they said, supported the ‘understanding and enforcement of the single-sex exceptions in service provision’; the other, a much longer list of 20, comprised those who had expressed support for the transgender agenda.

However, these Labour Party women were being kind in listing these eight candidates as supporters of the single-sex exceptions in the *Equality Act 2010*, as most of them were lukewarm at best. Three of them didn’t reply to the Declaration’s questions. Their support was assumed from their membership of the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance and hence their agreement with its equality statement. With the inclusion of both ‘sexism’ and ‘transphobia’ as forms of ‘discrimination and prejudice’, this statement is hardly a ringing endorsement of women’s sex-based rights. Of the other five in the list of eight, only two candidates expressed unequivocal support. The other three hedged their bets, saying they agreed with the Declaration while also supporting the trans position.

In 2024, in response to the 2024 Labour Party Manifesto, the Labour Women’s Declaration noted some improvements in policy (including the maintenance of single-sex exceptions, and the promised implementation of the recommendations in the Cass Review). They also continued to be concerned, however, because there was no reference to clarifying the meaning of ‘sex’ in law, there was still a ban on so-called ‘conversion practices (despite Cass’ warning), and there was a commitment to making Gender Recognition Certificates easier to get and to relying on the ‘LGBT+’ acronym in law and policy.<sup>12</sup>

For further discussions of the transgender bias of the British Labour Party, see: Bartosch, 2020; Brunskell-Evans, 2020: section 3.2; Hayton, 2020; for the expulsion from the Trades Union Congress of Debbie Hayton, a transsexual man who doesn’t claim to be a woman, for saying “Trans women are men. Get over it!”, see: Hellen, 2019.

### *The UK Greens*

Of course, the transgender bias of UK’s self-styled ‘centre left’ political parties is not confined to the Labour Party. The Green Party is as culpable of transgender bias as the Labour Party, if not more so, even to the extent that its transgender commitment blinds it to far more serious offences. One of their members was David Challenor, who was sentenced in August 2018 to 22 years in prison for imprisoning, raping and torturing a 10-year-old girl in the attic of the family home. Challenor was not himself transgender but his son, ‘Aimee’ (original name Ashton), was. The party raised no objection when Aimee twice appointed his father as his election agent when he was selected as a candidate for the Green Party, despite the fact that both Aimee and some Party members knew that Challenor père had been arrested and charged with sexual assault.

To give Aimee his due, he did email two senior Green Party members telling them of the charges. But he only said that ‘that the majority of them were sexual offences’ without giving any details. The person who responded did not ask for any, and

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<sup>11</sup> <http://labourwomensdeclaration.org.uk/news/voting-in-the-nec-elections/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://labourwomensdeclaration.org.uk/lwd-responds-to-the-2024-labour-party-manifesto/>

expressed sympathy only for Aimee (but not for the unknown person—actually a 10-year-old girl—whom David Challenor had assaulted): “I’m so sorry Aimee. How are you doing? Is there anything we can do as friends (as opposed to colleagues!)?” (Verita, 2019: paras.3.18, 3.19).<sup>13</sup> The police didn’t inform the Party either, despite the fact that, as the Verita report timidly put it, ‘safeguarding issues’ could ‘arise’ with David Challenor ‘interact[ing] with a large number of people in an unstructured environment ... includ[ing] young and/or vulnerable people’ (paras.3.11, 3.58, 3.75, R1).

Aimee was not living at home when his father kept the girl imprisoned in the attic, although it would seem as though he has similar sexual fetishes to his father, e.g. dressing as an infant in nappies (JL, 2020). But it is possible that the Party’s ‘transgender’ bias led them to ignore the issue of men assaulting and raping children, an issue that is arguably more important than Aimee’s feelings at learning about his father’s behaviour. They showed no interest in the nature of David Challenor’s offences, and he remained a Party member for nearly two years after he was first charged in November 2016. Beatrix Campbell commented, “The party should ask itself whether the party’s hard-line pro-trans policies and associated bullying provided ... a “conducive context” that shielded the Challenors from scrutiny”:

Somewhere in England there is a girl who was raped, tortured and electrocuted by a well-known local Green Party figure in Coventry, David Challenor ... The party’s initial official statements about the scandal pathetically paid more attention to Aimee Challenor’s need for support than the vindicated—but traduced—child (Campbell, 2021).

The problem of ignoring and denying men’s violence against women and children is not confined to the transgender agenda, but the transgender obliteration of the concept of ‘women’ feeds into that denial. If we don’t know what women are, there is no way of identifying the systematic nature of the violence against them or the misogyny behind it.

Prominent members of the UK Green Party have made it quite clear that they subscribe to that obliteration. When asked the question ‘What is a woman?’ four candidates for deputy leader of the Party, two men and two women, either dodged the question or gave answers straight out of the ‘transgender’ playbook. “Being a woman is an attitude”, said one of the women (Cowen, 2020a). I wonder if she applies that to herself, if she could ever say with a straight face, ‘I am an attitude’, in the unlikely event that she should be questioned about her sex. The other woman said she was a “proud intersectional feminist” and referred to “the patriarchal systems that oppress all women”. This doesn’t answer the question but it does use the ‘transgender’ tropes ‘intersectional feminist’ and ‘all women’, the latter intended to include within the category of ‘women’ the transgender men who claim to be ‘women’ even though they are not.

The men’s answers were even more wobbly. One said he didn’t think it was a “very productive question” and that they weren’t “going to get any solution to this issue if we’re going to try to define a word” (Cowen, 2020a). I have some sympathy for this position. The question of defining something so inescapably obvious as what a

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<sup>13</sup> This is the report of an investigation into the Green Party’s policy and procedures, commissioned and paid for by the Party, following the David Challenor incident.

‘woman’ is, could only arise within a transgender agenda that makes a nonsense of the meaning of ‘woman’ because men are claiming to be ‘women’. Even to ask the question is to remain within the transgender agenda. If men weren’t claiming to be ‘women’, the question would never arise.

The other man waffled on about “cis women” and “giving birth” (or not), “people who identify as women”, and “more feminine” and “more masculine”. He concluded by saying that “It’s not something we should be debating”. Again, I don’t disagree with that statement as it stands. The meaning of ‘woman’ only becomes debatable within the transgender universe. If we refuse to be drawn into it, there’s no need to ask what a woman is. But that’s not what this Green’s candidate meant. Instead, he was being pusillanimous, refusing to come out as an obvious trans supporter, while also refusing to defy them.

A fifth candidate, a woman, answered the question with the definition of ‘woman’ used by those who resist the transgender narrative, i.e. Posie Parker’s ‘adult human female’. She hadn’t actually been asked the question. She wasn’t at that particular meeting because she had caring responsibilities. She had, however, been accused of ‘hate tweets’ when she advocated for women’s sex-based rights as a candidate in the 2019 general election (Cowen, 2020a). So her answer would not have been approved, had she attended the meeting

Aimee Challenor was suspended from the Party in September 2018, after his father was convicted and his offences became public knowledge. In response, Aimee resigned, accusing the Party of ‘transphobia’, and moved to the Liberal Democratic Party. He was suspended from there following the discovery of ‘sick tweets’ posted on the social media account of a man Aimee said he was engaged to. The local newspaper refused to publish these tweets, saying that some of them involved the poster admitting to having sexual fantasies about children (Reid and Carlon, 2019), although they can be found elsewhere (JL, 2020. See also: McDonagh, 2018; Walker, 2018).

It is not possible to know whether the embrace of the ‘transgender’ agenda was behind the Party’s failure to respond appropriately once they knew about the charges against Aimee’s father, or whether they would have been equally oblivious if the ‘transgender’ issue had never arisen. The male Left does not have a good record when it comes to caring about women and girls. But for a long time the Party was remarkably accommodating towards Aimee Challenor, in stark contrast to what happens to women who insist that men are men. In March 2021, Emma Bateman, co-chair of the Green Party Women’s Group, was suspended from the Party because she insisted that so-called ‘transwomen’ are not female (Collins and Armstrong, 2021). On 5 February 2022, she tweeted ‘I have apparently breached the Party Code of Conduct because I refuse to bow down to the TAWW [trans women are woman] nonsense’.<sup>14</sup> A man who is charged with imprisoning and torturing a little girl is allowed to take up a responsible position within the Party, while a woman who states a biological fact is suspended.

Another member, Shahrar Ali, was removed from his role as party spokesman ‘for breaches of the Speakers’ Code of Conduct’, according to Liz Reason, the Party’s

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<sup>14</sup> <https://x.com/EmmaBatemanGPW/status/1489607775005155333>

Executive Committee Chair (whose claim to be ‘Reason by name, Reason by nature’ is clearly mistaken, given that she believes men can be women).<sup>15</sup> He was the Party spokesman on policing and domestic violence, and he was removed because of his ‘gender critical’ beliefs. In August 2023, he sued the Party claiming it discriminated against him because of those beliefs (Francis, 2023). He won his case, and was awarded £9,100 in damages (Francis and Catt, 2024) (although he had originally asked for £34,000) (Francis, 2023). The court found that the Party had improperly dismissed him, but they also ruled that political parties had the right to dismiss spokespeople whose views differed from the party’s, and dismissed all his other allegations (Francis and Catt, 2024).

Again there is resistance. Also in March 2021, and partly as a reaction to Bateman’s suspension, an entire Party branch went on strike and its secretary resigned. The only Green Party councillor in his area also resigned, both from the Party and from the council, because he had become ‘increasingly uneasy’ about the Party’s stance on women’s rights, a stance he attributed to the Party’s inability to stand up to the trans lobby’s bullying (Collins and Armstrong, 2021). All these Party members were also concerned that Bateman’s co-chair of the Women’s Group was a man masquerading as a ‘woman’ who worked for Gender GP, a company run by a doctor struck off in the UK, who prescribed puberty-blocking drugs to children without medical supervision. As well, the trans lobby got a motion on ‘gender self-id’ passed, and defeated a motion in support of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. The branch co-ordinator attributed this to the unrepresentative way in which Party policy was made. While Party membership numbered over 50,000, decisions binding on the whole Party were made by fewer than 300 people, which made the Party vulnerable to being ‘hijacked by a single-issue group’ (Collins and Armstrong, 2021). The interesting question is why that single issue is so influential, especially given the incoherence of its basic premise that men can be ‘women’.

For an account of the banning of two feminists from the listserv of the US Green Party, for asking for a discussion of women’s sex-based rights, see: Bruss, 2020; for an account of the Green Party’s incoherent response to the Cass Review, see: GWD, 2024.

The UK Green Party is not unique. They are simply an illustrative example of the blindness induced by acceptance of the transgender agenda. There is nothing progressive about that agenda. It slots too neatly into the misogyny that upholds the age-old system of male supremacy. Although Green Parties elsewhere have not to my knowledge had to deal with scandals similar to the Challenor incident, their experience should be a wake-up call to all who embrace the transgender cause.

But it’s not. In May 2024, the Scottish Greens expelled 13 Party members who had signed a Scottish Green Declaration for Women’s Sex-Based Rights. This document supposedly (in the eyes of transgender’s true believers) made the Party ‘less safe for trans and non-binary members’, by stating that “sex is a biological reality”, that women have a right to maintain sex-based protections, that lesbians are same-sex attracted, and that “women and girls have the right to discuss policies which affect

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<sup>15</sup> <https://x.com/lizreason/status/1490013274569592833>

them without being abused, harassed or intimidated”. The complainers were the usual trans-lobby culprits: co-convenors of LGBTQI+ group, the Rainbow Greens, and a co-convenor of its Women’s [sic] Network (Paterson, 2024). Once again, what men want trumps anything women might need.

*A reason for the Left’s embrace of the trans agenda*

But why has the political Left so enthusiastically embraced the transgender agenda? Part of the answer is, of course, misogyny, but that is unlikely to be its motivating force, but simply another manifestation of the perennial woman-hating that haunts every male attempt to do without women.

I would suggest that the Left’s embrace of transgender has something to do with the hegemony of neo-liberalism and its defeat of the Left. Since at least the early 1980s, governments everywhere have succumbed to neo-liberalism, with its ‘austerity’ (although not for the rich), its syphoning of public assets into (rich, male) private hands, and its deregulation of the powerful and its hyper-regulation of the rest of us. Faced with men’s increasingly unfettered control of money, the male Left has largely abandoned its traditional constituency in favour of the power of money. Neo-liberalism was introduced into Australia and New Zealand by self-styled ‘Centre Left’ governments, the ‘macroeconomic modernisation’ of the Hawke-Keating Labor governments in Australia (1983 to 1996),<sup>16</sup> and the Rogernomics (named after Roger Douglas, the Labour Party Finance Minister) (1984 to 1988) in New Zealand. After all, the poor have no power and governments need power if they are to get anything done.

Transgender, with its ‘vulnerable and marginalised’ population, mythical though it is, provides the Left with a substitute for the genuinely vulnerable—those ‘surplus’ populations for whom neo-liberalism has no use. So powerful is the Left’s denial that it has abandoned its roots that it is prepared, not only to accept a lie, but to embrace it avidly, and the more ridiculous the lie, the more avid the embrace needs to be. Moreover, this time the ‘vulnerable and marginalised’ are largely misogynist, adult heterosexual men, masculinity’s own constituency. Transgender compensates them for the psychic injuries inflicted by feminism.

For a similar argument, namely, that transgenderism is popular with the Left ‘because it works for a group of underdog men ... [j]ust as Marxism was popular because it worked for underdog men’, and ‘centres them in a new story in which they are victim and hero’, see: Brew, 2022.

