

American Swastika

*Inside the White Power Movement's
Hidden Spaces of Hate*

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1

Hidden Spaces of Aryan Hate

RaHoWa!

(rä-ho-wä, Racial Holy War) Expression of white power solidarity

In the 2008 presidential election, more than 69 million people elected Barack Obama, a forty-seven-year-old son of a white American mother and black Kenyan father, as the forty-fourth president of the United States. President Obama's election symbolizes a crowning achievement in the nation's push toward freedom and integration sought by heroes of equality such as Nobel laureate Martin Luther King Jr.

America's constitutional freedoms also allow people the liberty to speak hatred. "We have to kill the niggers," says Troy, a Southern California neo-Nazi skinhead. "We should just start digging a hole and bulldozing 'em all in! The Jews and spics too! We can't rest till they're all dead 'cause they won't till we are." Troy and others like him believe that the white race is on the verge of extinction and that a conspiracy of Jews who play puppet master to African Americans, Hispanics, and white-race traitors are to blame. For neo-Nazis like Troy, blacks with power represent a travesty. President Obama's election symbolizes how far a white nation has succumbed to the suicidal stupidity of integration. Troy believes that racial and ethnic integration represents no less than white racial genocide.

Troy and his comrades are embedded in a potent culture of racial and anti-Semitic hatred, paranoia, and conspiracy that continues to ferment in American society. They call themselves Aryans, white power, and racial separatists. We

know them commonly as white supremacists and neo-Nazis. These racist groups promote the white power movement (WPM), which is based on the ideology that the white race is genetically and culturally superior to all nonwhite races and deserves to rule over them.

Aryans¹ claim that both their genetic lineage and cultural heritage is under attack by race-mixing and intercultural exchange. They draw inspiration and symbols from Hitler and Nazi Germany, Pagan ritualism, Nordic warrior myths, and the Judeo-Christian Bible, which they interpret from a radical, racialist point of view.² Members of this subculture imagine that African Americans, Jews, Hispanics, homosexuals, and other nonbelievers are out to destroy them. Aryans are driven by a deep hatred of these groups, but also by pride, camaraderie, and the solidarity they feel toward fellow believers.

Aryans believe they are prosecuting a war to combat the extinction of the white race. Advocates of white power ideology proclaim themselves as race warriors fighting a shadowy cabal of powerful Jewish families they call ZOG, or Zionist Occupied Government, that directs America's culture industry, business, and government with the intent of eradicating the white race. Aryans have committed some of the most violent acts of homegrown terror and hate crime in the history of modern America, brutalizing and killing their racial enemies and those they suspect of supporting them.³ Many Aryans still plot against their enemies, and they hope to one day awaken the sleeping masses of whites, fight a race war, and retake their rightful position of power.

EXPLAINING ARYAN PERSISTENCE

How is such radical hatred able to persist in modern America? *American Swastika* seeks to provide an answer to this question. We build our explanation from firsthand ethnographic accounts of Aryans' lives. Our goal is to provide a sober explanation of Aryan persistence and inform strategies to counter the threats posed by Aryans and white power ideology. Our discussion exposes how Aryans cling to their extremism even as they are enmeshed in a wider society that vilifies their radical beliefs. Where radical beliefs endure, violent radical action may follow. One factor in the endurance of these beliefs is the role of the hidden social contexts where Aryans gather to privately cultivate racial hatred. We call these contexts Aryan free spaces.

Aryan Free Spaces

Aryan free spaces are settings where white power members meet with one another, openly express their extremist beliefs, and coordinate their activities. The term *free space* is a metaphor social scientists use to describe settings where marginalized groups feel some degree of freedom to express oppositional identi-

ties and beliefs that challenge mainstream ideas.⁴ Free spaces provide relatively powerless groups opportunities to safely articulate the aggression and hostility they feel toward the powerful.

Free space can be created in real-world physical spaces, such as a corner table in a busy restaurant where political activists quietly discuss plans for a guerilla demonstration, or in small, private, at-home meetings behind locked doors. Free space can also be created for larger gatherings such as backwoods survivalist camps organized on private lands. Likewise, activists may find sanctuary in virtual spaces on the Internet, where they log in to chat rooms, read political writings, listen to movement music, or watch videos that promote their cause. Whether large or small, physical or virtual, the common denominator of free spaces is that participants use them to nurture oppositional identities that challenge prevailing social arrangements and cultural norms.

American Swastika describes how Aryans use free spaces to overcome feelings of isolation and alienation by connecting with other Aryans and immersing themselves in white power culture. Aryan free spaces offer members solidarity, affection, and support for their crude fantasies of a utopian, militant, racially exclusive, all-white world.

