

# Right-Wing Domestic Terrorism: Widespread and Underreported

## (Part One of Two)

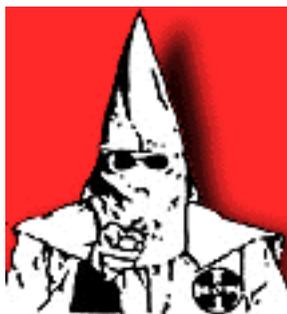
By Thom Saffold

*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 gird for total war against the Jews and the rest of the goddamned mud races of the world—politically, militantly, financially, morally and religiously. In fact 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, intimidat-



**THE KLU KLUX KLAN BEGAN AS A CLUB FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF SIX FORMER CONFEDERATE OFFICERS** less than a year after the Civil War, in the little town of Pulaski, Tennessee. They considered many names for their group, including "The Jolly Six" or "The Thespians." However, one of them suggested the Greek word for circle, *kyklos*. They changed it to Ku Klux, and then added, for alliteration, Klan.

One "amusement" was dressing in whitish, hooded costumes and galloping past people's homes after dark to frighten them. Soon joined by others, the first "Ku Kluxers" began using their rides as means of terrorizing newly freed slaves. Keeping them from voting and exercising political power became a chief goal.

The Klan attracted attention and soon began to spread. In April of 1867, representatives met in Nashville, at the Maxwell House, and formally organized themselves into a terrorist cult.

Using bits and pieces of Greek and Nordic mythologies, plus their own imaginations, they devised an organization based on secrecy with weird names and bizarre rituals and codes. The group elected Confederate war hero General Nathan Bedford Forrest as Grand Wizard and organized his "invisible empire" into realms, dominions, provinces and dens, headed by Grand Dragons, Titans, Giants, and Cyclopes. Regular members of the Klan were called Ghouls. Chaplains were called "Kludds," named after Culdee, the high priest of the ancient Druids.

Violence and secrecy were the tools of the Klan from their beginning in Nashville. They threatened, exiled, flogged, mutilated, shot, stabbed and hanged African Americans who were not respectful, or were accused of crimes, or belonged to military or political organizations that the Klan opposed. They terrorized Northern schoolteachers and storekeepers and politicians, assaulted judges, intimidated juries and attacked officials who registered Black people to vote.

Many of its methods were based on the intimidation and punishment tactics of plantation masters.

The Klan became an important part of the Reconstructed South culturally, politically and, of course, nocturnally. They soon spread to nine states in the South. The number of people they killed and the amount of property they destroyed is incalculable, in part because the Klan has always been a catalyst for destructive acts by people not formally connected with it. Then as now, many vigilante groups formed spontaneously, emboldened by the Klan.

As a formal organization, the Klan lasted only six years. The factions were so bloodthirsty that they brought down upon themselves the wrath of the Federal government, which passed a law outlawing the KKK. They were also the victims of their own infighting, with various Klan chapters and leaders vying for power and prestige within the wider organization.

However, the terror they unleashed did not end, and former Klan members used legal means to impose the Jim Crow laws that oppressed Black Americans for another hundred years.

**THE SECOND ERA OF THE KKK** began on Thanksgiving Eve, 1915, when a fake Southern colonel named William J. Simmons held a rally at Stone Mountain, Georgia and reincarnated the Ku Klux Klan. A former Methodist minister, Simmons had witnessed flaming crosses used at nighttime Christian revival services, and he incorporated the idea as a central symbol in his new KKK.

Controlling African Americans was not the Second Klan's main focus, because the Jim Crow laws and frequent lynchings accomplished that. The change of the century brought many social changes that Simmons and his Klan opposed. Voting rights for women, loosened sexual morality, the teaching of evolution instead of creationism, Catholicism, atheism, and Jews were high on the KKK's hate list. They also viewed immigrants from Asia, East Europe and the Middle East as a threat to their way of life.

tion, 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 influenced by their ideologies. The national news media reports on a small percentage 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 Columbine High School massacre, and 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 that begins this article.

African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, Jews, Asians, homosexuals, transgendered people, government workers, homeless people, people working for positive change, and ordinary people just living their lives are targets. The motive may be hatred of the victim's ethnicity, sexuality, lifestyle, or politics, or anger at the government or United Nations, or paranoid fear of what the radical right calls the New World Order or the Zionist Occupation Government.

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, another racist, fascist gunman attacked. This time children and staff at a Jewish Community Center were wounded, and a Filipino-American postal worker was shot and killed.