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<sup>16</sup> To be fair to the Hawke-Keating governments, they did introduce reforms to the social welfare system, e.g. rental assistance for social security recipients, a Family Income Supplement, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (which subsidised the cost of drugs), and best of all, universal health care, Medicare. But these couldn’t compensate for the effects of unfettered capitalism; and the corrupt right-wing government of John Howard subsequently did its best to destroy them, in the case of Medicare by refusing to increase payments to doctors in line with inflation.

## **Feminism and the Right**

The question of whether or not feminists should find common cause with the political Right on the question of transgender has caused some conflict in feminist circles. While some feminists have found allies on the Right, others have utterly condemned any such association (Bindel, 2020b).

Among those condemnatory voices are a number of contributors to the journal, *The Radical Notion*. Esmée Streachailt's disagreement in Issue Number One, was especially vigorous (while also acknowledging the misogyny of the self-styled 'progressive' political Left):

Some feminist groups have begun to ally with these fascist [nationalist] energies in order to defend women. *This move is both vicious with regard to race/class/sexuality and catastrophically stupid with regard to liberation generally* (Streachailt, 2020: 122—original emphasis).

Dani Ahrens also condemned what she referred to as 'alliances with the religious right', which she characterised as 'racist, homophobic and transphobic [sic] elements within the broader "gender-critical" milieu' (Ahrens, 2020: 49). Again, Paula Alice argued that these kinds of alliances have costs, 'including how they damage the possibility of gaining broader support':

the association of gender-critical arguments with the extreme religious right creates a feedback loop, alienating many left-leaning and moderate women and men who might otherwise be sympathetic to protecting sex-based rights (Alice, 2020: 27).

It's true that extreme caution must be exercised in any alliance with the Right, but the above objections go too far. They contain the insulting implications that feminists who have formed such alliances don't know what they're doing, and that they are allied with fascism, racism and homophobia. But there are no feminist groups allying with fascists. That is a lie promoted in bad faith by transgender and the mainstream media. (See the discussion in the 'Another strategy: violence' chapter, of the intrusion of neo-Nazi men into the Let Women speak event in Melbourne). Nor are there any feminist groups that are racist or homophobic, since those are values that don't belong in feminism. Wherever there are racist or homophobic attitudes, there is no feminism. The implication of this objection is that the feminists who are connecting with the Right on the transgender issue are also adopting other right-wing values. This is simply not true.

Moreover, the objection that feminist associations 'with the extreme religious right' would alienate potential sympathisers is not a reason not to go ahead. The possible disapproval of others is not a reason to refrain from anything. Anyone who is alienated from gender-critical arguments because they come from the Right obviously isn't listening to the arguments, since they speak for themselves, wherever they come from.

Then there's the critics' uncritical use of 'transphobic', as though it actually meant something. That certainly qualifies as a 'catastrophically stupid move', because it is a term from the transgender lexicon used to castigate anyone who dares to criticise transgender. It's another lie. There are no 'transphobic feminists' (because there's no transphobia); and there are no 'transwomen' either, although Streachailt seems to believe there are. 'My goal in these essays', she said,

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‘is to help establish ... [a] way between transphobic feminists and misogynist transwomen. A way that allows feminist women and feminist transwomen to work together. A way that lets me mark the difference between a patriarchal narcissist assuming trans-identity, and a transwoman who allies with women (Streachait, 2020: 122).

So she wants to make common cause with adult fetishistic heterosexual men claiming to be ‘women’, while condemning as ‘fascist’, feminists who have found allies against transgender among those who otherwise hold right-wing views. I find her commitment to the transgender cause, which is inherently and inescapably misogynist, far more worrying than short-term feminist connections with the Right.

Because the conventional categories of Left and Right are defined in terms of men and male interests, they can’t be used unmodified for feminist purposes. Feminism needs to go beyond them. Its traditional alliance with the Left has been undermined by the Left’s many betrayals, while the appearance of feminist-compatible, trans-critical content within right-wing circles has led some feminists to overcome their traditional hostility towards the Right. That hostility was (and remains) well-grounded in relation to most of what the Right espouses. But working with people on the Right is not such a bad thing, as long as it is strategic and temporary and compatible with feminist principles. And fighting the transgender hegemony is certainly compatible with the feminist goal of a fully human status for women outside male encroachment.

It is understandable that feminists might reject outright any association whatsoever with the Right, given its well-known misogyny. But in the face of the astounding success of transgender’s capture of so many powerful institutions, as well as yet another abandonment of women by the male Left, to find any allies at all can be a welcome relief. I agree with Sarah Ditum when she says,

many feminists have ended up closer to the Right than they ever imagined. Certainly I would not have predicted that a nice social democrat girl like me would end up writing defences of women’s toilets for the *Spectator*, or condemning rape threats against JK Rowling in the *Telegraph*—or rather, if you’d told me a decade ago that I couldn’t write these things for a Left-wing outlet, I would have been very shocked indeed. (Then again, I’d have been surprised to learn there would ever be an occasion to write them) (Ditum, 2020b).

(Later she was to show rather less insight, to put it mildly—see below).

### ***Earlier criticisms***

Before going any further I want to point out that this current alliance with (some sectors of) the Right on the part of (some) feminists is actually happening. Hence it differs from what happened in the earlier context of feminist campaigns against pornography. In the case of the transgender menace, there are arguments from the Right that are quite compatible with feminist arguments, while in the case of pornography, they were not. Feminist anti-pornography campaigns were seen to be right-wing (even by some who identified as feminists) simply because both feminism and the Right were opposed to pornography. At the same time, left-wing men (and the women supporting them) *defended* pornography in the name of pleasure, freedom and free speech.

The feminist struggle against pornography differed both from the ‘conservative’ (i.e. right-wing) focus on obscenity, immorality and Christian family values, and from the



‘liberal’ (i.e. left-wing) focus on ‘free speech’. Feminism’s focus was on the harm done to women by a worldview that recommended that men treat women with contempt, as objects to be used and abused and discarded at will (Lederer, ed., 1980). Feminism was not associated with the Right that wanted to suppress, not only pornography, but also ‘sex education, reproductive rights’ and any of the other causes the right wing found ‘obscene’ (Yeaman, 1980: 247).

‘[T]he anti-pornography forces’, said Diana Russell,

have almost always been conservative, homophobic, antisex, and pro the traditional family. They have equated nudity and explicit sex with pornography. They are often against abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, and the Women’s Liberation Movement. We have been so put off by the politics of these people, that our knee-jerk response is that we must be *for* whatever they are *against*. But we don’t have to ally ourselves with them. We haven’t yet. And we won’t! The women amongst them can relate to our focus on the abuse of women by pornography better than we can relate to the “sin” approach. They can come to us if they can accept the rest of our politics too (Russell, 1980: 301—original emphasis).

For a detailed critique of the charge that feminism’s anti-pornography stance was right-wing, see: Thompson, 1991: 198-202.

But the situation has changed since Russell wrote these words. While feminism’s focus on pornography’s harm to women differentiated it from the right-wing focus, the right-wing opposition to transgenderism often has a lot in common with feminism.

#### *Some examples of right-wing resistance to transgender*

Still, it is indeed an utterly unexpected turn of events that feminism and the political Right should have found common cause on anything. Feminism traditionally belongs on the Left, and the Right’s stance on most issues is anti-feminist, indeed anti-women. But the Right has an organised, well-funded resistance to the transgender lobby (ironically, given the compatibility between transgenderism and late-stage capitalism) (Bilek, 2018, 2020a, b, c). While the Left performs weird ideological contortions in accommodating itself to the transgender cause, the defiance of transgender demands by the political Right (or some sections of it) is often consistent with feminism.

#### *In Australia*

In Australia, the most public opposition to transgender has come from the Right. As a consequence, *all* opposition is interpreted as right-wing in a public media prone to regurgitating misinformation as ‘news’. The multiple feminist presentations to public authorities—governments, government departments, the UN, etc.—are largely ignored.

Still, it is true that the Right has been at the forefront of resistance to transgender. It was the right-wing Australian Christian Lobby that organised a petition against Drag Queen Story Hour at a library in Brisbane (Sandeman, 2020); and it is right-wing MPs who have challenged the transgender lobby, although not successfully.

In 2018, right-wing MP, Robbie Katter, Member for the western Queensland state electorate of Traeger (formerly Mt Isa), introduced an amendment to the 1991 anti-

discrimination law, *Anti-Discrimination (Right to Use Gender-Specific Language) Amendment Bill 2018* (Katter, 2018). This amendment was intended to protect the right to use what it called 'traditional gender based language'. Examples explicitly noted were: 'male, female, man, woman, boy, guy, girl, him, her, he, she, Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, husband, wife, widow or widower'. It was also intended to protect the provision of services specific to one 'gender' [sic] or the other. If the amendment had passed (it didn't), it would have made the 'gender identity' demands discriminatory. The pronoun demand, for example, would discriminate against a student who was marked down for using conventional pronouns in an essay; and the demand that businesses provide 'bathrooms specifically for persons who are not, or do not identify as, male or female' would have discriminated against a business that lost a contract because it did not provide such 'bathrooms' (Queensland Government, 2018a, b, 2019).

It is not surprising that the amendment was not passed. Anti-discrimination/human rights legislation everywhere has been fully captured by the transgender lobby, from the UN on down. Moreover, the political party in power at the time was the Australian Labor Party. Commonly regarded as 'left wing' and 'progressive' by both supporters and detractors (despite its betrayal of its original labour constituency), it was the appropriate vehicle for introducing the transgender syndrome into the body politic in that state.

Again, it was a right-wing MP, Mark Latham, who introduced a private member's Bill in the Upper House of the NSW parliament in August 2020 to counter the influence of 'gender fluidity' in NSW schools, and to allow parents to protest about what their children were being taught. The Bill was intended

to amend [three Acts] to provide that schools must recognise that parents are primarily responsible for the development and formation of moral and ethical standards and social and political values in their children, including an understanding of personal identity and questions of gender and sexuality and to prohibit schools, teachers, and training courses from teaching gender fluidity, and for other purposes.<sup>17</sup>

In 2022, it was announced that '[t]he New South Wales government has confirmed it will not support One Nation MP Mark Latham's controversial bill to ban discussion of gender diversity in classrooms, saying it could cause "targeted discrimination" against trans students' (McGowan, 2022).

There has been no connection between Australian feminists and these two men. Latham in particular has a political career that hardly endears him to feminists, or indeed to anyone for whom party politics has any meaning. At the time NSW state leader of the extreme right-wing One Nation political party, Latham was originally a stalwart of the vaguely left-wing Labor Party. He was even its parliamentary leader while in Opposition from December 2003 to January 2005. It is galling for feminists to find ourselves in agreement with him, but it is one example of the way the political distinction between Left and Right is irrelevant to the interests of women.

The stance on transgenderism by the Senator from Tasmania, Claire Chandler, from the right-wing Liberal Party,<sup>18</sup> has met with wholehearted support from feminists,

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bills/Pages/bill-details.aspx?pk=3776>

<sup>18</sup> Except where otherwise specified, the following is taken from Chandler, 2020a, b, c, d.

although as far as I am aware, Chandler has not returned the compliment. She characterises her allies as ‘the vast majority of Australians’, ‘women (and men) from all over Australia and the world’, and ‘people on both sides of the political divide’. Nonetheless, her position on the trans issue is a feminist one. In a series of questions expecting the answer ‘no’, she asked:

Should women and girls have to share change rooms and toilets with people with male genitals? Is it okay for biological males to win women’s sporting events? Should a male sex offender be housed in a women’s prison because they identify as a woman? (Chandler, 2020a).

She also said that she was concerned about ‘the chilling effects [that the gender activist approach] is already having on freedom of expression and factual debate’ (Chandler, 2020a).

Chandler’s initial move in her campaign against the transgender agenda was a speech she gave in the Australian Senate in June 2020. There, she criticised the guidelines from Sports Australia and the Australian Human Rights Commission that gave priority to ‘gender identity’ over sex when it came to participation in sport. She said that that speech attracted more attention than any other issue she had spoken about since she was elected the previous year. She said that she received a few messages calling her speech ‘some kind of right-wing diatribe’, but that most of the correspondence she received, from both sides of politics, thanked her for raising the issue and encouraged her to keep speaking out. ‘Many noted’, she said, ‘that they traditionally consider themselves on the “left” of the ideological spectrum, yet have been totally abandoned on the issue of women’s rights by left-of-centre politicians and parties’. Earlier, she had contacted both agencies and asked them if they had considered the implications for women’s sport of these guidelines. She found that neither of them would discuss the issue.

Despite her eminent position as a Senator in the Australian parliament, Chandler has not entirely escaped harassment by the trans lobby, although she has so far been successful in her defiance of their demands. In 2020, she received a communication from Equal Opportunity Tasmania, the state’s anti-discrimination organisation, requiring her to attend a ‘conciliation’ meeting or pay a fine. There had been a complaint, she was told, about a statement she had made in an email replying to a man who had queried her about an article she wrote in the local paper, *The Mercury*. The Commissioner had accepted the complaint because, the Commissioner is reported to have said, what Chandler said in the email was “problematic” and “a reasonable person is likely to anticipate a person who is a member of the LGBTIQ+ and gender diverse community would be humiliated, intimidated, offended and insulted”. The statement that this man objected to was that ‘women’s sports, women’s toilets and women’s changerooms are designed for people of the female sex (women) and should remain that way’ (Denholm, 2020).