Aryan free spaces may take the form of ordinary and benign settings and activities, but the content of the talk, rituals, and symbolism is anchored in white power ideology. For instance, most Aryan homes do not stand out as dens of hatred to neighbors or casual passersby. Outwardly, they tend to blend into their neighborhoods, apartment buildings, and communities. Inside, however, swastikas decorate the walls, white power literature lines the bookshelves, family pictures are full of Aryan symbolism, and mealtime prayers stress white power visions. Aryan homes are refuges from the mainstream world where members escape into a context defined by their white power beliefs.

The groups that meet in Aryan free spaces can vary greatly in size. Small Aryan cadres of a dozen or less may gather under the auspices of informal gatherings such as backyard barbeques, Bible study meetings, weekend campouts, or hiking excursions. Up to 500 Aryans may gather at the bar shows, concerts, and festivals that make up the white power music scene. Thousands of Aryans from around the world meet online through racist websites that promote white power culture. In some private Aryan communities, like Elohim City, Oklahoma, white power advocates are physically walled off from the outside world in order to live their image of a pure Aryan lifestyle.

Stigma, Concealment, and Aryan Survival

Aryans straddle the worlds of white power ideology and the mainstream culture. Aryans detest the mainstream culture as the mainstream detests them. They are abhorred and stigmatized at work, school, and in their neighborhoods where their self-conceived enemies surround them.

Sources of Aryan Stigma

A stigma is a mark of infamy and disgrace.⁵ Perhaps the most significant source of Aryan stigma derives from their reverence for Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany as a model nation-state. Aryan advocacy of racial separatism and white supremacy also valorizes the most bigoted aspects of the Southern Confederacy. White power ideology claims that whites' biological superiority is reflected in their political and cultural superiority as well. Aryans see the mainstream masses who oppose white supremacy as deluded by ZOG conspirators into supporting white genocide. They fantasize about exposing ZOG to the masses of whites and empowering Aryan ideologues.

These Aryan fantasies contradict several trends in modern American society. Since the late 1950s, integrationist policies and multicultural ethics have isolated racial extremists in America and increased the public stigma attached to white power culture and its adherents.⁶ Public opinion data indicates strong opposition to overt Aryan extremism in the United States.⁷ And fantasies of white genocide and an impending race war have little significance in the lives of most American citizens.⁸

Popular media, government, and human rights organizations all vilify Aryans and white power culture. News accounts of white power activity typically lampoon Aryans as ignorant buffoons and fringe whackos.⁹ Government attempts to combat white power groups have been ongoing since the 1960s, when the FBI began the Operation White Hate Group Program.¹⁰ Most recently, human rights organizations, such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, Simon Wiesenthal Center, and the Anti-Defamation League, have challenged white power groups through successful lawsuits against White Aryan Resistance, Aryan Nations, and Imperial Klans of America.¹¹

Aryans Hide among Us

Aryans are intensely aware of the stigma attached to their beliefs and the risks of publicly communicating their ideas.¹² Exposure would likely mean loss of employment and possibly the vandalizing and picketing of their homes.¹³ Most of the Aryans interviewed for *American Swastika* report such concerns about being shunned, or even surveilled and arrested, if they were to openly voice their extremist beliefs.¹⁴

In order to avoid constant confrontations they cannot win, Aryans camouflage their identities in public. In our midst, they blend into ordinary life and often pass by us without our recognition. These are not, as popular images have us believe, strident, hostile fanatics who stand out from the crowd and are always ready to fight.¹⁵ In most everyday settings, Aryans are invisible.

To be sure, hate does not always keep a low profile. Racist skinheads (skins) get into brawls with blacks and Hispanics. Klansmen beat racial enemies and

white race traitors. Neo-Nazis may go on gay-bashing walkabouts. National Socialists stage intermittent marches and rallies to promote white power. And there will be the spontaneous confrontations that occur on subways, in bars, and on the street. White power groups have also spawned organized crime, murders, and bombings.

But for all the vitriol and valorizing of violence in white power ideology, overt confrontations and organized violence are relatively rare events.¹⁶ James Scott notes that hiding hostility is a rational tactic of marginalized, powerless groups.¹⁷ Only fools fight openly when the deck is so stacked against them. Aryan resistance is a much more prosaic struggle to withstand or counteract the forces they oppose.

