

# Right-Wing Group Characteristics and Ideology

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## INTRODUCTION

Following the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center attack, our national attention was focused on Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, and other radical Islamic extremists. On April 19, 1995 the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed by a native-born white male United States citizen who harbored right-wing extremist beliefs. While our collective consciousness prioritizes radical Islamists as the preeminent threat, should individuals and groups that encompass the radical right be viewed as having a reduced capacity to perform acts of terrorism? What future trends will be adopted by the radical right? How could these trends lead to an escalation of the threat posed by right-wing extremists? What can be done to reduce the threat of terrorism perpetrated by right-wing adherents? Before offering an answer to these questions, we should establish a knowledge baseline to understand the history, key figures, and beliefs of right-wing extremist groups in the United States.

The specific ideology of right-wing extremism is frequently difficult to define because adherents have multiple and frequently simultaneous memberships in the array of right-wing groups. Many people involved in right-wing groups have come from other right-wing organizations and will likely move on to other groups as their beliefs change.<sup>1</sup>

## CHRISTIAN IDENTITY MOVEMENT

To understand Christian Identity is to understand a core feature of right-wing extremism. While some right-wing groups and individuals do not embrace the ideas of the Christian Identity movement,<sup>2</sup> it has become a prominent religious belief for many right-wing extremists.

### Theology

According to David Brannan in “Left- and Right-wing Political Terrorism,” a chapter in *The Politics of Terrorism*, Christian Identity is comprised of two separate theological ideas. The first and most prevalent form of Christian Identity is referred to as “seed-line” theology. In “seed-line” theology, Jews are depicted as the actual offspring of the Devil (Lucifer) and Eve. All non-whites, according to ‘seed-line’ theology, are considered to be the “beasts in the field,” a reference to the biblical passage contained in Genesis 1:24. Right-wing extremists who embrace “seed-line” Christian Identity theology possess core beliefs to justify death, enslavement, or expulsion of all non-whites from the country.<sup>3</sup>

The British-Israel version of Christian Identity is the second theological belief embraced by right-wing extremists. According to Brannan, British-Israel followers believe Aryans, rather than the Jews, are God’s chosen people. True Israel is actually comprised of the Anglo-Saxon, British, Scandinavian, and

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Germanic peoples, not Semitic or Ashkenazi Jews.<sup>4</sup> Pete Peters, the pastor of the LaPorte Church of Christ in Colorado preaches British-Israel Christian Identity theology. Part of Peters' message is that Jews are not God's chosen people and true Israelites are the Celtic, Anglo Saxon, Scandinavian, Germanic, and kindred people. Peters claims these true Israelites "can be identified Biblically, historically, and archeologically."<sup>5</sup> Bertrand Comparet, an earlier figure associated with the formative years of Christian Identity, in his essay *Christian Identity: What is It?* provides an account of Adam's people. Comparet notes the name Adam, in Hebrew, refers to being able to "show blood in the face; to be fair; rosy cheeked; to be ruddy; and to be able to blush or flush."<sup>6</sup> This description fits the true Israelites of British-Israel theology.

Both "seed-line" and British-Israel Christian Identity adherents refer to information contained in *The Thirteenth Tribe* by Arthur Koestler to support their views of modern day Jews. Koestler claims the majority of Jews surviving the holocaust were of eastern European descent, primarily the Khazar Empire.<sup>7</sup> The Khazar Empire was a Jewish state comprised mostly of Turks, prominent between the seventh and tenth centuries. It was located in eastern Europe and controlled a vital area between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea.<sup>8</sup> After the destruction of their empire, Khazar tribes and communities were believed to have migrated to Russia and Poland, where the largest populations of Jews were located during the beginning of the Modern Age. According to Koestler, this migration has led many historians to speculate that a majority of the Jews in the world today may not be of Semitic origin; they may actually be of Khazar ancestry.<sup>9</sup>

### **Christian Identity History**

During the middle part of the nineteenth century, the idea of British-Israelism became a movement as a result of the works of John Wilson. His book, *Lectures of Our Israelitish Origin*, his speeches, and other writings appealed to the British middle class.<sup>10</sup>

According to James Aho in *The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriotism*, British-Israelism was imported to Canada and then passed on to the United States through two points of entry. First, in 1928, Howard Rand of Maine started spreading the British-Israel message through his newsletter, the *Kingdom Message*. In 1930, Rand met William J. Cameron, the editor of Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent*, and eventually they formed the Anglo-Saxon Federation of America.<sup>11</sup> The *Dearborn Independent* was a very anti-Jewish publication and was later used as the basis of Henry Ford's book *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*.<sup>12</sup>

The other location for the export of the British-Israel movement to the United States was Vancouver, British Columbia, which influenced followers in Washington and Oregon. A British-Israel group in Vancouver influenced the emergence of Christian Identity through its participation in a series of conferences held in the western United States from 1937 through 1947. The Vancouver group spread and supported information that fostered the adoption of apocalyptic, conspiratorial, and anti-Semitic beliefs.<sup>13</sup>

According to Aho, the connection between Christian Identity and blatant racism could be partly attributed to fundamentalist Protestants from the Midwest Bible Belt and southern states who were fervent vocal proponents of the movement that would eventually become Christian Identity. These individuals included James Lovell, a Texas Baptist; Wesley Swift, an Alabama Methodist; Joe Jeffers, an Alabama Baptist; and Herbert Armstrong, an Iowa Adventist.<sup>14</sup> While Cameron is given credit for being a primary influence in the early development of Christian Identity, Californians Wesley Swift, Bertrand Comparet, and William Porter Gale were also key figures in the early development of Christian Identity in the United States.<sup>15</sup>