Chandler replied that she would attend, but that she would not ‘be withdrawing, retracting, modifying or apologising for my comments on women’s sport and women’s facilities’. She also refused to sign a confidentiality agreement. The proposed meeting was cancelled when the complainant withdrew his complaint, although it was also reported that she could be prosecuted ‘for “hindering” and “insulting” the anti-discrimination commissioner’ (Denholm, 2020. See also: Cowen, 2020b). Chandler was not officially informed that the complaint had been withdrawn, she heard about it

from media reports. This withdrawal, she said, ‘conveniently saves the Commissioner from addressing my response, which clearly demonstrates that she [the Commissioner] had no authority to accept the complaint and direct me to a mandatory conciliation conference’. Chandler also said that it ‘leaves the broader community in legal limbo around what statements members of the public can make about sex-based rights’. Any failure or refusal by the Equal Opportunity Commissioner to clarify when it is appropriate ‘to discuss the reality of biological sex and advocate for sex-based rights’, will have ‘a chilling effect on free speech in Tasmania’ and elsewhere, Senator Chandler said (Chandler, 2020a).

Although Chandler herself is unlikely to identify as a feminist, her stance on the transgender issue differs not at all from a feminist one. She acknowledges that she is able to speak out and defy attempts to silence her because she occupies a privileged position. As she herself pointed out in her speech to the Australian Senate on 6 October 2020, she has been able to defy transgender’s institutional capture of anti-discrimination law because she is ‘an elected parliamentarian who has the platform to speak up and fight back’. But her stance still takes courage, and it is a feminist kind of courage because it is in defence of the sex-based rights of women and girls. She has already felt the wrath of the transgender mob and she has not backed down. As she said in her response to accusations of ‘transphobia’ from the Labor Party, ‘We will not be controlled and we will not be silenced’ (Chandler, 2020b). Although to my knowledge there hasn’t been any direct connection between feminist groups and Senator Chandler, there can be no doubt that she is a feminist ally in this particular fight.

There are also other feminist allies on the Right, or at least right-wing organisations whose position on transgenderism is feminist, whether or not they acknowledge that. There’s the group calling themselves ‘Binary’,<sup>19</sup> an organisation ‘concerned with the role that gender plays in our society’. They do tend to substitute ‘gender’ for ‘sex’—‘We affirm the fact that gender is binary’. But their opposition to ‘the aggressive agenda to de-gender our society’ is compatible with feminism. I don’t know where they stand on the Left/Right binary. Their focus is wholly directed towards exposing the damage and absurdity of the transgender agenda.

Then there’s the Women’s Forum. Their right-wing credentials show in their opposition to abortion, although their stance is naïve rather than the rigid condemnation of the extreme Right. They argue that abortion on demand is not a genuine choice for a woman ‘facing an unplanned pregnancy’. Women are pressured into abortion by such factors as ‘domestic violence, inaccessible childcare, inflexible work and study arrangements, and a lack of pregnancy counselling and support’. Australian society and government need to address these issues, they say, so that women are no longer forced into having abortions.<sup>20</sup>

The naivety is their belief that Australian society and government will do anything soon, or at all, to address those issues. No part of this malestream society is going to do anything to support women, pregnant or not. Until we live in a society that acknowledges that women are fully human, women will continue to die if they don’t have access to legitimate, safe abortion, especially poor women. Those who oppose

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.binary.org.au/>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.womensforumaustralia.org/support\\_not\\_abortion](https://www.womensforumaustralia.org/support_not_abortion)

legal abortion don't seem to realise that no one likes abortion, or that the feminist position is not so much pro-abortion as a concern for women's health and lives. The refusal to provide freely available, legal abortions does not stop abortions, only the safe ones. Besides, the only person who has the right to make the ultimate decision about whether or not to bring a pregnancy to term is the woman herself, since it is her body in which the process happens. This is especially the case given that women still do not have complete control over the sexual act that leads to the pregnancy.

However, having established the right-wing credentials of the Women's Forum, I must also point out that their stance in relation to transgenderism and women's sex-based rights (among other areas—domestic violence, surrogacy) qualifies as feminist. For example, in August 2021 they circulated a petition addressed to the City of Sydney Council, protesting against the Council's eviction of the Feminist Legal Clinic from council premises because of the FLC's criticism of the transgender agenda. The petition was headed 'Speak up to protect women's sex-based rights and help the most vulnerable', e.g. 'victims of domestic/sexual violence, poor, disabled, Indigenous, lesbian, Muslim and from other marginalised groups, who require woman-centred support'. The petition made it quite clear that the Council's decision was motivated by its institutional capture by the transgender lobby.<sup>21</sup> In the Council's own weasel words, the FLC's 'affiliation with the Women's Sex Based Rights movement' was 'in conflict with the performance criteria and framework applying to ... tenants, and has the potential for generating discrimination and negative attitudes towards the transgender members of our community'.<sup>22</sup>

Australian feminists have also been fighting the pernicious influence of transgender, of course. For example, the Feminist Legal Clinic defied the bullying from their landlord, the City of Sydney Council, and were evicted from their premises because they refused to censor the trans-critical posts on their website. (See the 'City of Sydney Council and the Feminist Legal Clinic' section in chapter 10: 'Transgender wreaking havoc'). As discussed earlier (the 'Lesbian resistance' section in chapter 10: 'Transgender wreaking havoc'), the Melbourne Lesbian Action Group has also been doing its part in resisting the transgender hegemony, by challenging the Australian Human Rights Commission's force-teaming of lesbians with men.

There is also Australian Feminists for Women's Rights (AF4WR), 'an incorporated association of left-wing feminists who campaign for the sex-based rights of women and girls, within the broader struggle for a more just and equal society'.<sup>23</sup> Incorporated with the NSW Department of Fair Trading on 24 June 2024, it has a website and a social media presence devoted to news, campaigns, feminist advocacy and analysis, and submissions to parliaments, MPs and government bodies arguing the case for the rights of women and girls in opposition to the transgender erosion of those rights. On 6 March 2024, they organised the publication of an open letter to the Australian Human Rights Commission as a full-page paid advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The letter expressed alarm at the AHRC's project 'aimed at "mapping" alleged threats to the rights of trans and gender diverse (TGD) people'. That project, the letter said, assumes 'that there *are* existing and emerging threats to

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<sup>21</sup> [https://www.womensforaustralia.org/petition\\_2108\\_flc](https://www.womensforaustralia.org/petition_2108_flc)

<sup>22</sup> [https://feministlegal.org/save-feminist-legal-clinic-inc/#.YXiS\\_nlxVIY](https://feministlegal.org/save-feminist-legal-clinic-inc/#.YXiS_nlxVIY)

<sup>23</sup> <https://af4wr.org/>; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/482268321311675>

TGD people’s human rights’ (emphasis added), an assumption that can only lead to ‘a biased, evidence-excluding investigation with a predetermined outcome’. Freedom of Information requests to AHRC are answered with much of the information blacked out, such as the names of members of their “expert” panel, which should be a matter of public record.<sup>24</sup>

For links to other feminist groups fighting against the transgender influence in the interests of women and girls, see: <https://af4wr.org/other-groups-and-links/>;

for a letter to WHO in response to their 18 December 2023 announcement of ‘proposed development of a guideline on the health of trans and gender-diverse people’, expressing concern that it would ‘endorse the medicalisation of gender non-conformity especially in girls (signed by AF4WR, Affiliation of Australian Women’s Action Alliance, Coalition of Activist Lesbians, LGB Alliance Australia, and Women’s Rights Network Australia), see: <https://af4wr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/gre-dei-hiv-aids40-tgd-guideline-process-letter-coalition-final-unsigned.pdf>

*In the UK*

There has also been some feminist contact with the Right in the UK. When Venice Allen needed a venue to discuss the proposed changes to the Gender Recognition Act, she asked the Conservative MP David Davies for help. She already knew that Davies was sympathetic to women’s sex-based rights, and was hopeful that a Committee Room in the House of Commons would be safe from disruption.

Trans activists did try to stop the event going ahead, but they were unsuccessful. They began ringing the House of Commons as soon as the meeting was announced, some individuals calling many times while pretending to be different people. A transgender member of the ‘LGBT+ Conservatives’ organisation and representative of the Conservative Women’s [sic] Organization (Sue Pascoe, a man posing as a ‘woman’) tried to get the meeting shut down. Clearly a right-wing commitment doesn’t always mean rejecting the transgender agenda.

As a result of this harassment, Davies had to spend a long time with the serjeant-at-arms, the official responsible for security matters in the Commons, going through what the meeting was about. He was also subjected to a three-month investigation by the standards commissioner. The charges were that he had engaged in ‘hate speech’, that he had excluded ‘transwomen’, and that he had made money from the meeting. He was also threatened with a police investigation. Eventually he was cleared of all charges, but he had to suffer months of harassment engineered by the transgender lobby (Moss, 2018).<sup>25</sup>

Allen had been a loyal member of the political Left until the transgender betrayal. She was even a member of Momentum (the radical Left of the Labour Party and support for the Party leadership of Jeremy Corbyn). But her attempts to get a discussion going within Momentum were ignored, and she found it impossible to find any other public venues because of the sometimes violent harassment by transgender activists. (It was

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<sup>24</sup> Personal information from Bronwyn Winter.

<sup>25</sup> <https://talkradio.co.uk/news/david-davies-threatened-police-action-holding-meetings-transgender-concerns-18101628380>

prior to one such attempt that Maria Maclachlan was assaulted as the meeting gathered at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park) (Moss, 2018). Tory MP David Davies, though, stood up to the transgender bullying and refused to submit to their demands.

### **WoLF and the Right**

Another reason why it is in feminism's interests to get beyond Left/Right—apart from the betrayal by the Left and the surprising concordance with the Right—is that well-intentioned women are being accused of being right-wing. At one time, the best-known instance of feminists working with the Right (at least in feminist circles), and the most thoroughly criticised, was the détente<sup>26</sup> between Women's Liberation Front (WoLF) and right-wing groups in the US.

In February 2017, WoLF formed the Hands Across the Aisle Coalition with Concerned Women of America, whose membership comprised Christians and other conservative women.<sup>27</sup> The immediate aim of the coalition was to oppose 'the misnamed and insidious Equality Act'. It was an association of like-minded women from both sides of politics, who could see clearly the consequences for their sex of the inordinate reach of the transgender agenda. WoLF had found that many conservative women had 'a woman-centered perspective', they cared about 'domestic violence victims and girls' rights in the education system', and they were unconcerned about being accused of being 'feminists' (Chart, 2019). They disagreed, they said, 'about many (maybe even most) issues', but in the face of the threats posed to women's rights and safety by the passing of the Equality Act in the US Congress, they spoke as one (Chart and Nance, 2019; Chart and Price, 2020).

By the time the coalition was formed, WoLF had already been working with conservative women for a number of years in opposing the transgender agenda. They said that it was conservatives who shared their concern when two women were excluded from a women's homelessness shelter because they objected to having to share accommodation with a man posing as a 'woman'. The conservative women not only cared, WoLF said, they offered material help.

Conservative women for their part were delighted to learn that radical feminists were also struggling against the transgender tide. Mary Rice Hasson, the Kate O'Beirne Fellow in Catholic Studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. and director of the Catholic Women's Forum was quoted by the Catholic News Agency saying, "It has been a tremendous plus to have radical feminists speaking out so strongly about the reality of sexual difference and against the new tyranny of gender". She went on to say

"We differ greatly about abortion and our views of men, but I am hopeful that our work together and personal regard for each other will open up some opportunities in the future for discussions about those areas where we disagree. But for now, I'm grateful for their commitment to speak the truth, even at great personal cost" (Farrow, 2020).

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<sup>26</sup> 'an improvement in the relationship between two countries that in the past were not friendly and did not trust each other' (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/détente>).

<sup>27</sup> <https://handsacrosstheaislewomen.com/about/>

### *WoLF and the Heritage Foundation*

WoLF also found common cause with the Heritage Foundation in the struggle against transgender. It is true that the Right in general, and the Heritage Foundation in particular, are usually no friend to women. The Heritage Foundation's devotion to 'the family', for example, involves disapproval of women and children without men ('single parents'). They claim that they are concerned about poverty—'single parent' families tend to be poor. But they don't recommend affordable child care, jobs for women that pay a living wage, or welfare payments that lift them out of poverty. Their solution is to place women and children under the control of men: 'Child poverty is an ongoing national concern, but few are aware that its principal cause is the absence of married fathers in the home'.<sup>28</sup> The systematic nature of male violence against women and children in the home is rarely, if ever, mentioned in this context, even under its euphemistic name of 'domestic violence'. If it is mentioned, it is interpreted as the bad behaviour of particular individuals. There is no concern that, when women are financially dependent on men, they and their children are trapped when those 'married fathers in the home' are violent.

The Right also opposes abortion, sometimes violently, as well as government spending for such public goods as health, education and welfare ('limited government') and taxing the wealthy ('individual freedom'), while supporting unfettered capitalism ('free enterprise'), warmongering ('a strong national defence'), and the Trump administration:<sup>29</sup> "Donald Trump and many Republican Congressmen promised they'd drain the swamp. And Heritage is here to help them do just that!" (heritage.org). On any rational criteria, 'Donald Trump and many Republican Congressmen' *are* the swamp, or at least a representative sample of it. How people of, one would assume, reasonable intelligence could embrace such swamp creatures is a mystery to me.

Nonetheless, the Heritage Foundation did offer WoLF support in their resistance to the transgender agenda, and WoLF accepted that help. Part of that support involved organising public events where WoLF members could speak freely to a sympathetic audience without being attacked. One such event, in February 2017, was a public discussion by five members of the Hands Across the Aisle Coalition, at least two of whom were acknowledged feminist activists, and one a member of WoLF. Hosted by Ryan T. Anderson, the event had a title entirely compatible with feminist aims: 'Biology isn't bigotry: why sex matters in the age of gender identity' (Anderson, 2017; Anderson, 2018, 'Conclusion'). Anderson's right-wing credentials are obvious, at least from a feminist standpoint. He is a leading Catholic scholar, a former senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation, and the founder and editor of the journal, *Public Discourse*. But he is also the author of one of the earliest trans-critical books, *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment*. He was happy to host an event featuring 'self-professed radical feminists', as well as 'conservative women', and he expected to find it 'informative and enlightening'. He acknowledged that they were

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.heritage.org/poverty-and-inequality/report/marriage-americas-greatest-weapon-against-child-poverty>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.heritage.org/marriage-and-family/heritage-explains/why-the-declining-marriage-rate-affects-everyone>



‘exceptionally unlikely allies’, but they were united by the ‘gender identity’ debate and by the fact that their concerns were ignored by the mainstream media.

