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# The Public Eye



*In this issue:*

The Christian Right and Fourth Generation Warfare

How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism

When Prison Ministries Prioritize Salvation Over Justice

Charles Koch and the Makings of a Right-Wing Empire



As the summer issue of *The Public Eye* ships to the printers, it's been a whirlwind week. Republicans' efforts to overthrow Obamacare failed dramatically in the early hours of July 28, but this victory followed some of the Trump administration's most aggressive anti-LGBTQ actions to date. Trump delivered an unprecedentedly ugly partisan speech to the Boy Scouts of America, endorsed police brutality to a law enforcement audience, and publicly mused about firing officials over the ongoing Russia investigation and pardoning himself for what they may find. As many are now questioning if the administration is on a messy slide towards authoritarianism, this issue homes in on some of what got us here.

Sociologist and former civilian intelligence analyst James Scaminaci takes a close look at "**Fourth Generation Warfare**" (pg. 4), a little-known right-wing strategy developed in the 1980s and deployed over decades by strategists Paul Weyrich and William S. Lind. A fusion of military theory and the Christian Right agenda, Fourth Generation Warfare seeks to undermine the public's confidence not just in the government and media, but in a commonly-accepted reality itself. The result, Scaminaci writes, is "an all-out propaganda war against secular liberalism" and the political mainstream, waged "with the same intensity as a shooting war." Fourth Generation Warfare, he argues, set the template for Trump's no-holds-barred campaign against the political establishment.

Alongside the Christian Right's patient application of Fourth Generation Warfare tactics, this issue covers another facet of the Right's long game: dismantling the government. In an exclusive excerpt from the provocative new book, **Democracy in Chains** (pg. 16), Duke University historian Nancy MacLean examines the intellectual legacy of conservative economist James Buchanan, and how it influenced a generation of right-wing activists. Much of the history she documents here—PRA's excerpt focuses on the origins of billionaire philanthropist Charles Koch as a political actor, and the Cato Institute he helped found—sheds new light on how a generation of conservative scholars mobilized to reorient their "revolutionary cause" to Middle America. MacLean's book has lately come under fire—some from liberal and centrist critics, more from coordinated attacks by conservative activists. We find MacLean's overarching thesis compelling and invite readers to assess it for themselves.

This issue also includes a more personal piece, by longtime civil rights strategist Eric Ward, "**Skin in the Game**" (pg. 9), about how antisemitism remains the driving force of White nationalism. While the mainstream reemergence of White supremacist movements during and after last year's election has shocked the country and bolstered robust antiracist activism, writes Ward, even progressive social and economic justice movements have yet to "come to terms with the centrality of antisemitism to White nationalist ideology." And, "until we do we will fail to understand this virulent form of racism rapidly growing in America today."

Complementing these features is an online-exclusive essay from professor and writer Aaron Barlow, "**The Triumph of the Lie**," a meditation on how political lying has perhaps found its zenith in the Trump era. "If the current defeat of truth is to be reversed and the lie once again relegated to a position of approbation," Barlow writes, we have to do more than simply fact-check obvious falsehoods. "We have to reinvent moral and ethical standards, apply them to our own lives, and insist that we never reward liars, no matter how much we like them or agree with the positions they adopt."

Amid the high drama in Washington, D. C., existing injustices continue and worsen. Our commentary this issue, "**Captive Audience**" (pg. 3), by Tanya Erzen, looks at how conservative Christian prison ministries continue to create a two-tiered caste system within the corrections industry even while paying lip service to ideas of criminal justice reform. In the eight years she spent researching her new book, *God in Captivity*, Erzen mapped the enduring "tension between faith-based prison ministries that, on the one hand, have challenged conservatives' emphasis on punishment, and on the other, have embraced an idea of reform that demands adherence to conservative Christian theology and social ideas, where rehabilitation translates neatly to being born again."

Lastly, in our **Reports in Review** (pg. 21), PRA's Jessica Conger-Henry reads HOPE not hate's report on Breitbart News Network's expansion to Europe. Breitbart, a premiere purveyor of actual "fake news" in the U.S., has more quietly set up shop across the Atlantic, where it became a major supporter of the 2016 Brexit campaign and is spreading harmful misinformation around Muslim immigration in other European nations.

In between issues, PRA will continue its coverage and analysis of the Right, with new blog posts, online-only features and reports every week, so make sure to follow us at [politicalresearch.org](http://politicalresearch.org).

Kathryn Joyce

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[publiceye@politicalresearch.org](mailto:publiceye@politicalresearch.org)  
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All rights reserved. ISSN 0275-9322  
ISSUE 91

[www.politicalresearch.org](http://www.politicalresearch.org)

BY TANYA ERZEN

# Captive Audience

## How Prison Ministries Prioritize Salvation Over Justice

In early June at the Faith and Freedom Coalition's "Road to Majority" conference—an annual gathering of Christian Right leaders active in state and federal policy advocacy—Craig DeRoche of Prison Fellowship Ministries (PFM) emphasized to attendees that redemption, rather than punishment, is the key to reforming the criminal justice system.

"There is no such thing as a throwaway person," DeRoche had said previously, "and by granting second chances to those who have earned them, we will be contributing to the restoration of families, communities, and our nation."<sup>1</sup>

DeRoche's presence at the conference—alongside Christian leaders like James Dobson and GOP heavyweights including President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, Sen. Mitch McConnell, and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy—demonstrated how central prison reform has become to the conservative political agenda.<sup>2</sup> As author Kay Whitlock described in *The Public Eye* in Spring 2017, conservatives from Newt Gingrich to Grover Norquist have situated mass incarceration as a fiscal and moral problem, and have partnered with both progressives and religious leaders of all stripes in calling to reform the system. Addressing sentencing, juvenile imprisonment, diversion programs for drug offenses, and less restrictive parole regulations, organizations like Right on Crime and PFM have pushed back against tough-on-crime ideology and toward policies that reflect the Christian idea that prisoners can be redeemed. These are significant shifts from the War on Drugs and the specter of "the super-predator," which dominated criminal justice thinking in the 1980s and '90s.<sup>3</sup>

As bipartisan reform efforts have



According to their website, Prison Fellowship is the nation's largest Christian non-profit serving prisoners, former prisoners, and their families. Photo: Prison Fellowship.

steadily drifted rightward, the heavy hand of evangelicals in prison reform efforts has created new kinds of problems.

In the eight years I spent researching my book, *God In Captivity: The Rise of Faith-Based Prison Ministries in the Age of Mass Incarceration*, I found a tension between faith-based prison ministries that, on the one hand, have challenged conservatives' emphasis on punishment, and on the other, have embraced an idea of reform that demands adherence to conservative Christian theology and social ideas, where rehabilitation translates neatly to being born again.

DeRoche's organization, PFM, is one of the most prominent evangelical groups in the United States, with ministries inside more than 1,300 prisons, jails and detention centers, and Justice Fellowship, its sophisticated public policy arm. Founded in 1976 by Chuck Colson, a former Nixon aide convicted of Watergate-related crimes who emerged from prison born again, today part of PFM's empire includes 24-hour evangelical programs in some prisons that occupy entire

wings, where prisoners work, study, and sleep in an area of the prison dedicated to religious ideals.<sup>4</sup>

While not all prison ministries offer that sort of total segregation from the general population, for many imprisoned people, religious volunteers and programming offer their only option for an education, mental health counseling, addiction services or even contact with the outside world. As state funding for prisons has plummeted and public support for costly rehabilitation programs has declined, faith-based groups claim they can more effectively transform a person from the inside out than can any secular group, through a religion-informed "heart change." They also argue that they save states money. As Pat Nolan, a former colleague of Colson's at PFM (and a former California state assemblyman and ex-prisoner himself), argued in a newsletter, prison ministries "do the work the state just cannot afford to do on its own. And these volunteers will provide something that government employees cannot: love."<sup>5</sup>

**Commentary, continued on page 20**



# Battle Without Bullets

## The Christian Right and Fourth Generation Warfare

On October 13, 2016, just three weeks from the election, then-candidate Donald Trump deflected sexual assault allegations in a speech at West Palm Beach. He railed against his opponent and a corrupt political establishment:

The Washington establishment and the financial and media corporations that fund it exist for only one reason: to protect and enrich itself...It's a global power structure that is responsible for the economic decisions that have robbed our working class, stripped our country of its wealth and put that money into the pockets of a handful of large corporations and political entities.... The Clinton machine is at the center of this power structure. We've seen this firsthand in the WikiLeaks documents, in which Hillary Clinton meets in secret with international banks to plot the destruction of U.S. sovereignty in order to enrich these global financial powers, her special interest friends and her donors.<sup>1</sup>

Trump used similar language in a two-minute "closing argument" video released on November 4, in which he emphasized that "The political establishment that is trying to stop us is the same group responsible for our disastrous trade deals, massive illegal immigration and economic and foreign policies that have bled our country dry."<sup>2</sup>

In the video Trump also warned of a "global power structure," flashing photographs of prominent Jews, including international financier and liberal philanthropist George Soros, Chair of the

Federal Reserve System Janet Yellen, and Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein. This immediately provoked charges that Trump was employing antisemitic tropes that could have been taken from *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.<sup>3</sup>

But aside from resorting to one of the oldest and vilest of populist appeals, Trump was doing something else. He was telling prospective voters—most of whom had likely never heard of *Protocols*—that the ruling political establish-

ment was "failed" and "corrupt," and that it had "robbed our working class" and "stripped our country of its wealth." He had launched a direct and devastating assault on the legitimacy of the country's government and political, economic, and media elites, which he suggested was comprised of predators who posed an existential threat to voters' towns, companies, jobs, and families; it had, he suggested, no moral right to govern.

ample of a right-wing strategy developed in the late 1980s: Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW). Trump's rhetoric and policies rightly identify him as a "right-wing populist bully," in the words of former PRA senior analyst Chip Berlet, who notes that right-wing populism includes nativism and authoritarianism, as well as "fears of traitorous, subversive conspiracies."<sup>4</sup> What distinguishes harsh populist rhetoric from a 4GW attack, however, is going beyond the charge that one's individual opponent is wrong or misguided, to claim that the system is illegitimate and one's opponents have no right to power or even to exist.

Fourth Generation Warfare is a term of art for the latest evolution of types of warfare. Essentially, the three prior "generations" were massed manpower, massed firepower, and non-linear maneuver. Think roughly of the changing approaches of the American Revolutionary War to World War I to World War II. William S. Lind, who originated the term "Fourth Generation Warfare" in 1989,

noted that elements from earlier generations of warfare, like "collapsing the enemy internally rather than physically destroying him," would carry over into 4GW but with a greater emphasis and employing new tactics. 4GW expands warfare beyond the physical level to include the mental and moral dimensions. At the highest level of combat—moral conflict—the central objective is to undermine the legitimacy of one's opponent and induce a population to transfer their loyalty from their government to the insurgent.



Photo: k8 via Flickr.