Gerald L. K. Smith was a notable national figure in the development of Identity doctrine. Smith was a Church of Christ minister who was an associate of Louisiana political kingpin Huey Long. Characterized as a bombastic and charismatic orator, his extreme ego and political naiveté became apparent (and detrimental) during the unsuccessful presidential campaign of William Lemke. Smith became a friend of Henry Ford's in the late 1930s and received funding from the automobile industry icon for a radio broadcast series. Smith credits Ford for showing him the connection between Judaism and Communism. This focus on the denunciation of both Jews and communism was a prevalent theme during speaking engagements and in his mail order ministry, two businesses that made Smith a millionaire.<sup>16</sup> After World War II, Smith moved to Los Angeles where he became affiliated with anti-Semitic and white supremacists in Southern California. Smith's high profile public appearances included anti-Semitic and racist rhetoric that resulted in the mobilization of opposition minority and Jewish communities in the Los Angeles area.<sup>17</sup>

Wesley Swift, who had been affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the early 1940s,<sup>18</sup> may have been at least one early source of the Identity hermeneutic that furthered "seed-line" Identity theology. Kaplan provides the following quote in *Radical Religion in America* to indicate how Smith's Identity beliefs were influenced by Swift: "He opened the Bible and demonstrated to me with proper text that Christ's worst enemies were not God's chosen people. He identified the 'true Israel' which gave us the Messiah...He demonstrated that the crucifiers of Christ were apostates, sons of Satan, and the seed of Cain."<sup>19</sup>

In addition to Gerald L. K. Smith, Wesley Swift was affiliated with several notable figures influential in the rise of Christian Identity after World War II. Included in this group were Bertrand Comparet, William Gale, and Richard Butler. Comparet was a Stanford educated lawyer and had held the position of deputy district attorney in San Diego. He was an active Christian Identity preacher and was a close associate of Smith. Comparet successfully defended Smith during a 1955 libel suit.<sup>20</sup>

Gale was a former Army lieutenant colonel during World War II who frequently embellished his war record.<sup>21</sup> He was the founder of the Posse Comitatus, a movement he outlined in a 1971 article published in the *Identity Newsletter*. Posse Comitatus was founded on the belief that, constitutionally, no governmental body higher than the county level is legitimate.<sup>22</sup> Gale and his fellow Posse Comitatus followers' refusal to acknowledge state and federal governmental authority resulted in legal complications with the Internal Revenue

Service on tax-related criminal charges. At the time of his death in April 1988, Gale was appealing a 1987 conviction for conspiracy to threaten a judge and an IRS agent. While he preached his anti-Semitic and racial bigotry, Gale kept an enormous secret from his Christian Identity associates: his father was a Jew. The central premise of his Christian Identity beliefs and ministry were based on a complete denial of his heritage.<sup>23</sup>

Posse Comitatus members were responsible for several acts of violence in the Northwest and Midwest during the 1980s. An example of this violence was the 1983 shootout between Gordon Kahl and federal marshals. Kahl, an icon of the radical right and a member of the North Dakota Posse Comitatus, was killed during the incident. Many of the people who later participated in the militia movement were believed to have been involved in the Posse Comitatus groups of this time period.<sup>24</sup> Posse Comitatus members seized an opportunity to spread their message to distressed farmers during the 1980s farm crisis.

Right-wing religious rhetoric may appeal to many people for reasons other than religion. *American Terrorist* by Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck mentions Timothy McVeigh's interest a church near Yellowstone National Park that was involved in stockpiling food and munitions, but their "New Age religious ways failed to trip his trigger." McVeigh was not a believer in organized religion. Instead, he thought natural law guided the universe through a higher power using an internalized method to instill right and wrong in a person.<sup>25</sup> Yet McVeigh attempted to contact Andreas Strassmeir, a German national believed to be staying at the Christian Identity community in Elohim City, Oklahoma, seeking a safe haven after the bombing. McVeigh had met Strassmeir at a gun show. He also attempted to call a representative of the National Alliance to arrange refuge. Neo-Nazi William Pierce, author of *The Turner Diaries*, was the head of the National Alliance.<sup>26</sup> Although he contacted these two groups to seek assistance with escape and sanctuary, McVeigh should not be characterized as a Christian Identity follower or a neo-Nazi.

Richard Butler, a former engineer for Lockheed, had been a member of Swift's California church. Butler moved to Idaho in 1973 and started the Church of Jesus Christ Christian in Coeur d' Alene. His most notable political right-wing activity paralleling the Christian Identity movement was the establishment of the Aryan Nations.<sup>27</sup> Aryan Nations served as a consolidator of right-wing groups, including those who followed Christian Identity doctrine and those who did not follow the movement. Bruce Hoffmann in *Inside Terrorism* describes the Aryan Nations as being "an extremist, anti-Semitic, neo-Nazi group of white supremacists, survivalist and militant tax resisters..."<sup>28</sup> Aryan Nations members were involved in a series of violent acts beginning in the 1980s. These acts included the killing of a Denver, Colorado, Jewish radio talk show host by an Aryan Nations splinter group known as The Order. Members of The Order also committed several armed robberies and bombings during its reign of terror. Butler died in 2004, but not before he saw his Aryan Nations organization financially decimated by a civil judgment.<sup>29</sup> Although Richard Butler's demise appears to have resulted in further fragmentation of the national leadership of the Christian Identity movement, the danger posed by the overall goal of its followers – to establish a racially pure white Aryan country – continues to be a matter of concern.