Within hours, authorities confirmed that the shooter, Buford Furrow, is actively connected to far-right terrorist groups such as Aryan Nations. He is well schooled in the racist and fascist doctrines of Christian Identity and other right wing ideologies. Like hundreds of his ideological compatriots each year, he acted out his hatred on those he considers "inferior."

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

The Los Angeles Times, for example, described Furrow 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—such as neo-Nazi organizations, World Church of the Creator, and Aryan Nations—as completely abnormal and at the very "fringe" of American society.

Consumers of the corporate press are left with the relatively comforting impression that "hate crimes" are committed by mentally ill people with sick associations with "fringe organizations." The media, then, offers Americans a nice little mental box in which to put this latest fascist outrage, because "obviously Furrow 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 soon return to business as usual.

Of course, when the next attack occurs, the media will have forgotten all about Buford Furrow, and the "lone wolf nut"/"they're just a bunch of losers" theory will be trotted out once more.

Missing from the hand wringing and psychobabble 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.

## RIGHT-WING TERRORIST ACTS ARE UNDERREPORTED

Because most of us cannot rigorously read regional newspapers from every part of the nation, we do not hear about 99% of the right-wing terrorist acts committed each year.

For example, most people did not read about a father-son team convicted of the 1996 robbery and slaying of an Arkansas family to raise money for the Aryan Peoples Republic. Nor do we hear

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 favorites 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.

Violent and filled with bigotry though it was, the KKK was considered "respectable" by many. Preachers, politicians, business owners and police eagerly sought membership. President Warren Harding was inducted as a KKK member in the White House. In 1925, 40,000 Klan members rallied in a mammoth parade in Washington, DC, clad in their robes and hoods.

Fortunately, the Klan's terrible excesses and propensity for infighting once again led to a popular backlash that sent it into decline by the late 1920's. It revived in the 1930's and '40's by opposing communism, but had lost most of its strength.

**THE KKK'S THIRD INCARNATION** began with the rise of the modern civil rights movement. As violent as it had been, it reached its zenith of terrorist acts during this period. With African Americans agitating 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, who used their killing skills in small arms and explosives to deadly effect. 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 Luizzo 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 mainstream conservative-sounding rhetoric.

In 1980, Duke resigned from the KKK and formed a "political organization" to promote the cause of "White Rights." The National Association for the Advancement of White People (NAAWP). Elected to the Louisiana State Legislature in 1989, he has also run for Governor of Louisiana and made bids for a Senate seat, scoring impressive numbers with the electorate each time. In May, he garnered 19% of the primary vote for Louisiana's 1st Congressional District, out of a field of five viable conservative candidates. In November 1998, he self-published *My Awakening*, a 700-page autobiography. This opus of racism, anti-Semitism, and bigotry is a Mein Kampf for the Nineties.

The latest Klan is marked by four characteristics:

1. Its racist ideas are just as ugly and dangerous as ever.
2. Its commitment to violence is as strong as ever, but masked by the public relations flim-flam David Duke successfully peddles.
3. It cooperates with other groups and organizations. A dangerous synergy has emerged as the Klan's religiously racist legacy has inspired other fascist groups, and their ideologies have strengthened the Klan.
4. 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.

The Ku Klux Klan, nurtured in the racism, nativism and exploitative culture of America, is more dangerous as the calendars change to the next millennium than at any time in its history.



much about attacks on National Park employees and government regulators in several of the Western States, or death threats against county clerks, judges and other public servants. Or about the two plastic containers of medical waste marked with swastikas and references to the Jewish center shootings in Los Angeles found outside two Connecticut synagogues, 15 miles apart. Taped to one of the containers was a newspaper picture of Buford Furrow. The other had Furrow's name written on it.

Cross burnings, racist graffiti, threats, robberies, beatings and even killings occur daily or frequently across our nation. They are not only underreported; not all of them are even counted as "hate crimes"—much less as terrorist acts—by state and federal authorities, who have varying standards and definitions. The LA Times gives the recent example of a skinhead wearing obviously racist tattoos who "taunted, terrorized and finally shot [a West African immigrant at a downtown bus stop] because he couldn't stand his skin color." Denver police did not consider it a hate crime.

There have been some insightful news stories about domestic terrorist groups. *The Spokesman-Review* of Spokane, WA ran one of the best, a three part series that began on Sunday, Dec. 29, 1996. That series, as well as one a year earlier, can be found at <http://cda.net/library/war/cover.htm>.