While Aryans project an image that hides much about their extremism, they do not see their secrecy as a lack of commitment to white power ideas or acquiescence to anti-Aryan mainstream culture. Rather, they see concealment itself as a form of activism. Concealment is essential for Aryan survival, both for individuals and for the movement. Many white power leaders now explicitly advocate that Aryans limit their public displays of allegiance. When members go to jobs where they work alongside African Americans, attend schools with Jews, live in neighborhoods with Latinos, buy groceries from gays, and ride trains with white race traitors, there should be no hint of hatred for these groups. In these contexts, Aryans play down their extremist identity.¹⁸ They see members “who use overtly racist symbols in public or who adopt an exaggerated racist style as movement novices.”¹⁹ By strategically concealing their extremism from outsiders, savvy Aryans prepare themselves for future opportunities to instigate and fight the race war they believe is drawing near.²⁰

Aryans use their free spaces to escape from the mainstream and openly celebrate their mutual bigotry and hatred. In these hidden cultural worlds they are able to build the emotional connections that reinforce individual and collective white power identity.²¹ Aryans’ use of free spaces helps them overcome isolation, despair, and hopelessness, which might otherwise sap their devotion to white power culture.

Hatred and Violence Thrives in Free Spaces

Aryans are not unique in their use of free spaces to sustain a radical worldview. By definition, extremists operate on the margins of society and face repression from those in power. They try to avoid repression by hiding their radical beliefs, blending into the crowd with an appearance of normality. Extremist groups—from al Qaeda in the Middle East or Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia to environmental extremists, right-to-life radicals, and racial extremists in the United States—create places of refuge where they meet, find comfort with like-minded comrades, and plot to advance their cause.²² For such marginalized groups, “the

sheer maintenance of a cultural community of activists is the outer limit of what is possible” under some circumstances.²³

Free spaces shed light on how Aryanism persists and where potential sources of hate violence remain in America. Aryans’ low-profile activities typically do not produce the sort of headline-grabbing events that bring attention to their extremism. But we should not confuse a low-profile with a weak and innocuous form of radicalism. Their efforts reproduce a radical cultural milieu filled with ideas about hate and violence. Ideas of violence precede acts of violence, and Aryan free spaces create the contexts for nourishing such ideas. Thus, the potential for radical action persists. Violent Aryan terror remains a constant threat to tolerance and integration in America.

STUDYING ARYAN PERSISTENCE

Gaining access to Aryan free spaces was not easy. Our approach was time-consuming, labor-intensive, and emotionally draining, as we tried to overcome our gut feelings of shock, revulsion, rage, and sadness at the things we saw and heard. Our research goal was to understand Aryans on their own terms in their natural settings. This required listening to them with the discipline to temper our reactions to what our subjects said. It meant repeatedly reading over Aryans’ views about the world and taking those views seriously. It was necessary to exclude our own moral and ethical values and assumptions in order to understand and interpret the meaning of Aryans’ point of view.

We conducted fieldwork with white power activists and groups between 1996 and 2006. We used a multimethod approach,²⁴ including interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of white power movement websites and related Aryan literature. Interviews included one- to three-hour, face-to-face and telephone interviews with eighty-nine Aryan activists. Seventeen respondents were group leaders and seventy-two were rank-and-file members. Ninety-four follow-up interviews with primary contacts led to 183 total interviews.²⁵ Snowball and purposive sampling strategies produced contacts with a wide range of white power networks.²⁶ Specific organizations represented in the sample include: White Aryan Resistance, Aryan Nations, Hammerskin Nation, National Alliance, and branches of the Ku Klux Klan.

Of the eighty-nine interviewees, sixty-five were male and twenty-four were female. Their ages ranged from eighteen to seventy-eight years. Our informants represent a broad cross section of socioeconomic status found in the movement.²⁷ The majority described either their current or childhood socioeconomic status as middle class. We confirmed that a sizeable minority worked in mid- to upper-level professional occupations, such as attorney, college instructor, X-ray technician, and so on. Most informants had a high school diploma or the equivalent and a quarter of all informants attended some college.²⁸

Our participant observation includes Christian Identity adherents in the southwest and northwest, and a variety of Aryans in Southern California. We made twenty-three house visits with groups in Arizona, Nevada, and Utah. These visits lasted from one to three days and gave us access to a variety of social gatherings, such as parties, Bible study sessions, hikes, and campouts. Additionally, we made four separate three- to five-day visits to the Aryan Nations' former headquarter in Hayden Lake, Idaho, to observe and interview participants at Aryan Nations World Congresses and informal gatherings that Aryans organized outside the official congress proceedings.

Our fieldwork in Southern California included observations of social gatherings and twenty-two stints in activists' homes ranging from two days to five weeks. Our extended involvement in these settings allowed for, among other things, insight into how these Aryans express their racist identity. Our firsthand data are rare among research on Aryan activism.²⁹

We organized our data around six primary themes: (1) early childhood experiences (for example, political socialization in the family); (2) educational experiences and peer group socialization; (3) entry into the white power movement; (4) level and type of movement participation; (5) ideological orientation; and (6) identity-maintenance strategies. Our qualitative coding techniques³⁰ helped us to identify and extract relevant information across our data set.

