

White Pride World Wide

*A Contemporary History of Online, International
Right-wing Extremist Ideology and Culture*

Turner Stone Jacobs



Master's Thesis, Peace and Conflict Studies
Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

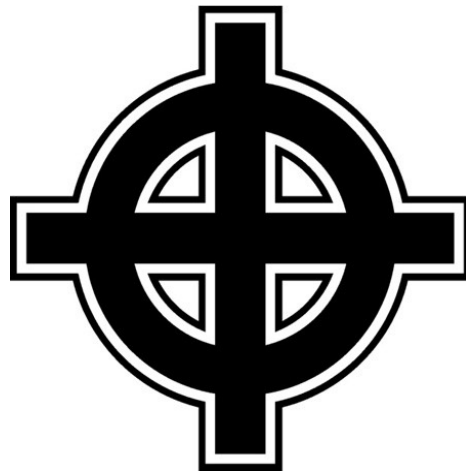
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ABSTRACT

Since 1995, advances in internet communications technology have led to more extensive interaction between right-wing extremists around the world. The wider extreme-right movement around the globe has become more homogenous, internationally-minded, and Americanized in recent years due to the rise of websites and forums such as Stormfront.org. However, ideological and cultural cleavages still remain as barriers to full cohesion between disparate strains of right-wing extremism. This study briefly outlines the history of international right-wing extremist ideology and culture, with a particular focus on developments in these areas after the establishment of Stormfront in 1995. Through the ideographical and inductive analysis of forum posts and website content, the intention of this thesis is to demonstrate that right-wing extremists in the contemporary period are part of an internationally-minded subculture which has been largely overlooked or misunderstood by scholars, politicians, and media outlets. Furthermore, this analysis seeks to underscore the threats to peace and coexistence posed by the violence and hatred inherent in this global subculture.

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ABBREVIATIONS

18	Adolf Hitler (AH)
88	“Heil Hitler” (HH)
ADL	Anti-Defamation League
BNP	British National Party
BNSM	British National Socialist Movement
C18	Combat 18
DDoS	Distributed denial of service attack
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
KKKK	Knights of the Ku Klux Klan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NF	National Front (England)
NS	National Socialist/Socialism
NSDAP- AO	<i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei – Auslands- Organisation</i>
NSBM	National Socialist Black Metal
NSM	National Socialist Movement
NSWPP	National Socialist White People’s Party
PEGIDA	Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West

PLE	Pioneer Little Europe
RAC	Rock Against Communism
SPLC	Southern Poverty Law Center
SS	<i>Schutzstaffel</i>
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
WAR	White Aryan Resistance
WAU	Women for Aryan Unity
WUNS	World Union of National Socialists
ZOG	Zionist Occupation Government

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INTRODUCTION

Terrorism and extremism have, in the post-9/11 era, increasingly become "hot topics" within media, political, and scholarly discourse. These discussions have typically focused upon fundamentalist Islamist extremists and their activities throughout the world. However, many scholars and journalists have also devoted their attention to investigating far- and extreme-right activities and ideologies. Over the past few years, right-wing political parties have been gaining increased amounts support throughout Europe, causing alarm among their ideological opponents on the left. References to neo-Nazis, fascists, and extremists are common during discussions about political parties such as Front National in France, or movements like Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA) in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Undoubtedly, these movements harbor individuals whose beliefs traverse the march between civilized political participation and dangerous or illegal extremist activity; however, the ambiguities inherent in these ideological hinterlands are often overlooked in contemporary discourse. It is easier and more politically expedient to resort to binaries such as right and left, good and evil, or tolerant and intolerant, rather than to separate what is truly dangerous from what is merely different. Unfortunately, the dangers from right-wing extremists are all too real.

In the past 17 years, the majority of deadly terrorist activities in the United States have been propagated by right-wing extremists.¹ Europe, too, has been confronted with extremist violence ranging from gang activity and murders to outright massacres. Extremist violence from far- or ultra-rightwing sources remains a threat to peace and security in western society, and the contemporary "rise of the right-wing" has complicated matters further. There has been a blurring of lines between ideologies which endorse bigotry (reprehensible, yet legal), healthy criticism of existing systems, and/or

¹ Sofer, Ken. "CHART: 17 Years After Oklahoma City Bombing, Right-Wing Extremism Is Significant Domestic Terror Threat." ThinkProgress, April 19, 2012. <http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/04/19/467384/chart-right-wing-extremism-terror-threat-oklahoma-city/> (Accessed 24 September, 2015)

outright violence. One may wonder: do supporters of PEGIDA fit their self-description as champions of western democracy, or are they its greatest foes? Does skepticism towards refugee and immigration policies open the floodgates of political violence? Is cultural or national pride inherently indicative of racism? The answers are varied, and are far from clear.

The difficulty inherent in answering such questions results from the nature of the contemporary fringes of the ideological right. These fringes are occupied by several national, international, and transnational organizations and movements, none of which can claim to have full authority over the wider ideological right-wing “family”. Rather than providing a coherent and comprehensive ideological platform to potential adherents, these groups have contributed to the creation of myriad hybrid ideologies which exhibit similarities beyond state boundaries. These hybrid ideologies exhibit radical elements, which are often borrowed from or related to violent extremist ideologies, while their adherents may simultaneously reject violence as a means of attaining their political goals. This works in the opposite direction as well. Violent extremists may use the language and image of moderation to hide more sinister activities. It is not always a simple task to separate the truly extreme and violent from the merely radical and intolerant. The most dangerous members of this global community are often the least visible, as they have in recent years adopted a "lone wolf" ideology that causes difficulties in drawing connections between them and other members of various movements.² This potentially threatening development, however, is the very reason that the extreme right as a global movement is deserving of a contemporary and nuanced examination.

This ideological hybridization would not have been as extensive as it has been without the development and proliferation of internet communications technology. The advent of the internet has assisted extremists, as well as their more moderate ideological cousins, in creating online communities where radical or extreme ideas can be shared, borrowed, debated, and altered. Symbols, music, and culture are also exchanged, creating

² See: Feldman, Matthew. "Comparative Lone Wolf Terrorism: Toward a Heuristic Definition." *Democracy and Security* Vol. 9, No. 3 (2013), pg. 270-286

a common language that has facilitated the transfer of ideas throughout the world. Web pages, online stores, webzines, blogs, online radio broadcasts, and forums which endorse extremist positions abound online, and are readily accessible to anyone with the means of connecting to the internet. Prior to the 1990s, when online communications became increasingly common and accessible, right-wing extremist movements tended to be nationally-minded, underground fringe groups. A German neo-Nazi in the 1970s would have had little in common with an American Klansman aside from their mutual disdain for non-whites. Today, these hypothetical extremists would be likely to recognize and support many of the same musicians, politicians, and “heroes” (or “martyrs”) of the wider right-wing extremist movement, many of whom do not share their respective countries of origin.

The leading website for right-wing fringe politics, stormfront.org (aka Stormfront), plays host to numerous ideologies, some complementary and others competing. In its contradictions and consistencies, Stormfront serves as a useful window into the various contemporary right-wing extremist movements which exist throughout the world. Hosted on servers in the United States, it is one of few places where the debates within the extreme right can be held and viewed rather openly, with little more than cursory censorship from administrators and community members. Discussions on Stormfront include participants from nearly every continent, with the majority coming from North America and Great Britain. The prevalence of Americans on Stormfront has partially “Americanized” much of the discourse on the extreme right, which has contributed to a sense of coalescence between the disparate strains of right-wing extremism. Stormfront’s members, like the movements and ideologies they represent, are more diverse in their ideas and beliefs than might be expected. Simultaneously, however, they have created a community of like-minded individuals who, despite their internal differences, endorse a more comprehensive and internationally-oriented variant of extreme-right ideology than has existed previously. Beyond Stormfront, numerous other right-wing extremist websites have followed in its wake and acted as platforms for a similar process. While

these sites are smaller in terms of both content and traffic, they still exist as significant examples of the contemporary internationalization of right-wing extremist ideology.

This aim of this analysis is thus to explore the major developments, key themes, and fundamental problems within contemporary international right-wing extremist ideology and culture. Particular emphasis is placed on the internet's role in facilitating the internationalization which has occurred in these areas. Stated differently, this analysis seeks to answer the following questions:

- *How has international right-wing extremist ideology and culture developed since the mid-twentieth century, and what does this phenomenon look like today?*
- *In which ways has the internet contributed to contemporary developments within the wider right-wing extremist movement, particularly in terms of internationalization?*

The premise of this analysis rests partly on the suggestion that research on this topic has been insufficient or incomplete, so it will begin with a discussion about the existing literature relevant to this topic. The internationalization and hybridization of the extreme right began before the 1990s, necessitating the inclusion of a brief chapter of background information in order to provide context. The period from 1995 to the present will be addressed in two chapters: the first will cover important events and the superficial qualities of online extremism, while the second will more closely examine specific elements which have emerged from and contributed to the internationalization of extreme-right ideologies. Within this framework, posts from stormfront.org will provide much of the “raw material,” but attention will also be devoted to other websites as well as the writings of individuals who have played a major role in contemporary developments.

CHAPTER 1 – CONCEPTS and LITERATURE

Right-wing extremism and its numerous iterations have long been a popular topic among scholars. “Fascism” in particular has captured scholarly attentions, to the point that *fascism* has become a common byword for most far- or extreme-right ideologies. While the historical regimes commonly associated with fascism have disappeared, they remain firmly rooted in the collective consciousness and exist as natural points of comparison to the contemporary ideologies for which they provided the groundwork. Many scholars since the end of the Second World War have taken this approach, placing expressions of extreme, radical, and far-right political sentiments under a familiar label. Within this context, scholars have largely focused upon national or regional iterations of right-wing fringe politics. While this approach was appropriate in previous decades, the movements which exist and operate today require a more nuanced approach that acknowledges and emphasizes the international currents among the contemporary extreme right. Existing studies are undoubtedly useful in providing background information about groups and individuals as well as explaining ideological developments, but they are often insufficient in capturing the dynamic and international characters of contemporary extreme-right ideologies.

Terminology and Conceptualization

Since the end of WWII, “fascist studies” has been a popular field among historians and social scientists interested in far- and extreme-right ideology, both in a historical and contemporary context. Stanley Payne argues that the term “fascism” is used by scholars in this field “not merely for the sake of convention,” but rather because Benito Mussolini’s Fascism was the first coherent movement to exhibit the characteristics displayed by subsequent related movements.³ The utility of this term may once have been sufficient, but newer developments in politics and ideology call its usefulness into

³ Payne, Stanley G. “Fascism: A Working Definition.” *Fascism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, ed. Roger Griffin and Matthew Feldman. Routledge (London, 2004), 258

question. For example, many other terms have arisen to describe related ideologies or political movements. The terms "right-wing extremism" and "fascism" are often used interchangeably with "neo-fascism," "neo-Nazism," or "the radical right," to name but a few terms. Furthermore, one can find even more specific labels which correspond to particular organized movements; this includes groups such as "skinheads," "Klansmen," "holocaust deniers," and "white nationalists." The terminology utilized by scholars can vary drastically from what their subjects use as self-descriptors, which may lead to confusion or misrepresentation.

It is important, then, to succinctly classify these disparate movements under a common label. However, due to the blurring of ideological lines that has occurred among and between these groups in recent decades, it can be difficult to distinguish one group from another by superficial characteristics alone. *Right-wing extremism* and *the extreme right* will henceforth be used interchangeably as umbrella terms for the object of study in this analysis, and subsets of this family will be, when appropriate, labeled clearly and explicitly to distinguish them from their cousins. The intention is not to overwhelm the reader with myriad subtypes, but rather to demonstrate the diversity of labels which contemporary right-wing extremists use for self-identification. These labels provide important clues to the peculiarities of their allegiances, religious convictions, and countries of origin. Fascism is thus eschewed in favor of a more inclusive descriptor.

Admittedly, such a discussion runs the risk of simply becoming a debate on semantics. Scholars have used various terms to classify what are essentially the same phenomena. Take for example Lorraine Bowman-Grieve's insightful analysis of stormfront.org, a topic that will be examined in detail in this analysis. Bowman-Grieve utilizes the term "radical right" in the same exact manner in which "extreme right" is used here. Her rationale is even comparable: "although differences exist between right-wing movements, similarities too exist and it is indeed these similarities of ideology that bring these movements together in terms of their analysis and assessment."⁴ The use of a catch-

⁴ Bowman-Grieve, Lorraine. "Exploring 'Stormfront': A Virtual Community of the Radical Right." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* Vol. 32 No. 11 (2009), pg. 991

all term is then valuable for looking at the extreme right as a whole, when such an examination is useful or necessary. However, the term “radical right” can also encompass mainstream political parties which support democratic values and demonstrate a willingness to participate in democratic systems. Why then, are certain terms so readily conflated with one another?

A controversial suggestion may be that the problem is due in part to the political standpoints of the scholars who are inclined to write about this subject. In both academia and the popular media, right-wing extremists are often conflated with the *radical right* or the *far right*, terms which can encompass a wider variety of ideologies that may have little in common. Aurel Braun attributes this problem to the fact that most analyses of right-wing extremism are produced by scholars who identify with the political left.⁵

Collections of articles on "fascism," "the extreme right," or "right-wing extremism" are often preoccupied with mainstream democratically-minded right-wing, populist, and anti-immigration parties rather than on extremist fringe movements which explicitly or implicitly endorse the use of violence to achieve their objectives. Thus, violent neo-Nazi skinhead gangs can be mentioned in the same breath as political parties such as Front National in France (which has begun to distance itself from its neo-Fascist origins), The Freedom Party of Austria, or the Progress Party in Denmark. Such comparisons are not always accurate or appropriate, and may even be counter-productive. While this may be an offensive or unpopular suggestion to many academics, the issue must be addressed honestly if a clearer and more accurate concept of "right-wing extremism" is to be formulated.

However, simply asserting that right-wing extremism is not equivalent to far-right or radical right ideology does not provide us with a useful definition of what the term represents. Several scholars have attempted to identify the elements that define right-wing extremism, and their conclusions are useful when trying to categorize individuals or groups that may fall under the ideological umbrella. Paul Hainsworth, for example,

⁵ Braun, Aurel. "Introduction." *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk*, ed. Braun, Aurel and Stephen Scheinberg. Westview Press (Boulder: 1997), pg. 3

provides a comprehensive overview of the debate surrounding this issue. He suggests that "[n]ation, national identity, [and] ethnocentrism" are the "core" elements of extreme right ideology, but that these ideals are by no means exclusive to the extreme right.⁶ The extreme right is further characterized by rabid anti-communism and anti-Semitism, which are typically accompanied by a belief in the conspiratorial forces behind them.⁷ Michi Ebata's conceptualization of the extreme right also explicitly identifies elements shared by many groups that lie on the fringes; these elements include mobilization against perceived outsiders, a sense of "primordial ethnic nationalism," belief in Zionist or Jewish conspiracies, and a willingness to use violence as displays of power.⁸

Exclusive nationalism, belief in racial superiority, and anti-Semitism are thus key elements which define the extreme right. These elements, however, also consist of more specific attributes. Exclusive ethnic nationalism does not concern contemporary right-wing extremist groups as much as it did their pre-World Wide Web predecessors. While ethnonationalist and ultra-nationalist sentiments are indisputable aspects of contemporary right-wing extremism, many right-wing extremists now adhere to the racialist ideology of "white nationalism," which focuses on white European racial identity more generally than on specific national identities. This ideal is epitomized by the banner message of stormfront.org: "White Pride World Wide."⁹ The specifics of racial supremacy are not consistent among right-wing extremists either. Extremists in the United States tend to focus their attention more on scapegoating black individuals while European extremists often are quicker to target Muslims or people of Middle-Eastern descent. Furthermore, many extremists cling to the idea that Jews, especially "Zionists", are the most dangerous or threatening "race." Many right-wing extremists also express hatred towards homosexuals and people with disabilities, as well as white people ("race traitors") who

⁶ Hainsworth 1992, pg 10, 23

⁷ Hainsworth 1992, pg 12-13

⁸ Ebata, Michi. "Right-Wing Extremism: In Search of a Definition." *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk*, ed. Braun, Aurel and Stephen Scheinberg. Westview Press (Boulder: 1997), 14-17

⁹ Stormfront.org

support or facilitate progressive agendas. These final elements, however, are not universal or consistent.

A significant ideological element which separates right-wing extremists from radical- or far-right groups is the support for democratic governance, or lack thereof. Far- and radical-right parties and movements are generally supportive of Western democracy: they defend democratic values, participate in democratic elections, and even integrate their pride in their countries' democratic institutions into their conceptions of nationalism. Most right-wing extremists have no such sentiments towards democracy. They view Western democratic structures as rotten, corrupt institutions which have been infiltrated by Zionists and flooded with Zionist money. Right-wing extremists often disagree on the "perfect" form of governance, but their preferences lean towards National Socialist dictatorship or other similar authoritarian systems. While they might vote in national or local elections, they typically vote for far- and radical-right or national populist candidates in the hope that such politicians may create a political environment which is friendly towards more extreme views; their endgame view is of using this momentum to assist in tearing down the existing systems. Others may refuse to vote for such candidates and parties out of the belief that these elements are simply tools of Zionism, whether they know it or not. The distinction between right-wing extremists and more moderate right-wingers is perhaps clearest on their attitudes towards democracy, and should serve as a useful tool for determining the proper categorization of a particular group.

Certain religious beliefs and practices can serve as indicators of right-wing extremist ideology, but there is no individual doctrine that all extremists share. Many right-wing extremists identify as pagans or neo-pagans, but many also are affiliated with various Christian denominations. This religious split is one of the most significant dividing factors within the broader right-wing extremist community, and while the issue is important it should not be overstated. The elements described above are common within the rhetoric on the extreme right regardless of religious faith. It should be quite obvious that not all Christians or pagans are connected with right-wing extremist activity, and, similarly, that not all right-wing extremists necessarily profess any religious beliefs.

However, certain religious beliefs can be immediately identified with extremism, particularly the Christian Identity movement and most strains of neo-pagan "Odinism." Even while religion has been used as a tool to unite extremists across national borders, alone it is insufficient for demonstrating whether a particular group or individual can be connected to extremist ideologies.

It is important to note that the extreme right exists as a complex mosaic of interrelated, but often competing or contradictory ideas and beliefs. Historically, this fragmentation has been a challenge to the extreme right's ambitions for political dominance: while extremists are numerous, they have a difficult time cooperating due to internal struggles or the minutiae of their particular ideologies. Peter Chroust speaks of an "international right-wing culture" which is fostered by internet communications.¹⁰ "Culture" may be a preferable term to "movement" when discussing the extreme right, as the latter term implies momentum in a particular direction. Individual extremists may have single affiliations or claim solidarity with concentric groups, but online discussions suggest that internal disagreements are commonplace in the world of the extreme right. The commonly-held beliefs of right-wing extremists are remarkably consistent, and the outside observer could reach the conclusion that a unified movement does indeed exist. What is argued here is that these disparate threads are tied together in a tenuous web which stretches across the world. Internal struggles are important in the formation of extreme-right identity, but there does indeed exist a nebulous "culture" which has brought extremists from around the globe to common conclusions.

Accounts of International Right-Wing Extremism

Scholars attempting to understand contemporary phenomena within the right-wing extremist movement can find much of value about specific individuals, ideologies, or groups, but there is little to be found about the internationalization occurring within these areas. The increasingly international perspective of the extreme right tends to be overlooked, with scholars favoring tidy, regionally-focused case studies; they rarely

¹⁰ Chroust, Peter.

include more than passing references to individuals or specific instances of international right-wing extremist communication.¹¹ Furthermore, references to rightwing extremists' ideological, political, religious, and cultural views and interests are often not clearly elaborated, or are indicative more of the movements in the 1970s and 1980s than of contemporary movements.