According to a *CNN.com* article by Henry Schuster, Butler's Aryan Nations successor, August Kries, has offered to form an alliance with al Qaeda. The motive behind the offer is based on common enemies shared by the two extremist groups – the United States government and the Jews. Christian Identity adherents might view involvement with extremist Muslims of Middle Eastern origins as contrary to their core beliefs; Kries dismisses the viewing of al Qaeda members as “mud people” as being “old school racism.” He provided the following reassurance to al Qaeda should they become interested in forming an alliance: “the cells are out here and they are already in place. They might not be cells of Islamic people, but they are here and they are ready to fight.”<sup>30</sup>

Phineas, a priest mentioned in the Old Testament, has inspired the use of violence in the name of God by a very secretive group of right-wing activists who are Christian Identity followers. According to Hoffman, punishing such violators of divine edicts as homosexuals, inter-racial married couples, and abortionists is the mission of the Phineas Priests. Ending the federal banking system is another divine duty accepted by the Phineas Priests.<sup>31</sup> With the decline of the Aryan Nations, the Phineas Priests have become more prevalent. Phineas Priests are not believed to be an organized group; rather, they appear to be a collection of several individual right-wing extremists who have committed violent crimes in the name of God.<sup>32</sup> In an August 4, 2005 posting on the Aryan Nations website, Pastor Jay Foster described two entities that form the Aryan Nations organization. First is the Aryan Nations proper, which accepts people who may not be religious, but are still attracted to the group because of their “views and systems.” The second entity is the biblical wing of the organization, known as the Tabernacles of the Phineas Priesthood.<sup>33</sup> Will the Tabernacles of the Phineas Priesthood actually commit acts of violence in the name of God, as their name implies? The Christian Identity beliefs of its members make potential terrorist acts a constant possibility.

Christian Identity offers devotees explanations for their present deficiencies and reassuring interpretations of the past. The past is described as glorious prior to the theft of their God-given birthright by the evil Jews. As for the future, Christian Identity provides assurances of happiness and global supremacy. Survival in the future is accomplished by the grace of God, through the use of Christian Identity followers' intellect and – alternatively – through the availability of stockpiled food and weaponry.<sup>34</sup>

## MILITIAS

The militia movement has evolved during the past three decades, redefining its purposes, ideology, and appeal to future members. Consistent themes include a distrust of the federal government and a belief that citizens will be disarmed by the government. The attraction of the militia movement to prospective members has varied as militias adapt their ideology to address emerging issues.

Militias are part of the informal patriot movement that, according to Matthew Zook, emerged from the challenges (created by the civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s) to the “dominant social and economic systems for regulating race and gender relations.”<sup>35</sup> Chip Berlet in *Militia Nation* expands this view of militias when he suggests that militias are a social byproduct of “economic hardship and the partial erosion of traditional structures of white

male heterosexual privilege.” He mentions two stresses associated with the “right-wing populist revolt” for which militia members are concerned: first is the stress of the genuine economic suffering that resulted from global restructuring; the second type of stress stemmed from outrage regarding the societal gains achieved by oppressed groups in the United States.<sup>36</sup>

According to a study of threats and reactive mobilizations by Van Dyke and Soule, the increase in the organization of patriot and militia groups is related to economic downturns. These economic hard times resulted in the loss of agricultural and manufacturing jobs.<sup>37</sup>

The loss of land and the heritage of many farmers and ranchers resulted in what rural counselor Glen Wallace referred to in his congressional committee testimony as “community depression.” The symptoms of the community depression observed by Wallace are similar to an individual with chronic long-term depression.<sup>38</sup> One of the escape mechanisms for the chronic stress experienced by farmers exhibiting manifestations of depression or psychosis is an outward projection of anger. These individuals want to make those whom they hold responsible feel the pain of the farmers. In the rural crisis of the 1980s, these outward expressions of anger resulted in the murders of bankers and federal lending agents.<sup>39</sup> Wallace acknowledged the violent reaction to the economic crisis in rural America when he stated: “You can’t treat human beings in a society the way rural people have been treated without them organizing and fighting back.” Involvement in antigovernment right-wing groups became another means for rural Americans to outwardly fight back.<sup>40</sup>

Societal gains by historically oppressed groups, the second area of stress mentioned by Beret, result in the displeasure expressed by many in the patriot movement with regard to unjust advantages extended to minorities and women, specifically nonwhites. Affirmative action programs have become a contentious subject of discourse. Conspiracy theories fueled the anger generated by the societal and economic issues. One tenet of conspiracy theories, mentioned by Beret, is the description of two types of people: parasites and producers. Parasites are viewed by the conspiracy theorist as being at the top and bottom levels of society. The top level contains the corrupt governmental officials and wealthy manipulators of the banks and currency. At the bottom are the aimless, “slacker” parasites who sponge off the hard-working middle class by accepting public assistance. In the middle are the producers, a reflection of the person who typically embraces conspiracy theories. A belief that those at the bottom are mostly blacks and Hispanics injects a racial element into these theories, though in reality welfare and other government relief programs are mostly utilized by whites.<sup>41</sup>

Mark Pitcavage in *Camouflage and Conspiracy: The Militia Movement from Ruby Ridge to Y2K*, attributes the rise of participation in militia groups to a variety of incidents that occurred during the 1990s. Included in these events were the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Brady Bill, the assault rifle ban, the riots in the Los Angeles area after the Rodney King verdict, the presidential election of Bill Clinton, the 1992 Ruby Ridge shootout, and the 1993 Branch Davidian standoff in Waco, Texas.<sup>42</sup> According to the 1999 congressional testimony of former FBI Director Louis Freeh, “most of

the militia movement has no racial overtones and does not espouse bigotry; there are some black and Jewish militia members.” While many militia members are not law violators, the presence of Christian Identity followers and individuals who embrace other hate beliefs is an emerging problem.<sup>43</sup>

Militia groups vary in some of their beliefs and priorities, but the preservation of their right to possess and own firearms is universally regarded as the most important issue. Militias view firearms ownership as a means to safeguard against government totalitarianism. Many militia members view, as fact, conspiracy theories based on scenarios where the federal government increases its power gradually and confiscates firearms. Some members believe New World Order conspiracy theories that foreign troops are secretly stationed in the country or staged for an eminent invasion sanctioned by the United Nations.<sup>44</sup>