In the book's chapters, we intersperse analysis with extended descriptive, firsthand observational and interview data. Our observations and interview data give readers insight into the raw experience of being in the settings and the energy and emotion Aryans express as they bond with one another.

Some of the stories described or language used throughout the book may be offensive to readers; it was offensive to us. But omitting it would only serve to soften the positions of the people quoted. We have kept some of the language in to illustrate the intensity of Aryans' feelings. In some instances, we have paraphrased, while in other instances we have let the record speak for itself.

We have disguised names and certain details of our observations to protect the confidentiality of our research subjects. While we present our themes in a systematic and organized way, we do not intend to depict a homogeneous picture of Aryans and their experiences. Our goal is to render an accurate and insightful representation of the enduring culture and organization of contemporary white power activism and the hidden social contexts where hate endures.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

American Swastika provides intricate descriptions of Aryan free spaces to explain how white power ideas are sustained and reproduced. Before turning to those free spaces, chapter 2 discusses the various branches of the white power

movement, their specific ideological beliefs, and the common doctrines among the branches that bind diverse Aryans together.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on Aryan free spaces where small, local cadres of Aryans meet. Chapter 3 describes Aryan homes as free spaces where parents socialize their children into their white power visions. Aryans also use their homes to stage a range of small, informal gatherings, Bible study groups, and ritual parties. Chapter 4 highlights parties, skinhead crashpads, and other Aryan meeting places where activists model their culture of hatred and recruit new members to the cause.

In Chapter 5, we focus on white power music as an organizing resource that draws together Aryans in a range of activities such as concerts, festivals, music websites, streaming radio, fan magazines, and chatrooms. The movement's music scene engages both seasoned activists and new members in activities that promote Aryan style and politics.

Chapter 6 turns to white power activists' use of the Internet to promote their politics. Aryans utilize cyberspace to create strong virtual links between organizations that members use to quickly transmit information about the movement. Aryans also use cyberspace for online social networking and as a gateway to connect in real-world settings.

Chapter 7 describes private white power communities. These Aryan settlements are devoutly racist. They create a pure white space that symbolizes the white supremacist world they seek. The communities house worship centers and white power archives stocked with Aryan literature and movement paraphernalia. The settlements also support paramilitary training and have been the seedbed for the most notorious acts of extremist violence.

White power families, parties, crashpads, music shows, cyberspace, and private communities are the free spaces where Aryan hatred survives. We conclude *American Swastika* by discussing what Aryan persistence means for the future of racial and anti-Semitic hatred and violence in America.

2

Contemporary Aryan Hate

What is the character of Aryan organization and ideology? Observers of white power activity offer two distinct answers to this question. One answer suggests that Aryans are an irrational and disorganized subculture rife with internal conflict.¹ For instance, Mattias Gardell says, “The level of discord, mutual enmity, organizational fragmentation, and ideological division characterizing the world of white racism [is] far too high to be able to speak of a white racist movement in any meaningful way.”² From this point of view, it appears that ideological schisms threaten to divide Aryans into politically innocuous and fragmented factions. Yet Gardell also affirms, “If there is not a ‘movement,’ there is still a ‘something’ that all or most of the different networks, channels of communication, organizations, activists, and tendencies may be seen as parts of.”³ An emphasis on the disorganized aspects of Aryanism obscures its strategic and structured dimensions.

We advocate a second perspective that sees racist activism as “a social movement, a ‘family’ of overlapping groups organized to spread racist and anti-Semitic ideas and terrorist tactics.”⁴ To be sure, most Aryan activity does not closely resemble the standard depiction of social movements with traditional, centralized organizations that mobilize insurgents to action. Aryan organization is anchored in fluid, transitory, and informal “submerged networks” that periodically coalesce in Aryan free spaces.⁵ But Aryan free spaces require deliberate, calculated organization and sustained commitments among participants to persist. Aryan free spaces are *movement spaces* where white power advocates congregate to reinforce their dedication to the cause and draw others into the ranks of Aryan activism.⁶

The Aryans who connect in free spaces manifest white power ideology in four distinct branches: the Ku Klux Klan, Christian Identity and neo-Pagan racists, neo-Nazis, and racist skinheads. We discuss each of these branches below in some detail, specifying their history and core ideological principles. The ideological and stylistic differences across the branches can be a source of discord and power struggle. But Aryans from across these branches also embrace basic doctrines that transcend their ideological differences and create points of general agreement. We conclude by describing each Aryan branch, their common doctrines, and the solidarity Aryans build with these beliefs.