Due to the difficulties in conceptualizing the extreme right, it is similarly challenging to demonstrate that a true "black international" of unified extremists has ever existed in an effective or coherent form.¹² With a few minor exceptions, ultra-nationalist right-wing movements in the past have tended to focus inward, effectively stymieing opportunities for international cooperation. As has been mentioned previously, collections of articles on right-wing extremism are typically organized by country or region, and individual articles rarely refer to international ties fostered by their objects of study. There are minor examples of this, but details in these accounts are scant. Michael Cox for example discusses the British origins of the prominent Identity Christianity movement, which has become a major locus of American extremism.¹³ Hans-Georg Betz mentions the influence of the American-based White Resistance on European extremists, but does not discuss in detail the explicit links between proponents of the ideology.¹⁴ Within Aurel Braun and Stephen Scheinberg's collection, David Matas touches upon the presence of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in Britain, while Ian J. Kagedan briefly discusses Gary Lauck's role in spreading neo-Nazi propaganda in Germany from within the United

¹¹ See: Braun, Aurel and Stephen Scheinberg. *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk*. Westview Press (Boulder: 1997); Hainsworth, Paul. *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*. Pinter Publishers (London, 1992); Merkl, Peter H. and Leonard Weinberg. *Right-Wing Extremism in the Twenty-First Century*. Frank Cass (London, 2003); Merkl, Peter H. and Leonard Weinberg. *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism in the Nineties*. Frank Cass (London, 1997); Luciano Cheles, Ronnie Ferguson and Michalina Vaughn. *Neo-Fascism in Europe*. Longman (Essex, 1991)

¹² Hainsworth 1992, pg 24

¹³ Cox, Michael. "Beyond the Fringe: The Extreme Right in the United States of America." *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*, ed. Hainsworth, Paul. Pinter Publishers (London, 1992), pg 297

¹⁴ Betz, Hans-Georg. "The Growing Threat of the Radical Right." *Right-Wing Extremism in the Twenty-First Century*. Merkl, Peter H. and Leonard Weinberg. Frank Cass (London, 2003), pg 82-83

States.¹⁵ However, in none of the preceding articles are these topics afforded more than two paragraphs' worth of detail; in some cases it is even less.

Ebata's 1997 essay on right-wing extremism as an international movement is much more fruitful in pointing explicitly to ties between groups and individuals. Gerhard Lauck (the founder of NSDAP-AO), David Duke (a former US politician with ties to the KKK and various neo-Nazi organizations), and Tom Metzger (of White Aryan Resistance) are given ample attention.¹⁶ Ebata's article is from the late 1990s, by which time the presence of extremist groups on the internet was miniscule but growing; unfortunately, this means that the increasingly significant role of the internet in fostering international ties between extremist groups was severely underestimated in Ebata's analysis. Many other scholars have since investigated the phenomenon of right-wing extremism online, but there is often not enough emphasis on the international aspects of the movement and too much emphasis on how the internet functions in general. Antonio Roversi provides a good introduction to the range of extremist websites which one can freely browse, along with detailed descriptions of their structures and contents. The focus, however, is primarily on websites dedicated to Italian Fascism; little attention is devoted to other perspectives.¹⁷ Burris, Smith, and Strahm use social network analysis to examine linkages between right-wing extremists, but their reliance on literal web links posted on extremist websites oversimplifies potential connections by ignoring more direct forms of support and cooperation.¹⁸ Bowman-Grieve, whose essay has been mentioned previously, engages in a fruitful analysis of stormfront.org by conceptualizing the online right-wing extremist movement as a virtual community with international aspects. Her analysis is light on

¹⁵ Matas, David. "The Extreme Right in the United Kingdom and France." *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk*, ed. Braun, Aurel and Stephen Scheinberg. Westview Press (Boulder: 1997), pg 87; Kagedan, Ian J. "Contemporary Right-Wing Extremism in Germany." *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk*, ed. Braun, Aurel and Stephen Scheinberg. Westview Press (Boulder: 1997), pg 116

¹⁶ Ebata, Michi. "The Extreme Right as an International Movement." *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk*, ed. Braun, Aurel and Stephen Scheinberg. Westview Press (Boulder: 1997), 221-222

¹⁷ Roversi, Antonio. *Hate on the Net: Extremist Sites, Neo-fascism On-line, Electronic Jihad*. Ashgate (Aldershot, 2008), pg 59-97

¹⁸ Burris, Val, Emery Smith and Ann Strahm. "White Supremacist Networks on the Internet." *Sociological Focus* Vol. 33 No. 2 (May 2000), 215-235

detail, however, and I hope to build off of her conclusions by providing and examining concrete evidence in greater detail.

In his book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity*, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke points to several instances of international cooperation between right-wing extremist groups during the 20th century.¹⁹ Published in 2003, *Black Sun* includes a wealth of information about international right-wing extremism in the 1990s; however, the first decade of the 21st century is naturally underrepresented. This also means that the new dimension of the internet is not examined in much detail. Furthermore, Goodrick-Clarke's emphasis on occultism and esoteric Nazism necessitates a degree of specificity by country and region. Nevertheless, his book serves as a useful source of background information and facts for scholars looking for an international approach to the extreme right. This analysis seeks to emulate his approach, albeit with greater emphasis on online extremism and a lesser emphasis on extreme right religious belief systems.

Since a review of the literature on international right-wing extremism demonstrates a knowledge gap, it is important to look at cultural studies as supplemental material. Extremist music, which is used both as a recruiting tool and a means of connecting with other extremists, is well-documented among scholars. Skinheads and racist music have long been identified as international in character, and a few studies of these phenomena have delved into this aspect of extremism on the right. In his book *Skinheads Shaved for Battle*, Jack B. Moore outlines the origins of the skinhead movement in Britain and its subsequent spread to the United States.²⁰ His account is informative, but outdated and narrow in scope. Written in 1993, the book provides insufficient information regarding the internet. Similarly, it lacks information regarding international skinhead networks such as the multi-continental Hammerskins Nations. Other scholars who focus on skinheads and racist music seem to be preoccupied with *Oi!* music, which was popular

¹⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, , Nicholas. *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity*. New York: New York University Press (2003)

²⁰ Moore, Jack B. *Skinheads Shaved for Battle: A Cultural History of American Skinheads*. Bowling Green State University Popular Press (Ohio, 1993)

with skinheads in the 1980s and 1990s but is less prominent today. As early as 1999, John M. Cotter recognized that *Oi!* is no longer the only music preferred by right-wing extremists.²¹ Webshops and independent music labels now facilitate the distribution of CDs with a variety of styles, with metal and its subgenres proliferating the "racist rock market."

Source Material

Due to the under-charted territory mapped through this analysis, the following chapters will rely heavily upon primary materials rather than on secondary literature. Secondary literature, particularly materials produced by watchdog organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), will be utilized mainly for its value in providing historical background information. The work which follows is based upon the ideographical and inductive assessment of numerous materials which are freely available on the internet. This approach is, admittedly, fraught with obstacles. Undoubtedly there is a wealth of information shared and held by right-wing extremists on private servers and in the nigh-unfathomable abyss of the deep web, but such information is accessible from the outside only by experienced hackers and sophisticated intelligence services. More easily-accessible materials such as websites, forum posts, images, and music must be relied upon instead. These materials have been assessed with the general assumption that those who have produced them are indeed representatives of extremist ideologies. The anonymous nature of the internet means that the people behind these materials could be anyone, from "trolls" and anti-fascist agitators to police and government agents.²² People participating in Stormfront discussions tend to believe, or at least act like they believe, that they are communicating with like-minded

²¹ Cotter, John M. "Sounds of Hate: White Power Rock and Roll and the Neo-Nazi Skinhead Subculture." *Fascism: Critical Concepts in Political Science* Vol. 5, ed. Roger Griffin and Matthew Feldman. London: Routledge (1995), pg 305

²² "Troll" in this context is used to describe an internet user who posts inflammatory materials and insulting comments on websites and online discussions with the intention of provoking a strong reaction from others.

individuals. Except in the obvious cases of trolling, one should give these users the benefit of the doubt and take their word for it.

Regarding the use of Stormfront as a major source of information, it must be noted that the nature of the website makes for a particularly challenging limitation. The sheer quantity of threads and posts on Stormfront renders the task of reading each individual post virtually impossible for a single individual; even with a team of several people, the task would be nothing short of Herculean. Stormfront currently catalogues over 866,000 threads consisting of more than 11 million posts, thousands of which are in languages other than English. With new threads and posts being submitted every day, the task would be endless. This of course means that any study of Stormfront's contents without the aid of advanced algorithms will naturally be incomplete. That is not to say, however, that a qualitative analysis of the website is entirely fruitless. As one delves into the discourse of Stormfront users, common themes and statements begin to emerge. Prominent users who generate the most influential content appear time and again, signaling the significance of particular threads and topics. Much of the discussion on Stormfront consists of users parroting viewpoints found in other discussions, so it is necessary (and efficient) to limit the analysis to the realm of what is humanly possible. This author's inherent skepticism towards quantitative analysis is born of a faith in the power of human reason and interpretation. Perhaps this view is optimistic at best, or naive and arrogant at worst; perhaps the utility, or lack thereof, of this analysis will shed some light on that position.

CHAPTER 2 - INTERNATIONAL RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM BEFORE 1995

The defeat of the European Axis powers in 1945 marked a turning point in European history, but the collapse of the German and Italian totalitarian regimes did not result in the eradication of extreme right ideologies. Spiritual successors to their movements lived on throughout the world, however miniscule their influence might have been in the democratic Western states which emerged victorious from the war. Nazism and Fascism were vilified by these triumphant powers, and individuals who flirted with such ideologies ran the risk of stigmatization at best, and imprisonment at worst. Nevertheless, dedicated ideologues continued to adapt fascist and National Socialist political ideas to the context of their native countries and political systems. Most of these political actors and organizations were ultra-nationalists whose concerns were with their own countries; there was very little meaningful interaction or exchange between them and their contemporaries in other countries. There are, however, notable exceptions which deserve mention.

If movements and individuals based in the United States appear to be overrepresented in this chapter, it is due partly to the American preoccupation with free speech. After the Second World War, Nazi and Fascist parties operated with minimal interference from government, so long as these groups avoided illegal activities and speech. It is thus unsurprising that the United States would come to harbor a notable amount of right-wing extremists willing to export their ideologies and collaborate with colleagues in other countries. Despite neo-Nazism's European origins, American extremists were in the unique position to re-export these ideas, albeit with a distinctive American flavor. European extremists were and are more heavily restricted, particularly in Germany where any association with Nazism was punishable under the law. German neo-Nazis have always been needed to operate in secret, thus hampering many possibilities for international cooperation.

The ideologies discussed in this chapter are as varied as those which will be examined in subsequent chapters; they will appear familiar too, as modern ideas have not

developed in a vacuum. While history is more helpfully visualized as a continuum rather than as a sequence of clearly-defined periods, the division this analysis into two distinct time periods serves the practical purpose of underlining a critical turning point in the past. The decision to identify 1995 as this turning point is far from arbitrary: it was in that year that stormfront.org was created, and by at that time internet technology was becoming increasingly ubiquitous and accessible to the average person. Extremist ideologies and priorities did not change overnight, but the internet would come to have an unmistakable impact on movements and individual adherents. Key movements and figures relevant before 1995 have also remained relevant after that point, but their roles and influence would come to be shaped by their ability to contend with a new medium and means of communication.

Anglo-American Neo-Nazism and World Union of National Socialists

The suppression of neo-Nazism in Germany after WWII provided American and English organizations with the opportunity to do the heavy lifting in reviving Nazism around the world. George Lincoln Rockwell of the American Nazi Party and Colin Jordan of the National Socialist Movement (NSM) in Britain formed transatlantic ties which represented an early effort to unify like-minded neo-Nazis from different nations. While their success was hampered by the unpopularity and dubious legality of their ideologies and actions, these figures and their movements served as examples for successor movements with similar interests and goals. Most importantly for this analysis, these men created the World Union of National Socialists, which despite its limited functionality existed (and continues to exist, albeit questionably) as an umbrella organization for neo-Nazis and extremists in the Western world.²³

Before his assassination by a disgruntled associate in 1967, George Lincoln Rockwell was a leading voice among right-wing extremists interested in fostering international connections. Rockwell's distinguished career in the US Navy was cut short after his conversion to National Socialism in the late 1950s. He went on to form the

²³ Goodrick-Clarke, 13

American Nazi Party, which was rechristened to the National Socialist White People's Party (NSWPP) shortly before Rockwell was killed.²⁴ Rockwell's ideology was directly inspired by his reading of *Mein Kampf*, and as such was largely anti-Semitic. Though the American Nazi Party was wildly unpopular in the United States, Rockwell's theatrical antics (such as giving public speeches in a Nazi uniform, flanked by "stormtroopers") put him and his ideas firmly in the media spotlight. Most influentially, Rockwell is credited with coining the slogan "white power," which he adapted from the "black power" slogan used by African Americans in the burgeoning civil rights movement.²⁵

Rockwell's international prominence arose from his dealings with a British counterpart, Colin Jordan. Like Rockwell, Jordan had served in the military during the Second World War. While he was sympathetic to Nazism during the war, his political activities began during his university studies at Cambridge after the war. He became a staple in neo-fascist circles, and went on to found the White Defense League in 1957. The White Defense League merged with another group, the National Labor Party, to form the British National Party (BNP). Factional disputes caused Jordan to leave the party in the early 60s. Along with John Tyndall, another deserter, he subsequently created the National Socialist Movement (NSM). Like Rockwell, Jordan used Nazi insignia and uniforms to attract media attention. His "global ambitions" culminated in 1962, when he invited other neo-Nazi parties to England for a Nazi International "summer camp."²⁶ Rockwell was among the party leaders invited to Jordan's event, which was part social gathering and part military boot camp.

Though Rockwell's reputation and activities prevented him from being granted a visa to travel to the United Kingdom, he managed to sneak into England through Ireland. At the NSM summer camp, he and Jordan laid the foundation for the World Union of National Socialists (WUNS). WUNS was created with the intention of bringing a level of ideological consistency to the neo-Nazi parties of the world, as well as to organize the

²⁴ Ibid, 14

²⁵ Archive.org. "George Lincoln Rockwell vs Stokely Carmichael"
<https://archive.org/details/GeorgeLincolnRockwellVsStokelyCarmichael> (Accessed 22 March, 2015)

²⁶ Goodrick-Clarke, 31-37

disparate parties under a single banner. Jordan was named as the “Führer” of WUNS, and Rockwell was chosen as his successor. Rockwell’s chance at leadership arrived shortly after the creation of WUNS: Jordan was arrested and imprisoned merely a few months after the summer camp, leaving Rockwell to take up the position of leadership. WUNS was a powerful idea, but it proved to be a fragile alliance. The organization essentially died with Rockwell, returning the international neo-Nazi scene to “a quarrelsome band of radical nationalists with no central focus to their interminable arguments and Utopian scheming.”²⁷ An organization which claims the name of WUNS still “exists” today, but it appears to be a paper tiger: the majority of the links to its member organizations’ web pages are to be broken or dead.²⁸

Internationally-minded Right-wing extremism in England did not end with Jordan’s arrest, nor did English extremists cease associations with international extremists. From the NSM arose the British National Socialist Movement (BNSM), which in turn led to the formation of the Blood and Honour network of white power music fans. BNSM also gave birth to Combat 18 (C18) in 1991. With a name referencing Adolf Hitler, C18 became an active guerilla movement which held international skinhead gatherings and maintained ties with Swedish, Canadian, and American extremists. The National Front (NF) in Britain was (and is) connected to other groups around the world; the original members of NF, for example, were inspired to action by right-wing extremist Italian fugitives who fled to England.²⁹ All of these groups exist into the present day, and their eventual activities online have ensured that their internationally-minded extremist ideologies remain accessible to and relevant for newer generations of right-wing extremists from around the world.

²⁷ Kaplan, Jeffrey. “The Post-War Paths of Occult National Socialism: from Rockwell to Madole to Manson.” *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 35 No. 3 (2001), pg 41

²⁸World Union of National Socialists. <http://nationalsocialist.net/>(Accessed 13 October, 2014)

²⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, 68

Gerhard Lauck: the “Farm Belt Führer”

German-American Gary (“Gerhard”) Rex Lauck is something of a colorful figure who has long been associated with international neo-Nazism. He is the founder of the NSDAP-AO, which derives its name from the original *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei – Auslands-Organisation* (National Socialist German Worker’s Party – Foreign Organization). Lauck’s NSDAP-AO is one of the longest-existing international neo-Nazi organizations.³⁰ Due to his inflammatory rhetoric and illegal political activities in Germany, he has faced jail time, police surveillance, and assassination attempts. Lauck’s long-running maintenance of international ties between extreme-right actors extends to the present day, and his activities have adapted through his use of the internet. While Lauck’s more recent posts on Stormfront suggest that his contemporary efforts are failing to fully engage his target audience (see Chapters 3 and 4), he is nevertheless an important figure in the history of international neo-Nazism.

Born and raised in the United States, Lauck grew up in a German-American family with close ties to their German roots. He had relatives who fought on both sides of WWII, and from an early age he felt sympathy for the Third Reich. Lauck’s political activities began in 1972, after coming into contact with several Nazi loyalists on a trip to Germany. Upon his return to the United States, Lauck launched a reborn NSDAP-AO.³¹ The party’s initial activities consisted of publishing pro-Nazi stickers and flyers which were then sent to Germany, where the production and distribution of such materials remains illegal. He spent the next three decades traveling between the US and Germany with the intent of spreading propaganda and recruiting new members for his party, but his travels were severely impeded by German authorities. In 1974, Lauck faced a deportation order; in 1976, he was jailed for 4½ months; over the next 30 years, he was found guilty in absentia of various charges by German courts, and only returned to Germany to testify in other cases (when granted temporary amnesty).³²

³⁰ The NSDAP-AO has existed since 1972 until the present day, without changing names.

³¹ Lauck, Gerhard. *The Education of an Evil Genius*. (Lincoln: RJG Enterprises Inc., 2014)

³² Ibid

Lauck's troubles with the authorities reached a pinnacle in 1995, when he was arrested in Denmark due to an international arrest warrant issued by the German authorities. While this did not mark the end of the NSDAP-AO's propaganda efforts, it coincided with the rise of the internet as a new medium for spreading information. By the time that Lauck was released from prison in 1999, his old methods of television interviews, sticker distribution, and "letterbombing" campaigns would no longer have the same impact and potential for generating publicity. Lauck has since shifted his focus to publishing online materials, but the efficacy of these efforts is questionable. Nevertheless, Lauck continues to claim support from NSDAP-AO chapters and brother organizations throughout the world.

Influential Americans

Besides Lauck, several other prominent American extreme-right actors have assisted in fostering material and ideological ties with colleagues in other countries. Their connections with extremists in Europe were not as direct or extensive as Lauck's, but their ideologies and rhetoric have been influential for contemporary movements. William Pierce, David Eden Lane, David Duke, and Tom Metzger are idolized by right-wing extremists around the world, and references to them and their writings appear on myriad websites and online discussions. While these men passed through similar organizations and interacted at times, they took different approaches to their ideologies and became influential in different ways. Lane and Pierce have both died, and in death they have been enshrined as "saints" or "martyrs" among right-wing extremists. Metzger and his organization, White Aryan Resistance (WAR), suffered a heavy financial blow due to a lawsuit, but Metzger has managed to maintain a minor online presence to the present day. Duke currently acts as a de facto spiritual guru for and public face of the contemporary international right-wing extremist scene, and aside from running his own website he remains a visible participant in Stormfront discussions.

William Pierce

Author and politician William Pierce had an extensive career in extreme right politics, which lasted until his death in 2002 at the age of 69. Having dabbled in far-right and ultra-conservative organizations such as the John Birch Society, Pierce eventually joined Rockwell's NSWPP. After Rockwell's assassination, Pierce played a crucial role as a key member of the party's leadership. He would later join the National Youth Alliance, founded by William Carto, but a personal rift between the two men led to a split in the organization. Pierce renamed his wing to the National Alliance, which under his leadership became one of the most prominent right-wing extremist organizations in America.³³ While Pierce was primarily focused on American political issues, his writings would become pieces of inspiration for violent extremist activities around the globe.

Pierce authored two particularly influential books, *The Turner Diaries* and *Hunter*, which espoused themes of racist violence and white supremacy. Published in 1978, *The Turner Diaries* was a fictional account of a race war, told through the diaries of the titular character Earl Turner who participates in the war. The plot revolves around a white supremacist group called the Organization, which eventually overthrows the US government and launches a worldwide purge of non-whites. Containing visceral depictions of violence directed towards blacks, Jews, and "race traitors," the book was meant to be an inspiration to extremists who agreed with Pierce's vision of white supremacy and the use of violence as a means of turning this vision into a reality. In 1989, Pierce published *Hunter*, a book with similar themes but a different plot. In *Hunter*, the protagonist is a "lone wolf" who stalks and kills interracial couples, Jews, and politicians.³⁴ The book marked a shift in right-wing extremist thought and tactics, as large organizations and the cell structure of extremist groups were gradually abandoned in favor of a lone wolf strategy.