There was another feminist-inclusive event organised by the Heritage Foundation, on 28 January 2019, involving a panel discussion which included three members of WoLF—Julia Beck, Jennifer Chavez and Kara Dansky.<sup>30</sup> A fourth member of the panel was Hacsí Horváth, a man who had formerly presented as a ‘woman’ for more than a dozen years, who said on Twitter that he ‘snapped out of it in 2013’ (Horváth, 2018). Called ‘The inequality of the Equality Act: concerns from the left’, the discussion was a criticism of the proposed federal US Equality Act, which would add ‘gender identity’ to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and which was being championed by the egregiously misnamed Human Rights Campaign, the largest transgender lobby group in the US.

Again, Anderson was the discussion moderator. He said in his introduction that it was taking place at the Heritage Foundation because ‘no left-leaning institution was willing to host it’. He said that the woman who had organised the speakers, who preferred to remain anonymous, had spent four years vainly trying to get help from left-wing organisations for her daughter who had been caught up in the transgender agenda since she was 11 years old. The panel were enthusiastically applauded by an audience consisting largely of ‘Trump supporters, religious-right members, natural law theorists, and conservative intellectuals’ (Sullivan, 2019). In stark contrast to typical reactions from the Left, there were no attempts to silence them, no shouted insults (‘bigots’, ‘transphobes’, ‘terfs’) or threats of violence, no shrieks of rage, no complaints to the police about ‘hate speech’.

### ***‘Sarah’ McBride***

Another instance of a feminist alliance with the Right involved three women from the UK—Kellie-Jay Keen (‘Posie Parker’), Venice Allen and Julia Long—who came to the US early in 2019 to protest against Twitter’s censorship policies. On the last day of their stay (30 January), WoLF and the Heritage Foundation organised an opportunity for them to speak to US legislators’ staff in the Congress Building about the harms of self-identification of gender being allowed to override sex in law and policy (WoLF, 2019a).

They were politely received by everyone they spoke to, except for Sarah McBride, a transgender man claiming to be a ‘woman’, who at that time was the National Press Secretary at the Human Rights Campaign (Chart, 2019). (He was subsequently to be elected to become the first openly transgender state senator in the US, for the state of Delaware).<sup>31</sup> He was there as part of an official delegation from the Human Rights Campaign, lobbying members of Congress in support of the Equality Act. McBride was being interviewed by the media in a corridor, along which the feminists were walking to get to their appointment. When the interview was finished, Posie and Julia took the opportunity to ask McBride some questions.

A small segment of the video of this incident shows a seated figure with long hair, presumably McBride, who keeps his back turned to the speaker the whole time she is

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMj9MOuRswc>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/sarah-mcbride-becomes-the-first-ever-openly-transgender-state-senator-in-us-history>

speaking, refusing to look at her or acknowledge her questions, even to deny them. The speaker (Keen), who is out of shot, is asking:

Why are you championing the rights of men to access women in women's prisons, and rape and sexually assault them, as recently happened in the United Kingdom? Why don't you care about lesbian girls at 14 having double mastectomies? Why don't you care about that Sarah? (end of clip).<sup>32</sup>

The video clip is framed with a commentary by a self-confessed 'transwoman' (i.e. a man) calling himself Ash IRL (In Real Life). When the clip is finished he says, with a look of pained bewilderment on his face: 'I think that really speaks for itself, don't you? I mean, oh my God. That clip, that's intense. I mean if I was Sarah, right there, I mean, I might have a melt-down. That's So. Freaking. Awful'. What was 'so awful' in his view was 'telling a transwoman [sic] what to do': 'what business does a lesbian have telling a transwoman [sic] what to do'.

But Keen was not telling McBride what to do, as should be obvious from what she actually said. She was asking him questions from a women's perspective, from a standpoint that incorporated the dire consequences for women and girls of the transgender agenda. She was asking if he had considered those consequences, and perhaps in that sense she *was* asking him to do something: to consider the consequences for women and girls. But these are reasonable questions to ask of someone with the money, power and influence of the (so-called) Human Rights Campaign behind him. What is awful about the incident is McBride's contemptible behaviour—showing his disdain for the speaker by keeping his back turned to her, by refusing to acknowledge her presence, and (if I remember rightly from my viewing of the whole video) by getting up and walking away, still with his back turned.

Keen is not a lesbian. She was not speaking on behalf of lesbians only, but on behalf of all women and girls likely to be affected by the transgender agenda. So another of Ash's complaints, that Keen's questions were somehow divisive of the 'LGBT community', is irrelevant. 'We're all members of the same community', he said piously, 'We don't need to be hurting each other ... the LGBT community needs to stand together'. But the LGBT platform is not a community for lesbians, much less for women and girls more generally. It is dominated by the transgender agenda with its insistence that men can be 'women', even 'lesbians', and its demands that actual lesbians accommodate these men as sexual partners. Since actual lesbians have no desire to partner sexually with men, these demands are just one more manifestation of rape culture. The 'standing together' that Ash pleads for is nothing but wholesale capitulation to the trans agenda. There is no standing together with lesbians to protect them from male encroachment. There is certainly no standing together with women and girls, who are excluded from this 'community' of entitled men and from the kinds of benefits and protections these men arrogate to themselves.

The reporting of this incident in the malestream media (aka *The New York Times*) was taken straight out of the transgender playbook. '[T]wo British women stormed onto Capitol Hill in Washington', the *Times* stoutly declared, 'for the purposes of ambushing Sarah McBride' (WoLF, 2019a). But this interpretation of the incident is a

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rel474rd8o> (viewed 6 November 2020). The whole video of the incident is no longer available.

lie. The behaviour implied by the emotive words ‘stormed’ and ‘ambushing’ simply didn’t happen. (I suggest readers watch the above-mentioned video clip, or better still, the whole video if they can find it). Moreover, the women were not there to approach McBride at all, ‘ambushing’ or otherwise. They were there to speak to people who worked in the building. But then lies are transgender’s favourite currency. The fact that *The New York Times* could uncritically regurgitate those lies is unsurprising, given transgender’s imperialistic penetration of public media everywhere. It is, however, no less deplorable. (For more details about this incident, see: Cockburn, 2019; Dreher, 2018)

### ***Objections to WoLF and the Right***

*The Radical Notion’s* contributors are not alone in their condemnation of any feminist alliance with the Right. Most of the conflict around what is seen as joining forces with the Right has happened online, on Facebook pages, social media and email lists that are necessarily private as protection against transgender trolling and doxxing. Take the following protests on a single Facebook page, dated 2 March 2020. They are mainly a reaction to the article by Natasha Chart from WoLF and Christen Price, ‘an evangelical Christian in the Anglican tradition and a former attorney at [the right-wing] Alliance Defending Freedom’ (Chart and Price, 2020).

The critics on Facebook said that the Right is against everything that feminism stands for. By working with them, WoLF were allowing themselves to be co-opted by an agenda that was virulently anti-feminist. They were no longer working for radical feminism because they were ‘under the political line and leadership of the religious right’ and ‘actively working with groups whose aim is to oppress women’. In doing so, they had ‘completely derailed radical feminism and turned it into a right-wing politic’, and ‘become a front for ... THE religious right that are the worst of the worst ... organizations that are trying to stop women globally from reproductive rights’. WoLF, the critics said, could not possibly ‘meaningfully “influence” women on the Religious Right’. Instead, they were ‘being used, trotted out in hopes of giving credibility to a deeply misogynist and anti-feminist worldview’. The critics also pointed out that the organisations WoLF were working with had ‘direct links to the Trump administration’ (as indeed they did). All this is true, but it doesn’t apply to what WoLF was working with the Right on, namely, the criticism of transgender.

Julie Bindel, one of the fiercer and more adamant critics of what she saw as WoLF’s collaboration with the Right, also pointed out the ways in which the Right is antagonistic to feminist aims. They are, she said, ‘people who would deny women their bodily autonomy, who are anti-gay, who consider trans people to be freaks, and who are more likely to show bigotry towards marginalised groups’. She acknowledged that ‘the Left has let women down. Badly’, but that was not a good enough reason to work with those who were ‘virulently opposed to women’s human rights’ (Bindel, 2020b).

WoLF replied to Bindel pointing out that their work with the Right was the kind of cross-partisan strategy that was quite common in the US. They also said that they had never worked with the Right against abortion, that they were firm enough in their feminist convictions not to be swayed by any arguments from the Right, that Bindel herself had written for right-wing publications, and that she had worked with other organisations connected to the Heritage Foundation without complaining about it (as

far as WoLF knew) (WoLF, 2020a).<sup>33</sup> Bindel replied, and WoLF replied again, but there was no common meeting ground and there communication ended.

*Money (they said)*

At one point it did seem as though the critics were right, and WoLF had been seduced into betraying their feminist commitment in exchange for right-wing money. It was said that they had accepted money from right-wing sources and had agreed that the money would not be used for abortion-related political activism. As one critical source (genderwipethefingerprints, 2017) said, towards the end of 2016, WoLF had applied for and received a \$15,000 grant from the Alliance Defending Freedom, which the critics described as ‘a right-wing evangelical Christian nonprofit law firm’ with a history of anti-feminist, anti-gay and anti-lesbian activism. According to the critics, acceptance of this money meant that ‘WoLF has basically solicited and accepted funding from the ideological wing of the Trump administration’.

Moreover, the critics said, in January 2017 WoLF hired Zachary Freeman and his firm, Imperial Independent Media, to raise funds for them. Freeman had solid right-wing credentials. He graduated from Liberty University, a private evangelical Christian university in Lynchburg, Virginia, founded by Jerry Falwell in 1971 as Lynchburg Baptist College. He had also worked for the Family Policy Institute of Washington, a right-wing lobby group designed ‘to create public policy that recognizes the significance and sanctity of the family ... [in the belief that] what God has said is true’.<sup>34</sup> The critics also said that Freeman had placed a condition on the use of the money he raised for WoLF. They quoted ‘a former board member of WoLF’ who said that Freeman “was willing to do this paid work if WoLF agreed to stop advocating for abortion rights” (genderwipethefingerprints, 2017).

On these accounts it would seem that WoLF had indeed succumbed to right-wing pressure. However, the situation was not quite as the critics painted it. In the case of the grant from the ADF, WoLF’s purpose in applying for it was to make up the shortfall in what was owed to the lawyer who had represented them in their lawsuit against the Obama Administration’s executive order requiring schools to recognise students’ ‘gender identity’ instead of their sex in relation to access to toilets (‘bathrooms’), change rooms and participation in sports. It was money WoLF intended to use for a purpose that found common cause with the ADF, who had already been representing the plaintiffs in similar lawsuits across the country. WoLF couldn’t use their own volunteer lawyers, they said, because they weren’t qualified in that area of law (WoLF, 2017).<sup>35</sup>

As for the accusation that they stopped advocating for abortion in exchange for money, WoLF acknowledged that Freeman’s offer to raise money for them did include a stipulation that ‘money he might raise for us not be spent on political activity related to abortion access’ (WoLF, 2017). WoLF agreed with this condition because it had no influence on their political activism. His stipulation related only to

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<sup>33</sup> WoLF updated their website some time in 2020. They acknowledge that ‘some links may not work the way they used to’, but in fact they don’t work at all, and this article can’t be found there now, or anywhere else.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.fpiw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/FPIW-2014-Brochure-10-2-14.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> This has also fallen foul of WoLF’s website reorganisation and is no longer available.

the money raised by his own fund-raising efforts, and not to any other money WoLF might raise through other means. Moreover, although all the members of WoLF were fully in favour of reproductive sovereignty for women and girls and opposed to any policy or initiative that restricted abortion access, WoLF itself was not engaged in funded political activity on that particular issue, and never had been. As strongly as they might feel about the importance of women's access to abortion, as an organisation, they said,

WoLF has never spent any money on political activity related to abortion access, nor do we have an expectation of such funding, nor does the organization have any paid staff who do such work (WoLF, 2017).

Hence they were not agreeing to stop work on abortion rights, as the critics were alleging. They had not agreed to 'shut down a bustling program', nor 'to restrict our members' political speech and activity' (WoLF, 2017). They agreed to Freeman's condition because it did not require them to do anything less than what they were already doing. Their members could continue their volunteer work campaigning for abortion rights as they always had done, while WoLF used the funding for the project for which they had sought legal incorporation, i.e. 'civil rights advocacy representing the interests of women and girls in relation to gender identity policy'. On that issue, WoLF and Zachary Freeman were in agreement.

They were also in agreement on another issue. When Freeman approached them offering to raise funds for them, he was already acquainted with WoLF's work, and they with him. He had been helpful in getting them publicity in the case of a transgender man (who called himself a 'woman'), who was having a major influence on transgender policy, including the White House, despite the fact that he had raped a transgender woman.<sup>36</sup> The transgender woman's insistence that she was a 'man' did not stop the transgender man from raping her.