Timothy McVeigh was not raised on a farm, but his anti-government sentiments could have been partially formed by the disappearance of industrial jobs commonly available to his father’s generation. Many of these jobs were lost due to international trade agreements and global economics.<sup>45</sup> His right-wing beliefs were something McVeigh had in common with militia members and other patriot groups. A significant belief opposed the government regulation of the right to own firearms. According to Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck in *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, McVeigh belonged to the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) for one year while serving in the U.S. Army. McVeigh determined the Klan’s main emphasis was on racism, while his concern was gun ownership rights and patriotism.<sup>46</sup> McVeigh believed politicians had the power to set their own salaries and were able to lavishly reward themselves in violation of the trust the public placed in them. Following his failure to gain employment as a New York toll road collector, despite a high score on the entrance examination, McVeigh surmised he was not hired because he was white and blamed affirmative action programs.<sup>47</sup> The Ruby Ridge incident further inflamed his anger with the federal government to the point where he believed the United States was “becoming an overtaxed police state.” Concluding that the National Rifle Association was too weak to protect his second amendment rights, McVeigh canceled his membership.<sup>48</sup> In an interview conducted by a student reporter during the Waco siege, McVeigh claimed the local sheriff was the only person with the legal authority to serve the warrant; federal agents had no authority or legitimate reason to be on Branch Davidian property. McVeigh ultimately found acceptance and understanding among the individuals he associated with while participating in the gun show circuit. He further solidified his belief in a New World Order – a single ruling government in the form of the United Nations – taking over the United States and restricting individual freedom.<sup>49</sup>

Militias, according to Bruce Hoffman in *Inside Terrorism*, come in two varieties. The “talking militias” do not advocate the overthrow of the government and are primarily concerned with preserving the right to bear arms. “Marching militias” or “up-front militias” use force to accomplish their goals. They embrace the more radical anti-Semitic, racist, and subversive principles of the radical right.<sup>50</sup> The Viper militia group in Phoenix, Arizona, is an example of a marching militia: Their members amassed a sizeable stockpile of illegal weapons and practiced the use of explosives. During the investigation following their arrest, the group’s plan to bomb buildings in Phoenix was discovered.<sup>51</sup> Closed-cell

militias are mentioned in an article by Martin Lindstedt in the initial issue of the *Modern Militiaman*. Persons wishing to become involved in a militia are only invited to the open militia meetings, never to a closed-cell group. Closed-cell groups are reserved for relatives and trusted friends.<sup>52</sup>

Following the Oklahoma City bombing, reporters portrayed McVeigh as an active militia member.<sup>53</sup> He was not an actual militia member, although he had made an unsuccessful attempt to organize a militia group in Arizona, with his friend Michael Fortier, and publicity after the bombing resulted in an increase in militia activity. Due to the arrests of several militia members in the late 1990s and unfulfilled conspiracy theories related to Y2K, many people left militia organizations. Other individuals left militias because they believed the organizations did not sufficiently address the issues important to them;<sup>54</sup> these were more radical members who probably became affiliated with other right-wing extremist groups that fulfilled their expectations. Others become loners, such as accused Olympic Park bomber Eric Rudolph, and committed violent acts to satisfy their desire for action.<sup>55</sup> Many other members grew bored and lost interest in militias.<sup>56</sup>

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, militias adopted new conspiracy theories to fit their fear of a new world order. Conspiracy theories often provide simplistic analysis, defying explanations of conflict or perceived problems. Militia members who embrace these theories affix blame to individuals or groups, instead of analyzing the complexities of real world issues and power structures.<sup>57</sup> John Trochmann of the Militia of Montana voiced an outlandish conspiracy theory when he claimed Bin Laden was a CIA operative when he masterminded the 9-11 attacks.<sup>58</sup>

Post 9-11 interest in survivalist training and equipment has also been used to increase militia membership and activities. Militia members at a fair in Yakima, Washington actively sought individuals to enroll in classes on terrorism survival. The Militia of Montana sold biological warfare suits, gas masks, and potassium iodide to individuals in various parts of the United States.<sup>59</sup>

Membership in militia organizations has increased and decreased over the past twenty years. Events such as the Oklahoma City bombing and the 9-11 attacks have impacted militia organizations by refocusing their interests. While many militia members are not law violators, the presence of members who have more radical beliefs, such as Christian Identity, is a matter of concern.

## **SOVEREIGN CITIZENS, FREEMEN, AND COMMON LAW COURTS**

People involved in groups referring to themselves as “sovereign citizens,” “freemen,” and “common law court members” are categorized as “separatist” by Leonard Weinberg, Elizabeth Francis, and Randall Lloyd in their article “Courts Under Threat.” In addition to a formative relationship with Christian Identity, a manuscript known as the *Nehemiah Township Document and Common Law Contract* provides the foundation for separatist organizations. In 1982, twenty-eight people signed the document that was subsequently notarized and filed by the county clerk in Kootenai County, Idaho. Notable extremist signatories included Richard Butler and KKK Imperial Wizard Thom Robb.<sup>60</sup> A religiously-based Republican government, in which only Aryan freemen would have rights, was the ultimate goal of the *Nehemiah Township Charter*. It referred to God’s