³³ Federal Bureau of Investigation. "FOIA: Pierce, William L.-HQ-1," pg 121-2. https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1 (Accessed 6 March, 2015)

³⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center. "William Pierce." <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-files/profiles/william-pierce> (Accessed 6 March, 2015)

The Turner Diaries and *Hunter* have become “required reading” for budding extremists on the right, and many convicted terrorists have been heavily influenced by Pierce’s work. *The Turner Diaries* gained particular notoriety after Timothy McVeigh, who was responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, was found to have been obsessed with the book.³⁵ While there is little evidence that McVeigh was explicitly committed to white supremacist ideology, other violent extremists around the world have been similarly inspired. In his later years, Colin Jordan was inspired by *The Turner Diaries*; in 1986 he wrote a guide to the guerilla tactics and violent agitation that would theoretically secure the future of British Nazism.³⁶ The *Bruder Schweigen*, who are discussed below, modeled their terrorist organization after the Organization from the novel. The Norwegian right-wing extremist and terrorist Anders Behring Breivik was an avid reader of *The Turner Diaries* as well.³⁷ Smaller-scale incidents inspired by *The Turner Diaries* have also occurred, one example being the Brixton and Soho nail bombings by British right-wing extremist David Copeland in 1999.³⁸

David Eden Lane

After his death in prison in 2007, the American right-wing extremist David Eden Lane (not to be mistaken for the American Evangelical activist David Lane) has become a martyr for right-wing extremists worldwide. His writings and quoted extensively online, with his infamous “14 words” having been adopted as one of the most popular slogans of the modern extreme right. Born in 1938, Lane lived through a difficult childhood which saw him and his siblings removed from their mother’s home and placed into foster care. His autobiography says little of interest regarding his life until 1978, the year which Lane claimed to have consolidated his extreme-right worldview. Working as a real estate agent

³⁵ Durham, Martin. “From Imperium to Internet: the National Alliance and the American Extreme Right.” *Patterns of Prejudice* Vol 36 No 3 (2002), pg 51

³⁶ Goodrick-Clarke, 41

³⁷ Gardell, Mattias “Crusader Dreams: Oslo 22/7 - Islamophobia, and the Quest for a Monocultural Europe.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol 26 No 1 (2014), 141

³⁸ Southern Poverty Law Center. “Once Again, The Turner Diaries Inspires Bloodshed.” *Intelligence Report* No 99 (2000). <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2000/summer/terrorism>

by this time, he began to distribute racist pamphlets in his Colorado neighborhood. This, combined with his refusal to rent houses to “coloreds,” resulted in him losing his realtor’s license. Lane subsequently became an active member in extremist organizations, joining the KKK in 1979 and the Aryan Nations in 1981.³⁹

It was Lane’s activities with The Order (aka *Bruder Schweigen* or “silent brotherhood”), a terrorist organization consisting of other white nationalists, which landed him in prison. Inspired by *The Turner Diaries*, Lane and the other members of The Order conducted several bank robberies before murdering a Jewish talk show host in 1984. They were eventually arrested and tried in 1985. Lane would be put on trial an additional two times in 1987; it was during a trial in 1988 that he uttered the “14 words”: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White Children.”⁴⁰ Based on a passage from *Mein Kampf*, the 14 words are popularly referenced by online extremists either in writing, tattoos, or by including the number 14 in their online usernames. Lane continued writing while in prison, and he became particularly interested in formulating a spiritual system which reconciled “Wotanism” and Identity Christianity.⁴¹ Although he retired from writing in 2001, and seems to have focused his efforts on spreading extremist ideas in America rather than throughout the world, Lane has become a martyr internationally for the broader right-wing extremist movement.

David Duke

Few right-wing extremists have had as prominent and colorful a career as “Dr.” David Duke. While Duke’s numerous campaigns for various political offices in the United States kept his attention focused on American issues before 1995, he did make a few attempts to connect with like-minded individuals overseas. Like other prominent American right-wing extremists, Duke began his racist and anti-Semitic activities in

³⁹ Lane, David. *Autobiography of David Lane*. http://www.resist.com/Autobiography_of_David_Lane.pdf (Accessed 18 March, 2015)

⁴⁰ DavidLane1488.com. “In Memorium.” <http://www.davidlane1488.com/fromus.html> (Accessed 17 November, 2014)

⁴¹ Lane, 13

college by donning Nazi regalia during protests in order to gain attention and publicity. In the 1970s, he revived the Ku Klux Klan by establishing the Louisiana Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (KKKK), becoming the organization's "Imperial Wizard" in the process.⁴² Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Duke resolved to clean up the image of right-wing extremists by adopting the dress and speech of a respectable politician. He eventually left the Klan to pursue a political career; his successor, Don Black, would later go on to establish Stormfront. Duke's political activity was largely unsuccessful, but as a Republican candidate for one of Louisiana's United States Senate seats in 1990, he won nearly 60% of the white vote.⁴³

Duke's international activities intensified during the 21st century, but his interest in establishing ties with other extremists abroad was demonstrated by one event before that period. With the intention of establishing a British wing of the KKKK, Duke traveled to the UK in 1978; his efforts were unsuccessful due to interference from British authorities.⁴⁴ The particularly American flavor of the KKKK's image and ideology has meant that, to this day, it remains virtually non-existent outside of the US. Duke's failed political campaigns throughout the 1990s led him to refocus his attention outside of America, and his attempts at fostering ties between American and European extremists are ongoing. Most notably, Duke received a doctorate in history in 2006 from the Interregional Academy of Personnel Management in Ukraine, which is known for its anti-Semitic ideology.⁴⁵ Duke's online presence throughout the 21st century, as well as his close ties to Don Black, has granted him a place of importance and respect in the international right-wing extremist community.

⁴² Anti-Defamation League. "David Duke." (2013) <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/combating-hate/David-Duke.pdf> (Accessed 20 February, 2015)

⁴³ Ibid, 10

⁴⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center. "Stormfront: A History." <http://www.splcenter.org/stormfront-a-history-timeline> (Accessed 23 March, 2015)

⁴⁵ ADL (2013)

Tom Metzger

Like Don Black, American Tom Metzger was once a member of Duke's KKKK. Unlike Black, however, Metzger eventually split from the KKKK and severed his ties with Duke. As is the case with Lane, Metzger's ideology became well known among right-wing extremists due more to the potency of his ideas than his direct efforts to connect with right-wing extremists overseas. Metzger gained prominence in the 1980s through his cable television show, "Race and Reason." The show included occasional international guests, but Metzger's best-known television appearance was on investigative journalist Geraldo Rivera's talk show in which a brawl ensued and Rivera's nose was broken.⁴⁶ More importantly for international right-wing extremists, Metzger founded White Aryan Resistance (WAR) in 1983. WAR's main print publication, which included a variety of racist and violent writings, billed itself as "The Newspaper of the International White Racist."⁴⁷ Metzger also popularized the concept of "leaderless resistance," a lone wolf principle which emphasized the inherent danger of arrest for extremists who operated in visible groups. Metzger suffered a heavy financial blow in 1990, when the SPLC won a lawsuit against him and WAR after an Ethiopian student was murdered by a gang with ties to the organization.⁴⁸ WAR's efficacy was greatly reduced, but it continues to have an influence due to Metzger's online presence. Furthermore, the organization was successfully exported to other countries, particularly Sweden. Metzger's influence on international right-wing extremism is therefore ongoing, and shows no sign of ceasing in the near future.

⁴⁶ New York Times. "Geraldo Rivera's Nose Broken In Scuffle on His Talk Show." (1988) <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/11/04/nyregion/geraldo-rivera-s-nose-broken-in-scuffle-on-his-talk-show.html> (Accessed 29 March, 2015)

⁴⁷ Turner, Wallace. "Extremist Finds Cable TV Is Forum for Right-Wing Views." New York Times (1986) <http://www.nytimes.com/1986/10/07/us/extremist-finds-cable-tv-is-forum-for-right-wing-views.html> (Accessed 29 March, 2015)

⁴⁸ Southern Poverty Law Center. "Berhanu v. Metzger." <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/case-docket/berhanu-v-metzger> (Accessed 10 April, 2015)

Nazi Punks: the Export of Skinheads

Among the most visible and problematic manifestations of right-wing extremism internationally are neo-Nazi and racist skinhead groups. While not as prominent in the 21st century as they were throughout the 1980s and 1990s, skinheads have historically been one of the most successful and influential extremist groups in terms of internationalization. Analysis of skinhead groups must be done with caution, as skinheads may self-identify in a number of ways ranging from neo-Nazi, to anti-racist, to apolitical. Fortunately for scholars interested in researching skinheads, those of the racist variety tend to be visible and outspoken about their extremist identities and ideologies. The criminal activity and violence in which neo-Nazi skinheads engage necessitates an understanding of these groups, as well as the way in which they have spread to the disparate corners of the world. Skinhead identity remains appealing to disaffected youths, both male and female, rendering these groups as potential points of entry for new recruits into extremism.

The skinhead movement began in the United Kingdom during the 1960s, possibly as early as 1964.⁴⁹ Its origins can be found within the “mod” culture which emerged in post-war England. Early skinheads were typically white, working class men who reacted against the effeminate affectations of mods and hippies. From the mods they inherited an interest in dressing sharply, but unlike the mods they chose to adopt a masculine and militant style of dress. The “classic” skinhead uniform consists of a neatly-pressed Ben Sherman shirt, cuffed Levi’s 501 jeans, red or black braces (suspenders, in American English), a bomber jacket, and the ubiquitous pair of well-polished Dr. Martens boots. Skinheads also cropped their hair very short rather than growing it long; it is in this stylistic choice that one may find the origin of the movement’s name. In what is perhaps the greatest irony of the contemporary racist skinhead movement, their progenitors were fans of reggae and dub music, which originated among non-white immigrants to Britain

⁴⁹ Moore, Jack B. *Skinheads Shaved for Battle: A Cultural History of American Skinheads*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press (1993), pg 28

from the Caribbean.⁵⁰ This changed by the 1970s, when the more aggressive among the skinheads were drawn to the raw grit of the punk scene. The move towards punk and away from reggae and dub was a critical development in the spread of the skinheads due to the transatlantic appeal of punk music. It was also during that period that racism and neo-Nazism entered the skinhead movement, or perhaps more accurately that skinheads began to enter extremist movements. In search of foot soldiers in the late 70s, the NF in England hoped to attract bellicose, street-fighting skinheads by appealing to their musical tastes.⁵¹ Thus emerged *Oi!* music, a raw and aggressive derivative of punk which typically features racist and violent lyrics. It is a style which would be adopted and emulated by audiences in other countries, where fans of the music also adopted the skinhead style.

Ian Stuart Donaldson, frontman of the *Oi!* band Skrewdriver, was a member of the National Front and likely had ties to WAR.⁵² Stuart and his contemporaries toured in America and pushed albums in Germany, where they found racists, neo-Nazis, and disillusioned youths receptive to their message and image. By the 1980s, racist or neo-Nazi skinheads could be found in most of the Western world, particularly in the United States, Germany, and Italy. Skinhead gangs and organizations still exist today. These groups range from small, local, independent gangs of disgruntled youths and thugs to international organizations such as the Hammerskin Nation, whose coherent image and ideology is shared between members in Europe, North America, and Australia.⁵³ Skinheads have long been among the most open and visible right-wing extremists, particularly due to their willingness to use violence and predilection towards criminality. While the skinhead culture and image is not as popular among right-wing extremists as it was during the 1980s and 1990s, new generations of right-wing extremists continue to be attracted to the masculine and militant image associated with the skinhead movement.

⁵⁰ Moore, 36-39

⁵¹ Moore, 46-47

⁵² Moore, 58

⁵³ Hammerskin Nation. www.hammerskins.net (Accessed 23 September, 2014)

CHAPTER 3 - STORMFRONT.ORG and EXTREMISM ONLINE, 1995- PRESENT

Before 1995, white supremacists and right-wing extremists were able to communicate via “snail mail” and over the telephones, or in person at gatherings such as concerts. The circulation of books and materials was possible through the use of mailing lists and physical catalogues, methods which any other political organization relied upon at the time. 1995 is given as a pivotal year in the history of international right-wing extremism because of the creation of stormfront.org, the world’s first and most prominent right-wing extremist website. The creation of Stormfront marked a turn from the older conventional channels of communication towards the new and innovative medium of the internet. Stormfront’s existence for twenty years at the time of writing (2015) is of key importance in understanding the myriad shifts in ideology and culture among right-wing extremists around the world. Stormfront is far from the only online institution of right-wing extremism, but it is the largest most stable; hundreds, if not thousands, of other websites exist, or have existed, but none can be considered to be as influential as Stormfront. This chapter will present a brief history of Stormfront in particular and online international right-wing extremism more generally from 1995 to the present, and will display a snapshot of how this phenomenon looks today. A detailed analysis of the content of these websites will follow in Chapter 4.

Stormfront

With over twenty years of history and hundreds of thousands of users, Stormfront.org is undoubtedly the most prominent right-wing extremist website in existence. Stormfront’s main function is as a web forum, where users and guests can view and participate in discussions on nearly any topic imaginable, albeit through the prism of a right-wing extremist worldview. While the website is maintained by a small group of individuals, nearly all of its content is generated by the user base and is thus a truly collective effort. These users include individuals from most corners of the world,

particularly North America and Europe, but also South America, South Africa, and Oceania (particularly Australia and New Zealand). As the first website of its kind, Stormfront has enjoyed a near-exponential growth in its membership base since it was created. It has undergone functional and cosmetic changes since its inception, but despite this it has always existed as a virtual gathering place for right-wing extremists. Stormfront celebrates its 20th “birthday” in 2015, and in its two decades of existence it has become the most popular and significant force in bringing right-wing extremists from all corners of the world into an increasingly global movement.

The brainchild of an American named Don Black, Stormfront’s origins lie in Black’s 1990 dialup computer bulletin board, which was also called Stormfront.⁵⁴ Its prominence began to grow in 1995, when Black transferred the bulletin board’s content to the World Wide Web in the form of stormfront.org, the form which it retains to this day. Black’s extremist credentials reach back to the 1970s, when Black was active in white supremacist circles. It was during the 70s that he came into contact with David Duke. Black joined Duke’s emergent KKKK, eventually becoming Duke’s second-in-command and subsequently taking charge of the group after Duke’s resignation.⁵⁵ Black would gain international notoriety in 1981 due to his role in Operation Red Dog, a right-wing extremist plot which entailed overthrowing the government of Dominica and establishing a white state. The plot was uncovered before the operation commenced, and Black was jailed for three years for his participation.⁵⁶ During his prison sentence he began to learn computer programming, a skill which he would put to effective use in the coming years. The Stormfront bulletin board was simply the first step in what would become an unstoppable global phenomenon.

When stormfront.org was launched by Black in March 1995, it was the first website of its kind: no other major gathering places of the extreme right had yet come into

⁵⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center. “Stormfront: A History.” <http://www.splcenter.org/stormfront-a-history-timeline> (Accessed 23 March, 2015)

⁵⁵ Kim, T.K. “Hate Website Stormfront Sees Rapid Growth of Neo-Nazi Community.” Southern Poverty Law Center. *Intelligence Report* No 188 (2005) <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2005/summer/electronic-storm> (Accessed 23 March, 2015)

⁵⁶ Ibid

existence in cyberspace. Stormfront's traffic was given an initial boost from extensive media attention; however, the site's membership remained relatively small throughout the 1990s. After 2002, however, Stormfront's membership base began to grow exponentially: from 2002 until 2004, when the site was redesigned in a way which has largely remained unchanged to this day, the number of active users grew from 5,000 to over 20,000.⁵⁷ By 2008, the number reached over 133,000. At the time of writing, the site's membership totals over 299,000 and this growth shows no sign of ceasing.⁵⁸ While the number of active or regular users is likely much smaller than this figure, its growth is still noteworthy. Furthermore, the figure does not take into account the number of "lurkers," or unregistered viewers, who regularly visit the site and read its content. Stormfront's ability to claim being the first website of its kind, coupled with Black's savvy decision not to create a hierarchical organization or cohesive dogma behind the website, has undoubtedly aided in this explosion of popularity among a wide variety of right-wing extremists over the past two decades.

Description and Form

While not entirely crucial to understanding the phenomena which are the focus of this analysis, an understanding of Stormfront's structure and basic content is useful for visualizing the context in which contemporary ideological and cultural developments among right-wing extremists have taken place. It is important to note that Stormfront was created by an American, is largely run and moderated by Americans, and exists on servers based in the United States. Thus, Stormfront is very much an American "institution" despite its increasingly international outlook and constitution. This is significant in that its user base and the general point of reference bear an especially strong American influence; from Stormfront's red-white-and-blue color scheme to the prevalence of American English throughout the website, an American perspective is inherent in the website. As will be further elaborated in Chapter 4, this American context has had

⁵⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center. "Stormfront: A History." <http://www.splcenter.org/stormfront-a-history-timeline> (Accessed 23 March, 2015)

⁵⁸ As of 23 April, 2015

important implications for the internationalization of right-wing extremism over the past twenty years.

Stormfront's design is simple and relatively user-friendly. The home page resembles that of a standard internet forum. It welcomes visitors with a prominent banner image which bears the slogan "White Pride World Wide;" occasionally, the banner image will display a picture of a famous white European or American and the date of their greatest achievement. Below this banner, one can find links and information regarding Don Black's radio show, a progress bar of funding goals (\$5358 of the \$7500 goal for spring 2015),⁵⁹ and a succinct description of the community:

We are a community of racial realists and idealists. We are White Nationalists who support *true* diversity and a homeland for *all* peoples. Thousands of organizations promote the interests, values and heritage of non-White minorities. We promote ours. Yet we are demonized as "racists."

We are the voice of the new, embattled White minority!

If this is your first visit, be sure to check out the **Introduction to Stormfront**. You are also welcome to browse our other ten million posts, but you must **register** before you can post anywhere except the Open Forums.

Below this welcome message, one can view the exhaustive list of forums, which are topic-specific discussion spaces organized into the following categories:

1. *Private Forums*, open only to those who have contributed money to Stormfront;
2. *Introduction to Stormfront*, which provides general information about Stormfront as well as Guidelines for Posting;
3. *News*, which is the intended place for users to post news articles;
4. *General*, the largest category, which contains a diverse selection of topics relating to ideology, culture, and lifestyle;

⁵⁹ As of 23 April 2015

5. *Open Forums*, in which unregistered “guests” may post and ask questions;
6. *Suggestions and Frequently Asked Questions*, which should be self-explanatory;
7. *Activism*, where users may discuss activities and techniques for spreading their message beyond Stormfront;
8. *White Singles*, where users can set up dates or discuss dating-related issues;
9. *International*, perhaps the most relevant forum to this analysis, as it includes subforums which focus on regions and countries outside of America.

Many of the aforementioned forum categories include a number of “subforums,” which bear crisp and succinct titles that make their prospective content clear. Some of these subforums include their own subforums, making for a highly-organized and easily-navigated website structure. Furthermore, the website includes a search function which allows visitors to search for specific terms, topics, or threads, either generally or by subforum. Below the list of categories, information regarding the users who are currently online, the total number of users and guests who have visited in the past 24 hours, general statistics, and current member birthdays are displayed.

Beyond these basic forum features, Stormfront includes a number of social tools which can assist members in creating personal connections and friendships with other users. Each registered member has a profile page which can display any information that they wish to supply, including birthdate, a personal website URL, instant messaging account handles, location or hometown/country, interests, occupation, and a biography. Each user creates their own unique screen name or nickname, and can upload an “avatar” photo, or profile picture, of their choosing (subject to moderation). Users may make “friends” with other users, send private messages, post on each others’ profiles, or join “Social Groups” organized around personal interests or specific themes and topics. In this way, Stormfront not only serves as a means of sharing information or debating issues, but also provides users with an online social network not unlike those found in other forms of social media. Stormfront is, in essence, a “one-stop shop” for right-wing extremists whose online social lives can exist exclusively on this website. Stormfront’s long history

and enduring popularity have aided in its sophistication, and this sophistication in turn has likely facilitated its recruitment and retention of users from around the world.

As has been mentioned above, there are nearly 300,000 registered users of Stormfront. These users have created over 870,000 threads, consisting of over 11 million posts. Within any given 24 hour time period, over a thousand registered users and tens of thousands of unregistered guests are likely to visit the site. While the demographic information of Stormfront's users is not collated in one location, extensive examination of the website's content suggests that the majority of users are from America, followed by Britain. Despite the prevalence of American and British users on Stormfront, numerous users from other countries are present and visible. Using the number of threads within the International subforums as a rough metric for the number of international users, the descending order of countries and regions with active Stormfront users can be determined as: the Netherlands; Australia and New Zealand; Spain, Portugal, and Latin America; Canada; Serbia and Southeast Europe; Italy; South Africa; Ireland; Russia; the Baltic States and Scandinavia; Croatia; Hungary; and Belgium. Germany is notably absent from this list due to Stormfront's restriction by German authorities and the close and unwanted scrutiny that participation on the site would entail for German right-wing extremists.⁶⁰ Nearly every region in the world which hosts a significant or majority white population is thus represented on Stormfront, but American voices are the most prominent in general discussions. Nevertheless, the forums on Stormfront are a truly international space for conversation and identity formation.