Later (WoLF, 2019c), WoLF also pointed out that the male left, too, had found common cause with the right wing whenever it suited them, and yet WoLF's detractors had nothing to say about that. WoLF gave the example of the American Civil Liberties Union, which had worked on several criminal justice reform issues with the American Legislative Exchange Council, a right-wing libertarian group, and Americans For Prosperity funded by the Koch family. The ACLU had also represented Milo Yiannopoulos in a free speech case. WoLF also mentioned the Human Rights Campaign's support of politicians with explicitly anti-gay policies. But then the Human Rights Campaign is neither a left-wing organisation, nor supportive of the rights of lesbians and gay men. Nonetheless, WoLF do have a point about the male left's opportunistic collaboration with the right wing:

Our online detractors don't seem to be aware that many groups on the political left ... have also partnered with right wing groups ... it seems hypocritical for feminists posting anti-WoLF comments online to be attacking us for working with conservatives, whereas they're not leveling similar charges against ... any number of other organizations led by men on the left who do the same thing (WoLF, 2019c).

So it is simply not true that WoLF received money from the Right as payment for ceasing to campaign against abortion. They weren't campaigning against abortion as

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<sup>36</sup> <https://medium.com/@notCursedE/5-actually-6-trans-people-who-did-bad-things-4c5b615ac284>

an organisation anyway. The money was never intended to be used for that purpose, so they could accept Freeman's condition without compromising their politics.

*Another disagreement*

Elizabeth Hungerford (2020) disagreed with much of the criticism leveled against WoLF for their association with the Right. She didn't agree that feminists could be forced, or even subtly influenced, to accept right-wing positions on abortion, marriage, 'the family', etc. '[I]t would be extremely disrespectful', she said, 'to assume that the women involved do not know their own minds and cannot control their own political opinions'. She also didn't agree that accepting funding from right-wing groups was always a bad thing. Although those groups might attach conditions to any funding they provided (as Freeman did), the decision whether or not to agree to those conditions would depend on each particular case, and only those involved would be in a position to make an informed decision. Finally, she said that cooperation with the Right might make feminists look bad, but 'feminists cannot control how other people react and no one should make important decisions based on what their haters might think or do in response!'

However, in relation to WoLF's *Amicus Curiae* brief<sup>37</sup> to the US Supreme Court in the Harris case (aka *Bostock v. Clayton County*), she did feel that they had taken on the 'preferred legal narrative' of the right-wing group they were working with, 'whether it was accurate or not!' She believed this was heavily influenced by 'conservative reasoning about public policy issues', which she saw as 'notoriously alarmist and intolerant, leveraging slippery slope arguments and scare tactics to control the uninformed' (Hungerford, 2020).

For a discussion of the Supreme Court's decision in the *Bostock v. Clayton County* case, where the Court ruled that 'sex' in Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act 1964* included both 'gender identity' and sexual orientation, see the 'US Supreme Court' section of the 'Piggybacking' chapter.

WoLF's *Amicus Curiae* brief (WoLF, 2019b) had asked the Court to find in favour of the funeral home on the grounds that finding in favour of the employee would mean compelling employers 'to engage in sex-stereotyping under the guise of "gender identity"' and weaken 'longstanding sex-based protections under the law'. They pointed out that Stephens could have challenged the legality of sex-specific dress codes, i.e. his employer fired him because he would not wear the clothing the employer required men to wear. 'Instead, he is attempting to redefine the term "sex" to mean "gender identity" under federal civil rights law, and potentially throughout the U.S. Code, and for every person in the U.S.' (p.13). They also argued that

[t]here is no basis in law for requiring the R.G. and G.R. Harris Funeral Homes to refer to Aimee Stephens as a woman ... Aimee Stephens and the EEOC<sup>38</sup> would have this Court rule that the R.G. and G.R. Harris Funeral Homes *must pretend* that it believes that Aimee Stephens is female,

<sup>37</sup> 'Amicus Curiae' means 'friend of the court, and an *Amicus Curiae* brief is a petition filed by some person or organisation that is not a party to the litigation but whom the court permits to advise it on a matter of law relevant to the case in question.

<sup>38</sup> The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was supporting Stephens in his petition to the Supreme Court, along with the American Civil Liberties Union.

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and use female pronouns to refer to him (WoLF, 2019b: 31—original emphasis).

Hungerford (2020) argued that WoLF's Brief was not an accurate assessment of the legal questions, and that its inaccuracies were a result of their 'echoing right wing hyperbole'. 'The legal definition of woman was not at issue' in the *Bostock v. Clayton County* case, she said.

The legal definition of sex was not even at issue! No sex-based rights will be erased or compromised by this decision. The case is about transgender identified people's compliance with dress codes, for goodness sake! ... how could [WoLF] possibly argue in good feminist faith that upholding ... sex stereotyping ... meant the court had to find that *firing the transgender person was legally permissible*? No, it made no sense at all (Hungerford, 2020—original emphasis).

But it is Hungerford's interpretation of the case that is inaccurate. The Court was not simply deciding who was right, the funeral home or the employee. It was deciding whether or not 'sex' in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act covered 'transgender status' (and sexual orientation) (Canzoneri and Oñate, 2019; Finlay, 2019; Medvin, 2019). Title VII made it unlawful to discriminate against anyone in employment 'because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin'.<sup>39</sup> The legal definition of woman was indeed at issue, as was the legal definition of sex. If men can legally become 'women', the word loses its meaning, as does the word 'sex', if people can legally change their sex. It is not right-wing hyperbole to say so.

And that was how the Supreme Court ruled. On 15 June 2020, the Court decided by a vote of 6-3 that Title VII's wording 'because of sex' did extend to both 'transgender status' and sexual orientation (Crawford and Hanby, 2020; National Law Review, 2020). The three justices who voted against the ruling were all 'conservatives', but there were two 'conservatives' who voted in favour of expanding the 'sex' category in Title VII. They were Chief Justice John Roberts and Neil Gorsuch, Trump's first Supreme Court appointee, who wrote the majority opinion. It would seem that not everyone on the political Right is opposed to the transgender agenda. All four so-called 'liberals' on the Court predictably voted in favour of the ruling, including Ruth Bader Ginsberg (Williams, Pete, 2020).

Hungerford was wrong in assuming that a legal victory for the transgender employee would not lead to legal erasure of females. Including 'transgender status' within the 'sex' category of Title VII does indeed set transgender rights against the rights of women. These men's insistence that they are 'women' has been found over and over again to override women's sex-based rights to freedom from male encroachment. The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (like human rights organisations everywhere) already included 'gender identity' as a ground of discrimination under 'sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation)'. Even before the Supreme Court decision, it was claiming (falsely) that Title VII's prohibition of sex discrimination could be interpreted 'as forbidding any employment discrimination

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/titlevii.cfm>. Interestingly, Title VII explicitly excludes from protection under the legislation members of the Communist Party, 'or of any other organization required to register as a Communist-action or Communist-front organization by final order of the Subversive Activities Control Board pursuant to the Subversive Activities Control Act of 1950'.

based on *gender identity* or *sexual orientation*'.<sup>40</sup> That decision justified their already-existing policy.<sup>41</sup>

One example of discrimination given in the since deleted version was '[d]enying an employee equal access to a common restroom corresponding to the employee's gender identity', thus erasing women's right to privacy in female toilets, change rooms, etc. Another example involved '[h]arassing [sic] an employee because of a gender transition, such as by intentionally and persistently *failing to use the name and gender pronoun that correspond to the gender identity* with which the employee identifies' (emphasis added). Interpreting this as discrimination against 'transgender' persons mandates coerced speech. Everyone has a right to be addressed by the name they have chosen for themselves, even if they've changed it. But no one has a right to demand that others use language (gendered pronouns) in the opposite sense to the generally accepted usage.

Hence the EEOC was insisting, even before the Supreme Court decision, that Title VII did oblige employers to accept 'transgender' men as 'women', thus erasing any separate category of women (as well as policing their employees' language usage). Until 15 June 2020 (and the Supreme Court's decision). But before the Supreme Court decision, this was untrue. The US Department of Justice, for example, said in 2017 that 'Title VII's prohibition on sex discrimination encompasses discrimination between men and women but does not encompass discrimination based on gender identity *per se*, including transgender status' (US DoJ, 2017). In thrall to the transgender agenda, the EEOC (again, like human rights organisations everywhere) took no notice of this advice. (For WoLF's response to an earlier commentary by Hungerford (2019), see: WoLF, 2019d).

#### *WoLF's answer*

WoLF have set out their reasons for working with the Right on their website (WoLF, 2020b). They say that the short answer to the question of why they 'work with conservatives' is that 'conservative women are also women'. They have 'as much interest as any of us in our fundamental legal status and the protection of children. Feminist advocacy is for their benefit, also'.

WoLF also point out that, not only is there no help from the political Left in the fight against transgenderism, left-wing organisations, even self-styled feminist ones, make every attempt to silence them, even in their work on traditional feminist concerns such as abortion or sex trafficking. 'We can't do this alone' they say, especially given the power and financial might of transgenderism. They are working together with organisation such as the Alliance Defending Freedom on their common goals, despite the fact that 'they are our opponents in other areas'. They also say that 'This is no time for purity politics', and that they need to be working with everyone they can fruitfully work with and use all the tools available in order to protect women's sex-based rights against the transgender encroachment.

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<sup>40</sup>[https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/wysk/enforcement\\_protections\\_lgbt\\_workers.cfm](https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/wysk/enforcement_protections_lgbt_workers.cfm) (original emphasis). This wording no longer appears at this URL. Instead, the current version is 'an update of a now-unavailable document originally published on 05-04-2015'.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi-discrimination>



So once WoLF's interactions with those who hold right-wing views are examined closely to find out what actually happened (rather than lying about what happened or accusing them of guilt by association), it becomes clear that no feminist principles were compromised. While it is true that the Right is typically against everything feminism stands for, just as the critics have said, including supporting the Trump administration, it is not true that working with people who hold right-wing positions on other issues means being co-opted into supporting any right-wing causes. Working *with* the Right on the single issue of transgender does not mean being *of* the Right on anything else. WoLF were not working with the Right on right-wing issues, and nothing anyone from WoLF has ever said or done can be interpreted as right-wing. As Hungerford pointed out, they were not seduced into abandoning their feminist values or embracing right-wing values. Their collaboration was confined to the struggle against transgenderism.

As for 'alienating many left-leaning and moderate women and men' (Alice, 2020: 27), WoLF has no control over what other people think, and hence no responsibility for taking it into consideration. Given that they had perfectly good reasons for working with those on the Right, strategically and temporarily, it is hardly reasonable to expect them to refrain from going ahead because of some hypothetical reactions other, unspecified, people might hypothetically have.

There is no sign that WoLF espoused any right-wing values as a result of working with the Right, and neither were they required to. They didn't start recommending that single mothers marry fathers for their children, they didn't start opposing abortion or the taxing of the wealthy, they didn't start criticising the cost to the government of health, education and welfare, and they certainly didn't advocate voting for Trump. Any connections with right-wing organisations and individuals were confined to fighting the transgender phenomenon, and to do that they didn't have to compromise any feminist principles at all.

### **Kellie-Jay Keen (Posie Parker)**

Another well-intentioned woman who is being attacked for her connections with the Right, real or imagined, is Kellie-Jay Keen (aka Posie Parker) in the UK. And yes, Keen is also well-intentioned, no matter how injudicious, politically naïve or mistaken some of the things she says or does might be, because she is concerned about the oppression of women and girls. It is true that she has had interactions with the Right. She attended events in the US under the auspices of the Heritage Foundation (see above), right-wingers have turned up at her rallies and not been turned away, and she is unperturbed at being friendly towards people who are known to be right-wing but who are critical of transgender. And she has expressed pleasure at the election of Donald Trump because he has been known to disagree with the transgender agenda (see below). But even that doesn't justify some of the attacks on her. Nor does it make everything she says and does right-wing, foolish though her championing of Trump might be, given that he has been proven over and over again to be no friend to women.

#### *Her critics*

One of the more vicious things said about her (Graham Linehan called it 'disgraceful' on his Substack blog, *The Glimmer Update*) is a tweet by Sarah Ditung that reads "Posie

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Parker is a Poundshop<sup>42</sup> Marine Le Pen and if you think she cares about any woman apart from herself, prepare to be very disappointed” (dated 23 September 2022, quoted in Linehan, 2022). A curious aspect of this tweet by Ditung is that she herself is not averse to taking advantage of the right-wing resources fighting against transgender. As she said non-judgementally (in the passage quoted above), ‘[M]any feminists have ended up closer to the Right than they ever imagined’. She went on to say, ‘[c]ertainly I would not have predicted that a nice social democrat girl like me would end up writing defences of women’s toilets for the *Spectator*, or condemning rape threats against JK Rowling in the *Telegraph*’ (Ditung, 2020b). (See below for other left-wing feminists who write for the right-wing press).

Ditung’s tweet was a response to one by Julie Bindel where she (Bindel) said that she agreed 100% with a piece by @GappyTales (i.e. Jeni Harvey) (Linehan, 2022). This was an article that traduced Keen by accusing her of being part of ‘a pattern of seemingly increased links between the far right, the American Christian right, and certain gender critical activists and organisations’. Harvey asked if the ‘white nationalists’ who turned up to a public Let Women Speak event in Brighton in September 2023 had been ‘specifically invited’, naming ‘Hearts of Oak, a far right movement promoted by Tommy Robinson, former UKIP members, and the anti-feminist YouTuber Carl Benjamin’ (Harvey, 2023). To suggest that Keen might have ‘specifically invited’ fascist men to the event is a gratuitous insult backed up by no evidence whatsoever. And this is what Bindel 100% agreed with.