divine laws as the only laws applicable to Aryans. National Courts consisting of seventy judges would be established to hand down verdicts according to God's law. The National Courts and lesser-affiliated judicial bodies would have overriding authority over other political entities, including state and federal court systems. Those persons who were not Aryan freemen would have no rights to participate in government or in the legal system. As in the Posse Comitatus movement, county government provides the structure for posses to function, though charters would be created as a new entity in government. Township citizens would have the power not to abide by any ordinance, regulation, or law enacted by municipal, state, or federal governmental bodies. This power also includes the right to ignore the federal tax code. The *Charter* contains references to the United States Constitution and English common law. One of the final passages in the *Charter* makes reference to an attack on one member being the equivalent to an attack on the whole group. This reference reveals that the signers realized the rebellious nature of their actions and beliefs – an indicator of future actions by some of the signers, who were subsequently convicted and incarcerated for their violent activities.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to the information contained in the *Nehemiah Township Charter*, Richard Abanes' book, *American Militias*, describes characteristics of separatists' beliefs. Included in these beliefs are two types of citizenship. State citizenship is considered natural and is believed to have been present before the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. The other form of citizenship is conferred by the Fourteenth Amendment and the Bill of Rights; in this form, citizens are obligated to comply with federal statutes, regulations, codes, judgments and rulings. Separatists believe the blood relatives of state citizens may reclaim inherited sovereign citizenship by breaking implicit contracts binding them to the federal government and its inferior form of citizenship. Birth certificates, marriage licenses, Social Security cards, and driver and vehicle licenses are examples of unlawful contracts to be broken to regain sovereignty. Sovereign citizens are not required to follow federal law, but are required to adhere to common law court judgments.<sup>62</sup>

Two other idiosyncratic separatist beliefs worthy of mention are claims that the United States Constitution was suspended in 1933 by the War and Emergency Powers Act and the Sixteenth Amendment was not properly ratified, thereby nullifying the legality of the federal income tax system. In the late 1990s, several common law courts were formed, predominantly in West and Midwest states. Common law activities included bogus liens filed against the property of judges, law enforcement officers, and other public officials. Illegitimate common law arrest warrants were issued for public officials who made decisions or rulings against the edict of separatists.<sup>63</sup> A decline in occurrences of separatist activities in the early twenty-first century is partly attributed to new laws that addressed the common law court activities.<sup>64</sup>

During the summer of 1997, Weinberg, Francis, and Lloyd conducted a random survey of 3,000 judges who had experience with separatists. Survey results revealed most judges viewed the separatists as being "angry individuals who are bright enough to have absorbed some abstract interpretation to explain their circumstances but who still lack the capacity, often provided by education,

to place the interpretation in a broader or comparative framework of understanding.” Of the judges who had encountered separatist challengers, over half indicated traffic cases were the most frequently disputed. A prevalence of cases involving weapons offenses was not surprising due to the Second Amendment issues embraced by militia members. Additionally, frequently disputed episodes involving domestic abuse, child custody, and alimony issues were viewed by Weinberg, et al. as indicative of the high stress associated with extremist political behavior.<sup>65</sup> The emotional vehemence of separatists is revealed in the survey results: Twenty-seven percent of the judges who reported challenges indicated they had received threats of violence. Four judges reported being victims of physical assaults.<sup>66</sup>

## KU KLUX KLAN

The KKK is the domestic ‘granddaddy’ of the right-wing extremist movement. It was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee, between late December 1865 and June of 1866, at the beginning of the Reconstruction era following the Civil War. The name of the organization is derived from the Greek word *kuklos*, which translates to English as “circle.” The group changed the Greek word slightly to *kuklux* and added the word *klan* to the ending to note the Scottish heritage of the group’s organizers. Six former confederate soldiers created the organization as a non-political social club for the amusement of themselves and other community members. In the beginning, the white sheets and elaborate costumes worn by the Klansmen were referred to as costumes of mystique and amusement. The amusement eventually transformed into intimidation. Klansmen also believed their white, hooded costumes represented the ghosts of dead confederate soldiers coming back to cast retribution upon the inferior Negro race.<sup>67</sup> This activity eventually led to freed blacks and white carpetbaggers from the North becoming the targets of degrading and frequently vicious nocturnal raids, often resulting in acts of violence and murder.<sup>68</sup> The Klan dens spread throughout Tennessee and eventually to Mississippi and Alabama. The Klan’s first national convention was held in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1867, where Confederate General Nathan Forrest became the first elected grand wizard. Forrest officially dissolved the Klan in 1869, but the activities of the various dens throughout the South continued.<sup>69</sup>

The first legislation designed to fight the intimidation and violence inflicted by members of the Klan was passed in 1870. The new law was designed to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution by outlawing interference with voting rights through intimidation, bribery, or use of force. Passage of this act resulted in an increased rate of Klan violence in the south during the 1870 elections.<sup>70</sup> In 1871, continued Klan violence resulted in President Ulysses S. Grant pushing Congress to pass the Ku-Klux Klan Bill: This law allowed any citizen of the United States to seek a federal judicial remedy for the violation of constitutional rights. Persons with foreknowledge of Klan violence were held liable for victims’ suffering. A provision of the bill made conspiring by two or more persons to violate another person’s rights a crime. The boldest parts of the Ku-Klux Klan Bill allowed the president to suspend temporarily the writ of habeas corpus and use federal troops to quell civil unrest aimed at depriving anyone from exercising their constitutional rights.<sup>71</sup> As racist, southern, white

conservatives regained legitimate power from the Reconstruction governments established at the end of the Civil War, the Klan faded from prominence.<sup>72</sup>

The Klan was reinvigorated in 1915, by the D. W. Griffith motion picture *Birth of a Nation*, which was based on Thomas Dixon's novel *The Clansmen*.<sup>73</sup> The movie glorified the Klan of the Reconstruction Era as saviors and portrayed a black man as the rapist of a frail innocent white girl.<sup>74</sup> The ceremonial burning of crosses was first depicted in the novel and was portrayed in the movie. Interest in the KKK intensified as Klansmen used movie showings to promote the organization.<sup>75</sup> The born-again Klan was less violent than the original Klan, but added the hatred of Jews and Catholics to the traditional hatred of blacks. Klan membership throughout the country was estimated to have been in the millions during the 1920s and 1930s. Prior to and during World War II, Klan membership continued to dwindle, only to rebound again during the turbulent civil rights movement of the 1960s. The Klan does not currently have a nationwide central governing organization; it consists of several, unconnected groups using variations of the Klan moniker. In keeping with the multiple affiliation characteristics of right-wing members, some members of Klan groups are followers of the Christian Identity movement.<sup>76</sup>