Other Websites, Minor Forums, and Online Stores

Stormfront may be the most influential and highly-visited right-wing extremist website, but it is far from being the only one in existence. Various website categories encompass countless other sites which are dedicated to different aspects of extremist ideology, politics, and culture. Forums other than Stormfront have come and gone, but

⁶⁰ Causalset. "Why no stormfront germany?" Stormfront (21 July, 2012) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t901695/> (Accessed 3 March, 2015)

these other forums are usually more specific or narrow in their content and focus. Numerous organizations and political parties which espouse right-wing extremist beliefs maintain an online presence, and have done so for many years. Webshops which sell right-wing extremist paraphernalia and media can be easily found online as well. Additionally, members of the extreme right have attempted to spread their ideology on more conventional social media platforms including Facebook and Reddit. A comprehensive list of all of these websites is far beyond the scope of this analysis; instead, there will be an attempt to discuss only the most noteworthy or relevant websites, most of which are still in use today.

Parties and Organizations

Numerous right-wing extremist political parties and organizations have maintained an online presence, but it is difficult to gauge the extent to which their sites are seen and visited on a regular basis. These groups' websites are often archaic or outdated: they often look as though they were built over ten years ago, which may indeed be the case in many circumstances. Furthermore, these often contain several broken links, or links to websites which are no longer in existence. This prevalence of dead links is unsurprising, as the fragmented nature of organized right-wing extremism means that financial support is difficult to come by. Servers and domain names cost money to maintain, and webmasters will necessarily have to utilize their own funds in the absence of regular contributions from supporters. Nevertheless, many right-wing extremist websites are still maintained and updated, implying that the people (or person) behind them can still afford to do so. Some websites have even been modernized in recent years, suggesting that the organizations which run them still have the ability and enthusiasm to keep their online presence alive.

Gerhard Lauck has maintained an online presence since 2000. Although the URL for his NSDAP-AO website is rather unwieldy,⁶¹ it can be easily found with a Google search for "NSDAP-AO." Lauck's site is very simple in its form, but its content is

⁶¹ Lauck's website can be found at <http://nazi-lauck-nsdapao.com/>

extremely dense. It consists of basic text and images on a white background, and the majority of its content is to be found on a single page. While it lacks the polish or sophistication of other right-wing extremist websites, it hosts a vast amount of information and materials. One can download posters, computer games, and free newsletters in several languages. Additionally, Lauck lists several books and flags which are available for sale. The site also contains information (in several languages) on using proxy servers to access blocked websites. The plethora of swastikas displayed throughout the page leaves little mystery as to the ideology of its webmaster.

Lauck's newer site, protest-vote.com, is more ambiguous at first glance. Launched on November 23, 2014, protest-vote.com sets aside the swastika and replaces it with toned-down anti-establishment and anti-immigration rhetoric. Of Lauck's two websites, Protest Vote is a more dedicated attempt at internationalization. Its welcome text reads, "This is a GLOBAL problem!" This text is followed by links to the website in 41 languages. All of the Protest Vote sites are organized in a manner similar to Lauck's NSDAP-AO website, but they are much less cluttered. Lauck's supporters briefly led a recruitment drive on Stormfront in an attempt to recruit new members for the Protest Vote project. This included sending private messages to individual users as well as creating forum posts detailing the ways in which potential supporters could become involved in the project.⁶² Lauck's three forum threads advertising the website collectively garnered about 1,600 views, but the two most recent threads received no replies.⁶³ It remains to be seen if Protest Vote will have as much significance among the extreme right as the NSDAP-AO has enjoyed.

Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance website has been online at least since 2006, but was updated in 2015. Found at resist.com, the W.A.R. webpage greets visitors with an angry wolf's face, possibly an allusion to the "lone wolf" ideology which WAR represents. Many of the website's materials focus on the concept of leaderless resistance

⁶² The Stormfront account created by this author received this private message from user "Aryan Beauty" on 21 January, 2015. Due to the private nature of user accounts, a direct link to the message is not possible.

⁶³ A search for "Gerhard Lauck" on Stormfront displays his posts.

which Metzger has become known for. Unlike Lauck, Metzger does not make as outright an attempt to appeal to an international audience; in fact, an older version of the website buried in an obscure corner of the current site stresses that “WAR advises all U.S. racial activists to concentrate on freeing North America from non-White aliens and from racial suicide. Aryans of Europe must develop their own Aryan movements.”⁶⁴ This page, however, is not likely to be viewed by most visitors to Metzger’s site given its hidden nature, and the information and writings he provides would undoubtedly feel relevant to right-wing extremists around the world who are interested in leaderless resistance.

While David Lane has been dead since 2007, his words and beliefs are kept alive at davidlane1488.com. The website appears to have been launched before Lane’s death in prison in the same year, but it has been maintained by Women for Aryan Unity (WAU) Australia since 2011.⁶⁵ Its content is dedicated heavily to paying tribute to the members of The Order, as memorials to deceased members as well as requests for donations are displayed prominently on the home page. In addition, it contains all of Lane’s writings. WAU maintains their own website as well, and it is much more polished and easily-navigated than the website dedicated to Lane.⁶⁶ Their focus on women and families presents a different picture of right-wing extremism than is typically found on other websites. Furthermore, their site states that their organization consists of several chapters in places including the US, Argentina, Europe, Spain, Italy, and Australia. In this way, WAU’s online presence functions as a truly international network which focuses on the typically marginalized female perspective of right-wing extremism.

Upon visiting David Duke’s personal website, viewers are welcomed by a grainy photo of a white-bearded and glum-looking Duke, as well as a dubious greeting: “DavidDuke.com – For Human Freedom and Diversity.” Despite the unflattering photograph, the remainder of Duke’s website is rather sophisticated and resembles a

⁶⁴ White Aryan Resistance. “International.” <http://www.resist.com/positions/International.html> (Accessed 15 March, 2015)

⁶⁵ Lane, David “Thank you.” (2006) <http://www.davidlane1488.com/thankyou.html> (Accessed 7 May, 2015)

⁶⁶ Women for Aryan Unity. <http://www.wau14.com/> (Accessed 7 May, 2015)

conventional news website. The home page contains links to the website's latest articles, a database of all posts, Duke's contact information, and information on how to "Help Dr. Duke's Work." Most of the main page is dedicated to a high quantity of articles penned by Duke and his associates. There are several news categories, which include seemingly mundane topics such as Economics, History, Health/Fitness, Movies/Music/Books/Art, and Religion. Alongside these topics are categories such as Jewish Supremacism, Zionism & Judaism, Zio-Watch with Dr. Patrick Slattery, and Jewish Extremism. Unsurprisingly, many of the articles found on Duke's website "expose" Zionist plots and other malevolent activities purportedly propagated by Zionists. Befitting Duke's 21st global perspective, the articles are not limited to issues in the United States. Also notable is the fact that individuals who would like to "Help Dr. Duke's Work" are provided with links corresponding to their location: Europe, and "anywhere else." Curiously, both links redirect visitors to daviddukeonline-eu.com, where books and other products are available for purchase. Donations can also be made via credit card.

Screwdriver.net, an affiliate website of C18, can still be easily accessed but does not appear to have been updated since the early 2000s.⁶⁷ The website's URL is derived from the name of the *Oi!* band fronted by Ian Stuart Donaldson, who had ties to C18. Screwdriver.net is an overtly neo-Nazi website which displays images of swastikas, AK-47s, and references to the Aryan race. The website contains a wealth of information, ranging from written resources to audio archives. It is truly an international website, and displays these credentials prominently. The news section, while outdated, hosts photographs from concerts and events in Serbia and Sweden, and includes references to other foreign "divisions" of C18. Furthermore, the website's "Field Manual" was authored by a Norwegian; now deceased, he is awarded a memorial page listing his contributions to the international right-wing extremist movement. Interestingly, the "Terror and Violence" section of the Field Manual is a dead link. It is unclear when the

⁶⁷Skrewdriver.net. "Blood and Honour Worldwide." <http://www.skrewdriver.net/worldindex.html> (Accessed 5 March, 2015)

page went offline, but the allusion to its existence leaves little doubt as to the ideology and mentality of those who have maintained the website.

Perhaps the largest and best-organized skinhead group in the world, the Hammerskin Nation has a detailed and comprehensive website which proudly displays the group's international credentials and focus. According to the description on their website, the Hammerskins are "a leaderless group of men and women who have adopted the White Power Skinhead lifestyle. [They] are blue collar workers, white collar professionals, college students, entrepreneurs, fathers and mothers."⁶⁸ Below this description, the website also displays the "14 words" coined by David Lane. The website also includes a detailed history of the Hammerskin Nation, which traces the group's American origins as well as its spread into Europe during the early 1990s. The "Chapters Contacts" page of the website displays maps of several countries, each bearing one or more links which are stylized as individual chapters' badges. According to this map, the Hammerskins have 6 chapters in the United States, as well as one chapter each in Australia, Italy, Canada, New Zealand, Portugal, France, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, and Luxembourg.⁶⁹ The links redirect visitors to individual pages for each of the branches, most of which provide a brief history of the chapter in question. The Hammerskins websites do not express any explicitly violent or racist positions, but an inherent sense of militancy pervades their imagery and language. Finally, the website hosts a link to the "Crew 38" forum, which will be discussed in the subsequent section.

Forums

Right-wing extremist forums beyond Stormfront tend to be more focused in their content and attract particular sections of the wider movement. While not nearly as large as Stormfront, the Hammerskin Nation "Crew 38" forum is still a significant and visible discussion space for right-wing extremists, particularly those interested in and involved

⁶⁸ Hammerskin Nation. www.hammerskins.net (Accessed 23 September, 2014)

⁶⁹ Hammerskin Nation. "Chapters" <http://hammerskins.net/chapters.html> (Accessed 23 September, 2014)

with the neo-Nazi skinhead movement.⁷⁰ With just over 2,000 registered users and nearly 10,000 threads, the Crew 38 forums are a smaller and more specific niche than Stormfront. As the “support” organization for the Hammerskins, Crew 38 includes a broad community of skinhead groups whose affiliation with the Hammerskins is too loose for full-fledged membership in the Hammerskin Nation.⁷¹ Like Stormfront, the Crew 38 forums function as a regular web forum; however, Crew 38 lacks the social tools which make Stormfront’s user experience more comprehensive. The content of many discussion threads are not open to unregistered users, but the topic’s titles are visible. Openly racist thread titles are quite visible, and are even “stickied” in some cases.⁷² The forum also has many subforums dedicated to groups in both Europe and North America, demonstrating the ongoing international solidarity of the organized skinhead movement.

Another notable right-wing extremist forum, Skadi Forum, existed from 2002 until 2012.⁷³ Members of Skadi were primarily interested in Germanic heritage and racist genetics, but the site was used by and known to many members of Stormfront who lamented its eventual downfall. The reason for its demise is unclear, but posts on Stormfront suggest that it was taken down in a major DDoS attack by hackers, possibly members of the hacker group Anonymous.⁷⁴ Some forums, such as The Apricity (which is billed as “A European Cultural Community”), are known to harbor a number of right-wing extremists.⁷⁵ Unlike the other forums, however, The Apricity is frequented by users of many political persuasions. While it is used by some as a platform for extremist ideology, one can find a range of opinions including ones critical of right-wing extremists. Therefore, The Apricity should not be considered to be a right-wing extremist forum per se. Other, smaller forums exist which are dedicated to overt extremist

⁷⁰ Crew 38. “Forum 38.” <http://www.crew38.com/forum38/content.php> (Accessed 16 April, 2013)

⁷¹ RV311. “Crew 38.” Crew 38. <http://www.crew38.com/forum38/showthread.php?3638-Crew-38> (Accessed 16 April, 2013)

⁷² Crew 38. “Humor and Jokes.” <http://www.crew38.com/forum38/forumdisplay.php?100-Humor-and-Jokes> (Accessed 16 April, 2013)

⁷³ Robert Lloyd. “Skadi forum down.” (27 August, 2012) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t909660> (Accessed 19 April, 2015)

⁷⁴ Ibid, 2

⁷⁵ The Apricity. www.theapricity.com (Accessed 19 April, 2015)

ideologies, but they have very limited activity or severely restricted membership. Many of these are private forums for particular groups, and are thus typically not accessible to outsiders. One example is The National Alliance, which originated with William Pierce, has a forum with 132 registered users.⁷⁶ Another forum, The White Race Forum, has just over 1,700 registered users and is thus nowhere near Stormfront's nearly 300,000.⁷⁷

Webshops

Right-wing extremist merchandise and music is available online through several websites, including a multitude of online stores or “webshops.” Some of these webshops are connected to organizations, but many are also run by private individuals. Judging by the physical addresses of these companies, most appear to be based in the United States. The products on these webshops typically include music CDs, DVDs, books, flags, clothing, jewelry, and other novelty items. These products bear overt Nazi imagery (including swastikas, SS runes, death's heads, and iron crosses), or are emblazoned with slogans which leave little doubt as to the ideology and culture they represent. Other products may appear more mundane, but their positioning alongside less subdued items renders these webshops rather clear in their target demographic.

Micetrap Distribution LLC is one of the major online stores for right-wing extremist merchandise. Based in New Jersey, Micetrap accepts payment in US, American, and Canadian dollars; Euros; and pounds sterling.⁷⁸ Their “Order Information” page includes a special section in German, in which their discrete and secure ordering system is explained to potential German customers.⁷⁹ The webshop includes several product categories, including Compact Discs, Clothing, Flags, “Miscellaneous” (including shot glasses, rune stones, stickers, and video games), Magazines & Books,

⁷⁶ White Biocentrism. <http://whitebiocentrism.com/index.php?sid=91dc03ada8cc1798f50cb17c3d97b0bc> (Accessed 14 April, 2015)

⁷⁷ The White Race. “Forum.” <http://thewhiterace.com/> (Accessed 14 April, 2015)

⁷⁸ Micetrap Distribution LLC. “Clothing.” <http://www.micetrap.net/shop/catalog/clothing-c-26.html?osCsid=7afeec39ad811018fffa65f393f99bc3> (Accessed 10 May, 2015)

⁷⁹ Micetrap Distribution LLC. “Ordering Info.” <http://www.micetrap.net/shop/catalog/orderinginfo.php> (Accessed 10 May, 2015)

Patches, Vinyl Records, DVDs & VHS Tapes, and various other sundries. The available products cater to a wide variety of right-wing extremist groups; for example, the flags listed on Micetrap's webshop include Nazi and Nazi-themed flags, Confederate flags, national flags of European countries, group-specific extremist flags (such as the KKK and Aryan Nations), and, curiously, the United Nations flag. The clothing section includes a wide variety of racist, supremacist, and Nazi-themed t-shirts which bear aggressive and/or "humorous" images and slogans. Items marketed towards skinheads are especially prominent. Despite being based in the United States, Micetrap's wide range of products is clearly designed to have international appeal.

Similar to Micetrap, NSM88 Records and Tightrope records are American-based webshops which host extensive online catalogues of numerous items. Both also ship their products internationally. The items hosted on their websites are similar to Micetrap's in variety and character, but both shops notably sell a sizable number of right-wing extremist-themed knives in addition to their more mundane goods.⁸⁰ Both sites sell products which represent various right-wing extremist groups and movements, but Tightrope in particular features items which seemed to be aimed at Americans interested in the KKK and Confederate imagery. Nazi-themed items are to be found in abundance in both webshops. NSM88 sells over 700 music albums, which is much more extensive than the 16 sold by Tightrope.⁸¹ Nevertheless, their products are similar in nature and their stores are as simple to navigate and use as any other mainstream online shop.

Some of the websites mentioned in a previous section host webshops in addition to their other materials. Gerhard Lauck sells a large selection of Nazi books, flags, CDs, and DVDs on his Third Reich Books site.⁸² The site, much like his other online ventures, is organized in a crude style which displays all of its products on a single page.

Nevertheless, the variety of books which Lauck sells is noteworthy. The White Aryan

⁸⁰ Tightrope Records. "Knives." <http://tightrope.cc/catalog/knives-c-25.html>; NSM88 Records. "Knives & Daggers." <http://nsm88records.com/theshop/index.php?cPath=67>; NSM88 Records. "Militaria Collectables." <http://nsm88records.com/theshop/index.php?cPath=55> (Accessed 10 May, 2015)

⁸¹ NSM88 Records. "Compact Discs (CDs)." <http://nsm88records.com/theshop/index.php?cPath=41>; Tightrope Records. "CDs." <http://tightrope.cc/catalog/cds-c-26.html> (Accessed 10 May, 2015)

⁸² Third Reich Books. <http://www.third-reich-books.com/> (Accessed 10 May, 2015)

Resistance “Insurgent Store” sells clothing, rings, patches, flags, pins, pendants, and multimedia materials.⁸³ The products are mostly Nazi-themed, and there are vastly fewer products than are sold by Micetrap, Tightrope, or NSM88. David Duke also sells a variety of products, but they are also few in number. The majority of Duke’s items are self-promotional in nature: many books and videos are available for purchase, most of which are published by Duke. The shop also sells t-shirts, sweatshirts, and hats emblazoned with Duke’s name, as well as with the “White Pride World Wide” Celtic cross symbol featured on Stormfront. Women for Aryan unity host a simple webshop with a small number of products which are available for purchase via email. Their items are less overly racist or Nazi-affiliated than the products on the other webshops, but the imagery featured on these still indicates the general position of WAU. Many of these goods appear to be handcrafted by WAU members, thus offering customers unique items which cannot be found elsewhere.

Other Media

Right-wing extremist ideology can be found in several formats online, so it is unsurprising that a right-wing extremist wiki site also exists. Metapedia.org, which can be described as an extreme-right version of Wikipedia, acts as an online encyclopedia of topics relevant to the wider right-wing extremist movement. Like Wikipedia, Metapedia is available for viewing in several languages; unlike Wikipedia, Metapedia is translated into 17 languages (as opposed to 277).⁸⁴ These 17 languages are from countries with majority white European populations, which is fitting given the website’s content and perspective. The open-source nature of wikis has contributed to a wide range of “voices” and tones in Metapedia articles. Some entries are rather neutral or mundane, while others are written from a clearly ideologically-charged standpoint. Metapedia’s articles, taken with a grain of salt, have been useful resources for this analysis due to their coverage of

⁸³ White Aryan Resistance. “Insurgent Equipment Yard.” http://www.resist.com/war_store.htm (Accessed 15 April, 2015)

⁸⁴ Wikipedia. “List of Wikipedias.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Wikipedias (Accessed 30 April, 2015)

topics which are seldom discussed elsewhere. While these articles have not been utilized as factual sources due to the potential for inaccuracy and bias inherent in the wiki format, they have been useful starting points for identifying prominent movements, individuals, and websites. Perhaps of more relevance to this analysis is what Metapedia represents: it is an international effort by the right-wing extremist community “to influence the mainstream debate, culture and historical view.”⁸⁵

Right-wing extremists online do not limit their activities simply to personally-owned websites and forums: they also have begun to use more public platforms from which they may espouse their ideas. Social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit engage in little censorship of the content posted by their users, thus making them fertile ground for both right-wing extremists to recruit new members and broadcast their ideology to a wider audience. Reddit in particular has seen a surge in right-wing extremist activities. Reddit is a website which hosts entirely user-generated content in numerous “subreddits.” Members can create new subreddits with names which describe their topic. In 2015, there was an explosion of white supremacist and extremist subreddits, including /r/WhiteRights, /r/GasTheKikes, /r/CoonTown, /r/NationalSocialism, /r/new_right, /r/AntiPOZi, and /r/european, to name only a few.⁸⁶ Reddit is virtually unmoderated, which allows for the posting of content which platforms such as Facebook or Twitter would potentially censor. Right-wing extremists have also invaded subreddits which host content that they deem anti-white; they engage in trolling by flooding these subreddits with inflammatory content. Whether the individuals who participate in this are dedicated to the ideology or simply bored teenagers looking to get a reaction out of anonymous internet users, is irrelevant. By displaying these ideas prominently across popular websites, right-wing extremists have the potential to attract large numbers of young, new members who may not have otherwise seen such content.

This chapter has provided but a few prominent examples of right-wing extremist websites, but it reflects the varied nature of the online formats through which the ideology

⁸⁵ Metapedia. Metapedia.org (Accessed 30 April, 2015)

⁸⁶ Slay, Michael. “Reddit is Fertile Ground for Recruitment.” Daily Stormer, 2015.