Fourth Generation Warfare resonated with military strategists and scholars, especially after 9/11, because it examined the emergence of a new type of warfare between a non-state insurgent and a central government in which ideas are key weapons.<sup>5</sup> Part of 4GW is “epistemological warfare”—that is, “warfare” that adapts and incorporates concepts from post-modernism, structuration theory, deconstructionism, and chaos theory. In simpler terms, this type of warfare aims to “Disrupt the moral, physical and/or informational vertical and horizontal relations (i.e. cohesion) among subsystems.”<sup>6</sup> This serves as propaganda intended to foster uncertainty, mistrust, and a sense of menace, all aimed at breaking down the bonds of social trust.<sup>7</sup>

But the doctrine of 4GW has not been limited to use in foreign wars. It has also been used at home: as a psy-ops campaign perpetrated by domestic actors against domestic political and religious adversaries.

The insurgent force, in this case, is the Christian Right, led by its key strategists: the late Paul Weyrich who would transform electoral competition into all-out political warfare against the political system itself, and William S. Lind, the original thinker who postulated the emergence of Fourth Generation Warfare and who served as Weyrich’s right-hand man.

Paul Weyrich, an architect of the Christian Right<sup>8</sup> and founder of the Free Congress Foundation, one of the movement’s strategic think tanks, saw 1980s-era America in terms of an epochal struggle between two camps over “our way of life.” He told the Christian Right’s founding direct mail fundraiser Richard Viguerie, “It may not be with bullets... and it may not be with rockets and missiles, but it is a war nevertheless. It is a war of ideology, it’s a war of ideas, it’s a war about our way of life. And it has to be fought with the same intensity, I think, and dedication as you would fight a shooting war.”<sup>9</sup>

Weyrich and Lind commissioned and published a strategic document in 2001 that epitomized their thinking and evolution away from the indirect influence of the Christian Reconstructionists who were more focused on theology. Written by their Free Congress Foundation

colleague Eric Heubeck, it was titled “The Integration of Theory and Practice: A Program For The New Traditionalist Movement.” The objectives and tactics of the movement were the delegitimization and destruction of the Left, meaning the destruction through unrelenting propaganda barrages of the liberal-secular federal government and associated political culture and Constitution that protects individual rights.

“Our strategy will be to bleed this corrupt culture dry,” the document declares. “We will pick off the most intelligent and creative individuals in our society, the individuals who help give credibility to the current regime.” A little later, Heubeck writes, “Our movement will be entirely destructive, and entirely constructive. We will not try to reform the existing institutions. We only intend to weaken them, and eventually destroy them... We will maintain a constant barrage of criticism against the Left. We will attack the very legitimacy of the Left.... We will use guerrilla tactics to undermine the

**“It may not be with bullets...but it is a war nevertheless. It is a war of ideology, it’s a war of ideas, it’s a war about our way of life.”**

*legitimacy of the dominant regime*” (emphasis added).<sup>10</sup>

Weyrich saw the Christian Right’s vision of traditional values as the legitimate and moral side. The other side, cast as the camp of secular liberalism, he saw as immoral and illegitimate. While Weyrich saw these opponents as in rough alignment with the two main political parties, his aim was never merely about electing Republicans. He was about forging a revolutionary Christian nationalist movement to undermine the legitimacy of what he saw as a liberal, secular democratic order.

#### **THE CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTIONISTS**

The starting point for understanding epistemological warfare and 4GW called for by Weyrich and Lind and executed by the Christian Right is to begin with the Christian Reconstructionists—the low profile strategic thinkers who have influ-

enced American politics since the 1960s.

Founded by Rev. Rousas John “R.J.” Rushdoony, the Christian Reconstructionist movement, through its voluminous writings, persuaded several hundred influential conservative clergy and theologians that American society had to be reconstructed<sup>11</sup>—not reformed—on a new basis of knowledge or epistemology in order to build God’s kingdom on earth from the rubble of failed civilization. One way Christian Reconstructionist strategists influenced the trajectory of the Christian Right was participating alongside the John Birch Society in the formation and early running of the secretive Council for National Policy, a highly opaque organization that brought together Christian Right leaders, funding sources, and well-to-do activists.<sup>12</sup>

The Reconstructionists argued that Christians should make a fundamental choice—obey God’s law or obey secular law. In his 1997 book, *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy*, PRA Senior Fellow Freder-

ick Clarkson noted that Rushdoony had essentially unilaterally declared that America was in a state of long term, civil war. Clarkson noted that according to Rushdoony, “every non-Biblical law-order represents an anti-Christian religion” and that “all law is a form of warfare.” The source for all law, institutions, norms, values, and ways of knowing must be their own idiosyncratic interpretation of the Bible.<sup>13</sup>

This worldview and its variants meant that all law, science, philosophy, and morals that did not conform to their interpretation of the Bible was illegitimate—or, in their words, anti-Christian and anti-God. Christian Reconstructionism had provided Weyrich and the Christian Right a theological justification for their all-out political war. Rushdoony himself was an acknowledged leader and thinker whose views were sought by the founding fathers of the contemporary

Christian Right, including Weyrich.<sup>14</sup>

While the ideological role of Rushdoony and his fellow Christian Reconstructionists may not always be obvious, it's not hard to detect when considering foundational thought regarding Christian nationalism;<sup>15</sup> the grading on reli-

#### COLONEL BOYD AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL WARFARE

The late Colonel John Boyd's influence on William S. Lind, the former director of cultural conservatism at Weyrich's Free Congress Foundation, may be one of the most underappreciated stories of the development of the Christian Right and its ever-evolving political strategy. It's not like Lind was hiding it. He was the co-author of at least three books on political strategy for the Christian Right: *Cultural Conservatism—Towards a New National Agenda*, *Cultural Conservatism—Theory and Practice*, and *The Next Conservatism*.<sup>20</sup>

Col. Boyd was a U.S. Air Force fighter pilot in the Korean War who dedicated the latter part of his career to reformulating

U.S. strategic thinking. Boyd never wrote a book on strategy, but instead spread his thinking throughout the Pentagon via constantly evolving marathon briefings, each of which could last between 14 and 18 hours. In 1959, while an Air

Force captain, Boyd wrote "Aerial Attack Study," which would become official Air Force doctrine on air combat.<sup>21</sup> He went on to help develop the F-15, F-16, and F-18 fighter jets in the 1960s and '70s. His contribution to the development of the U.S. Army's AirLand Battle concept

for defending NATO in the '70s and '80s, the incorporation of his ideas into the Marines' doctrinal warfighting manuals and the Department of Defense's joint doctrinal documents, as well as his influence on the United Kingdom's and other European military doctrines all marked him as a uniquely influential military thinker. As an associate of Dick Cheney, then the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Boyd also heavily influenced the design of the 1991 Gulf War's ground campaign.<sup>22</sup>

Boyd's 1997 obituary in *The New York Times* noted that he is regarded as having helped "revolutionize American military strategy." The highly decorated Colonel David Hackworth believed Boyd to be "America's greatest military thinker." Likewise, Major Jeffrey L. Cowan concluded his Marine Corps master's thesis on Boyd's conceptualization of warfare with the observation that Boyd "should be considered one of the most important military theorists of the United States."<sup>23</sup>

What made Boyd's work such an historic advance in the philosophy of military strategy was that he added the physical, mental, and moral dimensions to the traditional tactical, operational and strategic levels of military combat. For example, Joint Publication 3.0 on *Joint Operations*—which provides Pentagon doctrine to all U.S. military forces—defines the strategic level of warfare as the setting of national objectives and allocation of national resources to achieve those objectives. This translates national strategy into operational campaigns within a theater (e.g. Europe, Middle East), which then links to its use by military forces.<sup>24</sup>



In July 2016, Donald Trump drew controversy by tweeting out an antisemitic meme featuring Hillary Clinton and a six-pointed star.

gious grounds of candidates for public office at all levels;<sup>16</sup> the transformation of the constitutional principle of religious liberty into a demand for Christian Right primacy, the right to discriminate against LGBTQ people, and accusations that Christians are being persecuted;<sup>17</sup> the propagandistic assault on evolution and demand that the creationist controversy be taught in public schools;<sup>18</sup> and the unrelenting rejection of climate change science and belief that such evidence is fraudulent.<sup>19</sup>

The common denominator in all of these Christian Right assertions, demands, and propaganda efforts is not that their opponents are wrong on the facts, but that their opponents are an affront to God and that their way of knowing is illegitimate. This is the essence and objective of a FGW attack.

**The Christian Right has applied this type of warfare against the federal government, the Democratic Party, the mainstream media, and its religious institutional rivals among mainline Protestant churches.**

Force captain, Boyd wrote "Aerial Attack Study," which would become official Air Force doctrine on air combat.<sup>21</sup> He went on to help develop the F-15, F-16, and F-18 fighter jets in the 1960s and '70s. His contribution to the development of the U.S. Army's AirLand Battle concept

Boyd posited that the highest level of warfare was moral, followed by mental, and physical. For example, a victory at the physical level of combat could, in reality, be a defeat at the moral level. Thus a government massacre of villagers could tactically mean that the government



could claim a territorial victory, but it could delegitimize the government in the eyes of its citizens or international allies.

At that moral level of conflict, Boyd believed in exploiting three psychological conditions—menace, uncertainty, and mistrust—in order to create an existential and epistemological threat to an army or a society. Maj. Cowan, in his thesis, quoted Boyd's explanation of these terms: "menace, which are the impressions of danger to one's well being and survival; uncertainty or the impressions, or atmosphere generated by events that appear ambiguous, erratic, contradictory, unfamiliar, and chaotic; and, mistrust as an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion that loosens human bonds among members of an organic whole."<sup>25</sup>

Frans P.B. Osinga, a Dutch Air Force Lt. Colonel with a PhD who wrote a comprehensive analysis of Boyd's briefings, noted that the aim of moral conflict, according to Boyd, is to "Destroy moral bonds that permit an organic whole to exist." Osinga quoted Boyd's analysis of the "strategic aim" of moral conflict: to "Penetrate [his] moral-mental-physical being to dissolve his moral fiber, disorient his mental images, disrupt his operations, and overload his system, as well as subvert, shatter, seize or otherwise subdue those moral-mental-physical bastions, connections, or activities that he depends upon, in order to destroy internal harmony, produce paralysis, and collapse adversary's will to resist."<sup>26</sup>

What has so far gone largely unnoticed is that the Christian Right has applied this type of warfare against the federal government, the Democratic Party, the mainstream media, and its religious institutional rivals among mainline Protestant churches.

#### **ADAPTING WARFARE FOR THE RIGHT**

Weyrich's view that the Christian Right had to wage an all-out propaganda war against secular liberalism and the Democratic Party (and the GOP) with the "same intensity" as a "shooting war" would come to early fruition with Newt Gingrich, whom Weyrich personally recruited in the 1980s and trained to use inflammatory rhetoric around cultural wedge issues.<sup>27</sup> Eventually, Gingrich as-

cended to be Speaker of the House of Representatives by exploiting scandals he choreographed against the Democratic and Republican House leadership.