## NEO-NAZIS

Neo-Nazis, as the name implies, are the new followers of Nazi ideology. Members of this movement embrace many of the World War II Nazi symbols, including the swastika, which is considered the icon of the movement. Neo-Nazis refer to themselves as National Socialists and hold Adolph Hitler in high regard,<sup>77</sup> but they do not follow completely the ideas of Hitler's Nazi party. The modern rendition of these groups can be divided into three categories: followers of Odinism, Christian Identity believers, and groups embracing other spiritual or religious notions.<sup>78</sup> Christian Identity believers associated with the neo-Nazi movement have been discussed earlier and included Richard Butler's Aryan Nations groups, now lead by August Kries.

Believers of Odinism and Ásatrú reject Christianity,<sup>79</sup> but adopt the reconstructed beliefs of the pre-Christian mythical Norse gods of the Vikings. To attract followers who may already have multiple systems of religious or philosophical beliefs, Odinists use ritual magic, fraternal camaraderie, and a flexible ideology. Through the influences of Rud Mills (1930s) and Else Christensen (1960s), marked differences have emerged between Odinism and Ásatrú. First, individuals who embrace Odinism are more in touch with right-wing white supremacy adherents. Most Ásatrú followers reject such associations. Next, Odinists accept the validity of conspiracies when viewing the events of history, while most Ásatrú followers do not embrace these theories. A third difference is the warrior principle that drives Odinists to consider forceful retaliation for perceived past injustices by the dominant culture. A fourth difference is that Odinists hold racist feelings and opinions, which frequently merge with racial mysticism. Last, Odinism places an emphasis on the oversimplification of complex information associated with the revitalized tribal ideas of the Vikings. Ásatrú followers do not accept efforts to simplify their reconstruction of the communal, magical, and religious practices as they apply to modern society.

Many individuals who were involved in the rise of Hitler's Third Reich were known to have been Odinists.<sup>80</sup>

George Lincoln Rockwell started the American Nazi Party (ANP) in 1958; the organization was later called the National Socialist White People's Party. The need for white people to take back the country from the minorities, aliens, and terrorists was one of Rockwell's beliefs. Betty Dobratz and Stephanie Shanks-Meile, in their book *White Power, White Pride!*, mention Rockwell's advocacy of worldwide white power as a means to stop the mongrelization of the white race. A recently-expelled group member killed Rockwell in 1967.<sup>81</sup> William Pierce, a former Oregon State University physics instructor and member of Rockwell's ANP, later established and directed the National Alliance.<sup>82</sup>

Pierce is also the creator of Cosmotheism, a religious belief described by Brad Whitsel in *Aryan Visions for the Future in the West Virginia Mountains* as centered upon the "deterministic ideas reflecting the 'unlimited destiny' of the white race." The Cosmotheist believes an evolutionary force, still guiding us today, created the races. According to Pierce's view, the white race maintains a special status due to its past historical achievements, which far surpass the accomplishments of other races.<sup>83</sup> Placing man on a course to achieve godhood was what Pierce described as the divine mission of Cosmotheism. Some elements of Odinism have been incorporated into Cosmotheism, such as Norse legends and the use of mysterious runes, ancient characters used in Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian, or Teutonic writings.<sup>84</sup>

Pierce wrote *The Turner Diaries* under the pseudonym Andrew McDonald in 1978. The novel described the revolution against an evil federal government with established race-mixing, gun control, and other detestable actions. *The Turner Diaries* was believed to have inspired Robert Mathews to establish the violent white supremacist group known as The Order.<sup>85</sup> Timothy McVeigh also was inspired by *The Turner Diaries*: In an envelope found in the car driven from Oklahoma City after the bombing, McVeigh had placed articles he wanted to be discovered upon his capture. Among the items was a paper with the following quotes from Earl Turner, the central character of *The Turner Diaries*:

The real value of our attacks today lies in the psychological impact, not in the immediate casualties. More important though, is what we taught the politicians and the bureaucrats. They learned this afternoon that not one of them is beyond our reach. They can huddle behind barbed wire and tanks in the city, and they can hide behind the concrete walls of their country estates, but we can still find them and kill them.<sup>86</sup>

After Pierce's July 2002 death, Erich Glibe, the former boxer known as The Aryan Barbarian, assumed the National Alliance leadership position. As is frequently the case in right-wing groups, disagreement among the other potential leaders of the group resulted in resignations or expulsions from the National Alliance. This disarray in the American neo-Nazi movement has resulted in one of Pierce's intellectual protégés, Kevin Strom, forming the National Vanguard and another Pierce follower, Billy Roper, starting the group known as White Revolution.<sup>87</sup>

Rex (Gerhard) Lauck, known as the Farm Belt Fuhrer,<sup>88</sup> is described by Ingo Hasselbach in *Fuhrer-Ex* as being an international neo-Nazi leader. Based in

Lincoln, Nebraska, Lauck is the leader of the NSDAP/AO, the “National Socialist German Workers’ Party/Aufbau (“building up” in German) and Auslands (“abroad”) Organization. Lauck’s NSDAP/AO was patterned after the organization of the same name formerly operated by the Third Reich. Lauck had a significant influence on the activities and advancement of neo-Nazi activities in Germany and other European countries. His connections with old Nazis in South America helped to finance neo-Nazi activities.<sup>89</sup> Lauck’s publishing business in Lincoln produced and distributed a variety of Nazi paraphernalia, such as bumper stickers, books, videos, and computer games.<sup>90</sup> Lauck’s power was sufficient to order acts of terrorism against various officials associated with the attempt to host the Olympics in Berlin. His rationale for ordering the acts of terrorism was to deny the Federal Republic of Germany the chance to eclipse the Olympics hosted by the Third Reich prior to World War II. Acts of terrorism by neo-Nazis and left-wing elements resulted in Germany abandoning efforts to host the Olympics.<sup>91</sup> Eventually, Lauck was arrested in Denmark and charged with distributing terrorist materials and Nazi propaganda.<sup>92</sup>