This is not surprising. Bindel had already compared Keen to a Nazi woman. In the early hours of the morning (3.33 am) on 4 July 2022, she tweeted ‘The same right-wing cultists slagging me off re my crowd justice campaign? Lovely, those poundshop [E]va Brauns’.<sup>43</sup> While Bindel didn’t name anyone specifically, the ‘gender critical’ community knew who she was referring to. As one woman tweeted, ‘Julie Bindel called us, i.e. the opposing GC lot, “poundshop Eva Braun” and then the poundshop joke was repeated by others as a slur’;<sup>44</sup> and Ditung used the same trope (although with a different insulting name) to identify Keen as the prime target.

And the slur was repeated, gleefully, by trans activist India Willoughby, he who is so acceptable to the mainstream in the UK that he has been given a voice on public media on ITV and Channel 5, his misogyny ignored (or celebrated) in favour of his shock value. He is the UK’s first ‘transgender’ national television newsreader, as well as a broadcaster, a journalist, a ‘reality television’ personality, and the first ‘transgender’ co-host of ITV’s all-women [sic—not any more] talk show, ‘Loose Women’ (Wikipedia). On 7 June 2023, over a GIF of Keen with the subtitle, ‘Fascist is the new legend’ lip-synched to something Keen is saying, Willoughby tweeted ‘[Keen is] [l]aughing all the way to the bank. A suburban bully who turned herself into a Wish version [a variation on ‘Poundshop’] of Eva Braun. Funded by the Religious Right, adored by Nazis. In her pomp. Trans hate such a grift. Completely ignored by

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<sup>42</sup> Or Poundland, a store that originally sold everything for a £ or less. The implication is that Keen is a cheap version of a right-wing woman, pernicious for that reason, but not really worth worrying about because she’s not as powerful as Le Pen.

<sup>43</sup> <https://x.com/bindelj/status/1543649057100406784>

<sup>44</sup> <https://x.com/sarahstuartxx/status/1622499843108139008>

Brit Media/BBC'.<sup>45</sup> Thus does the antagonism towards Keen by self-styled 'feminists' play right into the hands of transgender thugs.

Keen has also been criticised for the fact that fascist men turn up at the events she organises (one example being the Let Women Speak event in Melbourne in March 2023, when the police ushered a group of neo-Nazi men onto the steps of parliament house alongside the women speaking) (see the 'More havoc: police' chapter). Another example is a snide hint by Jeni Harvey in the above-mentioned article Bindel approved of '100%', that Keen might have invited the fascist men to one of her events (Harvey, 2023). This is guilt by innuendo. Those who use the appearance of fascist men at trans-critical events as some kind of proof of right-wing affiliation, ignore the fact that those events are held in public outdoor spaces. Neither Keen nor anyone else has the power to exclude them. Neither did she have any power to stop the men filming the proceedings, even if they were, as Harvey said, 'filming from right in front of the stage' (Harvey, 2023).

#### *Defending Tommy Robinson?*

According to two left-wing pundits, though, there is supposedly evidence that Keen 'has defended far-right activist Tommy Robinson' (Blackburn and Dabbas, 2023), although these authors do not provide the evidence. Robinson was of special concern for feminists who had been trying to get the police to do something about the grooming gangs since the late 1990s. Bindel in particular was incensed (and rightly so) by the fact that the Right, and Robinson in particular, were being given credit for exposing the grooming gangs. '[I]f I hear one more time that Tommy Robinson (AKA the fascist fuckwit that capitalised on the rape and torture of working class girls to stir up racist hatred towards brown, migrant men) "uncovered the story" I will scream', she said (Bindel, 2023). She went on to point out (again, quite rightly) that the story was broken by the girls themselves when they became adults, by the lawyers and campaigners who worked with the victims (especially Sara Rowbotham, co-ordinator of a Crisis Intervention Team set up to support young people in Rochdale) (ITV, 2024a), and by former police officers, especially former detective constable Maggie Oliver (Bindel, 2023).

But Keen didn't say that Robinson uncovered the story of the grooming gangs and neither did she defend him, although she has refused to condemn him outright (see below). Her supposed 'support' for Robinson is yet another transgender lie, repeated endlessly in one trans blog after another. In an interview with Meghan Murphy,<sup>46</sup> she said that Robinson was one of those with ill motives who took advantage of the 'void' left by the silence about the ethnicity of the grooming gangs. Far from attributing the breaking of the story of the grooming gangs to Robinson, Keen acknowledged that '[t]here were women fighting it, right? ... in fact I'm assured by women on the ground, there was some work going on, on the ground' (41.40). The fact that the mainstream media didn't take up the issue was, at least in part, due to the Left's 'culture of "Let's not be racist"':

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<sup>45</sup> <https://x.com/IndiaWilloughby/status/1666150739108823055>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.feministcurrent.com/2019/01/24/podcast-posie-parker-standing-for-women/>. The following quotes are taken from that podcast.

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[This] left a gaping hole for somebody to come in and say, “Well, 90% of all the men that were arrested for grooming are Pakistani or Muslim or Somali. They’re all Muslim. So let’s talk about Muslim grooming gangs”. If you can’t talk about these things, you leave them open for people with ill motives to talk about them and make it their cause, and that’s exactly what happened ... it’s the fault of the Left. If they’d fought [indecipherable] with those grooming gangs from the off there would be no room for anyone to capitalise on that void (42.15).

Whether or not that’s true, insisting that Muslim men are not the only men who rape children begs the question of whether or not there is something in British Muslim culture that condones the organised male sexual abuse of ‘white’ girls. It also doesn’t allow for any distinction to be made between the racism and violence of the Right, and the feminist defence of women and girls.

What Keen herself has said about Robinson hardly supports the assertion that she defends him. In the interview, she said that she did post a tweet ‘questioning some of the stuff about Tommy Robinson’, the reason being that she had yet to see ‘conclusive evidence’ of what he was accused of, and ‘that means that I’m not willing to commit myself 100% to that’. She said that she herself was being accused of the same things Robinson was being accused of:

according to the mainstream media I’m a hateful bigot. So we have to ask questions of the narratives around people ... After his name and saying how much you hate him, you are basically considered a supporter [of the narrative against him] ... So I just said, you know, we’re supposed to think this and this and this about Robinson, but people think this about me, so I think we need to question who it sounds like (39.08).

But she clearly wasn’t a supporter. She acknowledged that he ‘probably is a racist and a job’, that he was ‘an opportunist’ and her ‘gut feeling’ was that ‘there are probably some really awful things to say about him’, and that she wasn’t saying ‘that his supporters aren’t awful as well’. She also asked,

Why is this insignificant man being given such significance? It doesn’t make any sense. He’s just like a miccy<sup>47</sup> job. Why is he able to be blamed for loads of the stuff going on? ... It’s just that I was raising a question. The scales had fallen from my eyes about the Left. I’m questioning everything. I want to know why we’re supposed to think that (39.39).

All she was saying was that she was not going to believe what was being said about him just because someone said it. After all, the same things were being said about her and they were untrue. On this point I feel she was being politically naïve, and the truth of Bindel’s designation of Robinson as a ‘fascist fuckwit’ (Bindel, 2023) is indeed an accurate, if brief, summing up of his politics. Still, Keen’s is hardly a ringing endorsement of Robinson.

### *‘Grooming’ gangs*

Along with the right-wing accusations, Keen is also accused of racism because of her insistence that the gangs of men raping children with impunity were Muslim. In May 2018, Woman’s Place UK (WPUK) announced that ‘Posie Parker will no longer be

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<sup>47</sup> Northern English slang for ‘disreputable’.

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speaking at our Cornwall meeting as we object to her stated views on race and religion'. '[W]e became aware', they said,

of several tweets by KJK that made pejorative comments about Muslim communities. We believed these tweets would contribute to a hostile environment for people from minoritised communities. The views expressed in these tweets are diametrically opposed to our principles and beliefs (WPUK, 2018).

Challenging the racism within our society is one of our fundamental principles and we do not want to work with, or promote the work of, others whose analysis and rhetoric on this matter differs so profoundly from our own (WPUK, 2022).

(In parenthesis: one of the tweets WPUK objected to was not about 'Muslim' gangs of child sexual abusers, although Keen believed that it was. The tweet was her reaction to an announcement by Lincolnshire Police, that said 'Eleven convicted in our "largest and most complex investigation" into #ModernSlavery'. In response, Keen tweeted:

Hey? What ethnicity and religion are these offenders? Hmmmm. Why isn't this mentioned I wonder.

[Screenshot of the announcement with photos of the offenders]

we say the way men socialised results in certain behaviour but not Muslim men and how they feel about white girls? (11 August 2017) (WPUK, 2022).

Unfortunately for Keen's point in this case, these eleven people were neither a gang of rapists nor Muslim. They were a despicable family called 'Rooney', all men except for one woman (daughter of one of the men and mother of others). All their 18 victims were men, captured because they were homeless, or had learning disabilities or drug or alcohol addictions. Most of the family members were convicted of 'conspiracy to require a person to perform forced or compulsory labour'. They had put the men to work, stolen their wages, kept them imprisoned in appalling conditions, and semi-starved them (Vernalls, 2017). Still, Keen's reaction did involve 'pejorative comments about Muslim communities', even though in this case it wasn't a 'Muslim community'.

There were, however, other 'stated views on race and religion' by Keen that WPUK objected to:

... there are pockets of Bradford where the culture is not British. Like many ex pat communities they hold on to their past culture rather tightly. There was an all boys school that was 99.9% Pakistani Muslim. Awful place for women (16 April 2018).

Dear UK, it seems we are at a time where you can offend everyone except Muslims and trans women ... all the rest of you are expected to take it on the chin.

Are we allowed to notice where these men are from and question the culture in which they've grown? I mean we seem to be able to blame rape culture but not Pakistani/Muslim rape culture (26 May 2018) (WPUK, 2022).

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Another of Keen's tweets WPUK objected to involved implied criticism of dressing small girls in hijab:

a class of 7 year olds just walked past only 2/15 girls weren't wearing hijab (3 July 2017).

Keen was objecting to the treatment of women and girls in Muslim culture, and reacting to the failure of the relevant authorities to stop the raping, pimping, exploiting and torturing of young 'white' girls by organised identifiable gangs of men (sometimes euphemistically referred to in the media as 'Asian'). These gangs had been operating with impunity for years because, it has been suggested (and not only by Keen), the authorities were worried about being accused of racism (BBC, 2012a, b)—and not incidentally, because the victims were female and were dismissed 'as "worthless slags" from "bad families"', despite the families' desperate attempts to get the police to act (Bindel, 2023). Nine men who were eventually jailed in 2012 (BBC, 2012a) were originally from Pakistan and Afghanistan, but this was a tiny minority of the men involved.

It has also been suggested that behind the authorities' failure to act was a fear of stirring up social unrest:

They feared the reaction of Asian communities to a targeted clampdown on British Pakistani criminal gangs. Above all, they feared the reaction of Britain's white working class, which they saw as a racist mass just waiting to erupt ... In their eyes, it could anger Asian communities and it could drive a white working class into the arms of whatever wretched far-right group is the monster du jour ... the elite fear of disorder and unrest ... led to countless state bodies to elevate some notion of "social cohesion" above upholding the law (Black, 2025).

The feminist reluctance to identify the rapist gangs as 'Muslim', e.g. WPUK, was a desire not to appear racist. Even the feminists who had been fighting for years to get the authorities to act against these organised gangs of men were careful not to identify them as 'Muslim'. Bindel, for example, quoted favourably an assistant chief constable with Lancashire police saying that "[o]ffenders can and do come from a variety of cultural backgrounds" (Bindel, 2007. See also: Bindel, 2012). She also said that "[T]he ethnicity of the majority of the perpetrators mirrored the criminal demographic in the old northern mill towns" (Bindel, 2023), i.e. there were a lot of 'Muslim' rapists in those areas because there was a large immigrant population. But she was unable to give any other examples of the ethnicity of child rapists. She went on to mention 'white middle-class men', not because they too were raping girls, but because they were 'supplying crack cocaine and heroin to small-time dealers' (Bindel, 2023).

In Bindel's view, the men's ethnicity was irrelevant except in the sense that they were reacting to their racist treatment by the wider society. '[P]imping of white females by black and ethnic-minority men', she said, 'can be a type of revenge against whites'. She quoted one Pakistani man who had told her that he 'took "great pleasure" in having young white girls at his beck and call, knowing their parents would be out of their minds with worry' (Bindel, 2007). But this makes the men's ethnicity very relevant indeed. It was the reason they were being humiliated, and their being humiliated was the reason (along with the usual male sex right) that they were prostituting the girls.

It's true that male violence against women and girls is often motivated by men's resentment at their treatment by other men (see the above discussion of Dworkin's analysis of men's love of pornography),<sup>48</sup> and hence not a characteristic peculiar to Muslim culture. But the fact remains that, in the case of the organised gangs of rapists in the north of England, most were from 'Pakistani Muslim communities'. Refusing to say so is not motivated by concern for the girls.

And there is something about these gangs of men that persists, even beyond the reluctance of the mainstream authorities to punish men who rape, even men who rape children. A report released over a decade after the nine men were jailed, of an investigation of 'the involvement of groups of Asian men' in the sexual abuse of children between 2004 and 2013, 'identifie[d] 96 men still deemed a potential risk to children', while noting that 'this is "only a proportion" of the numbers involved in the abuse' (ITV, 2024a, b).

Twelve years after she had resigned from the force in 2012, whistle-blower Oliver said that the abuse of girls was still happening: "My work in the Maggie Oliver Foundation", she said, "means that I have current information about what is going on today. I would say categorically ... the failures that happened then, are still happening now" (ITV, 2024a, b). She was responding to a report on the failure of the Greater Manchester Police between 2004 and 2013 to apprehend the offenders and stop the abuse 'by Asian men'.