John Dean, President Nixon's former White House counsel (whose Senate testimony laid the foundation for the article

### **Television News brought Weyrich and Roger Ailes into a direct working relationship, laying the groundwork for the emergence of Fox News some 20 years later.**

of impeachment for obstruction of justice), described Gingrich's pre-Speaker tactics as "portraying Republicans as godly and Democrats as anti-religious liberals." Gingrich's rhetorical tactics according to Dean, "were developed through consultations with communications experts, and soon became standard operating procedure for Republicans."<sup>28</sup> Gingrich would be instrumental in dismantling the committee structure of the House of Representatives, undermining democratic norms of comity, polarizing the House into warring political tribes, and, weakening the scientific basis of public policy.<sup>29</sup>

Lind was very familiar with Boyd and his work. Prior to joining Weyrich at the Free Congress Foundation, Lind worked for Senator Gary Hart on military reform issues, including as part of a small group working to reform U.S. defense strategy in Europe, which included Boyd. He also collaborated with Colonel Boyd on introducing maneuver warfare to the U.S. Marine Corps. Lind considered Boyd "America's greatest military theorist."<sup>30</sup> He once wrote that he had "worked with Boyd for about 15 years."<sup>31</sup>

Lind acknowledged that Boyd's theories had shaped his own views on moral conflict, writing that 4GW's "goal of collapsing the enemy internally rather than physically destroying him" derived from "Boyd's OODA (observation-orientation-decision-action) theory."<sup>32</sup> Lind further argued, in ways consistent with Boyd's thinking, that "psychological operations," "manipulating the media," and television news would become "more powerful" weapons in altering perceptions and public support for a govern-

ment's policies than actual military combat.<sup>33</sup>

Uncoincidentally, Weyrich launched National Empowerment Television (NET) during 1992-93 to attempt to manipulate news directed at conservative and Christian audiences.<sup>34</sup> Although Wey-

rich's first challenge to the media establishment came in 1973 with the Joseph Coors-funded Television News, Inc. (TVN), part of its significance is that it brought Weyrich and Roger Ailes into a direct working relationship and laid the groundwork for the emergence of Fox News some 20 years later.<sup>35</sup>

Since then, not only has the growth of the Christian Right and various submovements benefitted from Fox News misinforming its viewers<sup>36</sup> but the Religious and Political Right depends upon dubious documentaries as a form of psychological operations to inform and expand its base of conservative and evangelical supporters, as well as undermine progressive organizations.<sup>37</sup> Stephen Bannon, President Trump's senior strategist, is responsible for eight documentaries alone, including *In the Face of Evil: Reagan's War in Word and Deed*, *Generation Zero* and *Fire from the Heartland* (about the Tea Party movement), *District of Corruption*, and, *Occupy Unmasked*. The group Citizens United also released *Rediscovering God in America* and *Rediscovering God in America II*, produced by Candace and Newt Gingrich; *Hype: The Obama Effect*; *Blocking the Path of 9/11*; *Hillary: The Movie*; *We Have the Power: Making America Energy Independent*; *ACLU: At War with America*; *Border Wars: The Battle over Illegal Immigration*; and, *Broken Promises: The United Nations at 60*.

Under the strategic guidance of Weyrich and Lind, the Christian Right launched multiple propaganda campaigns since the 1980s<sup>38</sup> to induce, through stages, a crisis of confidence and legitimacy<sup>39</sup> completely independent of which political party controls the presi-

dency and Congress, which philosophy holds sway in federal courts, or prevailing economic conditions. The delivery mode of this unrelenting barrage of criticism—designed to provoke a Boydian sense of disorientation, disruption, overload, menace, uncertainty, and mistrust among the general public—is propaganda disseminated through television,<sup>40</sup> radio, movies, and documentary film,<sup>41</sup> all mediums that appeal to emotions rather than logic.

### THE PAYOFF

Brookings Institution and American Enterprise Institute scholars Thomas E. Mann and Norman Ornstein respectively reported in their 2012 book, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks*, that the “Republican Party has become the insurgent outlier in American politics...The contemporary GOP...has veered toward tolerance of extreme ideological beliefs and policies...and rejection of the legitimacy of its partisan opposition.”<sup>42</sup> Four years later, the scholars argued that both the Republican Party and the dysfunctional government had gotten worse. In their view, the “radicalization of the Republican Party” included “an utter rejection of the norms and civic culture underlying our constitutional system.”<sup>43</sup>

This conflict of legitimacy predates Trump's candidacy. In addition to Republicans' efforts to delegitimize President Obama, they were undermining the very basis of a secular, constitutional order and were using fear and propaganda to do so. But Trump also built upon these efforts and included his own violations of democratic norms.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump used racially charged accusations against Hillary Clinton, such as the insinuation that she would use African American voters to rig the election through voter fraud. These claims originated years before within the Republican Party.<sup>44</sup> Not only is the claim of massive voter fraud without a factual foundation, it has long been a right-wing propaganda tool.<sup>45</sup>

Trump also declared throughout the campaign that he intended to jail Clinton for treason and prosecute her and her lawyers, calling her “crooked Hillary.”

The Republican convention descended into a cesspool of prospective authoritarianism with calls to “lock her up” led by prominent Trump campaign officials and surrogates, including the future White House National Security Advisor, Gen. Michael Flynn. The effort appeared to be intended to delegitimize Clinton and her administration if she had won the election.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to delegitimizing candidate Clinton, Democratic voters, and the prospective election results, Trump amped-

***In a 4GW scenario, the better narrative wins. Thus, any counter-strategy must include a robust narrative of what is being defended and why.***

up longstanding right-wing attacks on the existence and functioning of a free, independent press.<sup>47</sup> In fact, Trump escalated and expanded his attacks into full-blown epistemological warfare.<sup>48</sup> But as historian and journalist Neal Gabler argued, Trump's triumph and the ongoing epistemological war it wrought was made possible by the very same mainstream media that failed to adequately report on Republican and Christian Right destabilization of democracy.<sup>49</sup>

The theological-political war first unleashed by the Christian Reconstructionists, followed by decades of Fourth Generation Warfare propaganda barrages perpetrated by the Christian Right and the wider conservative movement, ultimately resulted in something most political observers thought impossible: the election of Donald Trump as president. This is both a result and a cause of American society probably being more divided—by race, class, gender, and political ideology—than at any time since before the Civil War. The bonds of societal trust are disintegrating. Constitutional norms of governance are being undermined. Institutions meant to hold the executive branch in check are under assault from within and without. None of this was accidental. But if we are to hold onto any semblance of democratic society, knowledge of how Fourth Generation Warfare works, and that a religious and political insurrection is well advanced in the Unit-

ed States, is essential to formulation of appropriate strategies going forward.

The strategic intent of a 4GW attack, as Boyd explained, is “to dissolve [an enemy's] moral fiber, disorient his mental images, disrupt his operations, and overload his system, as well as subvert, shatter, seize or otherwise subdue those moral-mental-physical bastions, connections, or activities that he depends upon, in order to destroy internal harmony, produce paralysis, and collapse adversary's will to resist.”<sup>50</sup>

Any effective counter-strategy to efforts of the Trump administration and its Christian Right supporters must begin by understanding that when they attack, their objective is to undermine opponents' legitimacy, since under 4GW, legitimacy is the coin of the realm. But fact-checking and debunking conspiracism is only a partial solution. It must be accompanied by defending the legitimacy of institutions, democratic norms, legal procedures, and social groups singled out for attack.

In a 4GW scenario, the better narrative wins.<sup>51</sup> Thus, any counter-strategy must include a robust narrative of what is being defended and why, as well as the tools to counteract the menace, uncertainty, and mistrust engendered by 4GW attacks. These tools—a corresponding set to those in Boyd's plan of epistemological warfare—provide individuals and groups with moral strength. Or in Boyd's words, a “triumph of courage, confidence, and esprit (de corps) over [the] fear, anxiety, and alienation” of our modern, domestic, psychological war. ☞

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BY ERIC K. WARD

# Skin in the Game

## How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism

One September weekend in 1995, a few thousand people met at a convention center in Seattle to prepare for an apocalyptic standoff with the federal government. At the expo, you could sign up to defend yourself from the coming “political and economic collapse,” stock up on beef jerky, learn strategies for tax evasion, and browse titles by writers like Eustace Mullins, whose White nationalist classics include *The Secrets of the Federal Reserve*, published in 1952, and—from 1967—*The Biological Jew*. The sixth annual Preparedness Expo made national papers that year because it served as a clearinghouse for the militia movement, a decentralized right-wing movement of armed, local, anti-government paramilitaries that had recently sparked its most notorious act of terror, the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal courthouse by White nationalists Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols. A series of speakers told expo attendees the real story: the attack had been perpetrated by the government itself as an excuse to take citizens’ guns away.

Not a lot of Black folks show up at gatherings like the Preparedness Expo, one site in an extensive right-wing counter-culture in which White nationalism is a constant, explosive presence. White nationalists argue that Whites are a biologically defined people and that, once the White revolutionary spirit awakens, they will take down the federal government, remove people of color, and build a state (maybe or maybe not still called the United States of America, depending on who you ask) of their own. As a Black man, I am regarded by White nationalists as a subhuman, dangerous beast. In the 1990s, I was the field organizer for the

Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment, a six-state coalition working to reduce hate crimes and violence in the Pacific Northwest and Mountain States region. We did a lot of primary research, often undercover. A cardinal rule of organizing is that you can’t ask people to do anything you haven’t done yourself; so I spent that weekend as I spent many—among people plotting to remove me from their ethnostate.

It helped that, despite its blood-curdling anti-Black racism, at least some factions of the White nationalist movement saw me as a potential ally against their true archenemy. At the expo that year, a guy warily asked me about myself. I told him that I had come on behalf of a

### **Antisemitism forms the theoretical core of White nationalism.**

few brothers in the city. We needed to resist the federal government and we were there to get educated. I said I hoped he wouldn’t take it personally, but I didn’t shake hands with White people. He smiled; he totally understood. “Brother McLamb,” he concurred, “says we have to start building broad coalitions.” Together we went to hear Jack McLamb, a retired Phoenix cop who ran an organization called Police Against the New World Order, make a case for temporary alliances with “the Blacks, the Mexicans, the Orientals” against the real enemy, the federal government controlled by an international conspiracy. He didn’t have to say who ran this conspiracy because it was obvious to all in attendance. And

despite the widespread tendency to dismiss antisemitism, notwithstanding its daily presence across the country and the world, it is obvious to you, too.

From the time I documented my first White nationalist rally in 1990 until today, the movement has made its way from the margins of American political life to its center, and I’ve moved from doing antiracist organizing in small northwestern communities to fighting for inclusive democracy on a national level, as the Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Justice program officer at the Ford Foundation until recently, and now as a senior fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center. Yet if I had to give a basic definition of the movement—something I’ve often been asked to do, formally and informally, by folks who’ve spent less time hanging out with Nazis than I have—my response today would not be much different than it was when I began to do this work nearly thirty years ago. American White nationalism, which emerged in the wake of the 1960s civil rights struggle and descends from White supremacy, is a revolutionary social movement committed to building a Whites-only nation, and antisemitism forms its theoretical core.

That last part—antisemitism forms the theoretical core of White nationalism—bears repeating. Let me explain.

The meteoric rise of White nationalism within national discourse over the course of Donald Trump’s presidential campaign and freshman administration—through Trump’s barely coded speech at fascist-style rallies, his support from the internet-based “Alt Right,” and his placement of White nationalist popularizers like Stephen Bannon in top positions—has produced a shock of revelation for people across a wide swath of the

political spectrum. This shock, in turn, has been a source of frustration within communities of color and leftist circles, where White liberals are often accused of having kept their heads in the sand while more vulnerable populations sounded the alarm about the toll of economic crisis, mass incarceration, police violence,

with the centrality of antisemitism to White nationalist ideology, and until we do we will fail to understand this virulent form of racism rapidly growing in the U.S. today.