## SKINHEADS

The terrorist youth subculture label has been used to describe the groups popularly known as the skinheads.<sup>93</sup> Skinheads first materialized in London during the 1960s as a working-class youth response to the hippie trend.<sup>94</sup> These early skinheads, according to Mark Hamm in *American Skinheads: The Criminology and Control of Hate Crime*, combined the cultures of the working-class white and the Jamaican black immigrant. Their shaved heads symbolized their visibly defiant self-determination and served as a practical advantage by preventing opponents from grabbing their hair during street fights. These early skinheads targeted for their acts of violence Pakistanis, hippies, homosexuals, and students from upper-class families who attended Cambridge and the London School of Economics. In 1972, Scotland Yard successfully cracked down on skinheads perpetrating violent acts against innocent victims, thereby curtailing skinhead activities.<sup>95</sup>

Second-generation skinheads in Britain reemerged as a problem in 1981 as Ian Stuart, leader of the band Skrewdriver, formed a political action group called White Noise. The combination of politics and music led to an affiliation with the British National Front, a right-wing, neo-fascist organization. Resurgence of skinhead racial violence was encouraged further by anti-immigrant and nationalistic views expressed by officials in the Thatcher administration.<sup>96</sup> Skrewdriver’s popularity as the premier British white power band eventually led to a record contract with West German record company Rock-O-Rama Records. This contract resulted in their white hate, neo-Nazi, skinhead message being distributed throughout Europe, the United States, and Canada. The popularity of white power rock music was a factor in the development of the skinhead movement into an international youth subculture.<sup>97</sup>

According to J. Cotter, in *Sounds of Hate: White Power Rock and Roll and the Neo-Nazi Skinhead Subculture*, the propagation, persistence, and viability of the skinhead culture can be attributed to the messages communicated in the lyrics of white power rock and roll. This music validates the use of violence against non-

white immigrants perceived as a threat to the white race and the skinhead culture. In addition to being a source of entertainment for skinheads, white power rock and roll music has been a vehicle for the distribution of racist propaganda to a wide group of listeners. White power bands travel to various countries to give concerts and spread the skinhead way of life and ideology. The worldwide skinhead publication and music distribution network provides support to the bands and facilitates the flow of information to any interested persons.<sup>98</sup> A significant segment of the white power music and publication network is represented by Resistance Records and *Resistance Magazine*. George Eric Hawthorne, alias George Burdi, the lead singer of the band RAHOWA (Racial Holy War), founded Resistance Records in 1993. The publication side of the business doubled as a fan magazine for white power bands and a propaganda tool for white supremacy. Following Hawthorne's arrest for violating the Canadian law prohibiting the distribution of hate material, and his difficulties in the United States related to tax irregularities, Resistance Records fell on hard times. Eventually, it was purchased by Willis Carto and Todd Blodgett and later sold to William Pierce of the National Alliance. Pierce also acquired a competing Swedish white power music distributor to further bolster his business.<sup>99</sup> Prior to his death in 2002, Pierce had capitalized upon his investment through Internet sales and distribution of hate music, computer games, and literature.<sup>100</sup>

Clark Martell, a Skrewdriver follower and American Nazi Party member from Blue Island, Illinois, formed the first American skinhead group. A crime spree in the Chicago area was attributed to Martell and his skinhead group. Their violence resulted in the assault of six Hispanic women, swastikas painted on the walls of three synagogues, and other damage to Jewish-owned businesses. Martell's incarceration for the crime spree neutralized the skinhead movement in the Chicago area. Robert Heick formed a second group of skinheads in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. They adopted the typical appearance of the skinhead movement: Levi jeans, red suspenders, Fred Perry shirts, and Doc Martens steel-toed boots. Heick also adorned his body with sixteen tattoos of Vikings, swastikas, and eagles. Following a brief crime spree, Haight-Ashbury business owners persuaded police to crack down on the skinheads. Heick's group was neutralized, but many other skinheads would later emerge in the Bay area.<sup>101</sup>

Skinheads are considered the foot soldiers of the right-wing movement and are the target of recruitment efforts by other right-wing organizations, such as the Aryan Nations, KKK groups, and Church of the Creator (COC).<sup>102</sup> Thomas Metzger's White Aryan Resistance (WAR), an organization known for using television for recruitment, successfully enlisted skinheads into his organization. Skinhead WAR members were linked to the 1988 murder in Portland, Oregon of an immigrant from Ethiopia and the assault of three other immigrants. A civil case related to the wrongful death of the immigrant resulted in a \$12.5 million judgment against WAR.<sup>103</sup>

According to a 2006 Anti-Defamation League (ADL) press release, skinhead activity has increased along with a rise in hate crimes against African-Americans, Hispanics, immigrants, and homosexuals. The ADL attributes four factors to the increase in skinhead activity. First, alienated or disaffected youth are cordially invited to join the skinhead social network of hate on the Internet. Second, white

power music glorifying the skinhead movement is thriving. Third, the global expansion of the Hammerskin Nation and other skinhead groups through the Internet has resulted in the expansion of other white supremacist sites and has enhanced the ability of skinheads to communicate with each other. Finally, the level of competition from other white supremacist groups has been reduced by the deaths or arrests of their leaders and a resulting leadership vacuum characterized by group infighting.<sup>104</sup>

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE TRENDS OF THE RADICAL RIGHT

