Right-Wing Domestic Terrorism: Widespread and Underreported

By Thom Saffold

RAHOWA! [Racial Holy War!] In this one word we sum up the total goal and program of not only the Church of the Creator, but of the total White Race, and it is this: We take up the challenge. We god for total war against the Jews and the rest of the goddamned mud races of the world—politically, militantly, financially, visually, morally, and religiously. We do this with the determination that we regard it as the heart of our religious creed, and as the most sacred credo of all. We regard it as a holy war to the finish—a racial holy war.

From RAHOWA! This Planet Is All Ours, by Ben Klassen. World Church of the Creator founder

Every day in America terrorist acts are committed in the cause of white, male-supremacy, misguided patriotism or some other fascist goal.

According to figures from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report and the Michigan Index Crime Report, there were 740 confirmed hate crimes in Michigan in 1996, the latest year for which these statistics are available. Hate crimes, however, are underreported. Racially motivated crimes of murder, assault, intimidation, theft or vandalism occur in every state. Other crimes committed by militia-type anti-government groups are not counted and so are not included in these figures.

Perpetrators are members of one of the many radical right groups in the United States, or people who are sympathetic to the goals of these groups. However, the majority of their confirmed media reports on small percentages of these acts, usually only those involving multiple shootings. Recent examples include the dragging death of James Byrd, the brutal killing of several gay men, burned Jewish synagogues, an abortion doctor’s murder, the theft of KKK costumes, and even the murder of Benjamin Smith’s spree of killing Jews and Blacks just last month. Smith was a member of the World Church of the Creator and a fervent believer in the quote from Robert Heinlein: “We are the only race that may have a chance to be civilized.”[25] He acted out his hatred on those he considered “inferior.”

Domestic Terrorism:

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The news media habitually frames such killers as “lone wolf nuts” and gives the impression that such groups are complete abstractions of American life. The media portray killers like Smith and Farrow as sad, mentally unstable losers, instead of as people acting out of deeply rooted ideologies.

Throughout history, the media have described Farrow as “a loner with extreme racist beliefs and a history of mental health problems [who] had a hard time holding jobs.” Media reporting on what they invariably call “hate groups,” or “extremist fringe groups” is usually cursory at best and tends to view each group in isolation. It paints the groups that spawn and guide such killers—as neo-Nazi organizations, World Church of the Creator, and Aryan Nations—as completely abnormal and at the very “fringe” of American society.

Unfortunately, the corporate press are left with the relatively comforting impression that “hate crimes” are committed by mentally ill people with social associations with “fringe organizations.” The media use the term “hate group” as a way to whitesep a small box in which to put this large fascist outrage, because “obviously Farrow was over the edge and the groups he associated with are just a bunch of losers like he is,” as one interviewee put it on the evening news. Thus Americans do not have to question the way we have organized our society, because “you just can’t know when these nuts will strike,” in the words of another interviewee. Jewish institutions may have to tighten their security, but the rest of us can remain content to be as usual.

Of course, when the next attack occurs, the media will have forgotten all about Buford Farrow, and the “lone wolf nut”? they’re just a bunch of losers’ theory will be trotted out once more. Missoula, Montana police have disappeared thousands of people about all these “hate crimes” and “hate groups” are the words that politically define them: fascist, anti-Semitic, racist, homophobic, patriarchal, misogynist, right-wing terrorist, white supremacist.

Once again, the Klan entered a reign of terror, and was active in electoral politics. The Klan’s greatest political success was in Indiana by capturing most of the state government for Klan favorable or outright members in the 1924 election. The Klan was also instrumental in pressuring Congress to enact legislation that drastically restricted immigration into the US.

Unfortunately, the Klan’s terrible excesses created a national forum for radical right groups in the United States, or people acting out of deeply rooted ideologies.

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The KKK’s Third Incarnation

Began with the rise of the modern civil rights movement. As violent as it has been, it reached its zenith of terrorist acts during this period. With African American anti-semitism for meaningful freedom and equality, the main focus of the Klan shifted back to fighting for segregation and neo-slavery. World War II and Korea provided crucial training for many Klan members, and their ideologies have strengthened over the years. The homes of many civil rights leaders were bombed by Klan assassins, including that of Martin Luther King, Jr. The Klan killed Medgar Evers in 1963, civil rights workers Mickey Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman a year later, and Viola Liuzzo in 1965.

The Latest Version of the Klan

Is closely associated with the career of David Duke. Political reporters have called David Duke “the John Kennedy of the KKK” because of his good looks and political charisma. A former Grand Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1970’s, Duke, now 48, is responsible for modernizing much of the Klan, helping it, in his words, to “get out of the cow pasture and into hotel meeting rooms.” He taught the KKK to use code words (he has even referred to cross burnings as “illuminations”), and to disguise their ideas behind more respectable labels.

In 1989, Duke resigned from the KKK and formed a “political organization” to promote the cause of White Rights. The National Alliance for the Advancement of White People (NAWNP). He ran for Governor of Louisiana and made bids for a Senate seat, scoring impressive numbers with the electorate. In May, he garnered 19% of the primary vote for Louisiana’s 1st Congressional District, out of a field of five viable candidates.

The concept of “leaderless resistance” makes the Klan—and its kindred—less vulnerable to infiltration by law enforcement, and gives it “plausible deniability” when its members or adherents commit atrocities.