## RIGHT-WING TERRORIST GROUPS ARE GROWING

Organizations which study and monitor right wing groups say that the number and membership of right-wing terrorist groups is growing. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) publishes its quarterly *Intelligence Report* which profiles Far Right leaders, monitors domestic terrorism and reports on the activities of extremist groups. Its annual listing of [hate groups](#) and "[Patriot](#)" groups is the most comprehensive in the United States. The website for SPLC, [www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org), includes lists of these right-wing groups. The number and variety is frightening.

## MAKING THEM MORE DANGEROUS: LEADERLESS RESISTANCE

Some are trying to spark a revolution. Others are convinced that they are principled, disciplined soldiers, part of a revolution already begun. Some murder, bomb or vandalize purely out of hatred for other people's religion, skin color or ethnicity. Others bomb women's clinics, kill abortion providers, or intimidate women seeking abortions, simply wanting things to "go back to the way God wants things." Still others are just "mad as hell and won't take it anymore" because in their minds "the Jews have taken over." Still others view themselves as part of a glorious Holy War for Jesus.

Some of their best-known names are Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols, Benjamin Smith, Floyd Ray Looker, Buford Furrow, Matthew and Tyler Williams, and Eric Robert Rudolph. Each of them committed murder for their "cause" and was caught, except for Smith who committed suicide and Rudolph who has eluded authorities for months. There are hundreds of others, who, like them, have committed racist and/or fascist atrocities, and according to researchers, thousands upon thousands of others like them.

What makes these people even more dangerous than one might predict—from their ideologies, commitment to terror and easy access to weapons—Is the growing reliance on a tactic called "leaderless resistance." Evidence suggests that the individuals named above were students of most or all of a reading list that includes the most bigoted and incendiary books imaginable, including writings detailing terroristic methods and tactics. One book that seems to top every right-wing terrorist's "must read" list is the infamous *The Turner Diaries*, by William Pierce.

According to *Soldiers of God: White Supremacists and their Holy War for America*, written in 1998 by Howard Bushart, John Craig and Myra Barnes, "Timothy McVeigh, purportedly a student of *The Turner Diaries* and other racialist literature, apparently understood the concept of leaderless resistance well. Leaderless resistance is exactly what one might imagine—that is, if one imagines small, armed, militant groups, independent of each another, autonomous, but all fighting for the same cause."

Leaderless resistance gives two benefits to terrorist groups.

First, because the acts committed by people like McVeigh, Rudolph, Smith and Furrow are so cold-blooded and wicked, it is easy for the public to view them each as "a mentally unbalanced, alienated individual." That diverts us from the truth of just how organized the radical right has become.

Second, it gives "plausible deniability" to the groups that spawn them. When Buford Furrow shot Jewish children and murdered a Filipino postal worker, the Aryan Nations loudly claimed that he wasn't acting on any orders from them, and they didn't do things like that, even though Furrow is obviously part of it. Matthew Hale, the Pontifex Maximus of the World Church of the Creator said the same thing after one of his acolytes, Benjamin Smith, shot African- and Asian-American people in the back in July.

Louis Beam is the best known theoretician of leaderless resistance. Beam is a former Ku Klux Klan leader in Texas and longtime associate of Aryan Nations founder Richard Butler.

Beam, Butler and 10 other extremists were acquitted in 1988 in Arkansas of charges that they conspired to overthrow the US government by being the godfathers behind The Order. After the jury reached its verdict, Beam stood outside the courthouse and proclaimed the battle would continue, but with smaller groups secretly pressing the fight. "To hell with the federal government!" he shouted.

Beam details the concept in an essay published in his newsletter, *The Seditonist*, in February 1992. He now has his own homepage on the Internet that includes this essay and other samples of his writings.

Beam credits a man named Col. Ulius Louis Amoss, whom he calls a fierce opponent of communism, with proposing the idea of leaderless resistance in 1962. However, Beam also traces its roots to the Committees of Correspondence, groups that were organized to support the 13 colonies before the nation's independence.

Most organizations, Beam writes in the *Seditonist* article, are structured like a pyramid, with orders flowing from the top down. This model is "not only useless, but extremely dangerous for the participants when it is utilized in a resistance movement against state tyranny," he writes, because a single government

also included in this category. Out of 62 groups and chapters identified as Identity, Michigan is represented by Bible Restoration Ministries, Inc. in Royal Oak, Church of Christ in Israel, in Munising, Proclaim Liberty Ministry in Adrian, and Restoration Bible Church in Berkeley.