Miki Vohryzek-Bolden lists future trends of the radical right in *Right-Wing Terrorists and the Threats They Pose for Americans in the 21st Century*. The first trend is the right-wing shift from group affiliations to individual actors.<sup>105</sup> Louis Beam, a former Texas KKK grand dragon and participant in the Aryan Nations, is associated with promoting the concept of leaderless resistance. In his essay "Leaderless Resistance," Beam advocates the use of individuals or autonomous small groups, also known as cells, to perform acts of violence. Leaderless resistance is a means of avoiding the perceived pitfalls of the military model of organization. The unlinked cells and individuals make detection, information gathering, and informant development difficult.<sup>106</sup> One example of leaderless resistance was the involvement of Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols, Michael Fortier, and Lori Fortier in the Oklahoma City bombing. Use of leaderless resistance increases the need for effective long-term undercover officers to gather intelligence and be vigilant for signs of radical cells or lone wolf terrorists. Undercover officers must gain sufficient trust to be included in the more secure and exclusive gatherings where terrorist actions are likely to be discussed and planned or more radicalized individuals identified.

Other future trends of right-wing groups mentioned by Vohryzek-Bolden are attempts to have right-wing ideas and images assimilated into mainstream politics, and a rise in Odinism, white power rock music, and the influence of neo-Nazi groups. The desire of some group members to acquire weapons of mass destruction is mentioned as another future trend.<sup>107</sup> The confiscation in 2004 of a cyanide compound belonging to William Krar and his common-law wife Judith Bruey is an example of this potentiality becoming reality.<sup>108</sup> An additional trend involves the continued refinement of communications networks on the Internet, resulting in a potential ability to connect extremist and terrorists groups throughout the world. Related to this trend is the globalization of terrorist and extremist groups, including their symbols, religions, and music. Two final trends described by Vohryzek-Bolden include the formation of a more hard-core group of "true believers" and the recruitment of college-educated individuals who are more articulate and capable of handling the duties of group spokespersons.<sup>109</sup>

To safeguard our nation from future acts of terrorism, a constant awareness of right-wing extremist beliefs, activities, and adherents must be maintained. Public safety officials must be aware of the heroes and martyrs of the radical right and the catalytic events that may result in future acts of terrorism. Individuals committing criminal activities associated with the proliferation of right-wing extremist activities must be investigated and, if sufficient evidence is present, effectively adjudicated. The threat posed by the radical right may seem dormant, but the ideas

that promote violence against the government and other perceived enemies remain a constant danger. Developing sufficient and timely intelligence will be important in avoiding future catastrophic incidents of terrorism perpetrated by right-wing extremists.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Kaplan, "Right Wing Violence in North America," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 46.

<sup>2</sup> The World Church of the Creator, now known as the Creativity Movement is one group that does not embrace Christian Identity. According the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Law Enforcement Agency Resource Network website, [[http://www.adl.org/learn/Ext\\_US/WCOTC.asp?xpicked=3&item=17](http://www.adl.org/learn/Ext_US/WCOTC.asp?xpicked=3&item=17)], the Creativity Movement does not embrace beliefs normally associated with religion. Creativity Movement followers view their religion as revolving around the supremacy of the white race over all other races. Another right-wing group not embracing the beliefs of Christian Identity is the The National Alliance. Their religion was formulated by William Pierce, and is called Cosmotheism. According to Brad Whitsel's essay "Aryan Visions for the Future in the West Virginia Mountains" in *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Winter 1995): 117, Cosmotheism is "characterized by an idiosyncratic blend of ideas including Darwinian evolution, Teutonic mythology, and 'scientific' findings of early racial theorists..." Included in the beliefs of Cosmotheists are ideas related to their racial preordained future and their elevation to Aryan Godness.

<sup>3</sup> David W. Brannan, "Left- and Right-wing Political Terrorism," in *The Politics of Terrorism*, Andrew Tan, ed. (London: Europa Publications, 2006), 57.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Peters, "Special Report - Framing Deceit: An Analysis by Pastor Peter J. Peters of a Speech to the National Press Club by a Spokesperson of the So-Called 'Southern Poverty Law Center'." [<http://www.scripturesforamerica.org/PDF%20Files/Framing%20Deceit.pdf>]. February 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Bertrand Comparet, "Christian Identity: What is it?" [<http://www.churchoftrueisrael.com/comparet/what-is-identity.html>]. February 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe*, First American ed. (New York, NY: Random House, 1976), 17.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 15-17.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 4.

<sup>11</sup> James A. Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriotism* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1990), 52.

<sup>12</sup> The Anti-Defamation League, "The International Jew: Anti-Semitism from the Roaring Twenties Revived on the Web," [[http://www.adl.org/special\\_reports/ij/dearborn\\_independant.asp](http://www.adl.org/special_reports/ij/dearborn_independant.asp)]. February 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right*, 51.

<sup>14</sup> Aho, *Politics of Righteousness*, 3.

<sup>15</sup> Jeffrey Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America: Millenarian Movements from the Far Right to the Children of Noah* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Glen Jeansonne, "Gerald L. K. Smith: From Wisconsin Roots to National Notoriety," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 86, no. 2 (2002-2003): 24-26.

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- <sup>18</sup> Daniel Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door: The Militia Movement and the Radical Right* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 2004), 23.
- <sup>19</sup> Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America*, 3-4.
- <sup>20</sup> Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right*, 60.
- <sup>21</sup> Levitas, *Terrorist Next Door*, 18-19
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 108-109.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 295-298.
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- <sup>29</sup> Jonathan Martin, "Richard Butler, Who Led Aryan Nations, Dies in Idaho at 86." [<http://archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=butlerobit09m&date=20040909&query=richard+butler+aryan+nations+dies>]. February 2006.
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- <sup>92</sup> Ibid., 383.

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