To recognize that antisemitism is not a sideshow to racism within White nationalist thought is important for at least two

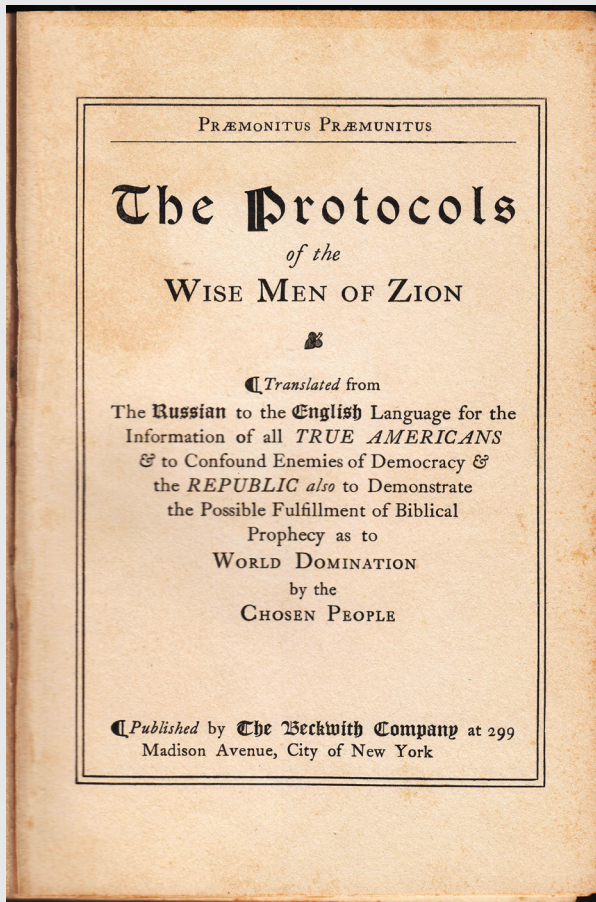
reasons. First, it allows us to identify the fuel that White nationalist ideology uses to power its anti-Black racism, its contempt for other people of color, and its xenophobia—as well as the misogyny and other forms of hatred it holds dear. White nationalists in the United States perceive the country as having plunged into unending crisis since the social ruptures of the 1960s supposedly dispossessed White people of their very nation. The successes of the civil rights movement created a terrible problem for White supremacist ideology. White supremacism—inscribed de jure by the Jim Crow regime and upheld de facto outside the South—had been the law of the land, and a Black-led social movement had toppled the political regime that supported it. How could a race of

inferiors have unseated this power structure through organizing alone? For that matter, how could feminists and LGBTQ people have upended traditional gender relations, leftists mounted a challenge to global capitalism, Muslims won billions of converts to Islam? How do you explain the boundary-crossing allure of hip hop? The election of a Black president? Some secret cabal, some mythological power, must be manipulating the social order behind the scenes. This diabolical evil

must control television, banking, entertainment, education, and even Washington, D.C. It must be brainwashing White people, rendering them racially unconscious.

What is this arch-nemesis of the White race, whose machinations have prevented the natural and inevitable imposition of white supremacy? It is, of course, the Jews. Jews function for today's White nationalists as they often have for antisemites through the centuries: as the demons stirring an otherwise changing and heterogeneous pot of lesser evils. At the turn of the 20th Century, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*—a forgery, first circulated by Czarist secret police in Russia in 1903, that purports to represent the minutes of a meeting of the international Jewish conspiracy—established the blueprint of antisemitic ideology in its modern form. It did this by recasting the shape-shifting, money-grubbing caricature of the Jew from a religious caricature to a racialized one. Upper-class Jews in Europe might have been assimilating and changing their names, but under the new regime of antisemitic thought, even a Jew who converted to Christianity would still be a Jew.

In 1920, Henry Ford brought the *Protocols* to the United States, printing half a million copies of an adaptation called *The International Jew*, and the text has had a presence in American life ever since. (Walmart stocked copies on its shelves and for a time refused calls to take them down—in 2004.) But it is over the past 50 years, not coincidentally the first period in U.S. history in which most American Jews have regarded themselves as White, that antisemitism has become integral to the architecture of American racism. Because modern antisemitic ideology traffics in fantasies of invisible power, it thrives precisely when its target would seem to be least vulnerable. Thus, in places where Jews were most assimilated—France at the time of the Dreyfus affair, Germany before Hitler came to power—they have functioned as a magic bullet to account for unaccountable contradictions at moments of national crisis. White supremacism through the collapse of Jim Crow was a conservative movement centered on a state-sanctioned



The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, first circulated by Czarist secret police in Russia in 1903, established the blueprint of antisemitic ideology in its modern form. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

deportation, environmental devastation, and—despite and in reaction to the election of Barack Obama—the unending blare of everyday hate. This is an understandable reaction. It's one I've often shared. But the fact that many of us have long recognized that the country we live in is not the one we are told exists doesn't mean we always understand the one that does. Within social and economic justice movements committed to equality, we have not yet collectively come to terms

with the centrality of antisemitism to White nationalist ideology, and until we do we will fail to understand this virulent form of racism rapidly growing in the U.S. today.



anti-Blackness that sought to maintain a racist status quo. The White nationalist movement that evolved from it in the 1970s was a revolutionary movement that saw itself as the vanguard of a new, Whites-only state. This latter movement, then and now, positions Jews as the absolute other, the driving force of White dispossession—which means the other channels of its hatred cannot be intercepted without directly taking on antisemitism.

This brings me to the second reason that White nationalist antisemitism must not be dismissed: at the bedrock of the movement is an explicit claim that Jews are a race of their own, and that their ostensible position as White folks in the U.S. represents the greatest trick the devil ever played. The bible for generations of White nationalists is *The Turner Diaries*, a 1978 dystopian novel by the White supremacist leader William Pierce, published under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald. The novel takes place in a near-future in which Jews have unleashed Blacks and other undesirables into the center of American public life, and follows the triumph of a clandestine White supremacist organization that snaps into revolutionary action, blowing up both Israel and New York City. Its narrator, a soldier in the White revolutionary army, insists that “trying to distinguish the ‘good’ Jews from the bad ones” is as absurd as the way “some of our thicker-skulled ‘good ol’ boys’ still insist on trying, separating the ‘good niggers’ from the rest of their race.” Contemporary antisemitism, then, does not just enable racism, it also is racism, for in the White nationalist imaginary Jews are a race—the race—that presents an existential threat to Whiteness. Moreover, if antisemitism exists in glaring form at the extreme edge of political discourse, it does not exist in a vacuum; as with every form of hateful ideology, what is explicit on the margins is implicit in the center, in ways we have not yet begun to unpack. This means the notion that Jews long ago and uncontestedly became White folks in the U.S.—became, in effect, post-racial—is a myth that we must dispel.

I’ve been terrorized by structural racism and White nationalist activism all my

life. Contrary to a popular image of White nationalists living exclusively off the grid, far from people of color—who are imagined to live exclusively on it—White nationalists are our neighbors. As a kid in Southern California and as a young adult in Oregon, deep in a West Coast punk scene that in some ways looked a lot like the U.S. in 2017, they were lit-

***Antisemitism, I discovered, is a particular and potent form of racism so central to White supremacy that Black people would not win our freedom without tearing it down.***

erally mine. Because I grew up Black in a city and a scene where people of color were under attack by White nationalists, the immediacy of the movement’s threat and its hatred of dark-skinned people like my family and friends is something I have always known. I thought I understood what motivated them, and I thought their motivation always looked like me. What I learned when I got to Oregon, as I began to log untold hours trying to understand White nationalists and their ideas, was that antisemitism was the lynchpin of the White nationalist belief system. That within this ideological matrix, Jews—despite and indeed because of the fact that they often read as White—are a different, unassimilable, enemy race that must be exposed, defeated, and ultimately eliminated. Antisemitism, I discovered, is a particular and potent form of racism so central to White supremacy that Black people would not win our freedom without tearing it down.

...

Long Beach, California, is planted on the line that locals call the Orange Curtain, the border between the working-class and immigrant neighborhoods of southern Los Angeles County and the White conservative suburbs of Orange County. By the time my mom and I moved down from L.A. in 1976, when I was in sixth grade, this endless sprawl of White flight was increasingly interrupted by people of color looking for affordable housing in safe neighborhoods. The Civil Rights and radical social move-

ments of the 1960s and early ‘70s had already been smashed by the state or self-destructed. White nationalism, on the other hand, was part of the scenery. Just down the street from one of our Long Beach apartments was an outpost of the John Birch Society, the foremost right-wing anticommunist organization during the Cold War—now having a Trump-

era revival—which officially disavowed White supremacy and antisemitism but fought the Civil Rights movement and described the communist menace as an international cabal.

I was bussed to school in middle-class suburbs through the fanciest neighborhoods I’d ever seen, where White people rolled down their car windows to call us monkeys or tell us to go back to Africa. At school, White kids initialed SWP on their desks: Supreme White Power. One of our local celebrities was Wally George, a public access television star whose show, “The Hot Seat,” was a forerunner to the hate radio of shock jocks like Rush Limbaugh and Tucker Carlson. As teenagers we’d get stoned and watch his show for laughs. But there was fear, too, beneath the laughter. Neonazis, a kid on the bus told us one morning, were marching in a nearby park. I’ve avoided that park to this day.

The L.A. punk scene of the late 1970s brought me into constant, unavoidable contact with proto-White nationalist youth. The scene was utopian and dystopian, thrilling and violent, gave me friends for life—Black, White, and Filipino, U.S.-born and undocumented—and killed some of them. The scene attracted the brightest minds and the burgeoning sociopaths from across lines of race and class. Chaos broke out at shows and kids formed gangs. There were racist and antiracist skinheads. Someone wearing a swastika armband might be a neonazi or might just be fucking around. The cops

stationed outside shows terrorized everyone present. We didn't expect to make it far into adulthood and we had fun, until the war on drugs intensified and we knew it was a war on us.

When I was 21, working minimum-wage jobs and playing in a garage band called Sloppy 2nds, some friends announced they'd be starting college at the University of Oregon and asked me to come with them. When I imagined anything north of San Francisco and south of Seattle, all I conjured were endless stands of trees. I said no. But working one night shift, pumping gas at the Union 76 station, the Specials song "Do Nothing"

Oregon as a kind of haven. Portland has now largely replaced San Francisco as the destination of choice for White youth with West Coast dreams of alternative living. But it is also where the White liberal imagination becomes a libertarian one: implicitly, it imagines a place free of people of color and therefore pregnant with the possibility of social harmony. But Oregon's Whiteness—and, particularly, its non-Blackness—was the product of deliberate, violent exclusion; founded by White supremacists before the Civil War, by the 1920s the state boasted the largest Klan membership west of the Mississippi. Klan campaigns often chose

sovereignty as their goal. "Ourselves alone willing," declared White nationalist leader and Aryan Nations organizer Robert Miles, "we shall begin to form the new nation even while in the suffocating embrace of the ZOG." In White nationalist parlance, the United States is the ZOG, or Zionist Occupied Government. It was in the Northwest that the nascent militia movement—notorious in the 1990s after standoffs between White nationalist compounds and the FBI in Ruby Ridge, Idaho, and Waco, Texas—declared war on their country loudly enough they could no longer be ignored.