KU KLUX KLAN

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) has persisted through several eras of change in America's political climate. A small cadre of young Confederate veterans organized the first Klan group in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1866. Ku Klux refers to the Greek word *kuklos*, meaning circle or band. Original Klan members conceived of the group as a fraternal order where Confederates could continue to meet after the Civil War.

Klan members quickly developed a doctrine based on the defense of white supremacy in the era of Reconstruction. The KKK's ranks swelled in 1868, and the organization grew more political as Southern whites reacted against black civil rights policies. The Klan expanded from outposts in half a dozen Tennessee counties to multiple groups in nearly every Southern state. Klan activity became violent, and numerous members were implicated in whippings, beatings, and murders of Southern blacks. Klan groups assassinated black Republican politicians and murdered voters during the 1868 election. Allen Trelease estimates that more than 1,000 racial murders occurred in Louisiana alone.⁷

This wave of Klan violence was the impetus for the federal government's adoption of the Civil Rights Act of 1871, then known as the Ku Klux Klan Act. In response, Klan officials formally disbanded to avoid federal sanctions, although many local groups continued to meet regularly.

The KKK reemerged in 1915 when Alabama native William J. Simmons founded the Second Era Klan in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Simmons implored all white Americans to join "The World's Greatest Secret, Social, Patriotic, Fraternal, Beneficiary Order." Simmons emphasized a doctrine of "100% Pure Americanism" to preserve the racial purity of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans. White mobs targeted African American communities across the United States and anti-Semitism flourished as the KKK cast Jews and other "mongrel" groups as "outsiders" who threatened white America's racial integrity.⁸

KKK membership reportedly reached between 2 and 5 million people nationwide by 1925. Such high numbers reflected the extent to which early-twentieth-

century Americans accepted the Klan's explicit racist and anti-Semitic views. The KKK also gained political strength and became one of the largest and most powerful political organizations in U.S. history.

Klan-sponsored candidates won U.S. Senate races in Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Texas, and in 1924 a Klan-endorsed candidate won the Kansas governorship. Klan membership crossed class lines and included influential Americans, such as Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black and presidents Harry Truman (who resigned after attending one meeting) and Warren Harding. By the late 1920s, however, membership numbers began plummeting as various scandals, including stories of indiscriminate terrorism and brutality, tarnished the Klan's self-righteous image. By the 1930s, the Klan was active in limited areas, such as Florida, where membership topped 30,000.

Klan activism reemerged again in response to civil rights protests in the 1950s and 1960s. Klan members carried out arson and numerous bombings and assassinations, including the murder of three civil rights workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi, in 1964, which became the topic of the motion picture *Mississippi Burning* (1988). Federal authorities responded with Operation White Hate Group, infiltrated Klan organizations, and arrested and prosecuted many leading members in Alabama, Mississippi, and other Southern states.⁹

Government pressure led to a precipitous drop in KKK official membership numbers during the 1970s and 1980s. By the late 1980s most KKK groups were fragmented and in dire financial straits. By 1995, about 60 splintered Klan groups remained in the United States and membership had declined to well below 10,000.¹⁰ However, KKK numbers rose again a decade later. The Southern Poverty Law Center estimates that 143 Klan chapters were active in 2008.¹¹

Immigration fears and economic concerns, along with a "new racist discourse"¹² of white victimization and loss of white cultural heritage, have combined to rejuvenate the modern KKK. The Anti-Defamation League asserts that Klan participation has grown over the past decade in several areas where the Klan has not been strong for many years, such as Iowa, as well as traditional Klan strongholds, such as Florida, Louisiana, and Indiana.¹³ The largest and most active Klan groups today are the Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, active in eighteen states in the South, Northeast, and Western United States; the Church of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, headquartered in Indiana with chapters in twenty states; and Brotherhood of Klans, with fifteen state chapters.¹⁴

Today's Klan members are active in the white power scene, organizing events such as Nordic Fest, which draws several hundred Aryans to the heavily guarded, gated compound of the Imperial Klans of America. These events have driven the "Nazification" of the Klan. KKK networks increasingly overlap with neo-Nazi racists, and Klan members are integrating neo-Nazi symbolism and rituals into long-standing KKK traditions. The German swastika has become a familiar symbol at KKK-sponsored gatherings along with the German Iron Cross emblazoned on traditional Klan robes and hoods.