<http://www.dailystormer.com/reddit-is-fertile-ground-for-recruitment/> (Accessed 19 April, 2015)

of the extreme right is perpetuated. Numerous other examples exist, and have existed. It is important to note that right-wing extremist websites appear and disappear on a regular basis. During the course of this study, for example, the webshop aryanwear.com went from being a well-constructed online shop to being a dead link. Another notable example of this is Micetrap's "Top 88 Sites" list, which provided links to several other right-wing extremist websites (many of which also led to dead ends). Some of the aforementioned websites may also change in appearance, as resist.com did during the writing of this analysis. Most of the websites examined here have existed for several years, and are likely to be maintained by the people behind them for as long as possible. The following chapter will examine these websites' content, rather than form, in greater detail.

CHAPTER 4 - IDEOLOGICAL TIES and INTERNATIONAL CULTURE

The proliferation of internet communications has facilitated the diffusion of ideas among right-wing extremists, bringing greater ideological coherence across national borders than has existed in the past. Issues of national or regional concern have not evaporated; they are rather being discussed in common terms and out of shared interest. The politics of the extreme right may be varied and fragmented, but these variations extend across borders and oceans by means of the internet. Political ideology is an obvious point of connection between right-wing extremists around the world, and may be the primary defining characteristic of extreme-right identity. It is important, however, to examine cultural and religious identity as complementary and vital components of internationalization. Religion and culture within extreme-right circles are used as vehicles for conveying political ideas, and international ties in these areas are often more visible, but overlooked, than in the political arena. As evinced by rhetoric and discussions among right-wing extremists online, the three areas of politics, culture, and religion are major components of extreme right identity. They exist in overlapping circles, mutually reinforcing one another in various directions and unbound by geographical constraints. The correspondences between these areas across state borders are thus worthy of detailed examination.

Politics and Political Beliefs

In Chapter 1, the broader “extreme right” is conceptualized on the basis of certain key components. Many, but not all of these elements are found in each and every thread of right-wing extremist ideology or political belief. Rather, they are among the “menu” of ideas which right-wing extremists are prone to adopt. The most prominent of these ideas is, quite broadly, a concept of racialism which is cast through varying lenses. This racialist ideology is typically derived from “classic” National Socialism, although it is not always portrayed as such. Explicit National Socialism, as well as neo-Nazi derivations of the ideology, remains common among members of the extreme right. While Nazism and

its modern incarnations fall under the broad racist ideology of the extreme right, the historical importance and influence of these ideologies warrants a brief discussion. The rejection of liberal democracy and the use and acceptance of violence among right-wing extremists are more complicated matters. Some organizations and parties believe in using democratic means to accomplish their goals, while others reject democracy; furthermore support for democracy does not exclude the possibility of embracing violence. While many organizations and individuals purport to condemn the use of violence, it is not uncommon to find tacit support for violent tactics and actions within extreme-right rhetoric. Additionally, it is enlightening to examine the internal debates which right-wing extremists are holding on contemporary political issues. Immigration, crime and justice, and debates on the conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine reveal ideological cleavages, as well as insights about how right-wing extremists view the world and their positions within the world.

Racialism and White Nationalism

At the core of right-wing extremist political ideology is a concept of racialism, most commonly expressed as “white nationalism.” Stormfront is advertised as a white nationalist forum, and the majority of the discussions on Stormfront are framed within this context. Even so, white nationalism is not a consistent concept. It is fluid, and open to interpretation depending on an individual’s initial frame of reference. Nevertheless, it is possible to distill the idea of white nationalism down to several underlying themes. There is an implicit sense of white supremacy, which is often rejected in principle but expressed in practice. Vague, idealistic, but forceful calls for a “white nation” underlie white nationalist ideology, but the specifics of where this theoretical white nation should or will be established are hotly debated. This white nation, according to the idea’s proponents, is necessary to ensure the continued existence of the white race; without a white nation, the white European race is vulnerable to the threat of “white genocide” from a varied combination of progressive liberals, communists, Zionists, and “mud races.” White nationalism thus requires the identification of a dangerous or threatening “other,”

and this other is typically determined on the basis of skin color, ethnicity, or religious belief. Most significantly, white nationalism exists as an internationally-minded ideology which attempts to dilute the barriers between white, ethnic Europeans posed by specific national identity.

Whiteness

In order to fully understand white nationalism, one must first understand how proponents of the idea determine who is white and who is not. In Stormfront's Open Forum thread, "Read this before asking – 'Who's White?'" , Stormfront Senior Moderator John Law is quoted as saying that the only people who may be considered to be white are "[n]on-Jewish people of wholly European descent. No exceptions."⁸⁷ In a subsequent post within the same thread, it is clarified that Iranians, despite a shared "Aryan" past, cannot be considered white due to several centuries of race mixing. Despite this thread's request that posters refrain from asking who can be considered white, posts asking this question regularly appear. One thread in particular reveals a variety of opinions on the matter from Stormfront users. In the Opposing Views Forum thread "Am I White? Im [sic] confused, What [sic] truly am I?" , the thread's poster poses the scenario of having Native American and black ancestry several generations ago, but self-identifying as white. One reply proposes David Lane's solution: "if you look white, act white, and fight for the white cause then you are folk."⁸⁸ Others are less forgiving, pointing to Law's statement as the forum's accepted standard.

The "White Nationalist Position Statements" sticky thread, located in the Ideology and Philosophy subforum, includes a position statement document by Stormfront user JohnJoyTree that provides a more thorough definition of who is white, and what white nationalism is:

⁸⁷ Dave Cooper. "Read this before asking, 'Who's White?'" Stormfront. (10 March, 2009) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t579652/> (Accessed 5 February, 2015)

⁸⁸ Psittacidae. "Am I White? Im confused, What truly am I?" (12 February, 2012) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t865455/> (Accessed 5 February, 2015)

Proposition zero. A White person is a human being of solely native European ancestry; or a human being who, if they have non-European antecedents, is nonetheless of a physical and genetic makeup that is within the range typical of people of solely European ancestry; or, the child of two Whites.

*Proposition one. A White Nationalist is a White person who is, by their actions and their voluntary public declaration, politically committed to the welfare of Whites, and to their continuing survival as a distinct and reproductively isolated group of human beings.*⁸⁹

This standard of whiteness, based on a vague sense of genetics and physical characteristics, is more flexible than Law's definition but equally lacking in rigor. Coherent guidelines as to how far back one must prove their pure European heritage in order to be considered white do not seem to exist, and JohnJoyTree fully acknowledges this fact, stating that "[w]e may nonetheless reasonably hope that the term 'the range typical of people of solely European ancestry' shall have a more precise *scientific* definition in future than we can offer now."⁹⁰ Nevertheless, a poll of 292 users in the same thread demonstrates that, of those 292, 70.89% agreed fully with JohnJoyTree's *Position Statements*. The lack of scientific precision in the white nationalist conception of whiteness or "pure white European blood and heritage" does not appear to detract from the underlying message that white nationalists hope to spread.

This pan-white sentiment is sometimes expressed in a sense of pan-Aryanism, but this is far from consistent among right-wing extremists. Occultists, neo-Nazis, and "history enthusiasts" tend to embrace the term "Aryan" more than "mainstream" white nationalists. In a poll thread titled "Should White European Nationalists dissassociate [sic] themselves with the term 'Aryan'?", 49% of respondents expressed that "Aryan" is an

⁸⁹ JohnJoyTree. *White Nationalist Position Statements*. 2005. <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t223388/>

⁹⁰ JohnJoyTree. "WN position statement zero: Whites and White Nationalists. Stormfront (2 August, 2005) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t222175/> (Accessed 5 February, 2015)

outdated term, while 40% believed that it was still worthwhile to use.⁹¹ With its strong Nazi connotations, the term Aryan has the potential to alienate possible recruits; because of this, many extremists prefer the use of “white” or “white European” as a way of making their ideology accessible to a wider range of people. On the other hand, some extremists feel that their message should be delivered in such a way that generates controversy, ergo publicity. As a general rule, people who prefer the term Aryan to white tend towards the more extreme ends of the spectrum.

In light of this schism, one notable (and controversial) aspect of the white nationalist definition of whiteness is the question of Slavic populations. Many Stormfront users are of Slavic origin, or are from Slavic-majority countries. The International forum includes additional subforums for Slavic countries such as Serbia, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Macedonia, and Croatia, as well as general news and politics discussion subforums in various Slavic languages. The apparent acceptance of Slavs as “white Europeans” places white nationalism at odds with classic Nazism, in which Slavs were considered to be an inferior race. Some nationalists, particularly British nationalists, are critical of Slavs due to the recent wave of Polish immigration to Britain; most neo-Nazis, despite their admiration for Hitler, have conversely rejected his hatred of Slavs.⁹² Additionally, Slavs themselves often refuse to acknowledge other Slavic groups as truly white.⁹³ This is particularly true of users with origins in the Balkans, for reasons beyond the scope of this analysis.

White Genocide and White Homelands

Having established a basic, albeit unstable, concept of whiteness, it is important to recognize the white nationalist fear of “white genocide.” White genocide is a conspiracy theory which insists that the white European race is on the path to systematized extinction

⁹¹ Stegura. “Should White European Nationalists disassociate themselves with the term ‘Aryan’?” Stormfront (12 January, 2005). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t177594/> (Accessed 23 February, 2015)

⁹² EuropeanPreservationist. “Is there and anti-Slavic sentiment present on this forum?” Stormfront (16 November, 2011). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t846015> (Accessed 16 April, 2015)

⁹³ Sign of the Eagle. “Slavic Thread.” Stormfront (3 March, 2007) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t369043/> (Accessed 16 April, 2015)

due to various sinister factors. The process of white genocide is not perceived as genocide in the sense of large-scale, violent ethnic cleansing, but rather as an insidious process by which “pure” white Europeans are interbred with and overwhelmed by members of the “mud races,” a term commonly employed to describe non-whites and Jews, to the point of non-existence. This process of encouraged miscegenation and mass immigration is allegedly a plot by politicians, media outlets, and activists intent on eliminating the white populations of the world. Such forces propound “diversity,” “forced assimilation,” and “anti-racism,” ideas which white nationalists purport to be code words for “anti-white.”⁹⁴ David Duke lays the blame for white genocide on Zionists, namely the “Ziomeia,” who he claims are responsible for perpetuating “genocidal actions” such as “Freudianism, Boasism, Bolshevism, Porn, Drugs, Sexual Degeneracy, Race-mixing, Radical Feminism, Massive non-White immigration to White Nations. [sic] White self-hate, Zio Bankersterism and the zioFED, and of course ZIOwars and ZioIsrael.”⁹⁵

The preferred solution to white genocide is thus the establishment of a “white nation,” or several white nations, in which only whites are allowed to live. To some white nationalists, this means segregation on a global scale. Many believe that each race should have its own nation or homeland in order to prevent race mixing or cultural “pollution.” However, the ideal location for a white homeland is far from clear. While most Stormfront users are American, they are fully cognizant of the fact that white Americans will be a minority in the United States by 2050.⁹⁶ The US is often viewed as a “lost cause,” and multicultural Europe is also viewed as a hostile environment for “pro-whites.” Most white nationalists recognize that establishing an entire state for the world’s white population is far from practical, meaning that efforts to create a white nation must

⁹⁴ White Genocide Project. “About White Genocide.” <http://whitegenocideproject.com/about-white-genocide/> (Accessed 2 March, 2015)

⁹⁵ Dr. Ford. “Part I: An Introduction to Stormfront and the Pro-White Movement.” Stormfront (23 May, 2013). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t968576/> (Accessed 2 March, 2015)

⁹⁶ Passel, Jeffrey S. and Cohn, D’vera. “US Population Projections: 2005-2050.” Pew Research Center.” <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2008/02/11/us-population-projections-2005-2050/> (Accessed 2 March, 2015)

begin on a small scale. White nationalist Craig Cobb has attempted to begin the process of establishing white communities both in Estonia and the US, but these attempts failed due to legal problems and a lack of material support from other white nationalists.⁹⁷ His efforts are related to the “Pioneer Little Europe” (PLE) movement, which bills itself as a “White Flight” movement focused on building white nationalist communities.⁹⁸ This desire to create a white homeland, or homelands, remains unrealistic due to legal constraints, as well as the reality that few truly homogenous white communities exist around the world. Nevertheless, PLE and similar movements aim to provide a roadmap to establishing homogenous enclaves for right-wing extremists on every continent.

Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Anti-Islam

Many white nationalists on Stormfront characterize their ideology as non-racist: they are not racist, but rather are “racially conscious” or “racially aware.”⁹⁹ They strive to “[c]elebrate what is good and amazing about [their] own culture instead of trying to point out what is bad about other cultures.”¹⁰⁰ Chauvinism and supremacism are, in principle, not “official” positions. Some extremists even promote the merits of other racially-based nationalist movements. This echoes Rockwell’s sympathy for black nationalists in the United States, as both movements strove to achieve total racial separation. This support for other racial nationalisms is frequently paraded as a means of demonstrating the non-racist credentials of the white nationalist movement. It is difficult to gauge whether this is a common opinion among right-wing extremists, but digging just beneath the surface of their discourse reveals that racism undoubtedly exists in practice. The “intellectual,”

⁹⁷ Associated Press. “White Supremacist who sought North Dakota enclave receives probation.” The Guardian, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/29/north-dakota-white-supremacist-craig-cobb-release> (Accessed 25 March, 2015)

⁹⁸ Pioneer Little Europe. “Greetings from Pioneer Little Europe.” <http://www.pioneerlittleeurope.com/about-us>. (Accessed 25 March, 2015)

⁹⁹ Jrnesbit. “Noticing a lot of people around the internet becomming racially aware. How can we help them.” Stormfront (25 December, 2014) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1080257/> (Accessed 27 March, 2015)

¹⁰⁰ Unlearn. “The way forward: Positive White Nationalism.” Stormfront (2 May, 2013). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t964243/> (Accessed 27 March, 2015)

savvy elite seem to adhere to the moderate approach while the rank-and-file demonstrate the harsher, bigoted and exclusionist reality of white nationalism.

In Don Black's "Guidelines for Posting" thread on Stormfront, he requests that users "[a]void racial epithets."¹⁰¹ Despite this guideline from the site's founder, countless users draw upon innuendo to subvert the rule. Offensive and denigrating terms abound on Stormfront, overt or otherwise. The terms "muds" or "mud races" are used as a catch-all for non-whites, while people of mixed ethnicities are commonly referred to as "mongrels." Black people may be described as "negroes," "nggers," "nigers," "negroids," or "noggers;" Asians are labeled as "chinks" and "mongoloids;" and Muslims and Arabs are regularly referred to as "dune coons" or "camel jockeys." The forum's moderators are clearly not enforcing the forum's regulations. Whether this is out of indifference, taciturn support, or laziness is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, the common use of the aforementioned epithets creates a hostile atmosphere where one need not guess about the true opinions of the community. Outside of Stormfront, where fewer rules apply, these stand-in labels are substituted for stronger words. This is especially true in the case of Reddit, as demonstrated in Chapter 3.

Aside from racially-charged terminology, online right-wing extremists frequently launch textual attacks on non-white cultures and cultural practices. They are notorious Europhiles, which in and of itself should not be seen as negative. This reverence for European culture in its totality contrasts sharply with threads which demonize non-European cultures and aesthetics. Rap music in particular is singled out as a cultural pollutant at best; at worst, it exists as a Zionist media plot to corrupt white youth into miscegenation, drug use, and criminality.¹⁰² Stormfront abounds with threads about criminal activities perpetuated by ethnic minorities in Europe and the Americas. These news reports are accompanied by posts which reinforce racial stereotypes and spew vitriol

¹⁰¹ Don Black. "Welcome: Guidelines for Posting." Stormfront (26 October, 2001). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t4359/> (Accessed 9 February, 2015)

¹⁰² Blahblahblahf. "Is there any country in the Western world that doesn't have a population saturated by rap music culture?" Stormfront (16 January, 2015) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1083855> (Accessed 26 February, 2015)

about the “degeneration” rampant within these non-white cultures. The selective use of news articles from around the world is intended to demonstrate that this degeneration is inherent to these races and their respective cultures. In these threads, the international aspect of the right-wing extremist movement is especially visible. American extremists will grow enraged over stories of Muslim immigrants raping or murdering whites in Sweden, while stories of black gang members in American inner-cities demonstrate to European extremists that America is a lost cause.¹⁰³ White criminals, on the other hand, are alternately portrayed as likely mongrels, victims of anti-white legal systems, degenerates unworthy of membership in the white race, or unfortunate fools who have been brainwashed by the Zionist media.

By now, it should be quite apparent that anti-Semitism is a lynchpin of extremist thought. The rampant anti-Semitism among right-wing extremists has clear historical origins. Anti-Semitism has a long tradition in Europe and the United States, which reached its zenith with the Holocaust during WWII. Most contemporary right-wing extremist movements have roots in neo-Nazi parties or anti-Semitic organizations, which has resulted in a continuity of hatred towards Jews. Archaic and tired anti-Semitic tropes are all too common online, as are denials of the Holocaust framed as “historical revisionism.” Jewish and Zionist conspiracies from medieval Europe and onward are revived in the myriad texts which circulate online, ranging from “classics” like Martin Luther’s *The Jews and Their Lies*, Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, to the works of more contemporary writers such as David Duke, David Lane, William Pierce, or holocaust denier Ernst Zundel. Extremists in America and Europe demonstrate online that anti-Semitism knows no borders.

Not all right-wing extremists are anti-Semites. Anders Behring-Breivik, who was responsible for the 2012 Utøya massacre in Norway, is perhaps the most notable of these atypical right-wing extremists in recent years. Breivik’s hatred of Muslims led him to express a taciturn support for Zionism and Israel. His views are an exception, and much

¹⁰³ Countless examples of these articles can be found in the Newslinks subforum: <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/f12/>

of the right-wing extremist community online despises him or, more absurdly, considers him to be a Mossad agent.¹⁰⁴ Breivik, however, was active within the extremist community before he carried out his terrorist actions. An avid poster on Stormfront and a regular visitor to other extremist websites, Breivik “well versed in White Power literature, its history, music, and heroes.”¹⁰⁵ His anti-Muslim beliefs therefore place him in line with the many right-wing extremists, particularly in Europe, who harbor feelings of hatred towards Muslims and Islam. Nevertheless, his massacre of mostly white Norwegian youths has earned him something of a pariah status of the “mainstream” right-wing extremist community.

Some among the extreme right have a complicated relationship with Islam and Muslims. On one hand, radical Islam and right-wing extremism share a sense of inherent social conservatism and hatred of Jews; on the other, right-wing extremists in the United States and Europe often view Islam as backwards and alien. Particularly in Europe, right-wing extremists view the influx of Muslim immigrants and asylum seekers as detrimental to Western culture and society. In one Stormfront thread which asks users which groups are whites’ “WORST ENEMIES,” 37.5% of the 1060 voters in the poll chose “MUSLIMS” as the biggest threat to white Europeans.¹⁰⁶ They share this view to an extent with many mainstream radical-right parties, whose anti-immigration rhetoric has grown louder in recent years. American extremists have a similar position, possibly influenced by the stereotypes which have emerged throughout more than decade of wars against Muslims in Middle-Eastern countries. Some extremists are sympathetic to Muslim nations with anti-Israel perspectives; however, they would prefer that people from these countries stay “home” to fight against the Zionists instead of immigrating to European countries.

¹⁰⁴ See: Lavard. “Norway: Mass murderer Anders Behring-Breivik is anti-racist, pro-homosexual and pro-Israel.” Stormfront (23 July, 2011). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t818652/>; Thulewarrior. “Breivik and Mossad.” Stormfront (10 May, 2012). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t886159/>; White Ginger Pride. “Anders Breivik trial begins with him giving a ‘far right’ salute.” Stormfront (16 March, 2015). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t880629/> (All accessed 23 March, 2015)

¹⁰⁵ Gardell, 141

¹⁰⁶ Protesilao. “OUR WORST ENEMY.” Stormfront (6 February, 2010) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t713834/> (Accessed 20 February, 2015)

Conspiracy Theories

As should be evident from the above discussions, conspiracy theories play an integral role in modern right-wing extremist thought. From the fears of white genocide to the absurd belief that Anders Behring-Breivik is a Mossad agent, contemporary right-wing extremists rely on conspiracy theories to give legitimacy to their worldview. The right-wing extremist preoccupations with Zionists and the “Zionist Occupation Government” (ZOG) system represent the pinnacle of conspiracy thinking.¹⁰⁷ Factual evidence for such theories is rarely provided, and when evidence is provided it tends to be from obscure or unreliable sources. David Duke is especially active in spreading information on Zionist conspiracies, as his high volume of media output relates almost exclusively to “exposing” the machinations of ZOG. While such conspiracy thinking is typically American in origin, the perceived global nature of ZOG and the Jewish international has meant that right-wing extremists around the world have adopted a belief in American-style conspiracism. These unfounded conspiracy theories serve to frighten right-wing extremists into tightening their ranks, as such theories serve to reinforce their inherent sense of entrenchment.