Ironically, then, if I had moved to Oregon to get away from the unpromising life expectancy for a Black male punk in southern California, the people who had decimated urban life in my home state had gotten there first. In 1978, California's White conservative voters passed the infamous Proposition 13, which cut taxes and slashed social services, turning the state into a laboratory for the Reagan revolution. Poverty and drug crime increased, and the same White folks who had gutted Californian cities in their flight to the suburbs after World War II now fled up the coast. I arrived in liberal Eugene in 1986, walked into workplace after workplace, and despite my resume, my smile, and my charm—funny, but no one was hiring. I didn't understand Oregon yet; I thought it was just me.

Meanwhile, the growing clashes between racist and antiracist skinheads in the punk scene that had made life in Long Beach dangerous were a fact of life in Oregon as well, and often took place beyond the reach of the law. As part of their nation-building project in the Pacific Northwest, White supremacists were establishing their own common law courts, their own religions, and their own paramilitaries. They attacked and sometimes killed cops, and the local authorities, cowed, turned a blind eye. So when



Photo: Courtesy of the author.

came on—"Nothing ever change, oh no/ Nothing ever change"—and I knew that if I didn't leave southern California I would die soon. So I moved with a multiracial group of L. A. punks to the remote college town of Eugene, Oregon, and we bunkered down in a house we called Camp Iceberg because we never turned on the heat. Sloppy 2nds disbanded and when it later reformed without me, it became Sublime, the most famous Long Beach band of all time.

White liberals have long imagined

Catholics as their immediate targets, because Blacks were not allowed to reside in Oregon until 1926.

The White nationalist movement that emerged in the last decades of the 20th Century grew across the country. But it was Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming that neonazis in the 1980s carved out as the territorial boundaries of their future Whites-only state, a region that self-identified "Aryans" from around the country began to colonize with nothing short of White national



gangs of neonazi punks terrorized people of color and other vulnerable groups in Portland, it was coalitions of the communities under attack that struck back and eventually beat them off the streets.

In the end, I began to fight White nationalism because my world, my scene, my friends, and my music were under neonazi attack. The great postpunk band Fugazi was on a national tour, and an unwanted audience of neonazis had begun turning up at their shows. Fugazi would stop playing, give the neonazis five dollars, and refuse to start up again until they left. A venue in Eugene cancelled a scheduled appearance when rumors spread that skinheads were planning to disrupt the show, and the community erupted in anger. By that time, I was a student and an activist. I had stumbled into student of color politics while attending community college and now co-directed the Black Student Union and Students Against Apartheid at the University of Oregon. I spent a semester in France and while I was away, a 28-year-old Ethiopian international student named Mulugeta Seraw was beaten to death by White supremacists on a Portland street. I returned to a community deeply shaken and in mourning. But it was in the wake of the cancelled show that I founded an organization, Communities Against Hate, in the way these things often happen: no one else wanted to do it. We created a zine called *The Race Mixer* ("Miscegenation At Its Finest"), reporting on the activity of hate groups in the Northwest; during the standoff at Ruby Ridge, we stood outside the Portland City Hall dressed as Klan members to warn against the spread of the militia movement. Two years later, in Eugene, Communities Against Hate got Fugazi to come back and play.

...

When folks ask me, skeptically, where the antisemitism in the White nationalist movement lies, it can feel like being asked to point out a large elephant in a small room. From the outset of my research on White nationalism all those years ago, it was clear that antisemitism in the movement is everywhere, and it is not hidden. "Life is uglier and uglier these days, more and more Jewish," William Pierce wrote

in *The Turner Diaries*. "No matter how long it takes us and no matter to what lengths we must go, we'll demand a final settlement of the account between our two races," the narrator promises at the book's conclusion. "If the Organization survives this contest, no Jew will—anywhere. We'll go to the uttermost ends of

a Jewish radio talk show host in Denver; to evangelical leaders like Pat Robertson who denounced antisemitism but used its popularity among their followers to promote an implicitly White supremacist "Christian nationalism"; to the contemporary Alt Right named by White nationalist Richard Spencer, which has brought

**I began to fight White nationalism because my world, my scene, my friends, and my music were under neonazi attack.**



Photos: Courtesy of the author.

the earth to hunt down the last of Satan's spawn." White nationalism is a fractious countercultural social movement, and its factions often disagree with each other about basic questions of theory and practice. The movement does not take a single, unified position on the Jewish question. But antisemitism has been a throughline from the Posse Comitatus, which set itself against "anti-Christ Jewry"; to David Duke's refurbished Ku Klux Klan, which abandoned anti-Catholicism in the 1970s in order to focus on "Jewish supremacism"; to the neonazi group The Order, inspired by *The Turner Diaries*, which in the mid-1980s went on a rampage of robberies and synagogue bombings in Washington state and murdered

antisemitic thought and imagery to new audiences on the internet—and now at White House press conferences.

Doing primary research on hate groups revealed the contours of the movement's antisemitism in even more intricate detail. At a time when many larger social justice organizations refused to take White nationalism seriously, regional groups like Communities Against Hate, Coalition for Human Dignity, Montana Human Rights Network, Rural Organizing Project, and dozens of others did much of the groundwork documenting its theories, strategies, and warring currents. That's why in 1990, for instance, antiracist activists were itching to get our hands on a copy of *Vigilantes of Christen-*

dom, a self-published book by a writer named Richard Kelly Hoskins influential on the Christian Identity circuit. (I scored a copy by marching into a book vending tent at a White supremacist rally and marketing it to passersby as a life-changing volume I had read at the behest of a White friend.) We learned that Hoskins' book appropriated the Old Testament story of Phineas, a prominent Israelite who marries outside the faith and is punished for his transgression by a rogue member of the tribe who kills him and his bride with a spear. Historically unpopular within the rabbinic tradition for appearing to endorse this lawless act, Hoskins' work celebrated the tale. To join the Priesthood, he wrote, an Aryan must act as a latter-day Phineas by perpetrating lone-wolf attacks against inferior races and their White apologists.

The Phineas Priesthood does not, in an organizational sense, appear to actually exist. But for decades, domestic terrorists—like Eric Rudolph, a Christian Identity acolyte who killed people in a string of bombing attacks at Southern gay bars, abortion clinics, and the 1996 summer Olympics in Atlanta—have allegedly seen themselves as Phineas Priests. Like the Phineas Priesthood, one small forma-

nationalism in the 1990s and early 2000s in the Northwest and then the Midwest and South, I found that audiences—whether White or of color, at synagogues or churches, universities or police trainings—generally had a relationship to White nationalism that, at least in one basic sense, was like my own. They knew the scope and seriousness of the movement from personal experience, and—if they didn't take this for granted to begin with—they were not shocked to discover its antisemitic emphasis. The resistance I have encountered when I address antisemitism has primarily come since I moved to the Northeast seven years ago, and from the most established progressive antiracist leaders, organizations, coalitions, and foundations around the country. It is here that a well-meaning but counterproductive thicket of discourse has grown up insisting that Jews—of Ashkenazi descent, at least—are uncontestedly White, and that to challenge this is to deny the workings of White privilege. In other words, when I'm asked, "Where is the antisemitism?," what I am often really being asked is, "Why should we be talking about antisemitism?"

And indeed—why? Why, when the president of the United States appears

Sephardi Jews posited as an exception—should regard themselves as White allies of people of color, eschewing any identity as a racialized people with their own skins at risk in the fight against White supremacy? Why, when Jews are safe and claims to the contrary serve to justify rather than to challenge racial and other oppressions, like conservative commentator Alan Dershowitz's cynical recent attempt to discredit antiracist and anticolonial struggles by declaring intersectionality an antisemitic concept? Why, when Jews of European descent are supposedly "White," have long been, will ever be?

I can answer this question as I have been doing and will continue to do: antisemitism fuels White nationalism, a genocidal movement now enthroned in the highest seats of American power, and fighting antisemitism cuts off that fuel for the sake of all marginalized communities under siege from the Trump regime and the social movement that helped raise it up. To refuse to deal with any ideology of domination, moreover, is to abet it. Contemporary social justice movements are quite clear that to refuse antiracism is an act of racism; to refuse feminism is an act of sexism. To refuse opposition to antisemitism, likewise, is an act of antisemitism. Arguably, not much more should need to be said than that. But I suspect that much more does need to be said. To the hovering question, why should we be talking about antisemitism, I reply, what is it we are afraid we will find out if we do? What historic and contemporary conflicts will be laid bare? And if we recognize that White privilege really is privilege, what will it mean for Jewish antiracists to give up the fantasy that they ever really had it to begin with?

And yet this impasse seems finally to be breaking down. It has long been the case that at moments when the left has suffered another devastating and seemingly inexplicable political loss, my phone rings more often; now that the White nationalist movement has come to national power, it is ringing off the hook. The public and private discussions I've had just in the past month suggest a hunger to understand antisemitism—within and outside the Jewish community—the

***Antisemitism fuels White nationalism, a genocidal movement now enthroned in the highest seats of American power, and fighting antisemitism cuts off that fuel for the sake of all marginalized communities under siege from the Trump regime and the social movement that helped raise it up.***

tion that might stand in for the whole, contemporary White nationalism has no clear center. Yet it does have a deadly commitment to revolutionary violence against racial others, and to the state apparatus perceived to do their bidding. And like the Priesthood, it rests upon a tortuous racial cosmology in which Jews form a monstrous, all-powerful cabal that uses subhuman others, including Blacks and immigrants, as pawns to destroy White nationhood.

Over years of speaking about White

bent on removing as many dark-skinned immigrants from the U.S. as he can, and when men who look like me are shot in the street or tortured to death in prison with impunity? Why, when the leadership of some mainstream Jewish communal organizations level false charges of antisemitism in order to silence critique—whether by Jews or non-Jews—of Israeli government policies? Why, after decades of soul-searching by Jewish antiracists has established a seeming consensus that Jews—with Mizrahi and



likes of which I have never witnessed before. Certainly many American Jews who regard themselves as White are feeling less so over these recent months as the candidate-turned-president seemed reluctant to disavow his endorsement by David Duke, the most notorious White supremacist in America. Meanwhile, Jewish cemeteries are desecrated even as

Privilege can be revoked. And this means too that progressive movements and social change organizations must come to understand that all social movements have influence, including those that seek to construct a society based on exclusion and terror.

Sometimes I wish I had a better story to tell about how I arrived at this analysis—

***Privilege, after all, is not the same as power. Privilege can be revoked. And this means too that progressive movements and social change organizations must come to understand that all social movements have influence, including those that seek to construct a society based on exclusion and terror.***

the administration directs the FBI to double down on the surveillance of Muslims and focus less on the White supremacists who constitute the principal domestic terrorist threat in the United States. Jewish thought leaders and journalists are being harassed on social media. In April, former White House press secretary Sean Spicer caused a furor by favorably comparing Adolph Hitler to Bashar al-Assad of Syria in remarks that, whether intentionally or not, echoed the apologetics of Holocaust deniers.