The issue blew up again at the beginning of 2025 (Bidwell, 2025), when multiple posts by Elon Musk on X raised it, accusing Prime Minister Starmer of being 'complicit in the RAPE OF BRITAIN when he was Head of Crown Prosecution Service for 6 years'<sup>49</sup> (Gooding, 2025—original emphasis). Whether or not the enforced silence about the men's Muslim cultural background is *responsible* for the continuing failure to stop the abuse, it certainly didn't stop it.

For a video with a number of people, including Keen, talking about the 'grooming gangs' in early 2025 at a Let Women Speak rally in Oldham in the north west of the UK, see: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Gg8fVSW6jE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Gg8fVSW6jE)

Another accusation against Keen occurred in the context of the Southport riots. When she reposted during the riots a video she had made about the grooming gangs, Jo Phoenix tweeted that she was 'a populist extremist hell bent on inciting violence ... [and] fanning the flames of racism' (Phoenix, 2024). The riots in question involved mobs of racist thugs responding to the knife attack at a Taylor Swift dance party by a 17-year-old boy who killed three little girls and injured nine other people, two of them adults. The thugs had mistakenly assumed the boy was an asylum seeker (and hence 'Muslim'), and attacked a hotel housing asylum seekers, creating their usual mayhem, including injuring police officers. As well as the video, Keen tweeted 'The left would rather you be a rapist than them being accused of being racist. Women and girls don't

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<sup>48</sup> Yes, I know women can be racist too, but as I have argued elsewhere (Thompson, 1994, 1995, 2001: 94-5), racism is an aspect of the male supremacist system that divides people into categories of worth and worthlessness. Women can and do embrace those meanings and values too, especially as that is where the power lies.

<sup>49</sup> <https://x.com/elonmusk/status/1875150194909823085>

matter. #Rotherham' (i.e. one of the places where the gangs were operating) (Phoenix, 2024).

It's not clear from Phoenix' account whether Keen had posted the video as a commentary on the supposed ethnicity of the boy responsible for the murderous attacks, or whether it was before the riots started, or whether it was coincidental. Keen's comment, 'rather you be a rapist', suggests it was not a commentary, since what the boy did was murder, not rape. However, Phoenix said that Keen did acknowledge that posting the video was inflammatory, so presumably she did mean it as a commentary on the boy's ethnicity. But whether that counts as 'inciting violence' is debatable.

Although I haven't seen the video (I can't find it), from my reading of what she says elsewhere she is saying no more than that the grooming gangs are Muslim, that there's an unjustified silence about that, and that that silencing (which she blames on the Left) has contributed to the failure to stop the gangs prostituting girls. Whatever the truth of those claims, they don't amount to inciting violence. In fact the failure to prosecute the men and protect the girls was not so much the fault of the Left, as it was a consequence of society-wide misogyny—'a mountain of sexism, entrenched attitudes and prejudice against young working-class girls'—and the unwillingness of the authorities to do anything to protect females who are 'often seen as nothing more than "throw away girls"' (Phoenix, 2024).

As for Keen's point about the grooming gangs being Muslim and the silence around that, Phoenix too is careful to avoid identifying the men as 'Muslim'. For example, she said that 'the greater preponderance of pimping and exploitation happened at the hands of white men' (Phoenix, 2024). This is true, but it's not very helpful for her anti-racist cause, given that white men are 'the greater preponderance' of the male population of the UK. Of course they outnumber Asian men. There are more of them. Moreover, as she herself said, '[m]ost of us who had worked in the area of prostitution knew that there has always been a racial and migrant dimension to pimping and exploitation' (Phoenix, 2024). Apart from the euphemism ('a racial and migrant dimension'), how is this different from what Keen is saying?

There is a genuine dilemma involved: how to acknowledge the extreme misogyny of Muslim culture without accepting the racism of the Right. As one commentator who objected to Phoenix' tweet accusing Keen of being a populist extremist (etc.), asked: 'how we are supposed to talk about Asian grooming gangs if even mentioning it is seen as racist?' (Phoenix, 2024). (Phoenix' response is lengthy but boils down to the partial truth that child sexual assault is not just a Muslim problem, while insisting that the ethnicity of these particular men—'Rotherham'—shouldn't be mentioned at all because the racist Right is saying the same thing). The dilemma is not resolved with hard-line stances on either side. Keen's accusers perceive her criticism of 'Muslim' culture as racist and an incitement to racist violence, while she perceives her accusers as hide-bound by leftist ideology.

My sympathy is with Keen's position, at least in part. Accusations of racism rely on terms defined by, for and about men. The male Left's 'anti-racism' rests on the unquestioned assumption that culture belongs to men, even though (as every feminist knows) it is mandated and expressed through the bodies of women. Admittedly, it is difficult to criticise the misogyny of minority cultures without being seen to be racist. But that's because anti-racist rhetoric focuses on supporting the men of those cultures



(while women, if they appear at all, function as the avatars of men's fantasies of domination). That focus on men is often justified, given that male domination divides men into categories of worth and worthlessness (as well as the sexes), and 'race' is one of the divisive tactics. But criticising any culture's treatment of women is to go beyond the Left's anti-racism as long as that 'anti-racism' remains focused on men and male interests.

Such 'anti-racism' obliterates feminism's concern for all women in its refusal to condemn a culture that explicitly and shamelessly dehumanises women by allowing them no autonomy whatsoever. I have heard it said that those practices are not genuine Islam and that may be true; and it is also true that Islam is *the* most persecuted religion on the planet, under siege everywhere, especially as it has taken the place of 'communism' as the favourite enemy of the US. But that doesn't excuse its treatment of females. It's true that child rape is not confined to 'Muslim' men, but happens everywhere in every culture (Patel, 2020; UK Government, 2020), wherever adult men can get access to children. Nonetheless, 'Muslim' culture's explicit and shameless dehumanisation of the female encourages men to rape; and while that same culture has attracted the racism of the wider society, that doesn't excuse the men for taking out their resentment on 'white' girls, the most powerless members of that society. It's not racist to say so.

For a manifesto with 362 signatories by a group calling themselves GC [Gender Critical] Anti Far Right, who are 'deeply disturbed that populist messages particularly targeting Muslims have gained traction among significant numbers of social media accounts associated with the gender critical movement' (without naming any of those accounts, or Keen who is not one of the signatories, and who was probably not asked to sign it), see: GC Anti Far Right, 2024.

### *Defending Keen*

Because of the obnoxiousness of some of the criticisms of Keen, some of her defenders have attributed less than honourable motives to the critics. Many of the commenters on Linehan's Substack blog (where he posted Ditung's tweet likening Keen to a cut-price right-wing woman) accused the critics of being envious (or 'jealous'). 'I suspect', said one commenter, 'that the "professional feminists" who say despicable things about KJK [Kellie-Jay Keen] are consumed with jealousy for all she has achieved and her burgeoning popularity' (Linehan, 2022). Other reasons suggested for the envy are that she's 'very attractive', 'incredibly charismatic' and 'a marketing genius'. Some commenters viewed Keen's critics as 'snobbish' and 'classist', that they 'look[ed] down [their] nose at "lesser women", at 'poor and working class women'. As one commenter noted, 'I can't think of any phrase that encapsulates looking down on someone as much as referring to them as a "poundshop" does' (Linehan, 2022).

But despite the childishness of some of the criticisms of Keen, the critics do genuinely believe that what Keen is saying is racist. But even the critics who sound reasonable are too reliant on the male Left's definition of 'racism' (which is by, for and about men and hence forbids criticism of men of 'racialised minorities'). They are also oblivious to Keen's motives, namely, her concern for what happens to women and girls. She not saying the same things as Tommy Robinson, as Phoenix alleges when she refers to 'the story that people like Tommy Robinson and KJK are telling

... their own extremist views about the history and legacy of migration in this country' (Phoenix, 2024). Or rather, to the extent that she is saying the same things, she is saying them from a different place entirely to that occupied by the extreme Right. Some of what she has said might be thoughtless or ill-advised, but she is not racist nor friendly towards right-wing thugs nor does she incite violence.

For an argument that 'it behoves gender-critical feminists to reject the proposition that a left/right division between gender-critical women is "good"', see: Brunskell-Evans, 2023;

for a scathing critique of the 'years-long campaign of defamation and hatred against Kellie-Jay Keen' by 'woke leftist feminists' and the 'legacy media' for her supposed right-wing views, arguing that such criticisms provided fuel for the murderous mob at the Let Women Speak rally in Auckland, see: Vigo, 2023).

### *Left-wing feminists and the Right*

As for the notion of 'working with the Right', it would appear to be unacceptable only if the connections are interpersonal (e.g. WoLF's relationships with the Heritage Foundation, Keen's supposed friendly relationships with actual people with right-wing views). There are many women who have had to publish their trans-criticism in right-wing media, including feminists whose commitment to the political Left is unswerving, and that has elicited no criticism of these women as right-wing. True, they are not working with actual people who hold right-wing views, but publishing in those outlets could lead to 'guilt-by-association' accusations (although to my knowledge, there haven't been any).

Julie Bindel, for example, has published in *The Spectator* (Bindel, 2020a, c), which has also published a number of other trans-critical articles.<sup>50</sup> Sarah Ditum's condemnation of the rape threats against J. K. Rowling originally appeared in the *Telegraph* (Ditum, 2020a), while *The Economist* has published trans-critical articles by Helen Joyce, as well as Kathleen Stock's criticism of transgender's attempt to change the concept of 'woman' to include men (Stock, 2018). Jennifer Bilek, whose extensive work exposing the sources of transgender's funding appears on her own blog (*The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour*), has published in *The Federalist* (a conservative online news magazine with a 'general distrust of the present tendency toward increasing interference by government')<sup>51</sup> (Bilek, 2018), in *First Things* ('America's most influential journal of religion and public life') (Bilek, 2020a), and in *The American Conservative* (Bilek, 2020b, c). The stories of five anonymous mothers (2019), desperately worried about their daughters' capture by the trans lobby, appeared in the Heritage Foundation's *Public Discourse*; and *Breitbart* referenced both 4<sup>th</sup> Wave Now and Bilek's work favourably for their criticism of transgender (Berry, 2019; Munro, 2018).

As Suzanne Moore pointed out to the editors at *The Guardian* when she resigned because of the way she had been treated for her stance on trans issues:

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<sup>50</sup> *The Spectator* is widely recognised to be politically conservative. The *Media Bias/Fact Check* site found them to be 'Right-Center biased based on story selection and editorial positions that moderately favour the right', and 'Mostly factual' in reporting rather than 'High' – <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/the-spectator-uk/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://thefederalist.com/2013/09/18/introducing-the-federalist/>

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My argument to my newspaper ... has always been if we don't have this discussion [about transgender] then the Right will, and indeed that has been the case. The *Spectator* and the *Times* have covered stories we haven't, and I have had to write what I wanted to in the *Telegraph* (Moore, 2020).

Feminists cannot look to the Left for support in the fight against transgender. The category of 'trans people' serves too important a function for a political Left in disarray as a result of the triumph of neo-liberalism with its demolition of the working-class in the 'developed' nations and its hegemonic control of a mass media that brooks no opposition. The Right, or certain aspects thereof, is the only mainstream political position prepared to challenge transgender, and feminists mounting the same challenge are going to find themselves allied with the Right in that sense in one way or another. Those alliances have always been strategic and temporary, and there is no evidence that those involved have been seduced into embracing right-wing values.

### *Conclusion*

It's true that there isn't a culture on earth that treats women as full human beings in our own right. But 'Muslim' culture (which may or may not be pure Islam, but which is certainly alive and well whatever it is called, and operating exactly as intended by giving evil men permission to deny females any human status at all) is overtly and shamelessly misogynist. A culture that coerces women to cover themselves up from head to toe, that requires police to bash, jail or murder them (and any man supporting them) if they do not conform (Gritten and Slow, 2022), that invented the 'honour killing' of women who don't conform, and that forces them to be under constant male surveillance, is a culture crying out for feminist resistance. This is Keen's reference point in her insistence that the gangs of men prostituting girls are 'Muslim'. As she herself said about seven-year-olds wearing hijab (in the interview with Meghan Murphy):

I was apparently 'Islamophobic' because I said I didn't think little girls at seven should be wearing hijab. I can't imagine a feminist position that doesn't think little girls being told to cover their [...] hair, and the thinking behind that is that hair is something that you should keep covered, and it's part of being modest, and it's a sexual thing, so therefore, if you cover little girls, you're basically saying that they're sexual. I can't possibly ever agree with that. I think it's disgusting (42.58).<sup>52</sup>

What Keen has been saying is neither racist nor right-wing, as a more careful feminist reading of what she said shows (not to mention a modicum of sisterhood). She is not motivated by bigotry, nor by the violent, enraged resentment displayed by right-wing male thugs. She is motivated by a concern for girls and women. In their eagerness to prove their anti-racist credentials, defined by, for and about men, her critics have forgotten their feminism. Criticising 'Muslim', or any other 'minority' culture, for the way it dehumanises females is not 'racist'. To call such a concern 'racist', or even right-wing, is to abandon one of feminism's basic principles, namely, that feminism is for *all* women wherever male supremacy violates the human status of females. The Left's male-centred 'anti-racism' is a barrier to criticising woman-hating practices that

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.feministcurrent.com/2019/01/24/podcast-posie-parker-standing-for-women/>

occur in ‘minoritised communities’, and prevents the exposure of the actions of subordinated men taking out their humiliation on helpless females.

*In conclusion, a qualification*

Of course, finding common cause with the political Right does have its limits from a feminist standpoint, indeed from any standpoint that values human well-being. I’ve heard it said that there are some ‘gender critical feminists’ in the US who announced that they were going to vote for Trump because he has voiced opposition to transgender. But that violates one of feminism’s basic principles for the protection of women—namely, not supporting violent, depraved men—not to mention the danger to the US nation and the rest of the world of another Trump presidency. This kind of connection with the Right is, as Esmée Streachait said, catastrophically stupid.