Anti-democratic sentiment

There is little concrete agreement as to the ideal form of government among right-wing extremists. Extremists from the United States tend to have the widest variety of opinions on this matter, ranging from support for American-style republicanism or libertarianism to National Socialist totalitarianism. The latter preference is unsurprisingly common among neo-Nazis, who express admiration for the Third Reich’s racialist policies and explicit interest in cultivation of white (Germanic/Aryan) culture and economic prosperity. In Gerhard Lauck’s most successful Stormfront thread, he poses the question of whether democracy is a preferable or viable form of government. The discussion spans 51 pages of posts, which highlights the importance of this issue among Stormfront members. Many white nationalists dislike modern democracy due to the

¹⁰⁷ Bowman-Grieve, 995

demographic issue mentioned earlier: if white people will one day be a minority in America (and possible Europe), then the interests of whites will be overruled by the (non-white) “mob.”¹⁰⁸ Democracy, especially in the American context, is largely seen as a corrupt system which has been infiltrated and spoiled by Jewish liberals and their lackeys. Many users in the discussion suggest that a National Socialist form of government would be the most effective and stable in the long run, but that such a government cannot exist so long as liberal and progressive forces in the international system stand in opposition to it.

This is one of the key areas in which some degree of consensus exists between right-wing extremists on an international level. Moreover, as mentioned previously, it is a significant difference which separates right-wing extremists from right-wing radicals; far-right parties and national-populists are typically willing to participate in democratic governments, and often espouse their admiration for the democratic systems of their home countries. The extremist viewpoint often transcends concerns of localized nationalism, as it focuses on broad political philosophies which have the potential to benefit the white race as a whole, rather than simply benefitting particular states. The flaws and merits of particular states’ governments are typically discussed in the context of the ideal white nation. Only the most idealistic or naïve right-wing extremists believe that such a discussion will provide tangible results, unlike more moderate right-wing political actors whose ideas and policies are framed within the context of established state systems.

National Socialism

As has been noted previously, white nationalism and National Socialism are related but distinct ideologies. Neo-Nazism is often difficult to separate from white nationalism, as the two ideologies have been mutually influential over the past decades. Whereas white nationalism has a pan-white or pan-ethnic European outlook, contemporary expressions of Nazism tend to be pan-Aryan or pan-Germanic. White

¹⁰⁸ Gerhard Lauck. “Is democracy good or bad?” Stormfront (16 February, 2015). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1088846/> (Accessed 32 March, 2015)

nationalists may accept that the National Socialist form of government is most fitting for their ideologies while simultaneously rejecting the imagery and some core assumptions of National Socialism; contrarily, some white nationalists may identify with National Socialism but reject self-labeling as NS due to its tainted image in Western society. To self-identify as a neo-Nazi is to unequivocally associate oneself with extreme views, which is anathema to white nationalists who wish to perpetuate the idea that white nationalism is not an extreme ideology. Furthermore, some white nationalists fear that association with neo-Nazis delegitimizes their cause, given that such characters bring scrutiny from sources such as anti-fascist organizations, watchdog groups, media outlets, governments, and police and intelligence services. This concern is, perhaps, moot: white nationalism and National Socialism are related ideologies with a clear history of explicit connections. If neo-Nazis were to somehow evaporate, white nationalists would remain under scrutiny due to the inherently questionable nature of their beliefs and the criminal activities which have been, and continue to be, perpetrated by members of their ranks.

Several parallels and differences exist between neo-Nazis and white nationalists, but there are certain distinctive aspects of contemporary and international NS movements which are worth noting. Neo-Nazis tend to eschew watered-down rhetoric as compared to white nationalists. The very act of labeling oneself as a Nazi is guaranteed to be a divisive action. On Stormfront, many neo-Nazis appear to be well-read; they are familiar with the vast literature which influenced National Socialism and fascism, as well as the writings of key Nazi figures from the early to mid-twentieth century. Savitri Devi has been particularly influential among neo-Nazis who have built upon her portrayal of Hitler as a divine avatar sent to save the Aryan race. These quasi-intellectual discussions, and the vast amount of dense reading one must do to understand them, renders certain branches of neo-Nazism too esoteric for rank-and-file keyboard warrior extremists. The issue of racism/racialism can differ among neo-Nazis as well. Some historically-oriented neo-Nazis can be somewhat sympathetic to non-white races due to the Third Reich's acceptance of non-whites as "Honorary Aryans" for their service in foreign SS divisions. This "inclusive" aspect of National Socialist wartime policy is often cited as "proof" that

Nazism was a non-racist and international ideology which has been unfairly maligned by historians and through pop culture.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, such a position is ironic in light of the explicit white/Aryan supremacist assumptions which underpin National Socialist ideology.

Violence

Modern Western countries have sophisticated intelligence organs which have the potential extensively monitor virtually any activity, legal or otherwise. It is no secret that many right-wing extremist organizations and individuals are under surveillance by the intelligence and police services of many states. Free speech is protected in the United States, but this protection does not extend to speech which encourages violence or other illegal activities. In some European countries, speech is more tightly-regulated. Germany in particular closely monitors right-wing extremists for activities and speech which are illegal under German law. Many right-wing extremist websites are thus hosted on servers in the United States, as laws in the US are generally more flexible. Decades of successful arrests of right-wing extremists around the world due to diligent police and intelligence work has not eliminated their violent actions or beliefs. Rather, these beliefs are thinly veiled behind vague statements and militant imagery. Overt expressions of violence on easily-accessible online platforms undoubtedly draw scrutiny towards individuals, and it is not unreasonable to believe that the most extreme opinions online are concealed behind sophisticated encryption and other security measures. Nonetheless, dangerous extremist viewpoints related to political violence are rather easy to find online.

One need only look to Stormfront's "Self-Defense, Martial Arts, and Preparedness" subforum to find numerous examples of violent materials. Most of the subforum's threads entail gun-related discussions, and as such they tend to be conversations between Americans. Nevertheless, there are also several posts which provide links to videos of whites beating up members of other races, alongside more

¹⁰⁹ Real Irish. "Question about Hitlers Muslim soldiers." Stormfront (16 November, 2015). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1005893> (Accessed 20 February, 2015).

benign threads about martial arts styles and general fitness. Most notable perhaps are the threads which discuss guerilla warfare and survivalism. A sticky thread by user Looking for a fight, titled “Militia, Military Guerilla Warfare and Survival,” lists several manuals on guerilla warfare, military training, and covert operations, from sources including the SS, C18, US Special Forces, and SKS.¹¹⁰ These materials are posted without any accompanying explanation, but the thread’s sticky status indicates a sense of approval by Stormfront’s moderators of its inherent message: for anyone interested in engaging in large-scale violence for the right-wing extremist cause, options exist and can be found here.

The “self defense” portion of the subforum’s title provides a clue to the mentality, or at least the rhetoric, adopted by many on the extreme right. To accept that the process of white genocide is underway is to adopt a fortress mentality; whites are being attacked from every side, and therefore must become “armed and dangerous” to protect themselves and their families from the hordes of non-whites spreading into their countries. Proactive violence is certainly encouraged by some members of Stormfront, but most users are inclined to advocate violence in self-defense. Stormfront’s discussions about violence are necessarily veiled, and are most likely moderated heavily in order to preserve the modicum of respectability that the community strives to uphold. Outside of Stormfront, endorsements of violence are more apparent. Resist.com, the website of WAR, is one such location. Its outdated design is counteracted by its simple URL and its unambiguous content. The online library section of the website, for example, provides several revolutionary texts and manuals, most of which are flavored by white supremacy and white nationalism.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Looking for a fight. “Militia, Military Guerilla Warfare and Survival.” Stormfront (17 May, 2011). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t802155/?s=5df464c82724b15aedf68d3499de0fff> (Accessed 24 May, 2015)

¹¹¹ White Aryan Resistance. “Online Books.” <http://www.resist.com/Onlinebooks.html> (Accessed 24 May, 2015)

Contemporary Political Debates

The extreme right is a fairly coherent movement, but the ad-hoc nature of its political ideals means that there is room for internal debate. Members of the extreme right around the world have a keen interest in politics beyond their home countries. While there is generally a consensus on political issues related to immigration, discussions about contemporary conflicts such as the crisis in Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East tend to be divisive. The correspondences and points of contention within these conversations demonstrate the relatively wide span of opinions which can exist within the movement, despite the generally consistent values that constitute the right-wing extremist community's foundations. Examining the political debates which occur online between right-wing extremists from around the world, particularly in Europe and America, provides useful insights into their beliefs and worldviews.

The Middle East

Due to their occasionally conflicting feelings about Muslims, right-wing extremists have difficulty reaching a consensus on developments which have been occurring in the Middle East over the past few decades. The common underlying narrative of the conflicts in the Middle East is that Zionists in Israel and the United States are responsible for these unnecessary and destructive wars. Beyond blaming the Zionists and Israelis, there are varying strains of argument which right-wing extremists around the world have adopted. Ultimately this debate can be framed in the context of whether or not "the enemy of my enemy is my friend;" should anti-Zionists be willing to support events, actors, and states which oppose Israel, even if these forces are not white? Some right-wing extremists profess support for anti-American and anti-Israel Muslim nations and groups, particularly Iran and the Palestinians. Others are mistrustful of all Muslims, and thus wish to see Israel and their nearby rivals wreak havoc on one another. They feel that American interference in the Middle East has simply bolstered Israel's position, rendering such an occurrence untenable.

The issue of whether or not white nationalists should support Iran is particularly difficult among members of the extreme right. The first point of contention is, as has been discussed earlier, whether or not Iranians are considered Semitic, Indo-European, or “mongrelized;” Stormfront’s official policy favors the latter interpretation, but that does not prevent some users from suggesting that Iranians should be considered to be Aryans.¹¹² Aside from this, there is the issue of siding with Muslims against the Jews. Some extremists feel that the West has nothing to fear from Iran, while others are convinced that Iran is merely waiting for a good opportunity to make a nuclear strike on Europe and/or America. Many, however, have no love for either side; they may dislike Israel more than Iran, but would ultimately prefer to see each side destroy the other in an apocalyptic showdown.¹¹³ Nevertheless, there does seem to be a sense of agreement on the issue of keeping immigrants from the Middle East in general outside of Europe and America. Even supporters of Iran’s government are quick to mention that support for the government does not equate to acceptance of the country’s people moving to their own countries. Muslims may be seen as opponents of Zionism, but their beliefs are also seen as alien and detrimental to white European culture.

Interestingly, the Politics and Ongoing Crises subforum of Stormfront appears to be lacking in detailed discussion about general crises in the Middle East. When filtering the threads within the subforum by number posts, the thread “US Warships Head to Syria” is the only thread to appear which is directly related to crises in the Middle East, save for two threads discussing former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and a sticky thread titled “The Islamic Disease.” An examination of the latter thread reveals that it is less about political developments or crises in the Middle East, and more an avenue through which to deliver slurs and vitriol against Muslims. The Syria thread has, at the time of writing, received no new posts since November 2013.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, it

¹¹² DispaternRagnar. “Don’t support Iran!” Stormfront (17 February, 2012) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t866857/> (Accessed 5 April, 2015)

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ Zoomcopter. “Re: US warships headed to Syria.” Stormfront (10 November, 2015). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t989605-226/> (Accessed 5 April, 2015)

entails a largely predictable discussion wherein users share conspiracy theories about Middle East conflicts which hinge upon explaining every development through the nefarious plots of Zionists. Americans appear to have the strongest presence in this thread, possibly due to the wars in the Middle East being a relevant and visible topic within the common American discourse. Right-wing extremists thus appear uninterested in Middle Eastern politics, focusing instead on the impact of Muslim immigration to Europe and the United States.

Ukrainian Crisis

At the time of writing, the crisis in Ukraine is yet to be resolved. Separatist rebels with probable Russian backing have been engaged in a civil war with the Ukrainian government since February 2014. The government in Kiev includes a small number of right-wing extremists and neo-Nazis from Svoboda, a far-right party which harbors a significant amount of extremists.¹¹⁵ Right Sector, a coalition of various far- and extreme-right parties and paramilitary organizations, is popular and well-regarded among many extremists around the world due to its role as a coalition for numerous far- and extreme-right groups in Ukraine. The Azov Battalion, a volunteer paramilitary force with ties to Right Sector and which has recently been incorporated into the Ukrainian army, is known to have attracted foreign volunteers from countries including England, Sweden, and Croatia.¹¹⁶ Despite the government in Kiev's links to these extremist elements, many right-wing extremists are unable to agree on which side in the conflict is the correct side to support. There are three main lines of argument among them, each of which differs based on the individuals' countries of origin. Some support Ukraine and the nationalists,

¹¹⁵ Ishchenko, Voldymyr. "Ukraine has ignored the far right for too long – it must wake up to the danger." *The Guardian*, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/13/ukraine-far-right-fascism-mps> (Accessed 23 March, 2015); Whelan, Brian. "How the far-right took top posts in Ukraine's power vacuum." *Channel 4 News*, 2014. <http://www.channel4.com/news/svoboda-ministers-ukraine-new-government-far-right> (Accessed 23 March, 2015)

¹¹⁶ Parfitt, Tom. "Ukraine crisis: the neo-Nazi brigade fighting pro-Russian separatists." *The Telegraph*, 11 August, 2014 (Accessed 23 March, 2015)

others support the pro-Russian rebels, and still others believe that the war is a mistake and that both sides are being exploited by Zionists.

Many right-wing extremists identify closely with the Ukrainian ultra-nationalists, many of whom were heavily involved in the Euromaidan movement which toppled the regime of former president Viktor Yanukovich. The current regime in Kiev includes members of Right Sector, who played a key role in Yanukovich's downfall. Right Sector's militant activities and ultra-nationalist imagery are admired by many right-wing extremists around the world. Furthermore, some right-wing extremists are mistrustful of Russia and feel that Ukraine is the last line of defense between Russia and the rest of Europe. Many extremists from countries which have difficult histories with Russian occupation, including the Baltic States, tend to be supportive of Kiev's position in the conflict. Other extremists also frame their support for Kiev in anti-Russian, or anti-Putin terms; many Russian neo-Nazis and ultra-nationalists disapprove of Putin, seeing him less as a force of Russian nationalism and more as a neo-Soviet with anti-white policies and questionable ties to Jewish oligarchs.¹¹⁷

Other right-wing extremists, many of whom are American, support the Russian-backed separatists in the conflict. The current government in Kiev, they argue, was created after an illegal coup which was orchestrated by Zionist forces in the American government. Thus, the regime in Kiev has no legitimacy and is reliant upon support for the anti-white forces which already control Western Europe and North America. They view Russia as the only true bastion of anti-Zionist forces, as Putin has demonstrated his willingness to stand up to the Zionist European and American governments. Supporters of Russia and the rebels argue further that the contemporary Ukrainian nation is a fabrication which has no historical basis. Thus, the rebels' claims to nationhood are at least as legitimate, if not more so, than the government in Kiev's desire to maintain Ukraine's current borders. The popularity of this standpoint among Americans may be related to the popularity of RT among American dissidents; in this sense, the Kremlin's

¹¹⁷ Alexei. "Putin, United Russia, etc – corrupt, criminal, anti-white regime." Stormfront (28 December, 2007). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t447934/> (Accessed 23 March, 2015)

propaganda machine seems to be effective in influencing the opinions of American right-wing extremists.

The third line of argument is that the conflict in Ukraine is pointless, and is ultimately detrimental to the white nationalist movement as a whole: whites are killing other whites due to petty border squabbles which have been orchestrated, unsurprisingly, by Zionists. As with the pro-rebel extremists, they argue that the current government in Kiev was brought into power by Zionist forces which assisted in fomenting the current conflict. Furthermore, the rebels and the Russian government have been similarly goaded into the conflict by the same Zionist forces. The entire conflict is thus a Zionist plot to destabilize the region, possibly with the intention of creating financial opportunities for the oligarchs on both sides. Right-wing extremists who support this position declare that neither side in the conflict deserves support, and they are especially quick to caution others that support for Putin simply because he opposes the NATO countries is misguided: Putinism, according to them, is equally destructive as the ideology of the Zionist West.¹¹⁸ Thus, there is little consensus among right-wing extremists on the issue of the Ukrainian crisis, but this variety of opinions provides intriguing insights into the diverse international mindsets within the contemporary movement.

Culture

Among right-wing extremists, culture, politics, and identity are inextricably linked. As evinced by online discussions, right-wing extremism is a way of life for many individuals. Their cultural interests and aesthetic preferences are connected to a sense of European chauvinism or Europhilia which dictates their music tastes and visual culture. The music they listen to and the symbols they adopt may be politicized in nature, but this is not always the case. Benign or mundane works may be appropriated and charged with political or racialist meaning simply by nature of being white or European in origin. Americans may supply a large proportion of political ideology to their European

¹¹⁸ Poison. "Русские и Майдан. Russians and Ukraine/Maidan. Discussion." Stormfront (21 February, 2014) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1027181-11/> (Accessed 23 March, 2015)

colleagues, but in exchange they receive cultural cues and preferences from the traditions and practices of the “Old World.” Culture among right-wing extremists is therefore not only important for creating political cohesion among the extreme right: it is a means by which extremists foster personal connections and create a sense of borderless group identity.

White European Culture and Identity

Given the preoccupation of right-wing extremists with whiteness and white European ethnicity, it should be little surprise that there is a fetishization of white European culture among members of the extreme right. This obsession takes many forms, and covers most aspects of white European culture. History, art, music, literature, architecture, and religion play an integral role in the formation of right-wing extremist identity. These elements are typically viewed in a romantic, nostalgic light, and may or may not be portrayed in an anachronistic manner. Right-wing extremists of different national origins appear comfortable with praising the achievements of white Europeans from countries other than their own, despite any historical rivalries which these nations or states may have once had throughout history. Americans, whose ethnic and national identities are often shaped by nostalgic notions of a mythic and idealized European “fatherland,” seem particularly enthusiastic about the achievements of their white European “forebears.” On Stormfront and beyond, praise and admiration for white European culture acts as a means by which right-wing extremists around the world can find common ground and agreement despite any existing political or ideological differences.

Stormfront maintains two subforums dedicated primarily to aspects of white European identity: “Culture and Customs”, and “History & Revisionism.” The stickied threads in Culture and Customs cover topics such as European art and architecture, classical music, literature, heritage, and bicycling, to name but a few. Heritage and ethnicity threads are among the most popular in this section, with 4 of the top 20 posts relating exclusively to this topic. The atmosphere of these threads is largely positive and

celebratory, which stands in contrast to the negative or aggressive tones found in other threads throughout Stormfront. The History & Revisionism subforum's stickied threads focus primarily on the latter of the two topics, but one thread in particular warns that "[a]ttacking other White Nationalities will not be tolerated."¹¹⁹ The general tone of the thread is one of agreement, with subsequent posters calling for white unity and the end of "petty flame wars." Most of the non-stickied historical threads pertain to military history (particularly the history of WWII), but the focus of the historical threads in general is almost exclusively on Europe.

Outside of these Stormfront discussion forums, right-wing extremists around the world express their identities through various other media. The following two sections explore the visual culture and music which right-wing extremists utilize as vehicles for solidifying international ties and constructing an "inclusive," pan-white identity. Anachronistic and nostalgic historical themes merge with contemporary online culture in a way that celebrates an imagined European past; this development seeks to smooth over past grievances between white European ethnic groups which have been at odds with one another over the course of several centuries. By using a generic and eclectic conception of "white" culture, right-wing extremists from around the world have developed a mutual appreciation of European culture which will continue to build bridges between disparate movements and ideologies around the world.

Visual Culture and Symbolism

The internationalization of extreme right ideology can be seen particularly in the symbolism employed by extremist ideologues. These symbols exist as a language, covert at times and overt at others, which can assist right-wing extremists in identifying each other and conveying information about their beliefs and preferences. Stormfront and other extremist sites are proliferated by a number of symbols with diverse origins, most of which are rooted in European or American history, culture, and religious tradition. On

¹¹⁹ White Resistance 14. "Attacking other White Nationalities will not be Tolerated." Stormfront (30 January, 2010). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t677937/> (Accessed 12 May, 2015)

Stormfront, symbols typically appear in users' "avatars," or profile pictures, or in their "signatures" which appear after their posts. Some extremists wear these symbols on their bodies, in the form of clothing, jewelry, and tattoos. From physical flags to virtual banners, there exists a comprehensive milieu of international right-wing extremist visual culture. These symbols provide clues to users' countries of origin, national or ethnic identity, religious beliefs, and historical interests. Many of these symbols are identified by the Anti-Defamation League, whose "Hate on Display" website provides a useful guide to symbols by type and affiliation.¹²⁰ Several of the symbols listed there appear will be discussed in detail below, as their uses are important to recognizing and understanding the international nature of right-wing extremism.

