

INTRODUCTION

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What can I say? I find myself introducing another truly fascinating issue, with articles ranging broadly across space and time. This is the final issue under my editorship. There have been many ups and downs during the past few years, but contributions have gradually increased in quality and diversity and—if I may be permitted to say this—*JRV* issues have become progressively more *interesting*. I am happy to say that the new co-editors, Michael Jerryson and Margo Kitts, continue to develop the *Journal of Religion and Violence* in this same direction.

In the first article, “The Sheiks of Sedition: Father Prophet Mohammed Bey, Mother Jesus Rosie Bey, and Kansas City’s Moors (1933–1945),” Fathie Ali Abdat examines the development of the Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA), a black American Islamic religious organisation from 1933 to 1945, a period largely ignored by prior researchers. Abdat analyses how the leaders of the Kansas City Moors coped with the organisation’s fissiparous tendencies and reframed Prophet Noble Drew Ali’s Black Asiatic Orientalist doctrines in terms of the subversive socio-political culture of the 1930s and 1940s. In the process, both the Father Prophet Mohammed Bey and Mother Jesus Rosie Bey developed an early form of black theology and black power.

Despite decades of discussion, we have not managed to develop a generally accepted definition of the term “holy war.” As discussed in Alexander Pierre Bronisch’s “On the Use and Definition of the Term ‘Holy War’: The Visigothic and Asturian-Leonese Examples,” attempts to develop a definition can be classified into five groups: 1. the understanding of “holy war” as a war in which religion has the function of a specific cause; 2. critics of this position who fail to give their own concise definition of “holy war”; 3. those who see holy wars from the perspective of just war theory; 4. others who define “holy war” as a war fought in the service of the Papacy; and, finally, 5. all those who seem to assume that a consensus about the meaning of this

term already exists. In this article, the author's definition, elaborated in the context of war in medieval Spain, is presented.

In "The Reasonable Citizen/The Unreasonable Scapegoat," Nathan Colborne argues that the modern liberal state has not escaped the organized violence of the scapegoat mechanism as described by Rene Girard, and that liberal theory, at least in its Rawlsian form, obscures this mechanism rather than repudiating it. The clearest example of this is Rawls' attempt to distinguish between reasonable and unreasonable comprehensive doctrines in order to exclude the latter from contributing to an overlapping consensus which, according to Rawls, is the basis of liberal political procedures. Girard's account of the scapegoat mechanism can help us understand the underlying logic of this distinction and the political purpose it serves.

Sweden is known for its tolerance and its liberal policies. Yet, 60 percent of Sweden's mosques and Islamic centers have been subjected to threats, vandalism, or arson. In 2014, the Sweden Democrats, a proto-fascist nationalist party, gained close to 13 percent of the national vote after a fervent anti-Muslim campaign. "What's Love Got to Do with It? Ultrnationalism, Islamophobia, and Hate Crime in Sweden" is based on fieldwork, surveys, and open-ended interviews with one hundred Muslim citizens and forty anti-Muslim activists, as well as reviewing anti-Muslim calls to arms online. In this study, Mattias Gardell addresses the surge of anti-Muslim hate crime in Sweden, exploring the role of violence in the proto-fascist attempt to 'recreate' a homogenous nation that never existed. While the literature on ultranationalist-inspired hate crime typically see the perpetrators as angry white men, the nationalists interviewed in this study claimed to act out of love, not hate.

In "Christ, Batman, and Girard: A Philosophical Perspective on Self-Sacrifice," Lorenzo Magnani and Tommaso Bertolotti offer a non-trivial reflection on the violence embedded in self-sacrifice. They suggest a definition of violence which does not *make* self-sacrifice necessarily violent, but which rather aims at being consistent with the common sense conception of sacrifice as actually violent. The *exemplar* of self-sacrifice in the Western tradition is Jesus Christ's. The self-sacrifice committed by God's own *lógos* is the epitome of sacrifice as *sacrificium intellectus*, and therefore the highest gradient of intellectual violence. The second "mirror" to reflect on the violence of self-sacrifice will be the sacrifice enacted by Batman and the extent to which the sacrifice of intellect is at play when kenotic self-sacrifice and scapegoating processes become hard to distinguish from one another.

Human lives and bodies become transformed into sacred offerings during sacrificial rites. We can recognize these transformative actions in the archaeological record based on the location of human burials—often in association with sacred spaces—and the evidence of peri-mortem manipulation of the

bodies. In “The Body Sacrificed: A Bioarchaeological Analysis of Ritual Violence in Ancient Túcume, Peru,” J. Marla Toyne describes and discusses the different ways in which human bodies have been manipulated in ancient Andean rites of human sacrifice as specific death rituals, outside of traditional or normative mortuary practices. She introduces the concept of the “body sacrificed” as a means through which to identify particular ritual significance in the treatment of these special sacred offerings.