We do not yet know where Trump's coalition will land on the question of White nationalism. That Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner is Jewish should not in itself be of comfort; there were Jews who worked with Hitler, too, and Blacks in the Confederate army. But it is important to note that the White nationalist faction of the administration led by Stephen Bannon—now ousted from his position in the National Security Council—is just one of several warring parties and currently appears to be losing ground. In other words, we do not yet have a fully activated White nationalist administration. (If we did, we'd know.) At the same time, the fact that this remains an open question at all likely invites more than a few ostensibly "White" Jews to contemplate the provisional nature of their Whiteness, their privilege. Privilege, after all, is not the same as power.

a story more dramatic or more heartwarming, somehow more about me. If I live and work, as I do, in the kind of daily, intimate Black-Jewish coalitions that were a mainstay of the Civil Rights movement but are now supposed to be fraught with mutual suspicion, I must have experienced a historically uncanny revelation or been drawn to the Jewish community through some mysterious pull of identification. It's true that back in Long Beach, on days I opted out of middle school, the man at the corner deli would call me over and give me blueberry blintzes. He was the first person I knew was Jewish. I didn't know what that meant, but the blintzes were good, and when you don't have a lot of food, they are even better. But I also remember the delicious sushi a local Japanese restaurant gave me. I still love sushi, and blintzes, but neither helped me to understand racism or social change. There was no kumbaya experience, no light bulb, no moment where I became Paul on the road to Damascus. It was just common sense to study my enemy, White nationalism. And like any worthwhile research project, it has taken time.

A central insistence of antiracist thought over the past several decades is that, as with any social category produced by regimes of power, you don't choose race, power chooses it for you; it names you. This is why all the well-

meaning identification in the world does not make a White person Black. Likewise, as much as I draw inspiration from the Jewish community, and as much as I adore my Jewish partner and friends, it was my organizing against antisemitism as a Black antiracist that first pulled me to the Jewish community, not the other way around. I developed an analysis of antisemitism because I wanted to smash White supremacy; because I wanted to be free. If we acknowledge that White nationalism clearly and forcefully names Jews as non-white, and did so in the very fiber of its emergence as a post-civil rights right-wing revolutionary movement, then we are forced to recognize our own ignorance about the country we thought we lived in. It is time to have that conversation. ☞

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*As an organizer with Community Alliance of Lane County, field director of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment, and national field director of the Center for New Community, Ward designed campaigns to expose and counter hate groups and respond to bigoted violence. During this period, he was one of a handful of prominent leaders of color working to counter this new manifestation of organized hate. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of Revolutions Per Minute (RPM), a nonprofit agency that provides artists with strategy and support for their activism and philanthropy.*

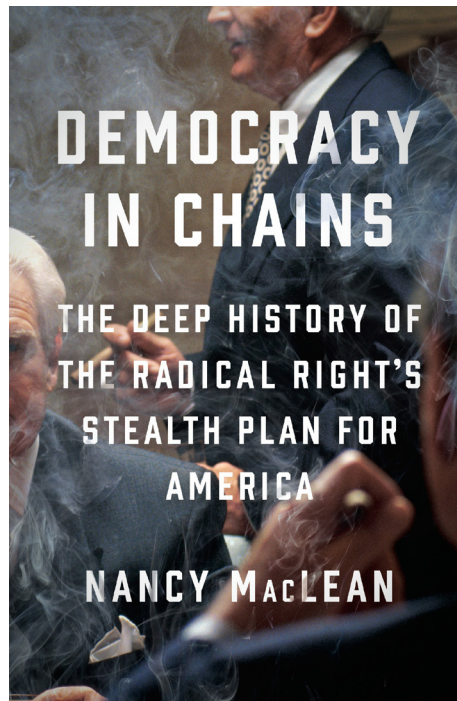
# Charles Koch, the Cato Institute and the Makings of a Right-Wing Empire

Charles Koch, the billionaire philanthropist who's the source of much of the Right's "dark money," did not just become a convert to the ultra-capitalist radical right. He is the sole reason why this movement may yet alter the trajectory of the United States in ways that would be profoundly disturbing even to the somewhat undemocratic James Madison, I believe—and would unquestionably take the "demos" out of American democratic governance. How Koch came to know libertarianism is easy to answer: at his father's dinner table. Less obvious is why he continued to pour untold millions of dollars into this cause, even as he later acknowledged that for some three decades it produced few results. He made clear he was looking for something, but what that something was, beyond a "technology" of revolution, remained unclear.<sup>1</sup> When and where he found it is not: in the ideas of James Buchanan, the founder of the public choice school of political economy, sometimes called Virginia political economy, and the first U.S. Southerner to win the Nobel Prize in economics. In the eventual merger of Koch's money and managerial talent and the Buchanan team's decades of work monomaniacally identifying how the populace became more powerful than the propertied, a virtual fifth column movement would come into being, the likes of which no nation has ever seen.

At first it seems hard to imagine why a man who had so much would become consumed with a need to take down those who just wanted "some more" for themselves (in the immortal words of *Oliver Twist*). The answer, to the extent that one can be found in the mysteries of individual human personality, lies in a childhood in which fighting was a leitmotif and government was always the enemy.

Charles G. (de Ganahl) Koch was the

second of four sons of Fred Chase Koch, a man who made his millions running an oil-refining business. Through much of his youth, Charles and his brothers watched their father fight round after round of what no doubt seemed to



the family, despite its wealth, a David-and-Goliath-style legal battle. It lasted 23 years. On one side was a behemoth known as Universal Oil Products, which was owned by a group of major corporations, including what remained of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil, and which had monopolistic tendencies. On the other was Fred Koch.<sup>2</sup>

As the plaintiff, Universal Oil claimed that the innovative technical process that had already made Fred Koch a wealthy man violated its patent rights. Koch was up against an adversary that had unlimited funds and therefore access to the best lawyers. They won virtually every lawsuit

they filed for patent violations against new competitors. But Koch did not buckle. His attorney argued that his accusers kept control of the industry through a kind of government-backed blackmail, such that "a small refiner . . . is told that if he does not take a license [from the patent-owning company] he will suffer the penalty." At trial, Koch lost. His appeals failed as well. But later he learned, as the investigative reporter Daniel Schulman has put it, that "the ruling that had sealed his company's fate had been bought and paid for" by the company that sued him. The judge had been bribed. It took two decades and the exposure of that corruption, but Koch ultimately prevailed.<sup>3</sup>

Universal Oil Products engaged in what Buchanan's coauthor Gordon Tullock would later define as (and an adult Charles Koch would revile as) "rent-seeking behavior." It referred to all attempts to extract benefits (financial or otherwise) through manipulation of the political or legal system that exceeded what those seeking these advantages would have been able to earn through their own productive activity.<sup>4</sup> Of course, what happened to Fred Koch wasn't rent-seeking behavior; it was criminal behavior. If Universal's lawyers felt confident that the courts would have sustained their claims, then Universal would not have resorted to bribery. One can only wonder if the course of both Fred's and Charles's lives might have been somehow different had the judge in the case refused the bribe and heard the case on its merits.<sup>5</sup>

Then again, there is no gainsaying the fact that Fred Koch did not need a lawsuit to lead him to the Right. When asked to describe his father, Charles called him "a John Wayne-type figure, charismatic and forceful," someone who taught his boys to love liberty, venerate hard work, and passionately hate collectivism. "He was constantly speaking to us children about



what was wrong with government,” recalled David Koch, one of Charles’s two younger brothers. But he was even more derogatory about those who turned to government for help, expressing his utter contempt for those who had a “dependence on government” or were even temporarily “feeding at the public trough.”<sup>6</sup>

Making and enjoying money was never enough for Fred Koch, as it would not be enough for the son he groomed to be his successor. He had to have things his way. In 1958, after his victory against Universal Oil, Fred co-led a referendum drive to alter the state constitution in order to make it harder for unions to take root in Kansas. Fred was a passionate advocate of so-called right-to-work laws. Today he is most remembered as a founding member of the John Birch Society earlier the same year, declaring that he was “thoroughly disgusted with the Eisenhower variety of Republicanism.”<sup>7</sup>

Charles was in graduate school at MIT at the time his father helped launch the society, and was keeping his distance from the stern hand of the family patriarch. By all accounts, Charles continued to be more interested in things—above all, how they worked and how to make them work more efficiently—than in philosophy; he earned three engineering degrees before departing from MIT. He liked living in Cambridge and chose to remain in the Boston area in a consulting job after graduation, beyond the reach of the man who had been so bent on hardening him that he had sent Charles, against his will, to a string of boarding schools as a preadolescent and then to an Indiana military academy far from home for high school.<sup>8</sup> But Charles was raised to respect his parents. So when Fred Koch, ailing, called upon him to help with the family business—or see it sold off—the prodigal son returned to Wichita.

The company he gradually took over had, at the time he returned, annual revenues of \$70 million. In 1967, after two heart attacks felled Fred Koch, Charles, then still only 32, succeeded his father. Through the aggressive pursuit of any promising technological breakthrough, and the determined application of it no matter how long it took to yield results, combined with shrewd market and managerial strategy, he would turn Koch Industries into the second-largest privately held company in America—with yearly

revenues of more than \$115 billion (well over a thousandfold increase from what it was when he took over) and some 67,000 employees in almost 60 nations.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, within a decade of his assuming leadership, and at a time when America had only five billionaire families (four of whose fortunes went back to the Gilded Age), the Kochs had already reached the top 20 in wealth through Charles’s deft navigation of the family’s original industry, crude oil marketing, and smart expansion into other domains.<sup>10</sup> Keeping the company private, he also maintained control.

Koch’s competitors learned never to underestimate his determination, his skill at seeing many moves beyond them,

prolong the disease. Koch believed that only in its “radical, pure form,” without compromise, would the ideas “appeal to the brightest, most enthusiastic, most capable people.”<sup>11</sup> (Is it any wonder, then, that his allies would now rather bring down the government than improve it?)

In the beginning, though, it was difficult to find bright and capable people who believed as he did. When “I started [bankrolling the cause],” Koch marveled, “we’d be lucky if we could get a half dozen professors or scholars.”<sup>12</sup> Still, he continued to invest, undaunted by the eccentricities of the human raw material at hand. At one 1975 gathering of Institute for Humane Studies members in Hart-

***In the eventual merger of Koch’s money and managerial talent and the Buchanan team’s decades of work monomaniacally identifying how the populace became more powerful than the propertied, a virtual fifth column movement would come into being, the likes of which no nation has ever seen.***

and his virtually infinite patience. Playing the long game is his forte, something other Americans are just beginning to understand.

...