The Klan's greatest impact on the white power movement may be its historic legacy. The Ku Klux Klan has now persisted for more than 140 years. Radical groups in addition to the KKK have emerged in the landscape of racist extremism. The Klan remains a symbol of perseverance alongside these groups and continues to inspire Aryan vigilantism and devotion to white power. We turn next to discuss Christian Identity and neo-Pagan racists, neo-Nazis, and racist skinheads.

CHRISTIAN IDENTITY AND NEO-PAGANISM

Christian Identity and neo-Paganism make up a branch of Aryan extremists anchored in religion and mythology. Christian Identity is a movement that espouses a theological justification for white superiority through interpretations of the Judeo-Christian Bible. Neo-Pagans combine pre-Christian pagan myths with Aryan racist and anti-Semitic ideals.

Christian Identity

Christian Identity believers define nonwhites as evil incarnate and promote racial violence as acts ordained by God. They see blacks, Latinos, Asians, and other nonwhites as lower-order subspecies of "pre-Adamic mudpeople" and, therefore, not fully human.¹⁵ These beliefs are rooted in British Israelism, a nineteenth-century English theology that posits the true Israelites were Anglo-Saxons. Christian Identity adds to this interpretation the notion that Jews are descended from Satan and resulted from Eve's copulation with the serpent. Identity believers imagine they are warriors in a righteous battle against the Jewish conspiracy to eradicate the white race.¹⁶

Historically, the most prominent Christian Identity group has been Aryan Nations/Church of Jesus Christ Christian, founded by Richard Butler in 1974. Under Butler's leadership, Aryan Nations grew to include chapters in twenty-six states with multiple chapters in Louisiana, New Jersey, and Ohio. Butler hosted a number of annual gatherings on his compound in Hayden Lake, Idaho. The most notorious were the Aryan Nations World Congresses, which brought together members from other white power branches.

Aryan Nations was bankrupted in 2000 when the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) won a \$6.3 million lawsuit against Butler. The Aryan Nations compound was transferred to the plaintiffs in 2001 and the group splintered following Butler's death in 2004. Now three separate Aryan Nations organizations claim to be the rightful heirs to Butler's legacy. August Kreis leads one faction, currently in Lexington, South Carolina. Kreis is well known among Aryans for advocating an alliance between Islamic jihad and the white power struggle. Jonathon Williams leads the second Aryan Nations faction based in Lincoln, Alabama. Williams holds annual Aryan Nations gatherings that bring WPM activists together from

across the country. Both factions are struggling to match the resources, membership, and notoriety Aryan Nations enjoyed under Butler's leadership. In 2009, Jerald O'Brien emerged to lead a third Aryan Nations faction claiming rightful inheritance of Butler's legacy. Located in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, members have leafleted the Coeur d'Alene area announcing the return of Aryan Nations to Idaho.

Christian Identity also persists in many small, independent cells of believers. Christian Identity members meet in Aryan free spaces such as small Bible study groups, independent churches, and cultural heritage organizations linked by a range of websites devoted to the cause.

Neo-Paganism

Racist neo-Pagans celebrate the ancient pre-Christian, proto-Germanic spiritual traditions of Odinism and its Icelandic cousin, Asatru. Odinism and Asatru share a social Darwinist philosophy that defines the survival of pure whites as a goal to be achieved at all costs.¹⁷

Racist neo-Pagans draw upon Norse mythology to emphasize the mystical and heroic nature of European folk heritage. Neo-Pagans construct racial consciousness and solidarity around the worship of Odin, the chief Norse god of wisdom; Thor, the Norse god of strength; and Freyja, the Norse goddess of fertility and love.¹⁸

Racist neo-Pagans see these gods as pure white deities that stand apart from the bastardized spirituality of mainstream Christianity. They also tend to "biologize spirituality" through the belief that their white gods and goddesses are "encoded in the DNA of their descendants."¹⁹ Gardell explains, "Blood is thought to carry memories of the ancient past, and divinities are believed to be genetically engraved upon or reverberate from deep down within the abyss of the collective subconscious or 'folk soul'" of true Aryans.²⁰

As they are interspersed throughout the larger Aryan networks of the neo-Nazi and skinhead faithful, neo-Pagans have spread their motifs to other factions of the white power movement. Thus, Aryan websites, racist literature, white power musicians, and racist music lyrics feature "muscular heathens, pagan gods and goddesses, runes and symbols, magic, and esoteric themes in abundance."²¹ The warrior imagery appeals to Aryans across all branches because warrior imagery symbolizes the righteous, combatant ideal with which many contemporary Aryans identify. Not all Aryans are devout followers of Pagan rituals and spiritual beliefs, but neo-Paganism provides modern-day Aryans with a collection of symbols, images, and ideals that amplify white power ideology.