Nazi Imagery

Unsurprisingly, Nazi insignia are popular among Stormfront members despite a ban on the swastika in profile pictures.¹²¹ The ban, which was endorsed and supported by Black and Duke, is intended to bring a degree of respectability and accessibility to the site by playing down members' potential associations with Nazism. When Black initially launched the website, he chose not to utilize the swastika in the site's imagery because it would "have remained a tiny little cult site" despite the symbol's potential for garnering significant media attention.¹²² In the same thread, Duke argues that the swastika would have driven potential members away due to the Jews' demonization of the symbol in the media.¹²³ The ban, however, is not extended to images posted in threads, nor does it extend to other images associated with Nazism. Members frequently circumvent this rule by utilizing other forms of Nazi imagery, effectively rendering Black's and Duke's logic irrelevant. Swastika flags are popular items on webshops, and there exist several variants

¹²⁰ Anti-Defamation League. "Hate on Display – Hate Symbols Database." <http://www.adl.org/combatting-hate/hate-on-display/> (Accessed 26 January, 2015)

¹²¹ Ravenser. "Swastika avatars – not permitted on Stormfront." Stormfront (14 February, 2011) <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t779948/> (Accessed 12 February, 2015)

¹²² *ibid*

¹²³ *ibid*

of both historical and non-historical designs which mimic the Nazi banner or incorporate the swastika.

The more ambiguous Iron Cross, which has been re-appropriated in the post-war world by various subcultures, is also commonly worked into images on Stormfront and beyond. Users may opt for a standard image of an Iron Cross, but many place the symbol over their national flag or superimpose the flag onto the cross. The Iron Cross is a popular tattoo among right-wing extremists due to the symbol's militaristic connotations and relative distance from overt Nazism; a swastika tattoo immediately signifies a neo-Nazi, whereas an Iron Cross could simply exist as a sign of rebellion. The more obscure *wolfsangel* or "wolf cross," a German heraldic symbol co-opted by Nazis during WWII, is also popular among contemporary extremists. Derived from the appearance of medieval wolf traps, the wolfsangel resembles a stylized letter "z," which may or may not be bisected by an additional line.¹²⁴ Like many Nazi symbols, the wolfsangel predates the Nazi movement by several centuries. It still appears on the coats of arms of several German municipalities, suggesting that the symbol does not bear the same tainted image as the swastika. This symbol has received media attention recently, as it appears on the badge of the Ukrainian Azov Battalion.¹²⁵ Their badge features a wolfsangel flanked by the "black sun," an occult symbol which will be discussed in the subsequent section on religious symbolism.

In a more covert show of Nazi sympathy, some members on Stormfront utilize photos of Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, Rudolf Hess, Joseph Goebbels, and other Nazi leaders to represent themselves online. These profile pictures may be photographs, illustrations, or digitally altered images. Such users seek to demonstrate their admiration for these figures as well as their loyalty to national socialist ideology. It is also common for right-wing extremists to employ the numbers 88, or 18. These numbers correspond to letters in the alphabet: HH, and AH. HH is an acronym for "Heil Hitler," while AH is an

¹²⁴ AG Minifossi. "Von Wolfsankern, Krähenfüßen, Wassernüssen, Wolfs- & Fußangeln" <http://www.jugendheim-gersbach.de/Wolf-2-Wolfsangel-2003.html> (German) (Accessed 19 February, 2015)

¹²⁵ "Azov" special purpose regiment. <http://vk.com/azovinternational> (Accessed 15 May, 2015)

acronym for “Adolf Hitler.” The numbers 88 and 18 are commonly found in usernames and signatures, or used as salutations. Extremist skinheads often will have one of the two numbers tattooed on their body, sometimes in highly-visible locations such as the face. These numbers and images also appear on clothing and other merchandise offered in webshops.

Pagan and Occult Symbols

Many pagan and occult symbols were co-opted by the Nazis, but many of these symbols have been reclaimed by neo-pagans who do not associate with Nazism or other extremist ideologies. The symbols discussed below are thus not grouped with other Nazi symbols, as their meanings are connected as much with the religious preferences of the groups and individuals who use them as they are with political sentiments. Furthermore, some of the following symbols are not connected to historical Nazism. The meanings of such symbols therefore depend on the context in which they appear.

Futhark runes, which served as the written alphabet for early Germanic languages, have become ubiquitous symbols among the extreme right. Some of these runes were appropriated by the Nazi party; most notable among these is the sigel/sol rune (ᚱ, sun), a stylized version of which was adapted into the symbol of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS). As implied by its name, the sol run in ancient times was used to represent the sun. Another pagan sun symbol, the sunwheel or sun cross, is commonly utilized by extremists. A rather simple design, the sunwheel consists of a circle which is quartered by a cross. It is also associated with Nazism; more specifically, it is associated with the Norwegian *Nasjonal Samling* as they adopted the symbol as their logo. As an ancient symbol, the sunwheel has been adopted and modified by several cultures around the world. The Celtic cross is a well-known iteration of the sunwheel, and extremists will commonly refer to the symbol by that name. Visitors to Stormfront are greeted by a prominent Celtic cross/sunwheel, and the symbol also appears on flags, t-shirts, tattoos, and profile pictures on Stormfront. This author personally observed right-extremists in Scotland wearing arm patches of this symbol during Unionist rallies in Scotland after the 2014

referendum on independence.¹²⁶ Non-extremists may not take notice of such a symbol, but its meaning is heavily charged to those who recognize it.

In addition to pagan sun symbolism, right-wing extremists have co-opted other characters from the futhark runic alphabet. This is in imitation of the SS, who were the first to co-opt many ancient runes in their flags and badges. The most common runes found in extreme right circles are algiz (Ƿ, life), tiwaz (ᚏ, the god Tyr, or victory in battle), and odal (ᚠ, kinship and folk). Algiz may also appear inverted to signify death, but this is an ahistorical use and meaning. The regular version of this rune has been adopted as the logo of the American National Alliance.¹²⁷ Tiwaz, which resembles an arrow pointing upwards, can be found on many flags and logos. It appears along with the sig rune in the logo of Thor Steinar, a clothing brand popular among right-wing extremists in Europe.¹²⁸ Odal, with its potential for racist interpretation, appears regularly among extreme-right groups. It may be displayed in its traditional form, or with two “tails” added at the bottom in imitation of the SS usage. The rune notably lends its name to the “odalist” religious movement; like the other runes mentioned above, it appears on flags, tattoos, clothing, and websites.

While not a runic symbol, the Norse valknut is another pagan symbol which has enjoyed extensive usage among members of the extreme right. Consisting of three stylized interlocking triangles, the valknut is associated with the god Odin and thus carries with it connotations of battle and death.¹²⁹ These associations make the symbol appealing to extremists who may support more violent or militant positions, or who view their struggle as a war against the Zionist and Muslim interests encroaching upon white European culture and society. Like the other symbols listed, valknuts appear as tattoos,

¹²⁶ Most observers were reluctant to name the group with which these individuals were affiliated, but one observer suggested that they may have been members of the Scottish Defense League or the British National Party.

¹²⁷ National Alliance. <https://natall.com/> (Accessed 3 March, 2015)

¹²⁸ Ironically, the name Thor begins not with tiwaz (T), but with the thorn rune (Th). The logo’s attempt to appeal to extremists is effective, but ultimately inaccurate.

¹²⁹ Symbol Dictionary. “Valknut.” <http://symboldictionary.net/?p=741> (Accessed 3 March, 2015)

forum avatars, and as logos on websites and webshops.¹³⁰ This symbol is more difficult to directly associate with extremist views, as it was not, until recently, tarnished by associations with Nazism. Of all the aforementioned symbols, the valknut is the least heavily associated with extreme right ideology; neo-pagans, reenactors, and history enthusiasts who do not ascribe to extreme ideologies also use and celebrate the symbol, so one must be cautious when drawing conclusions about the meaning behind the valknut's usage.

These aforementioned symbols are used anachronistically and are redefined in such a way that constructs an imagined pre-Christian European past, albeit one that is focused on Germanic identity as opposed to a broader white European identity. Therefore, Germanic pagan symbolism is a visual language shared mainly between extremists in countries which speak Germanic languages (including English). Americans fascinated by the mythological "homeland" of their ancestors identify with a distant land and imagined past, while Europeans seek to reinforce a concept of a "folk" rooted in the indigenous pre-Christian cultures of Northern Europe. This concept of folk may be nationally-limited, but it also appeals to internationally-minded white nationalists who have fetishized an anachronistic version of European culture. Nevertheless, sentiments of white Germanic solidarity across borders and beyond spoken language are strengthened by the use of these easily-identifiable symbols.

Christian Symbolism

To a lesser extent than with Nazi and pagan imagery, Christian imagery is also popular among certain groups within the extreme right. It might be mentioned that two aforementioned symbols, the Iron Cross and the Celtic cross, have Christian associations along with their extremist interpretations. While the iron cross today is generally associated with Nazism, historically its use can be traced back to the Teutonic Order, a

¹³⁰ Anti-Defamation League. "Valknut." http://www.adl.org/combating-hate/hate-on-display/c/valknot.html#.VCZkM_IdWSo (Accessed 3 March, 2015)

Christian crusader order which originated in the Middle Ages.¹³¹ This dual association with Nazism and a crusader ethos has rendered it as a popular symbol among many Christian right-wing extremists. The Celtic cross has pagan roots, but has also been adopted into modern Christian imagery due to its popularity in Ireland and Scotland. It is therefore a symbol that appeals to both Christians and neo-pagans, making it a fitting symbol for Stormfront specifically and the wider extremist movement more generally. Other cross symbolism can be found in the form of the Scandinavian cross, a popular motif in extremist flags and banners.¹³² This may also be due to its similarity to the Nazi War Ensign, a design also based on the Scandinavian cross and which incorporates the iron cross.

Images of Christian heroes are especially popular among right-wing extremist Christians around the world. St. George is a reoccurring character due in part to the English nationalist enthusiasm for the English flag, which is known as St. George's cross. As a Christian, armor-clad, weapon-bearing dragonslayer, St. George represents a sense of militancy which appeals to many right-wing extremists of Christian persuasion. Historical figures such as Jan III Sobieski and Vlad Tepes ("the Impaler") are often cited as examples of admirable European Christian heroes due to their successful battles against the Turks.¹³³ Sobieski is known for his defeat of the Ottomans at Vienna, while Tepes is revered for his alleged hatred of the Ottomans and his rumored predilection for cruelty. Anders Behring-Breivik, whose personal version of right-wing extremism was Christian in its outlook, was particularly impressed by Sobieski as well as King Felipe III of Spain, who was responsible for the expulsion of the Moors from Iberia.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Imperial Teutonic Order. "The Insignia of the Hochmeister of The Teutonic Order."

<http://www.imperialteutonicorder.com/id51.html> (Accessed 15 April, 2015)

¹³² Proud Anglo-Saxon. "Here is a new WN flag & a new slideshow video to kick off 2013." Stormfront (1 January, 2013). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t936180/> (accessed 16 April, 2015)

¹³³ Stegura. "White European heros of the struggle against Islam!" Stormfront (18 November, 2004). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t166238/>

¹³⁴ Gardell, 147

Music

Since before the internet era, music has been an effective tool for creating ties between right-wing extremists around the world. The *Oi!* and Rock Against Communism (RAC) genres popular from the 1970s originated in England, and eventually spread to other parts of the world. Many extremists still appreciate these genres for the messages which they deliver, but *Oi!* and RAC are no longer the most popular genres of extremist music. Scholars often overemphasize the contemporary significance of these genres; while influential for the development of international connections between extremists, these styles of music have been supplanted by other forms of music which carry with them different messages and connotations. The most important of these genres include National Socialist black metal, as well as Viking, folk, and pagan metal. Metal in general has grown in popularity among right-wing extremists, whose enthusiasm for apolitical bands nearly equals the politicized variants of the genre.¹³⁵ The following discussion is by no means comprehensive, but it should serve as an adequate guide to the contemporary music preferences of extremists as well as the way in which these preferences contribute to a sense of community among members of the extreme right.

White Noise: Oi! and Rock Against Communism

The right-wing extremist music scene, as discussed briefly in Chapter 2, grew out of the punk scene in England along with the skinhead movement. Known as *Oi!* (a British colloquialism, the music resembled punk in its “style of rock and roll that consisted of hard, fast, and ‘unmelodic’ music, with forcefully sung lyrics, typically with working-class accents.”¹³⁶ While the genre was not initially exclusive to skinheads, it was quickly co-opted by right-wing extremists through the efforts of the National Front. Ian Stuart Donaldson of the band Skrewdriver became the “poster boy” of the racist skinhead scene, ultimately securing Skrewdriver’s position as possibly the best-known and most popular right-wing extremist band to date. By the 1980s, record labels such as Rock-O-

¹³⁵ When sorted by the number of members, “Metal Heads” is the fourth most popular Social Group on Stormfront. <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/group.php?do=grouplist&sort=members>

¹³⁶ Cotter, 117

Rama Records (Germany) and White Noise Records (England) were branding this style of music as “Rock Against Communism” (RAC).¹³⁷ England and Germany were the primary markets for these bands, but it was not long before *Oi!* and RAC began to spread throughout the continent as well as overseas. American extremists in particular facilitated the spread of racist music; Resistance Records, a subsidiary of the National Alliance, was a prominent international distributor until their collapse after the death of William Pierce.¹³⁸

Despite Donaldson’s death and the legal or financial problems faced by several right-wing extremist music distributors, *Oi!* and RAC remain popular among the “old guard” as well as new generations of right-wing extremists. Skrewdriver in particular remains a staple of webshop inventories; Micetrap, for example, has a product category dedicated entirely to Skrewdriver music and merchandise.¹³⁹ RAC and *Oi!* are discussed regularly on Stormfront, with users recommending bands and posting YouTube videos of songs; over 180 threads exist which are exclusively dedicated to such bands, and countless other music-related threads contain references to them as well. “White noise” music has been a global phenomenon since the late 1970s and early 1980s, and remains popular around the world to this day. However, it is being supplanted by a new generation of right-wing extremist bands whose music styles have changed in such a way that mimics the trends of extreme (not extremist) music in general: punk has had its day in the field, but metal has begun to usurp the position it once held on the extreme fringes of the music world.

NSBM and Folk/Viking/Pagan Metal

The history of metal music in general is not especially relevant to this analysis, but a brief history of black metal is necessary in order to understand its connections to

¹³⁷ Ibid, 119

¹³⁸ Resistance has since revived, but the company currently only does business in the United States.
<http://www.resistance.com/site/>

¹³⁹ Micetrap Records LLC. “Skrewdriver.”
<http://www.micetrap.net/shop/catalog/skrewdriverc47.html?osCsid=61a708d7ece44871bfae11aa5ebfb5f8>
(Accessed 13 March, 2015)

contemporary international right-wing extremism. Black metal, a “subgenre” of metal, arose in the late 1980s from bands such as Hellhammer, Celtic Frost, and Bathory, who began to take metal to more extreme sonic and aesthetic edges.¹⁴⁰ Musically, black metal tends to be harsh, dissonant, and aggressive. It features heavily-distorted guitars, “blast beat” drumming, and vocals which are often screamed in high pitch. Black metal bands typically draw upon satanic, occult, and horror themes for their lyrics and imagery, but many bands also draw upon national history and folklore. The genre’s popularity surged in Norway in the early 1990s, where the black metal scene became an infamous realm of anti-social youth rebellion. Sordid tales of church burnings, suicides, and murders have contributed to black metal’s image and reputation as a mysterious, frightening, and potentially dangerous source of violence or criminality. In a contemporary context, these fears are an over-exaggeration; while black metal’s aesthetics and lyrical content may be uncomfortable or frightening to outside observers or sensationalist media outlets, most contemporary black metal acts are simply interested in producing music that people in the black metal community will enjoy. Furthermore, the black metal community has sought to distance itself from criminality since the early days of the genre. The nature of the music’s imagery and sound, however, has meant that a number of people with extreme beliefs have been drawn towards black metal as a medium for expressing their ideals.

National Socialist ideology was not always an aspect of black metal, but the anti-social nature of the black metal mentality has led some apolitical bands to flirt with Nazi imagery. An early example of this can be seen with the band Darkthrone, whose 1995 album *Panzerfaust* derives its name from the eponymous Nazi anti-tank weapon; the name was chosen simply for its provocative connotations.¹⁴¹ In 2007, the frontman of the Norwegian band Taake performed a show in Germany with a swastika painted on his chest. He later claimed that Taake is not a Nazi band, but that he was trying to channel negativity during the performance. The reaction to his stunt suggests that he succeeded in

¹⁴⁰ Phillipov, Michelle. “Extreme Music for Extreme People? Norwegian Black Metal and Transcendent Violence.” *Popular Music History* Vol 6 No 1/2 (2011), pg 153

¹⁴¹ Sputnik’s official false metal authority. “Darkthrone – Transilvanian Hunger.” <http://www.sputnikmusic.com/review/42177/Darkthrone-Transilvanian-Hunger/> (Accessed 7 April, 2015)

this.¹⁴² The figure most associated with bringing elements of Nazism into black metal is “Varg” Vikernes, who has become a prominent figure in the international right-wing extremist scene. Vikernes is best known for his role in several church-burnings in Norway, as well as the murder of his former bandmate Øystein “Euronymous” Aarseth. Vikernes’ interest in pre-Christian Norwegian culture led him to form ties with Norwegian neo-Nazis, and his 20-year prison sentence for Aarseth’s murder gave him time to reformulate and spread his views.¹⁴³ Vikernes’ musical project Burzum is considered to be apolitical, and remains popular among black metal fans around the world. Many non-extremist Burzum fans will profess that their interest in the band is based on its musical qualities, and that they disagree with the sentiments of the man behind the project.¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless, black metal has been adopted by many neo-Nazi artists since the 1990s, to the point that National Socialist black metal (NSBM) is identified by many metal fans, extremist or otherwise, as a distinct subgenre of black metal. The Encyclopaedia Metallum, an online directory of metal bands, lists 445 bands which relate solely to National Socialism.¹⁴⁵ Of these, many additionally explore related themes such as Aryanism, genocide, war, and resistance. Most of the bands are European or North American, but some can also be found in South and Central America. NSBM bands typically choose band names which include references to Nazism, paganism, or some aspect of national or racial pride. As with other racist music, most major online music services and stores refuse to sell records of overt Nazi metal bands. Nevertheless, one can easily find their music on YouTube or through Stormfront posts; some bands even slip through the cracks, and their music can be listened to on mainstream services such as

¹⁴² Blabbermouth.net. “Taake Frontman In Swastika Scandal.” <http://www.blabbermouth.net/news/taake-frontman-in-swastika-scandal/> (Accessed 7 April, 2015)

¹⁴³ Olson, Benjamin Hedge. “Voice of our Blood: National Socialist Discourses in Black Metal.” *Popular Music History* Vol 6 No 1/2 (2011), 137

¹⁴⁴ This statement is anecdotal, as it is based off of private conversations I have had with many metal fans. It is worth noting that many black metal fans refuse to listen to Burzum due to Vikernes’ politics.

¹⁴⁵ Encyclopaedia Metallum. “Search results for “National Socialist.” http://www.metal-archives.com/search?searchString=national+socialism&type=band_themes (Accessed 7 April, 2015)

Spotify or Last.fm. Music that cannot be found in mainstream sources is typically available via specialized webshops.

Folk, pagan, and Viking metal, derivative subgenres of black metal, are appreciated and appropriated by many right-wing extremists due to the aesthetics and lyrical themes of bands which fall within these genres. These bands are generally apolitical, focusing on national history, folklore, and pagan tradition in a non-racialized context. The use of these themes has ensured, perhaps unintentionally, that folk/pagan/Viking metal appeals to many members the extreme right community, as evinced by the prevalence of Stormfront threads on the topic. A simple glance at the Music and Entertainment subform main page will typically show several threads related to pagan or folk metal, and most of the bands listed have no clear ties to extremist ideology in their lyrics or associations. Many of these bands sing in English or their native languages, but language does not appear to be a barrier to their international appeal. The interest in these bands among right-wing extremists stems from a notion of nostalgia for Europe's mythic pre-Christian past, and the numerous anachronisms which appear in the bands' music and imagery are therefore either ignored, or unimportant.