As Koch was building his company into the behemoth it is today, he never stopped reading. Among his favorite authors was Ludwig von Mises, who, like Ayn Rand, wrote of entrepreneurs with reverence, treating them as the greatest heroes in human history. That sense of intellectual and even ethical superiority to others may help explain why Charles Koch bypassed the also libertarian but more empirically and practically minded economist Milton Friedman to make common cause with the more uncompromising James Buchanan. Koch referred to Friedman and the rest of the post-Hayek Chicago school of economics he led, as well as to Alan Greenspan, as “sellouts to the system,” in the words of journalist Brian Doherty. Why? Because they sought “to make government work more efficiently when the true libertarian should be tearing it out at the root.” They actually tried to help government deliver better results, which could only

ford to promote Koch’s favored Austrian economics—that of von Mises and F.A. Hayek, two of the founding members of the Mont Pelerin Society, which pitted itself against “collectivism” and reviled even public education and Social Security as “socialism”—one participant remembered “a real team-building afternoon” when the group went on a bus tour. As the young female tour guide drew their attention to the many lovely buildings they were passing, “when it was a government building we all booed deeply and when it was private we all cheered,” delighting in the fact that the young woman, not grasping the correlation, was “totally unnerved” by the men’s yelling. Apparently, only one attendee of several dozen was “shocked and disgusted” by the boorishness. He was not American.<sup>13</sup>

The next such IHS gathering was held at Windsor Castle, the royal palace used on weekends by Queen Elizabeth, but now with fewer than two dozen participants. They were “booster meetings” to bond new talent with “heroes.” Charles and his wife Liz Koch brought so many pieces of matching luggage, the organiz-

er recalled, that an additional big car had to be hired to port it all. It was, he reminisced, like the “forming of a clan.”<sup>14</sup>

It is hard to imagine such a clan upending the known world within a few decades, but chance won them a wider hearing. It came with the troubling economic events of the mid-1970s, which undercut the credibility of the prevailing approach to political economy. The worst and longest recession since the Great Depression, followed by a mystifying period of stagflation and compounded by new competition from abroad, enabled the wider Right to draw more and more cor-

cal. “We must practice what we preach,” he intoned, and cease seeking special privileges and subsidies.<sup>17</sup>

Given the interest of James Buchanan’s team in what they called rent-seeking and in new legal rules that might prevent it, the man who jokingly referred to himself as an “adopted Austrian,” and who privately speculated about the benefits to the Virginia school of political economy he had founded of “assuming the role of the American ‘Hayek,’” found himself drawing closer to the people representing Koch’s political interests. And when Charles Koch set up his own eponymous

cadre among Austrian economics-inclined scholars, were as probing as any of those asked by the invited academics—indeed, with a sharper sense of the ultimate stakes, we can see in hindsight, because he was deadly serious about implementing the views of Austrian thinkers on matters from labor management to monetary policy. Before long, Koch was writing to Buchanan to share his excitement “about developments in the economics profession” and thank the scholar for his leadership “in bringing them about.” The two were also drawing closer through joint work to build up the Institute for Humane Studies, which carried forward “the battle of ideas” on campuses by “building a critical mass of freedom-friendly professors.”<sup>20</sup>

When William E. Simon, Nixon’s Treasury Secretary and by 1978 the president of the John M. Olin Foundation, urged corporate leaders to “rush [funds] by multimillions to the aid of liberty,” by funding positions for pro-capitalist faculty on university campuses, Charles Koch needed little convincing—he was already writing checks.<sup>21</sup> And he was writing them not simply from a desire to broaden public debate. He was seeking the alchemy that might help him take what was then a quirky backwater of a movement and turn it into a rushing river powerful enough to smash through the dam of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century state. Which explains his interest in Murray Rothbard, one of the intellectuals Koch first subsidized. It was Rothbard who explained to him how small numbers could effect big changes. Rothbard suggested that Koch study Lenin.<sup>22</sup>

“I grew up in a Communist culture,” Rothbard later said of the extended “family, friends, [and] neighbors” in the New York City milieu he rebelled against. Even as he despised their goals, he took from their heated discussions in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as his own wide reading in the original sources, a deep appreciation of the strategic and tactical genius of Vladimir Lenin, who led a revolution in a place where others said it simply could not be done. A champion of “uncompromising libertarianism,” Rothbard, like Lenin, believed that government was “our enemy.” He admired Lenin’s daring leadership, but most of all he saw that some of his techniques could serve a wholly opposite purpose: namely,

**He was even more derogatory about those who turned to government for help, expressing his utter contempt for those who had a “dependence on government” or were even temporarily “feeding at the public trough.”**

porate leaders into action. They wanted not just to rein in regulation and taxation, but also to dethrone the dominant paradigm of Keynesian economics that was at the core of the midcentury social contract.<sup>15</sup>

Although deeply interested in this very project, Koch remained on the sidelines of the energetic corporate mobilization then under way. He simply did not trust the big blue-chip, publicly traded companies and established business associations that took the lead to stand on principle (which, in fact, they did not, always making exceptions for themselves), so Koch kept his contributions separate. He would not intermix his money with that of the ideologically impure, those who seemed likely to quit or cut a side deal before the long game was won. As they did.<sup>16</sup>

As important, because he had assured himself that his actions were solely motivated by principle, by allegiance to a set of ideas that would create a better society, he remained religious about the need to discipline CEOs as well as social movements and others who looked to government. “How discrediting it is for us to request [corporate] welfare for ourselves,” Charles Koch chided his fellow businessmen in 1978, “while attacking [welfare] for the poor.” No wonder the enemies of free enterprise called company attacks on big government hypocriti-

foundation in 1974, Buchanan was invited to be the featured dinner speaker for “our first formal activity.” Held in Charlottesville, where kindred economists and law school faculty were now working so well together at the University of Virginia, it was the first of a series of gatherings that were not merely for the like-minded to get acquainted. They featured intense deliberations on topics ranging from “The New Monetary Theory” to “The Austrian View of Social Cost.”<sup>18</sup>

Koch’s team knew of James Buchanan not least because the libertarian milieu was still so small. Earlier, they had welcomed the economist’s argument against “appeasement” of campus protests, publishing a pamphlet-size version of *Academia in Anarchy*—in which Buchanan and a co-author had applied Virginia school analysis to explain the campus upheaval of the 1960s as the result of universities not being run like corporations—to reach a broader audience than the book had. Indeed, more than anything else, it was Buchanan’s and Koch’s shared commitment to school privatization at every level that started a collaboration that deepened over the next two decades.<sup>19</sup>

Being an insatiable reader and an acting thinker, Koch was made to partner with a man like Buchanan. His questions at the early Charles Koch Foundation seminars, which built community and



to establish a kind of capitalism purer and less restrained than the world had ever known.<sup>23</sup>

In 1976, over a weekend of discussion as Koch's guest in Vail, Colorado, Rothbard explained to his host how a Lenin-like libertarian strategy might work. The Russian revolutionary had once said of the ranks of the revolutionary party, "Better fewer, but better." To create a sound, disciplined movement, Rothbard explained, preparing a "cadre" must be the top priority. What his admiring biographer, a foot soldier himself, summed up as "the general flakiness and counter-culturalism" of so many libertarians had had its day, Rothbard told Koch. The survivalist-like stocking up on beans and science fiction novels to last years of exile, with backpacks at the ready to rush for the hills if the statist came, the visions of colonizing remote islands or even of other planets: all that had to go. A new seriousness was needed. It was time for the revolutionary cause to orient itself to Middle America.<sup>24</sup>

In a protracted fight to win, it would be crucial to stay on top of "nourishing, maintaining, and extending the libertarian cadre itself," something Koch's bottomless bank accounts would enable.<sup>25</sup> It was not hard to persuade the midwestern multinational capitalist that the many weirdos were not bringing success any closer. Liking what he'd heard, Charles Koch shushed the older advisers he had on retainer and bet on the brash visitor, who seemed so sure of what was to be done.<sup>26</sup> Not long after that, in one of the publications whose creation Rothbard had recommended as organizing tools, Koch wrote that over his own 15 years of active involvement, "our biggest problem has been the shortage of talent." To become "an effective force for social change," the CEO intoned, "we need a movement." And to create a sound, disciplined movement, preparing a "cadre" must be the top priority.<sup>27</sup>

The new urgency called for a think tank to be created to serve as a training and reinforcement institution for the cadre. To lead it, both men had their eyes on a steely fellow already in the ranks: Edward Crane III.<sup>28</sup> Crane had served as a precinct captain for Barry Goldwater in 1964, but he was disgusted by "how quickly Goldwater ran away from the issue of privatizing Social Security." Blam-

ing Goldwater's retreat on his effort to win over the majority of voters (and recoiling, too, from the senator's military adventurism), Crane went on to join the Libertarian Party, which had been summoned into being in a Denver living room in December 1971. Its founders sought a world in which liberty was preserved by

which Rothbard eventually supplied: it would be called the Cato Institute. The name was a wink to insiders: while seeming to gesture toward the *Cato's Letters* of the American Revolution, thus performing an appealing patriotism, it also alluded to Cato the Elder, the Roman leader famed for his declaration that "Carthage

## Playing the long game is his forte.



Charles Koch, Chairman and CEO, Koch Industries. Photo: Kevin Moloney/Fortune Brainstorm TECH via Flickr.

the total absence of government coercion in any form. That entailed the end of public education, Social Security, Medicare, the U.S. Postal Service, minimum wage laws, prohibitions against child labor, foreign aid, the Environmental Protection Agency, prosecution for drug use or voluntary prostitution—and, in time, the end of taxes and government regulations of any kind.<sup>29</sup> And those were just the marquee targets.

Crane was as insistent as Rothbard and Koch about the need for a libertarian revolution against the statist world system of the 20th Century. "The Establishment" had to be overthrown—its conservative wing along with its liberal wing. Both suffered "intellectual bankruptcy," the conservatives for their "militarism" and the liberals for their "false goals of equality." The future belonged to the only "truly radical vision": repudiating state power altogether.<sup>30</sup>

Once Crane agreed to lead the training institute, all that was lacking was a name,

must be destroyed!" For this new Cato's mission was also one of demolition: it sought nothing less than the annihilation of statism in America.<sup>31</sup>☞

From *DEMOCRACY IN CHAINS: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America* by Nancy MacLean, published on June 13, 2017 by Viking, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House, LLC. Copyright © 2017 by Nancy MacLean.

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**Commentary, continued from page 3**

For evangelicals on the outside, faith-based programs have become a means to enter prisons in massive numbers and proselytize a captive audience desperate for a lifeline. On any given day, there are worship services and religious study groups in almost every prison in the U.S. Most are Christian and most require a profession of Christian belief as a prerequisite for joining. Six states have prisons with in-house Baptist seminary programs, where inmates earn a college degree in Christian ministry and are sent as missionaries to other prisons in the same state. Florida has revamped 11 state prisons into faith- and character-based institutions: entire prisons where rehabilitation is supposed to occur through religious practice. Kairos Prison Ministry International, a global Christian prison ministry, offers three-day “Kairos Inside Weekends” for prisoners to form Christian communities in prison.

The first prisons in the U.S. were built on the premise of redemption through religious belief. Quakers and Methodist reformers who first designed penitentiaries in the early 1800s believed that isolation, prayer, and reflection could turn prisoners away from a life of crime. In the colonial era, crimes were seen as sins against God and the community, and transgressors were punished swiftly and publicly by hanging, stockades, or banishment. Quakers and Methodists fervently believed that prisons, modeled around Quaker reflective practices of silence and isolation, were a more humane alternative that would foster redemption in those who had strayed. (Some of these early prisons also inadvertently created the model for solitary confinement out of Quaker principles of solitude.) But while groups like the American Friends Service Committee and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (a network of Black churches focused on social justice) have made ending mass incarceration a priority, they and mainline Protestant groups are not represented inside prisons in even close to the same numbers as conservative evangelical ministries, which number in the thousands.<sup>6</sup>

Today, given the option between a lack of programs and the advantages provided by faith-based groups, large numbers of

prisoners apply to faith-based prisons and programs. In the notoriously harsh Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, for example, prisoners vie to be chosen for college programs run by seminaries affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention that allow them, upon graduation, to be sent as “agents of moral rehabilitation” to other state prisons. The prison is careful to use neutral terms to avoid accusations of violating the Establishment Clause of the Constitution, but the reality is that joining these religious programs is often the only means available for prisoners—most in the program are serving sentences of 20 years to life—to get an education and improve their lot.