NEO-NAZIS

Neo-Nazi networks persist through parties, crashpads, the white power music scene, and the Internet. Neo-Nazis embrace traditional Nazi symbolism, such as

the swastika; describe themselves as National Socialists; revere Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich; and promote eugenics to ensure the existence of a pure white race.²² George Lincoln Rockwell formed one of the earliest versions of neo-Nazis in 1958 with the American Nazi Party (ANP). The ANP popularized Holocaust denial among the American racist right and encouraged followers to join forces with Christian Identity churches.²³

The National Alliance, White Aryan Resistance, and the National Socialist Movement (NSM) have been three of the most influential sources of American neo-Nazism.²⁴ William Pierce founded the National Alliance in 1974 after he became involved with Rockwell and the American Nazi Party during the 1960s. In 1978, Pierce, a former physics professor, authored the *Turner Diaries*, which depicts a racist guerrilla war and a truck bombing of a federal building. Timothy McVeigh reportedly used the *Turner Diaries* as an inspirational blueprint for the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building in Oklahoma City.²⁵

Pierce established the National Alliance headquarters in 1985 on his 346-acre farm in Mill Point, West Virginia. He and a small cadre of members used the headquarters to publish white power books and other propaganda, operate the white power music company Resistance Records, and organize Internet activities. In 2001, the Alliance claimed thirty-five groups in thirty different states. Pierce's death in 2002 dealt a severe blow to the group, resulting in a substantial drop in the number of Alliance units and members. Recent evidence points to a shift in the National Alliance from a relatively large membership organization toward a small, loosely organized clique of white supremacists with long histories of violence and other criminal offending.²⁶

Since Pierce's death, several groups have splintered from the National Alliance. One of the most prominent neo-Nazi groups is Billy Roper's White Revolution. Roper, a former high school history teacher with a master's degree in anthropology, founded White Revolution in 2002. White Revolution draws upon Nazi-era ideals of *volk*²⁷ to celebrate an ideal of Aryan racial kinship. Roper is noted for his efforts to pull together factions from across the movement for rallies, music shows, and other Aryan gatherings. White Revolution has an extensive Web presence and active chapters in sixteen states.

Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance (WAR) is a popular multimedia clearinghouse for neo-Nazi ideology. Metzger founded WAR in the 1980s after traveling a circuitous route through several white power branches. Metzger began his career in right-wing extremism during the 1960s and joined the John Birch Society. He quickly left the organization dissatisfied with their unwillingness to openly advocate anti-Semitism. In 1975, Metzger joined David Duke's Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and ascended to the rank of grand dragon, the KKK's highest-ranking state officer in California. Eventually Metzger and Duke parted ways and after an unsuccessful Congressional bid in 1980, Metzger founded the White American Political Association, which he eventually renamed the White Aryan

Resistance. WAR has been in the forefront of the white power movement's Internet presence and aggressively recruits younger generations to the cause.²⁸

The National Socialist Movement formed in 1974 as an off-shoot of the American Nazi Party, but remained on the periphery of U.S. neo-Nazi groups until the mid-1990s when Jeff Schoep took over NSM leadership. Schoep has stepped into the vacuum created by William Pierce's death to recruit new members into the NSM. The fifty-six NSM groups in the United States periodically sponsor public rallies against illegal immigration and gay marriage. The NSM also sponsors an armed border watch unit that patrols the U.S./Mexican border in Southern California.²⁹

RACIST SKINHEADS

Racist skinheads are the youngest branch of the white power movement. They derive from a distinct youth subculture, and since the late 1980s racist skinheads have synthesized neo-Nazi ideals and symbolism. Racist skinheads persist in loosely organized gangs and activist networks that congregate in skinhead crash-pads and white power music gatherings. The largest organized groups, such as the Hammerskin Nation, produce white power concerts and festivals and have active cells around the world and an extensive Web presence.

Racist skinhead groups formed in the United States during the late 1970s as a response to increased economic pressures, Latino and Asian immigration, and the growth of minority street gangs. The early U.S. racist skinheads in the 1970s and 1980s drew inspiration from disaffected British skinheads associated with the extreme right-wing National Front and the British National Party.³⁰ Prior to the mid-1980s, skinhead racism was limited mainly to intermittent local conflicts with nonwhites and minority street gangs. In the late 1980s, however, WAR leader Tom Metzger, along with Aryan Nations' Richard Butler and other white power groups, began vigorously recruiting skinheads into the cause of global Aryan activism.