The Council of Conservative Citizens (the remnant of the infamous southern White Citizens Council), National Association for the Advancement of White People (chapters in Dearborn Heights and Garden City), and the Nationalist Movement are large white supremacist groups inventoried under "Other." The list of 92 also contains publishers such as Day of the Rope Productions, and in Michigan, the Avengical Press in Boomingdale.

Even these lists do not enumerate the many terroristic anti-abortion groups operating across the nation.

On January 29, 1998, a bomb exploded outside the New Woman, All Women Health Care Clinic in Birmingham, Alabama. Robert "Sandy" Sanderson, a police officer moonlighting as a security guard at the clinic, was killed in the blast. Emily Lyons, a nurse at the clinic, was severely wounded.

Eric Robert Rudolph has been charged with the bombing. He is also a suspect in the 1996 bombing at Centennial Park during the Olympics. Rudolph is linked with the Christian Patriot and Christian Identity movements, and with the anti-abortion terrorist group, Army of God. In the aftermath of the Birmingham bombing, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* received handwritten letters claiming responsibility, which were signed by the Army of God. In 1997, media outlets received similarly signed letters following the bombings of an abortion clinic and gay nightclub in Atlanta.

The Army of God is a loosely organized network of terrorists. Like a growing number of militias and other domestic terrorist groups, it does not have a hierarchy, headquarters, or membership list. In other words, it is organized along the lines of "leaderless resistance."

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But how can a movement thrive by essentially abandoning any organization?

"The answer to this question is that participants... must know exactly what they are doing, and how to do it," Beam writes. "It becomes the responsibility of the individual to acquire the necessary skills and information as to what is to be done... No one need issue an order to anyone."

Hard evidence proves that radical right groups are getting the message. The following is from the "Field Manual Section 1: Principles Justifying the Arming and Organizing of A Militia," 1994, Wisconsin, The Free Militia, p. 78:

*THE FUNDAMENTAL RULE GUIDING THE ORGANIZATION OF THE FREE MILITIA IS GENERALIZED PRINCIPLES AND PLANNING BUT DECENTRALIZED TACTICS AND ACTION.*

*What is meant by this key statement is that the whole Militia must be committed to the same cause and coordinated in their joint defense of a community. Thus, there must be allegiance to a higher command. But specific tactics should be left up to the individual elements so that compromise of a part does not compromise the whole. Furthermore, all training and combat actions should be up to the smaller elements, again so that isolation or decapitation does not render the smaller units inept.*

*The way a balance between these competing concerns is achieved in the Free Militia is to organize all elements into 'cells.'*

Unless some major things change in this country, it is not a matter of *if* there are more terroristic attacks by the right wing, but when, how many, and what innocent groups of people will be the next to die.

In the fall of 1994, the National Abortion Federation announced that it had received a copy of a manual entitled *When Life Hurts, We Can Help... THE ARMY OF GOD*. This manual details "99 Covert Ways to Stop Abortion," including arson, bombing, use of butyric acid and other toxic chemicals, and numerous methods of vandalism. Detailed instructions for making explosives are also included. An epilogue ends the book with a declaration of "war" that calls for the killing of abortion providers.

## WHAT'S AHEAD

Fascist, racist and right-wing anarchist groups are growing in numbers and membership faster than at any time in our nation's history. This parallels an explosion of similar groups around the world, from neo-Nazi groups in Europe, Australia and South America to murderous militia groups in Asia, Africa and Europe. Most cooperate with other organizations, domestic and foreign, even those with different right-wing agendas than their own.

The author traveled to Croatia and Bosnia during the war there in 1993, as part of an effort to do nonviolent-direct-action peacemaking to try to stop the war. Several Bosnians, particularly Sarajevans, said, "We never thought that this ethnic violence could ever happen to us. Extremist groups, militias and the use of propaganda to create ethnic hatred produced this war. If it can happen to us, it can happen in America, for you are the most ethnically diverse land in the world."

Yes, and we have a history pocked with racism, slavery, anti-Semitism, nativism, violent imperialism, and class exploitation. This is the putrid soil that nurtures groups like the World Church of the Creator, the KKK, National Alliance, and Army of God. It is this soil, this paradigm of inhumanity that is at the heart of our society, economy and culture, which must be turned over, cleansed and thoroughly weeded if we are ever to be rid of hate groups.

Next month, AGENDA continues this article with ideas on how to do just that. ☑

**ALSO SEE BOX ON PAGE 20**

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 *mis*interpretation 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.