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According to the Intelligence Project, 435 fascist “Patriot” groups were active in 1998. Of these groups, 171 were militias, 31 were “common-law courts” and the rest fit into a variety of categories such as publishers, ministries, citizens groups and others. These Patriot groups usually define themselves as opposed to the “New World Order,” and most or all advocate or adhere to extreme antigovernment doctrines.

In 1997, the SPLC reported 40 militia chapters and 10 other extremist groups operating in Michigan, from Allegan, Arenac and Bad Axe to Dexter, Flint and Dearborn. Only Texas and California have more.

The SPLC breaks down racist groups into categories—Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazi, Racist Skinheads, Identity, and Other, which includes publishers of racist writings and music as well as miscellaneous groups.

There are currently a total of 81 separate KKK organizations, the Intelligence Report lists 167 chapters, 4 of them in Michigan.

Neo-Nazis include 157 factions and chapters in the U.S. The Aryan Nations/Court of Church Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Neo-Nazi National Alliance (a chapter in Eastpointe), National Socialist White People’s Party (chapters in Caledonia, Pinconning and Warren), and the 46 chapters of Benjamin Smith’s World Church of the Creator, (chapters in Dearborn and Westland) are the largest, best known, and perhaps most dangerous.

Racist Skinheads, operating under names like Aryan National Front, Blood and Honor, Fourth Degree, Aryan Nations, SS, National Socialist Movement and Hammer Kudlos (one chapter in Warren, MI) are represented on the list with 50 organizations and chapters.

Identity refers to Christian Identity, an ultraracist theology. Its central tenant claims that the nation, the American people, the race, the church, the state, the flag and everything else—except for Jews—is sacred. This means that God commands white people to uphold the sovereignty and national identity of the United States, and it implies that Jews and other nonwhites are enemies inside and out. In Christian Identity, it is believed that the Creator of the universe is a God of pure race, and that the United States has a special mission to spread the Christian religion, culture, and values to the rest of the world.

The church also serves as a bank, a hospital, a school, and a government. It is the only true authority on earth. Christians are God’s people, and as such, they are commanded to obey God, not the government. They believe that the government is a false authority, and that the only true authority is God, the Supreme Being, who created the universe. They believe that the government is a false authority, and that the only true authority is God, the Supreme Being, who created the universe.

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From the KKK and many militia groups to the John Birch Society and Christian Coalition, most radical-right terrorist groups and their ideological twins are based on a similar Christian theology.

There are two major branches in far-right theology. A third, Christian Identity, is rejected by many in the religious right, but some of its tenants are accepted by most.

First is Protestant Fundamentalism, which is preached weekly in conservative Christian Churches. Among its tenets is that the Christian Bible is inerrant and infallible, if taken literally. Of course, in practice, this means that whatever interpretation—or misinterpretation the interpreter makes is what they really consider “inerrant and infallible.” Jews, gays and lesbians, women, poor people, the environment and victims of America’s wars of empire have suffered from this belief.

Religious-right theology is also patriarchal and hierarchical. That women are to submit to men is a central belief, and adherents find it “natural” that certain groups should be “on top” and others on the bottom of societal organization.

The religious right has a punitive view of God. People have to placate God; so, people cannot feel quite secure in their relationship with the Divine, or with other people. Also destructive is the idea that some people and groups are part of the “saved” or “elect.” According to this doctrine, it is very important for “the good people” not to contaminate themselves with “inferior” or “bad” people. Laws and taboos against interracial relationships come directly from this theology. It also desensitizes people to suffering if the “non-elect” are the ones suffering; the belief is, “Well, what do they expect? God only protects His own.” Anti-Semitism, which has a long history in Christianity and in the United States, is rooted in this theology, as were many of the justifications for exterminating Native Americans.

Finally, there is a strong stain of apocalypticism in right-wing religion. The religious right’s interpretations of Book of Revelation, which they say predicts battles between the armies of good and the hordes of hell, is very important to its theology. The world-domination theories that the radical right thrives on, dealing with the Trilateral Commission, ZOG (Zionist Occupation Government), and the ever-popular “international Jewish banking conspiracy,” can be traced back to this theology.

The second major leg is Dominion Theology, also known as Reconstruction, which is also part of Sunday services in thousands of American churches. It claims that the Christian Church is to take over every system of government and reconstruct governments, societies, cultures and economies according to God’s will. And if you are unsure about what God’s will might be, well, the Reconstructionists know everything there is to know about that!

Pat Robertson, of the Christian Coalition and “700 Club,” has publicly said: “The Constitution is a marvelous document for self-government by Christian people. But the minute you turn the document into the hands of nonChristians and atheistic people, they can use it to destroy the very foundation of our society.” In other words, a basic principle of Dominion Theology is that only Christians—and Christians just like Robertson, at that—should be elected to government.

The recent decision by the Kansas State School Board not to require the teaching of evolution in science classes is another example of Dominion Theology at work. Then there is Christian Identity, the theology of White Supremacy.

Christian Identity is neither a single organization nor a monolithic doctrine. Instead, it is composed of hundreds of small groupings dotted across the map, not confined to any single region.

Christian Identity contends that the people of Northern Europe—white Anglo-Saxons—are the Lost Tribes of Israel. Jews are considered to be the Children of Satan, and Black people and people of color are considered to be “pre-Adamic”—a lower form of species than that of white people. Identity calls them “mud people” and preaches a profound hatred of them.

Identity doctrine is central to the ideologies of groups like the paramilitary White Patriot Party, various militia/survivalist groups, the Aryan Nations and the World Church of the Creator, each of which may interpret and use the basic theology differently.