Racist skinheads organize themselves in a variety of ways.³¹ There are racist skinhead gangs with state-level affiliations, such as the West Virginia Skinheads; county affiliations, such as Orange County Skins; and city affiliations, such as the Las Vegas Skins.³²

The two most prominent American skinhead groups are Hammerskin Nation and Volkfront. The Hammerskins claim six regional chapters in the United States—Northwest Hammers, Midland Hammers, Confederate Hammers, Western Hammers, Northern Hammers, and Eastern Hammers—and official chapters in twelve other countries.³³

Hammerskins hosted dozens of white power music shows in 2008, along with Aryan barbeques, mixed martial arts viewing parties, and a "Führer's Birthday Party" to commemorate Adolf Hitler's birthday. In December 2008, more than

100 Aryans from five states attended a “Martyrs Day” party in Florida to commemorate the Silent Brotherhood founder Robert Mathews, an Aryan terrorist who was killed in a 1984 shoot-out with federal authorities in Whidbey Island, Washington. Martyrs Day was cosponsored by the Confederate Hammerskins, Volksfront, and the American Front, and featured a keynote address by Richard Kemp, an imprisoned member of the Silent Brotherhood, who phoned in from federal prison.

Volksfront is one of the fastest growing and most active racist skinhead groups. Founded in an Oregon state penitentiary by Randal Lee Krager and Richard Arden in 1994, Volksfront calls itself “The Independent Voice of the White Working Class” and claims chapters in sixteen states and eight countries.³⁴ Volksfront members are closely linked with Hammerskins and Blood & Honour, and Aryans from across the movement’s branches attend its annual music festivals and participate in their Web forums. One of Volksfront’s main goals is to create an all-white private community, and the group has reportedly purchased land for this purpose in Oregon, Washington, and Missouri.³⁵ Volksfront uses their Missouri property to host an Aryan summit and music festival called Althing, dedicated to Samuel Weaver, martyred son of Christian Identity adherent Randy Weaver who was killed by federal authorities in an Idaho standoff in 1992.

Our sorting of Aryan branches overstates the lines of distinction among these networks, which in reality are much more blurred and porous. The white power movement encompasses contradictory realities. Some Aryans hold hard-line stances against other believers, which creates the basis for schisms.³⁶ However, many Aryans collaborate across ideological lines to sustain the Aryan cause. Aryans of all stripes move back and forth across racist networks that meet in Aryan free spaces and uphold some basic white power doctrines on which all Aryans agree.

ARYAN DOCTRINE AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Aryans sustain a sense of solidarity anchored in fundamental aims and ideological doctrines shared across the different white power branches.³⁷ Their free spaces nourish and reinforce a sense of group unity around these doctrines and certain elemental beliefs about what it means to be an Aryan.

First and foremost, Aryans across all branches believe that they possess a unique ancestry that links them literally as racial brothers and sisters. That is, Aryans imagine that they are all connected by an innate biogenetic superiority. This presumed racial superiority is used to justify their belief in Aryan cultural superiority. Aryan doctrine claims that race mixing and intercultural exchange threaten their superior genetic and cultural lineage. In this way, Aryans see themselves as victims of a society that not only fails to acknowledge the natural superiority of whites but also suppresses and destroys all things Aryan.³⁸ This view

is summed up in the Aryan mantra known as the “14 Words”: *We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.*

Aryans idealize traditional male-dominant families in which women are meant for domesticity, particularly for rearing white children who will become the early risers of the racial revolution. Aryans desire a racially exclusive world where nonwhites and other subhumans are vanquished, segregated, or at least subordinated to Aryan authority.

These beliefs are amplified by the emotions that accompany them. While it is easy to imagine that hate is the sole emotion underlying Aryan solidarity, it is only part of the picture. Expressions of intense hatred, anger, frustration, and outrage toward racial others do permeate Aryan networks. These “reactive emotions”³⁹ are prominent in the relationships that galvanize white power members against their enemies. But Aryans also express a range of “vitalizing”⁴⁰ and “reciprocal”⁴¹ feelings of pride, pleasure, solidarity, loyalty, solicitude, affection, gratification, and love directed toward one another. These sorts of convictions are the “glue of solidarity.”⁴² They transcend ideological and stylistic differences among Aryan branches and help link members around the common goal of white power.



Constructing solidarity is a major accomplishment for members of such an extreme and marginalized ideology as white power. Aryan free spaces are the primary contexts where white power members fashion a sense of unity around core beliefs and the emotions they arouse.

We now turn to discuss *how* Aryans build solidarity in their free spaces. We begin with the family as the most intimate of Aryan free spaces. Aryan families are the clearest and most direct representation of white racial kinship. The family home is meant to be a pure white space offering escape from mainstream society. Aryan parents use this space to envelope their children in white power hate culture, to socialize new recruits for the movement.