And yet, Trump’s voiced opposition to transgender has seduced Keen into expressing glee at his election. In a FaceBook post shortly after the election, she is depicted swaying in time to the song, ‘What a day this has been. What a rare mood I’m in. Why, it’s almost like being in love’. She goes on to say: ‘So to the Americans watching: congratulations, you finally have someone in government who’s doing the right things’.<sup>53</sup> She also posted a YouTube video where she said:

There are feminists at the moment ([sotto voce] Julie Bindel) saying things like “I can’t believe people voted for a rapist”. What we voted for Julie, and I know this is difficult for you to understand because you never fully grasped the fucking *argument*. What women have voted for is no more *rapists* in women’s prisons. They haven’t voted for Harris or Trump, and maybe some of them have, but many of the women haven’t said “Do you know what, I would like to marry Tump, I’d like to date him, I think he should date my kids, I wanna move in with him, I want him to kind of govern every single thought I’ve ever had”. They said “I’m gonna vote for the person who’s going to get those rapists out of women’s prisons. I’m going to vote for the person who said that they don’t think it’s all right to *surgically alter* children, to *steal* their fertility”. That’s what they voted for.<sup>54</sup>

But she was not the only feminist-aligned<sup>55</sup> woman to express support for a Trump presidency. Meghan Murphy, whose blog *Feminist Current* has been criticising transgender for years, announced her intention to vote for him shortly before the 2024 election (Murphy, 2023). Although she is Canadian, she is eligible to vote in US elections because she has dual citizenship, her mother being a US citizen. ‘I’ve come to decide’, she said, ‘the best option for America, for women, for children and for the working class is a Trump presidency’. But as Katherine Acosta pointed out, Murphy is simply wrong about this. Trump’s racism, especially his hatred of immigrants, and his misogyny are well-documented (Acosta, 2024); and while it is true that Trump has tapped into people’s dissatisfaction with unemployment and low wage rates, the 60 or more lawsuits, ‘along with hundreds of liens, judgments, and other government

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/reel/531998909791780>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/JhFGIgDH3YE>

<sup>55</sup> Keen had explicitly denied she’s ‘a feminist’, but her work challenging transgender is feminist nonetheless.

filings’, accusing him of failing to pay workers, indicates that he is not a friend of the working class either (Reilly, 2016).

It’s a pity that these two women (among others) could be so misled about political reality, despite their perceptiveness and courage in publicly and consistently resisting the transgender mandate. Yet it’s possibly another consequence of that very mandate, which is so powerful and so violent that it demands a focus that overrides everything else. But the feminist struggle requires a focus that is alert to any and every manifestation of male supremacy. Focusing on a single issue is important when that issue is as powerful, all-pervasive and misogynist as transgender is, and as central to the backlash against feminism. But transgender is only one manifestation of a much wider phenomenon. Finding mainstream support for the struggle against transgender needs to remain firmly grounded in feminist principles, as well as in some awareness of the nature of that wider system of male supremacy that feminism is opposing. Donald Trump and his cohorts violate feminist principles on every dimension except transgenderism; and even there, the motives are unlikely to be feminist ones.

Another example of a connection with the Right that goes too far is Kathleen Stock’s acceptance of a position as a Founding Faculty Fellow with the nascent University of Austin Texas (UATX) (Swerling, 2021), many of whose founding members are politically right-wing. The problem is that her association with them is open-ended and not confined to the transgender issue. Stock was formerly a professor of philosophy at Sussex University. She had been so badly harassed for her trans-critical views—she is the author of the trans-critical *Material Girls*—that she resigned from her post and left the university. Her decision to join UATX was based on their claims to be fighting against the cancel culture to which she herself had been so savagely subjected.

In November 2021, she tweeted that she was

[d]elighted to be invited to be a Founding Faculty Fellow of the University of Austin, a new initiative announced today by Bari Weiss, alongside several other stellar individuals. I accepted with alacrity. It’s an exciting looking project, focused on free inquiry ... PS I should add to avoid confusion—this doesn’t mean I’m moving to Austin. And it’s not a full-time role. Just getting involved in various ways from a UK base (Palmer, 2021)

The advance publicity for this new university sounds good. UATX was described in the *Daily Mail* as a ‘Who’s Who of canceled academics, journalists and entrepreneurs’ who were getting together to challenge ‘the oppressive wokeness on college campuses’ by establishing their own university (Alexander, 2021). At least one feminist commentator had nothing but praise for Stock’s participation in the new venture (Phillimore, 2021). Moreover, the founders’ analysis of what’s wrong with universities resonates with the experience of those of us aghast at what has happened to the higher education sector under the influence of neo-liberal funding regimes that have subordinated intellectual endeavour to profit. ‘Something is rotten in the state of academia’, said one of them, Niall Ferguson,

Above all, [there is] the erosion of academic freedom and the ascendancy of an illiberal “successor ideology” known to its critics as wokeism, which manifests itself as career-ending “cancelations” and speaker disinvitations,

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but less visibly generates a pervasive climate of anxiety and self-censorship' (Ferguson, 2021)

Another of the founders, Pano Kanelos, said, 'We can't wait for universities to fix themselves, so we're starting a new one'. '[A]n increasing proportion of tuition dollars are spent on administration rather than instruction', he said, and 'faculty are being treated like thought criminals'. As one example, he gave Stock's treatment at the University of Sussex, where 'mobs threatened her over her research on sex and gender'. The 'core purpose' of a university, according to Kanelos, is 'the intrepid pursuit of truth' (Kanelos, 2021).

However, there are signs that UATX might not be very accommodating to feminist principles, given that many of its founding members are well-entrenched in the malestream reality feminism is opposing. Moreover, their opposition to 'career-ending cancelations' might depend on whose career it is. At least one of the founders, Bari Weiss, has been involved in censorship campaigns against those she disagrees with (see below).

One example of where UATX's interests lie can be found in their response to one of their 'Frequently asked questions'. The question is 'Why Austin?' and the answer is 'If it's good enough for Elon Musk and Joe Rogan, it's good enough for us'.<sup>56</sup> The implication is that these are men UATX's founders admire. But why? Both are inordinately wealthy and both moved to Austin (from California) to avoid paying tax. (Texas has zero income tax) (Bloomberg, 2021; Donofrio, 2021). Wealth and tax avoidance are not admirable traits, and neither of them is likely to be compatible with any 'intrepid pursuit of truth' (whatever that might be). They are certainly incompatible with feminism.

Some of UATX's founding members have already demonstrated, if not a shaky relationship to the truth, then at least views that evoke reasonable disagreement. There's Larry Summers, with his misogynist opinion that women are less capable than men of succeeding in maths and science, and that the difference is biological (Goldenberg, 2005), an opinion he has not retracted (as far as I know), despite the fact that it's been shown to be false (e.g. Hill et al, 2012). There's Niall Ferguson, supporter of the war in Iraq and cheerleader for the British Empire (Manjoo, 2021). There's Andrew Sullivan who believes in 'subtle, genetic bell-curve differences in intelligence between what we identify as race' (Sullivan, 2007).<sup>57</sup> There's David Mamet, famous playwright, screenwriter and film-maker, exemplar of toxic masculinity (Bradshaw, 2017), and supporter of Trump whom he regards as a 'great president' (Ng, 2020).

Bari Weiss is a leading light among the founders of the new university. (Kanelos posted his introduction to UATX on her Substack website). She was involved in activism against Arab and Muslim professors at Columbia, whom she falsely accused of bullying Jewish students; and she does her best to silence any criticism of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. She was part of the campaign to destroy the reputation of Nadia Abu El-Haj, author of a book that questioned the claims of Israeli

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<sup>56</sup> <https://www.uaustin.org/faq>

<sup>57</sup> The problem with Sullivan's position, and that of the scientists he cites in support, is not just that they're wrong. The problem is that they even ask the question in the first place.

anthropologists that archaeological findings justified the state of Israel. In an article in the Israeli daily, *Haaretz*, Weiss claimed that her criticism of Abu El-Haj's book was 'about the nature of truth' and that the facts were on her side. However, she didn't challenge Abu El-Haj's facts, or even mention them. Writing about the *New York Times*' hiring of Weiss as one of their Op Ed page columnists, Glenn Greenwald summed up her position thus: 'Weiss now postures as some sort of champion of free thought on college campuses. Yet her whole career was literally built on ugly campaigns to attack, stigmatize, and punish Arab professors who criticize Israel' (Greenwald, 2017; Weiss, 2007. See also: Greenwald 2018).

Then there's UATX's source of funding, Cicero Research.<sup>58</sup> This is part of the Cicero Institute, one of whose main aims is to privatise public assets: 'recommending free-market based solutions to public policy issues'.<sup>59</sup> It also surreptitiously appeals to 'States' rights', as the political Right has done throughout the nation's history: 'Regardless of what is going on in Washington, states have courageous leaders who welcome entrepreneurial policies and stand up for our country's founding principles'.<sup>60</sup> The doctrine of 'States' rights' is an ideological justification for racism and capitalist economic domination. It demands the decentralisation of governmental powers whereby each State is given precedence over the authority of the federal government. It was incorporated into the US Constitution as a compromise with both the slave-owning States of the South, and the business-owners in the northern States whose power was State-based. It was originally a thinly-disguised defence of an economy based on slavery, and it also justified the power base of economic domination within the US. The 'States' rights' system has played a large part in the policies that created the terrible US 'welfare' system with its attendant racism (Piven and Cloward, 1993: 442-3). In its commitment to economic domination, the Cicero Institute is clearly right-wing. UATX's boast, that it 'will be fiercely independent—financially, intellectually, and politically',<sup>61</sup> is unlikely to be true. It is not independent of its funding body, and that organisation is unlikely to view favourably anything that challenges current capitalist, and hence right-wing, values.

Joe Lonsdale, another founding member of UATX, is chairman of the Cicero Institute's board (Goforth, 2021). He is also co-founder of Palantir, a firm that mines electronic data and sells it. As one commentator noted, Palantir 'has ways to track us that make Cambridge Analytica's Facebook-mining seem quaint, including surveillance techniques that are already being used by police departments and government agencies such as ICE' (Millard, 2018). ICE is the Immigration and Customs Enforcement department, notorious for its enforcement of the Trump administration's policy of separating the children of undocumented immigrants from their parents. Palantir was initially funded by the CIA and is now used by the FBI and NSA in the 'war against terrorism' (Daniel, 2021).

It's not clear why Stock would want to join this mob. Yes, they're opposed to 'cancel culture' (rhetorically speaking), but I wonder if that single issue is sufficient to counter

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<sup>58</sup> <https://www.uaustin.org/faq>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/86-1325445>

<sup>60</sup> <https://ciceroinstitute.org/about/>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.uaustin.org/our-principles>

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all the other issues that Stock herself surely does not agree with: the worship of wealth and of the craftiness of the men who dodge their obligations to society; the Zionism that excuses and justifies the Israeli state's ousting and massacring of the Palestinian people; the 'States' rights' ideology born in slavery and currently justifying economic domination, including a scandalous 'welfare' system that maintains abysmal levels of poverty in the world's richest nation; the mining of private data to be used for corporate purposes; and the 'war against terrorism', that excuse used by the degenerate regime of US governance to justify pouring public money into the private pockets of arms manufacturers. While Stock's feminism might be secure enough to resist such hegemonic meanings and values, why would she want to be associated with them?

It might be argued that Stock's connection with UATX is not all that different from WoLF's connection with the Heritage Foundation, given that UATX' affiliations are pretty much the same as the Heritage Foundation's. But that's not really the issue here. There's no doubt that both are right-wing. What is at issue is the nature of the connection being made. For WoLF, that connection was limited to the transgender issue, whereas Stock's connection is open-ended. She may find that she can't work with UATX after all, but as things stand at the moment, she seems quite happy with the arrangement.

Murphy, despite her turn to Trump, had earlier made a statement on her blog of her changed attitude towards the Left/Right distinction, with which I largely agree, without agreeing that that position leads to support of Trump:

I want to acknowledge some things I once believed, but have changed my mind about. I no longer believe leftist positions are necessarily most right or most ethical. I no longer believe everyone on the right is wrong about everything. I do not believe all those on the right necessarily have ill intentions, and suspect that many, like those on the left, believe they are working towards a better world. I don't believe that it's productive to position everyone who disagrees with the left as "right wing," and therefore an enemy. I regret refusing to engage with or trying to understand those who are called "right wing" or "free speakers," flat out. I think this is the wrong approach. I think it is, in fact, very important that we engage with those we may disagree with on various issues, and don't think it serves us to ignore, mock, or dismiss people because they don't share our exact political ideology. I am genuinely interested in speaking with people I may disagree with on various issues and am open to the possibility that we may agree on some ideas and not others. I think we should, as leftists and feminists, challenge and question our own ideas and mantras, rather than become too comfortable in the echo chamber (Murphy, 2018).

The problem is that the distinction between Left and Right tends to be drawn too absolutely. The Left holds that nothing emanating from a right-wing source is to be trusted, while agreement with something originating from the Right seems to mean ignoring Leftist insights (as Murphy does), or explicitly rejecting the Left (as Keen does, or says she does). But within feminism, the distinction between Left and Right is not as hard and fast as the traditional Left would have us believe, or even that it makes any sense at all when it comes to the liberation of women from male supremacist oppression. Finding common cause with (some aspects of) the Right doesn't have to mean abandoning those aspects of the Left that accord with feminist



principles. It does require caution though, and extreme care that those principles are not compromised. The old saying about ‘a long spoon’ comes to mind.

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