For the few non-Christians accepted into the program, the instruction can feel marginalizing. As one Muslim inmate in Texas told me, “I have been here my whole life... What else is there for me to do while I am incarcerated? I cannot work, we do not get paid for working. I cannot go to college, because I do not have the money to pay for it. So, this is the best thing going.”<sup>7</sup>

In 2000, Congress unanimously passed the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), which assured that the religious freedom of those confined in government institutions such as prisons would be protected. Evangelical groups like Prison Fellowship helped draft RLUIPA, but there are no equivalent programs for Muslims or members of other religions. Non-Christian groups still face obstacles at the state level from recalcitrant or hostile chaplains and prison administrations, who tend to identify as Christians themselves.

Yet, despite these troubling patterns, evangelical prison ministries can seem like one of the only voices available to challenge the resurgent law-and-order focus of the Right. Before Jeff Sessions was confirmed as Attorney General, DeRoche published an article on the Fox News website urging Sessions to resist simply warehousing more people and instead focus on rehabilitation and diversionary programs as a matter of public safety and fiscal responsibility.<sup>8</sup>

Sessions instead announced, in a memorandum issued in May, a stunning reversal of the Obama administration’s

efforts to scale back the War on Drugs.<sup>9</sup> Where Obama had called for shortening sentences for nonviolent drug offenses and phasing out the use of private prisons, Sessions, by contrast, instructed prosecutors to pursue drug charges to the most serious degree.

In the wake of this, DeRoche has distinguished between “real criminals” who commit serious crimes and the vast majority of people who he believes should be given a second chance. The moral argument DeRoche makes is directly at odds with the private prison industry, which benefits from prosecutions of low-level drug offenses. One of the largest for-profit prison operators in the country, GEO Group, contributed to the Trump campaign and hired two of Sessions’ aides as lobbyists.<sup>10</sup>

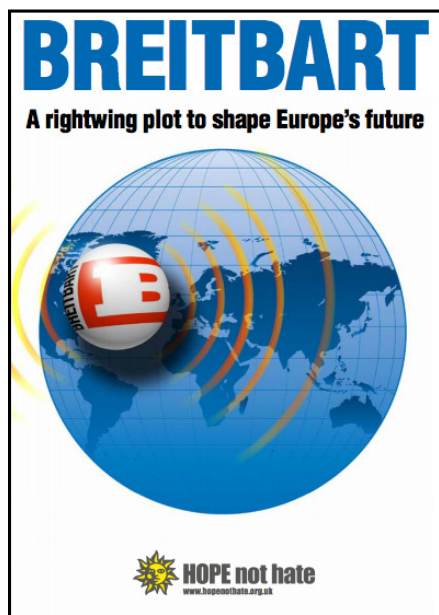
But while DeRoche represents an important ideological shift in thinking about punishment, his broader aims for criminal justice reform aren’t shared by his peers. Prison ministries are primarily concerned with salvaging individual souls rather than questioning the purpose of prisons, and why so many people inside them are serving long sentences. Ministries and seminaries, which have more access to the prison system than most, could have a profound effect on policy were they to publicly address the ethical, social, and economic consequences of mass incarceration on individuals, families, and communities. But as it stands, the question of prison ministries’ motivation may be best summed up by Norris Henderson, director of Voice of the Ex-Offender and an Open Society Foundations Soros Justice fellow, who spent 27 years in Angola. As Henderson put it, “Are you giving people the help they need or the help you think they need?”<sup>11</sup>

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## Breitbart: A Right Wing Plot to Shape Europe's Future

HOPE not hate



In 2017, “fake news” became a national fixation. But what is “fake news”? A distortion of the truth? “Alternative facts”? Outright lies? According to a new report from HOPE not hate, a UK-based organization dedicated to fighting extremism in British politics, concerning Breitbart News Network’s efforts to expand into Europe, fake news is an often deliberately confusing mix of all three.

Breitbart created its London outpost in February 2014, giving it plenty of time to influence the British news cycle before the 2015 election and 2016 Brexit vote. Steve Bannon, former Breitbart CEO and current White House Chief Strategist, has said that he wanted to energize the Eurosceptic movement in the UK and support a “nascent European Tea Party.” In the wake of Brexit, which Breitbart’s London outpost strongly supported, and amid the French and German election campaigns, where right-wing candidates are seeing their highest popularity in decades, Breitbart has sought similar influence and popularity across Europe.

HOPE not hate’s new report frames Breitbart not as a news center, but as a willing and enthusiastic political propagandist for far-right ideas seeking to transform heightened emotions into right-wing support. Breitbart’s content is frequently openly homophobic, sexist, and xenophobic, and asserts that it is bucking establishment norms by publishing politically incorrect information. It doesn’t matter that the information is sometimes not true, as in the case of an article about a supposed attack by Muslim immigrants on a church in Dortmund, Germany, on New Year’s Eve in 2016. The Breitbart

article falsely claimed that Muslim men “launched fireworks at police and set fire to a historic church,” although, according to Dortmund police, the night was quiet with nearly 300 fewer arrests than the previous year. And while some fireworks set a net on the church on fire, it was an accident and extinguished immediately. (The newspaper the article cited as a source, *Ruhr Nachrichten*, claims that their reporting was distorted and used as propaganda.) Breitbart articles are written to reinforce a philosophically consistent narrative and sow distrust of critical information.

Breitbart’s editorial staff see themselves as culture warriors, fighting by controlling the narrative. To that end, they hammer home ideological points by writing repeatedly on similar topics, rarely issue corrections for false assertions, and use algorithms on social media created by Cambridge Analytica—a data analytics firm with ties to Robert Mercer, a financial benefactor of both Donald Trump and Breitbart—that target readers with specific news and opinion pieces.

During the 2015 UK election, Breitbart London aligned itself with the Eurosceptic UKIP party and their leader Nigel Farage to the extent that an employee reported to British conservative magazine *The Spectator*, “We effectively became the UKIP comms office.” Many UKIP officials have written for Breitbart London, according to the HOPE Not hate, “including three leaders, nine MEPs, and multiple spokespeople,” the majority of whom are pro-Farage and anti-immigrant. Bannon’s London protege, Raheem Kassam, joined Farage’s team in 2014 and Kassam helped craft the increasingly nasty UKIP message and style, clearly influenced by the angry and inflammatory tone of Breitbart reporting in the U.S. While this strategy did not lead to electoral victory in 2015—UKIP gained just a single seat in Parliament—it did win UKIP infamy and influence at home and abroad. Following some post-election infighting, in 2016, Breitbart London put the full strength of its data-based propaganda machine behind UKIP’s successful Leave.EU Brexit campaign.

Breitbart London also makes room for international commentary, from figures such as recently defeated Dutch right-wing politician Geert Wilders and U.S. anti-Islam leader Robert Spencer, who runs the organization Jihadwatch.org. One widely-shared listicle published by the site, “Ten Reasons Sweden’s ‘Multicultural Utopia’ is Massively Failing,” perpetuates the ideas that there is an epidemic of immigrant-related violence in Sweden, with “no go zones” where the police are helpless against Muslim immigrant violence, and that there has been an increase in sexual violence directly related to immigration. HOPE not hate investigated the claims and found that Breitbart had distorted the facts beyond recognition, obscuring the true root causes of crime—often discrimination and language and other barriers to employment.

Breitbart London, Hope Not Hate determined, is far less a news publisher than a propaganda outlet. Both the London and U.S. branches of the organization were founded to serve as right-wing weapons in a culture war against feminism, multiculturalism, and tolerance of sexual minorities. Their stories need to be refuted, as their influence continues to grow online and in the White House.

—Jessica Conger-Henry

## Captive Audience, p. 3

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## The Art of Activism

This issue's cover artist, Ashley Lukashevsky, was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii, where she was involved with activism from a young age. Her life took a detour, however, when she attended University of Southern California to pursue a degree in International Relations.

"I spent most of my time at school suppressing my artistic side to make room for my research internships and political science programs," she explained. But the art courses she took toward the end of college drew her back to the creative field. Now, Lukashevsky couldn't be happier with her choice. Intertwining both the personal and political, Lukashevsky's art utilizes illustration and graphic design to create images that have a political message or tell a story. Her work has been featured in *GOOD* magazine and *Broadly*, and accompanied an essay by Dr. Marcia Chatelain, the creator of the #FergusonSyllabus, in *Lenny Letter*. Most recently, Lukashevsky is working with Amplifier, an "art machine for social justice," an experience she said has shown her "the impact that positive propaganda has on public discourse."

She draws inspiration in part from her life experiences, such as being a woman of color on a largely White college campus. Lukashevsky is also inspired by the activism of others. She said, "I am continuously inspired and awed by Black and Brown activists who constantly fight oppression with their bodies and minds." The 2016 presidential election was another major catalyst for Lukashevsky's art. In its immediate aftermath,

she spent five months on an international backpacking trip, turning her "anger, frustration, isolation, and copious amounts of free time" into political art.

Lukashevsky shares her art, some of which utilizes text to emphasize a specific message, through her Instagram account, which with 5,000 followers has brought her work to a broader audience.

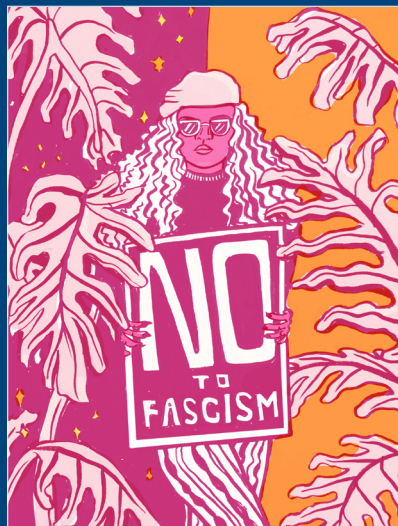
"It makes me so happy to know that perhaps something like my 'sisters not just cisters' print has made a trans sister feel loved and accepted in an environment of non-intersectional feminism," she said.

Although she sees that "art is often overlooked in terms of political impact," Lukashevsky has challenged that oversight, arguing that it's the responsibility of people with artistic skills—whether artists, editorial illustrators, art directors—to "make social justice a priority with the skillset that they have." To that end, she uses her website to offer her services to any organization "working to combat racism, misogyny, and all forms of bigotry."

"I wish I had understood at an earlier age that art and design are vital to social movements, and that there [is] a need for all ranges of the activist spectrum," she said.

Although Lukashevsky took a detour from art for a few years in college, it doesn't seem like she will be changing course again anytime soon. "It's been a long path back to art," she said, "but I could not be happier that I took the leap back into creativity."

—Eve Feldberg



Ashley Lukashevsky, "Anti Fascism," 2017.  
See more at: [www.ashleylukashevsky.com](http://www.ashleylukashevsky.com)

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