Religion

Religion, among members of the extreme right, is a double-edged sword. It exists alternately as a point of unity and a source of division. The divisions, while notable, should not be overstated. Individuals and groups which espouse particular religious beliefs have formed meaningful connections on an international level. As has been previously mentioned, religious beliefs tie into political ideology and cultural cues within the wider right-wing extremist community. Religion plays an integral part in shaping individuals' worldviews, and the religious dogmas and guidelines adopted by extremists are inexorable from their core identities. The universal nature of religion has rendered this area one of the most important in fostering international ties between racialists and white European supremacists. Christianity, neo-paganism, and occultism are the most common belief systems espoused by right-wing extremists. Divisions among religious

right-wing extremists occur primarily between pagans and Christians, with occultists generally finding more acceptance among the pagans than among the Christians. Pagan extremists resent the forcible conversion of pagans which occurred in Europe during the Middle Ages, while dogmatic Christians tend to view pagans and occultists as covert Satanists who cannot be trusted. The arguments which these groups once had on Stormfront in the past have been tempered in recent years, as hostile “flame wars” came to be viewed as unnecessarily divisive.¹⁴⁶ These tensions remain below the surface, so extremists around the world can hold pretenses towards presenting a united front in spite of their inner religious struggles. Nevertheless, religion is a point of international unity and identity formation among members of the extreme right.

Christianity

As the world’s largest religion, Christianity comes in innumerable flavors which vary greatly across the world. It is unsurprising that, given European society’s long history of Christian tradition, many right-wing extremists adhere to brands of Christianity which reinforce this notion. Since discussions about religion are highly discouraged outside of Stormfront’s Theology subforum, and since posting in the subforum is closed to most users, Stormfront discussions about Christianity tend toward the apolitical and strictly theological. Nevertheless, users’ preferred variants of Christianity differ along expected national lines. Many of the American posters are Protestants of some sort, and most Catholic posters are from traditionally Catholic countries such as Poland, Italy, and France. Orthodox Christians tend to be, unsurprisingly, from Southern and Eastern Europe. Christianity in general is nevertheless portrayed by these extremists as the force that will save Europe and/or America from the threats of Judaism and Islam.¹⁴⁷ The long history of conflict between Christian Europe and various Muslim political entities has

¹⁴⁶ The Religion forum on Stormfront is hidden to non-registered users, and its subforums are heavily moderated. Furthermore, users must be vetted by moderators before being allowed to post in these subforums. These measures have been adopted in response to the flame wars in past years.

¹⁴⁷ Coldstar. ”Christianity’s War Against Islam.” Stormfront (19 February, 2015). <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1089242/> (Accessed 14 March, 2015)

provided Christian extremists with a built-in *casus belli* against contemporary Muslim immigrants. Christians and Muslims, in their view, have always been at war. Thus, something of a crusader mentality is popular among Christian extremists. Breivik, for example, considered himself to be a modern Knight Templar.¹⁴⁸ This mentality can be found among Christian right-wing extremists from all denominations.

The Christian movement most commonly associated with the extreme right is the Christian Identity movement. Originating in England in the 1930s, Christian Identity was based upon notions of Aryanism and anti-Semitism. According to Christian Identity doctrine, members of the Aryan race are the true chosen people of God; furthermore, modern Jews are Khazar imposters who falsely claim Israelite origins.¹⁴⁹ Christian Identity spread from Britain to the United States, where it gathered a larger following and was further defined into an explicitly racist and racialist doctrine. Today, the US is the main bastion of Christian Identity, particularly in the form of the Aryan Nations Church of Jesus Christ Christian. An American organization with a “world headquarters” located in Louisiana, the Aryan Nations Church maintains pretenses of a pan-white nationalist view but are US-centric in their outlook and imagery. Nevertheless, their online catalogue includes shipping rates for international orders.¹⁵⁰ This is a prime example of the Americanization of right-wing extremist internationally: a British creation has been imported, reformulated, and re-exported with a particular American flavor that undoubtedly impacts the mindsets of non-American extremists who adopt this set of religious beliefs.

Paganism

Racist neo-paganism is a prominent example of international right-wing extremism. Unlike Christianity and Christian movements, it is generally decentralized and open to interpretation. Pagans on the extreme-right will typically revere the gods most closely related to their ethnicity or nationality. The Germanic gods and goddesses in

¹⁴⁸ Gardell, 132

¹⁴⁹ Baysinger, 1-3

¹⁵⁰ Aryan Nation. “Catalogue.” <http://www.aryan-nation.org/tapelib.htm.pdf> (Accessed 16 March, 2015)

their varying forms (i.e. Odin/Oden/Woden/Wotan for the chief Germanic god) are the most popular and universal, perhaps because of their celebration in Nazi imagery and propaganda. Furthermore, American neo-pagans often have extensively mixed ethnic backgrounds and may find it most efficient to simply adopt the European pagan pantheon which is best-documented and most easily researched. The Greek pantheon is popular among Greeks and Southern European pagans, while Eastern Europeans and Russians will typically venerate the Slavic pantheon. Regardless of their chosen pantheon, extremist pagans are vocal in their rejection of Christianity, which they see as an impure Jewish invention which was violently forced upon their pagan ancestors. Reverence for the old gods and veneration of the ancestors in an unintentionally anachronistic fashion is thus the ideal means of preserving the white race, as the old ways remain “uncorrupted” by Jewish influences. Similar to Christians, neo-pagans have something of a warrior mentality influenced by the alleged Germanic pagan obsession with battle, death, and glory. The Vikings, for example, represent for many right-wing extremists a white ideal of virility, brutality, and power; this ideal inevitably encourages a tacit acceptance of violent rhetoric and imagery within the wider right-wing extremist movement.

Neo-paganism exists in many varieties, but its relative obscurity in mainstream society has allowed the online neo-pagan “market” to be flooded with extremist ideology. Common themes in extremist Germanic neo-paganism are concepts of race, folk, shared ancestry, and anti-Christianity. Germanic neo-paganism can be divided at a basic level into Asatru and Odinism, the latter of which is more explicitly racialist. Asatru may or may not be racialist depending on the particular organization, and racialist asatru groups tend to veil such beliefs in “folkish” language. A Google search for “asatru” brings up the homepages of two organizations, the Asatru Alliance and the Asatru Folk Assembly, two US-based Asatru organizations which portray their beliefs in folkish terms. European Asatru, particularly in Iceland where it originated, is generally not concerned with race or folk. Odinism, on the other hand, has been associated with racialism since its inception in

Australia in the 1930s.¹⁵¹ Both of these forms of Germanic neo-paganism are reconstructions, as Germanic pagan traditions were almost exclusively passed down orally and visually. The best sources of Germanic pagan beliefs are found in the Icelandic Eddas, which were transcribed by Christian monks in the Middle Ages. It is thus ironic that anti-Christian pagans heavily base their beliefs upon the accounts of Christians, who may or may not have portrayed these pagan traditions accurately or in their entirety.¹⁵²

People interested in exploring neo-paganism as a religion will inevitably be exposed to racialism and folkish ideology when exploring the religion online, which may have damaging effects for the non-racist neo-pagan community while being a boon to the extremists. The vast quantity of both racist and non-racist pagan resources available online and in various languages ensures that extremists will have a large potential pool of new members by obfuscating their ideology behind a veil of “authentic” traditional religious belief. International extremist neo-paganism consists of many groups and organizations, but there is more ideological consistency between racist Germanic neo-pagans than there is between their Christian counterparts. The consistent influence of this pagan “front” of right-wing extremists appears to be strong on both sides of the Atlantic, and is not likely to subside in the near future. If anything, it will continue to create bridges between right-wing extremists across the world for years to come.

Occultism

Occultist practices among right-wing extremists began before the Second World War, and the occultist strains of right-wing extremism exist to this day. From the SS inner circle’s ideas about Thule and the Teutonic gods, to the modern phenomenon of religious Hitlerism, extremists who walk the occultist path are a small and enigmatic section of the extreme right. On Stormfront, they are greatly outnumbered by Christians

¹⁵¹ The Odinic Rite of Australia. “Home.” <https://odinicriteofaustralia.wordpress.com/> (Accessed 13 May, 2015)

¹⁵² Sacred Texts. *The Poetic Edda*. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/poe02.htm> (Accessed 13 May, 2015)

and neo-pagans.¹⁵³ As with the aforementioned religious groupings, extremist occultists subscribe to a variety of beliefs which occasionally overlap. These esoteric belief systems typically incorporate elements of mystic Aryanism and Hitler worship, making such beliefs popular among the neo-Nazi sections of the greater right-wing extremist movement. The writings of Savitri Devi, a contemporary of Adolph Hitler who combined Western occultism with Hinduism and Vedic mysticism to create an Aryanist belief system, remain influential among esoterically-oriented members of the extreme right. Her popularity is limited on Stormfront, however, due to her status as a “race traitor;” her marriage to an Indian man is seen as unacceptable by many Stormfront members.¹⁵⁴ Her dedicated base of enthusiasts appears to be small, as the most prominent website devoted to her writings has had around 23,000 visits since it was created in 2006.¹⁵⁵ Occultism as a religious or spiritual path among right-wing extremists around the world deserves mention, but as with non-racialist belief systems of a similar character, it remains a marginal element of right-wing extremist identity.

¹⁵³ Stormfront. “Theology.” <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/f80/> (only accessible by registered users)

¹⁵⁴ Paulus BFC. “Savitri Devi.” Stormfront (9 September, 2007)
<https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t418574/> (Accessed 14 May, 2015)

¹⁵⁵ Woman Against Time: The Savitri Devi Archive. <http://savitridevi.org/> (accessed 9 February, 2015)

CONCLUSION

While by no means comprehensive, this analysis has attempted to create a detailed, yet concise history of contemporary international right-wing extremist ideology and culture, with particular emphasis on the ways in which this phenomenon is expressed on the internet. Stormfront.org in particular has served as a focal point for the research, as the majority of extreme-right discourse can be found on that particular website. From the 1950s to the present, the extreme right has undergone an ideological evolution from insular ethnonationalism to a comprehensive, racist “white nationalism;” American voices have been especially influential in this process, which shows no signs of abating. The internet has been a significant tool in this paradigm shift as it has facilitated communication between adherents of disparate strains of right-wing extremist belief from around the world. National identity has not evaporated from right-wing extremist ideology, and extremists are by no means homogenous in their worldviews. Rather, they have intensified their internal dialogue in an attempt to reconcile viewpoints which often stand in contrast to one another. The extreme right as a movement is likely to remain fragmented and factionalized, but it is clear that an internationally-oriented mindset has developed since the mid-20th century.

The findings of this analysis suggest that, somewhat enigmatically, right-wing extremists have become more homogenized in some ways and more fractionalized in others. The adoption of a white nationalist perspective has led to increased communication between extremists from different countries, but the enhanced accessibility of various strains of right-wing extremist thought has provided right-wing extremists with a “grab-bag” of cultural cues and beliefs which are often in contrast to those held by other right-wing extremists. White nationalism has also forced many neo-Nazis to repudiate aspects of Hitler’s racial hierarchy, particularly with regards to his hatred of Slavs. Perhaps right-wing extremists of all flavors have recognized their small numbers, and out of necessity have expanded their conception of whiteness in such a way that bolsters their ranks. As with other families of political ideology, right-wing

extremism has had to adapt to a shrinking world; some elements of the “classic” ideology have been retained while others are eschewed. It is likely that right-wing extremist ideology and culture will continue to experience this process of refinement and redefinition, as these elements have undergone significant changes in a span of merely twenty years. Perhaps the divisions will be healed, or perhaps they will deepen. Whatever the case may be, the movement’s current momentum suggests that the process of internationalization will continue unabated for years to come.

Study Limitations and Further Research

As has been stated above, this account of contemporary right-wing extremism is rather broad in its scope. A truly comprehensive account of right-wing extremism online is well beyond the capacity of a master’s thesis. The sheer quantity of materials online related to this topic necessitates a selective process of obtaining relevant materials. While the process was not arbitrary, difficult decisions needed to be made as to which materials did not “make the cut.” Thus, the most “mainstream” and visible websites were examined, which inevitably colors this study’s conclusions in such a way that represents specific strains of right-wing extremist ideology. The reliance on primary materials over secondary materials may be questioned, as well as the inductive approach taken in analyzing these materials. This study was intended to act as a “pioneering” effort which explores a known topic from a new perspective. If the conclusions in this study are found to be faulty or lacking, it can only be attributed to flaws in this author’s thought process and analytical abilities (or lack thereof). Regardless, sincere efforts have been made to ensure that the matter at hand has been portrayed concisely, reliably, and accurately.

As a pioneering endeavor, this analysis raises a number of questions which warrant further investigation. It has been demonstrated above that few scholars have conceptualized contemporary right-wing extremism as an international movement, or have explored this conception in sufficient detail. The ideological and material ties which exist between groups may appear as asides and footnotes in the literature, but are concrete and significant in the real world. This study hopefully will provide but a few examples of

the interconnections between right-wing extremists around the world. Scholars who find merit in this conceptualization may find fruitful avenues of study by expanding upon particular aspects of this internationalization, whether in terms of material support, ideology, culture, or religion. Narrow regional focuses may still have merit, but regional and international perspectives would be a welcome addition to the wider literature. If the current trends among the extreme right continue to develop in this direction, then scholars would be wise to track this process and stay ahead of the proverbial curve.

While several pages of this analysis are dedicated to *what* right-wing extremists say and believe and *how* these ideas are expressed online, there is no discussion as to *why* the individuals behind these beliefs choose to adhere to them. This is perhaps a question better answered by sociologists than historians or political scientists, but it is an intriguing question nonetheless. This study was also conducted by a “lurker” who merely read discussions without engaging the community members who produced them. A “participant observation” approach to the topic of right-wing extremism could yield enlightening results, but such an approach is admittedly fraught with challenges. Stormfront users are happy to share their ideologies with guest posters, but the cultivation of trusting personal contacts within the right-wing extremist community is a task which would require great time and effort. Most, if not all members, are aware that they are vilified within mainstream society, and are therefore slow to trust strangers or outsiders. “Infiltrating” particular groups could produce valuable insights, but such a course of action is potentially dangerous; it is not worth risking the safety of one’s self and family for the sake of a master’s thesis. Perhaps such an approach is better suited for an adventurous PhD student, or for the police and intelligence community which is undoubtedly already engaged in such work.

One specific area overlooked by this analysis is Stormfront’s “Private Forums,” which hosts over 9,000 threads.¹⁵⁶ Access to these subforums is limited to individuals who have donated money to Stormfront. If I am permitted to break the fourth wall, I was hesitant to take such an action due to my personal ideological opposition to Stormfront’s

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/> (Accessed 12 May, 2015)

core ideology. Although such a donation would have been for the sake of my research, I would be uncomfortable knowing that I had given money to an organization whose beliefs I cannot condone. While the content of these forums remains elusive, it is likely that the discussions held there represent the beliefs of the “hard core” of Stormfront users. These discussions may or may not have been relevant to this analysis. Nevertheless, I am rather curious about the nature of this “elite” subforum and would be glad to read another scholar’s analysis of its contents.

Educational institutions should consider supporting additional research in the area of right-wing extremism. The subject of Islamist terrorism has been popular since the declaration of the “War on Terror,” and remains a popular topic at scholarly institutions worldwide. This situation has perhaps occurred at the expense of research on terrorism and violence within the extreme right. It is startling that in Norway, where the deadliest European terrorist attack of the 21st century occurred, there are no funded research opportunities for scholars interested in right-wing extremism.¹⁵⁷ Right-wing extremists appear to be growing in number, and scholarly institutions run the risk of being “too late” in exploring this potential threat in detail. While this analysis suggests that the internationalization of right-wing extremism in particular deserves more detailed investigation, the topic in general should not continue to be neglected by scholars as it has been in recent years.

Policy Implications

Hopefully, this analysis has demonstrated the need for scholars, journalists, politicians, and average citizens to reconsider what they think they know about contemporary right-wing extremists. There is no doubt that extremist ideologies pose a threat to global, regional, and domestic security, particularly for vulnerable minority groups who have unjustly been made into scapegoats by adherents to such ideologies. Nevertheless, many people are all too eager to lump far-right but pro-democratic populists

¹⁵⁷The Norway Post. “Research on right-wing extremism neglected.”
<http://www.norwaypost.no/index.php/news/latest-news/30301>

and immigration skeptics with violent extremists who are truly dangerous. To call such organizations and individuals “fascists” or “neo-Nazis” demonstrates a twofold lack of knowledge: the “danger” of generally democratic and peaceful groups is likely exaggerated, while the real threat is ignored in favor of easier targets. The labeling of one’s ideological opponents as “Nazis” is a tired trope, and is becoming increasingly meaningless through overuse. A better understanding of what the real “Nazis” (or right-wing extremists) say, think, and believe should be sufficient in demonstrating the core differences between the far right and the extreme right. This is not to say that the lines between them are not blurred, but perhaps the border is not so nebulous as many politicians, scholars, and media outlets seem to suggest.

Governments and societies should also attempt to understand the reasons why the right-wing extremist movement has experienced substantial growth in recent years. A number of Stormfront discussions reveal that many adherents to right-wing extremist ideology feel left behind or abandoned by Western liberal society. The political gains made by national-populist parties with anti-immigrant perspectives suggests that there is a great deal of interest in the issues of immigration and national identity, and more honest and open discussion on the challenges posed by immigration needs to occur. Particularly in Europe, right-wing extremists have capitalized upon progressives’ hesitance to embrace nationalism by appropriating national identity and European culture as signifiers of a racist and exclusive worldview. This initial hesitance is understandable given the legacy of the Second World War, but the war ended 70 years ago. By rendering nationalist sentiment and enthusiasm for European culture as taboo, progressive forces throughout Europe have allowed extremists to co-opt these factors, thereby spurring a vicious cycle which simply reinforces an inherent fear of nationalism. One may find value in the example of Norway, where progressive elements have succeeded in harnessing nationalist sentiment in such a way that emphasizes the inclusive and positive aspects of Norwegian national identity. Similarly, the burgeoning Scottish nationalist movement is an example of an inclusive civic nationalism which largely rejects ethnic

identity in favor of an inclusive, value-based identity.¹⁵⁸ If progressives continue to ignore the potential value and merit of positive nationalism, extremist elements will likely continue to monopolize and abuse the concept for divisive and destructive ends.

Furthermore, the increasingly international perspectives of right-wing extremists deserve attention from governments and security services. The United States in particular is especially concerned with domestic extremists, and appears to have little interest in the fact that American extremists are “leading the charge” in spreading right-wing extremist ideology throughout the world. International cooperation on this issue could go a long way in mitigating the potential danger of right-wing extremist violence. The calls to action which can be seen on Stormfront (“someone needs to *do* something”) have the potential to inspire acts of terrorism around the world. Police and intelligence services would be wise to cooperate and share intelligence on these matters, as far as they possibly can. It may well be the case that such cooperation already exists, but it is not especially visible or well-publicized. Government interest in this issue would not only have the potential to mitigate threats from the extreme right, but it would also have the possibility of educating the public about the nature of right-wing extremism. As has been stated above, one can only hope such action will occur before it is “too late.”

Final Remarks

Having spent a substantial amount of time exploring a strange and insular subculture, I am perhaps left with more questions than answers. The nuances, contradictions, and mysteries of the right-wing extremist movement are too vast for any one individual to fully comprehend. For what it may be worth, my impression of the extreme right as a whole is that the wider movement consists primarily of disillusioned males in search of belonging and meaning; they have found this meaning in a poisonous and paranoid community of “white brothers” who have discovered easy scapegoats in Jews and non-whites. My hope is that many among these are simply young people and

¹⁵⁸ Jacobs, Turner. “No Quirky Tartan Sentiment: Understanding and Conceptualizing Scottish Nationalism.” Term Paper, PECOS 4010 (2013)

teenagers in search of their identity, who will ultimately come to understand the absurdity of the community which they have adopted as their own. Nevertheless, the potency of the general ideology and the zealotry which can be seen within the discourse among right-wing extremists suggests that many of these people will be lifelong adherents. The general population would be wise to understand them, not just to fear them, so that these ideologues do not remain isolated in their vitriolic bubble. If we look askance at that which we fear or detest, we run the risk of allowing it to fester unchecked beneath the surface. Honesty, openness, and understanding should not hinder our condemnation of the detestable, but condemnation should not blind us to the potential value of communication and conversation in mitigating the spread of poisonous ideologies.

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