

THE HATE MOVEMENT’S GREATEST TARGET: AMERICA’S DISENFRANCHISED YOUTH [604]

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Abstract

In this session, the author and participants will examine the increasingly sophisticated use of technology by hate groups to lure our youth into this violent, racist subculture. The author will review hate group Web sites, including their “Children’s Pages” white power rock bands and the lyrics to their songs, racist video games, and more. The author will examine how these groups target disenfranchised youth and offer them a sense of belonging, power, responsibility and family. Hate groups are one specific type of gang. Hate groups are present throughout the United States. Specific information will be provided on the insignia, symbols, philosophies, and recruitment tools of groups including The Creativity Movement (formerly known as World Church of the Creator), Aryan Nations, National Alliance, National Socialist Movement, Keystone State Skinheads, and other groups. Finally, the author will discuss how mainstream adults can recognize at-risk youth and offer them positive connections and role models.

At-Risk Youth

It is no secret that children are the future of any society. While mainstream America seeks to harness the strengths of our young people for positive and even lofty goals, many groups within the hate movement have set their sites on harnessing the rage and hostility of our disenfranchised youth as a means to their end.

Sadly, many American young people do not have positive, nurturing home lives: their lives are riddled with abuse and neglect. Regardless of economic strata, when parents are more focused on their own needs rather than the needs of their children, the children suffer. Even if the parent is focused on something positive, like volunteering one’s services to a worthwhile charitable organization, the simple fact that the children are left to fend for themselves detracts from the protective factors needed to help our children succeed.

Without strong, positive relationships with a parent or caregiver, including teachers, these children are adrift from mainstream society. They explore many harmful avenues as they look for acceptance and understanding. While many adolescents turn to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs to fill the void in their lives, still countless others are victimized by predators in one way or another. The American hate movement represents one type of predator seeking to control our alienated youth.

The American hate movement has a long history of finding our alienated youth and offering them what they most desire: acceptance. Not only do these groups offer acceptance, but they also offer these unattached teens the things which are missing in their young lives, including a sense of identity/belonging, value, purpose, excitement, alignment with strong leaders, empowerment, answers to difficult questions, camaraderie, protection, and a justification for violence. They express these common themes with the following types of statements to alienated teens:

- We’ll be your family.
- You are valuable.

- We’ll give you responsibilities, prestige, and authority.
- We will protect you.
- God loves us best.
- It’s their fault. . . .
- Therefore, violence is justified.

For the first time in many of their lives, these disenfranchised youth are made to feel like valuable members of their new “family.” They are given duties and are expected to contribute to the goals of the group. Many alienated youth are ready to do anything to earn greater acceptance within the group. Additionally, the opportunity to lash out at mainstream society is a goal readily embraced by youths who have not been accepted by that society. Again, the hate movement preaches that violence against a society which has turned its back on these young people is not only justified, but righteously necessary.

The State of Hate

The American hate movement is less organized today than it once was. Since 1979, Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center have legally crippled many white supremacists groups including the Ku Klux Klan and the Aryan Nations. (<http://www.splcenter.org/legal/landmark/hate.jsp>) Additionally, the deaths of William Pierce, founder of the National Alliance, and Richard Butler, founder of the Aryan Nations, rocked the foundations of the hate movement. The arrest and subsequent conviction of Matthew Hale, *Pontifex Maximus* (“highest priest”) of the Creativity Movement, formerly known as the World Church of the Creator, added to the confusion and disarray of the hate movement. Throw in the fact that many National Alliance members did not accept Eric Glibe as William Pierce’s successor to lead the group, and the result is an almost chaotic, unorganized mess.

This is not to say that there are no successful, growing groups within the American hate movement. Unfortunately, while the long-standing groups mentioned above have seen a large decline in their memberships and their influence, other groups are rising in both of these key areas. These emerging groups are younger and more focused on catering to the anger and hostility seething in the angry young men and women they target.

The fastest growing groups in today’s American hate movement have something in common—a core affiliation to Nazi Germany. The National Socialist Movement (NSM), the fastest growing neo-Nazi group in America, works diligently to cultivate the growing hatred and anger brewing in our alienated youth. NSM members wear “uniforms” that are extremely reminiscent of Nazi “Brownshirt” uniforms, including the swastika arm band. They are very regimented and use military rank to create order in their world. Today, NSM has chapters throughout the country.

Unlike the disciplined lifestyle of NSM, skinhead groups are another type of neo-Nazi group that is gaining in number and popularity. Skinheads are the younger, more violent edge of the American hate movement. Skinhead groups cater to the teens and twenties crowd, with some hanging on into their thirties. They tend to be tattooed, with shaved heads or sporting super short, military style cuts. They’re often decked out in their “uniform” of choice—a white t-shirt or t-shirt of a white power rock band, jeans, suspenders and combat boots, almost always of the Doc Marten variety. Suspenders and bootlaces tend to be color-matched to signify the wearer’s rank within his crew.

White Power Rock

Skinheads are notorious for listening to white power rock music and for drinking and fighting. In fact, white power rock music is arguably the best weapon in the hate movement’s arsenal as it targets American youth.

The music is of the heavy metal genre, with driving beats, heavily laden with electric guitars. The vocals are screamed rather than sung, and the lyrics themselves preach chaos and mayhem while they spew undisguised hatred, designed to pump the listener up into a frenzy of racial awareness.

White power rock, also known as “Oi!” music, is big business, with yearly sales around the one million dollar mark. The leading producers of white power music are Resistance Records, Tight Rope Records, Free Your Mind Productions, Tri-State Terror, Mice Trap Records, and Imperium Records. The names of the groups on these record labels are transparent with regard to the message their music preaches. Some of the more popular groups are H8 Machine, Bully Boys, Extreme Hatred, Rahowa (an acronym for Racial Holy War), Angry Aryans, Aggravated Assault, Berserkr, and Brutal Attack.

The lyrics of white power songs are similarly transparent in their glorification of “Aryan purity” and justification of violence as a means to “cleanse” America. An excerpt of the song, “Third Reich” by the band Rahowa is a clear example of the hatred and violence that pervades the white power rock genre.

Editor’s note: The author might recite some controversial lyrics from Rahowa. At press time, the publisher had not received reprint permission from the owner of the sound mark to print the lyrics here.

It is not possible to misinterpret the mindset of the members of Rahowa. When songs like this are performed at live events, the crowd engages in "mosh pit" activity, where participants slam into each other to show their appreciation to the band and to “get in the spirit” of the music. Occasionally, true violence erupts at these racist rock concerts and police must be called to the scene. However, for the most part, the concert goes rarely turn on each other because of the sense of camaraderie and the feeling that they are united against “the enemy” and are Aryan brothers and sisters.

In the fall of 2004, Panzerfaust Records, now defunct, launched the “Project Schoolyard” campaign to distribute free white power rock CDs to schools across America. Panzerfaust planned to distribute 100,000 copies of a CD sampler featuring 20 songs by popular white power artists. The game plan was to have volunteers from various hate groups across the country hand out these free CDs to students at school activities like dances and sporting events. According to Panzerfaust, the target audience for this free music was students in middle and high school with this free music. By early 2005, the Anti-Defamation League reported that CDs had been distributed in “Alaska, California, Florida, Missouri, Ohio, and West Virginia.”

The hate movement knows that American teens historically have enjoyed listening to music that their parents find distasteful. They are capitalizing on this usually innocuous form of teenage rebellion and are turning kids onto their vile and repugnant message of racial hatred and give their listeners a justification for violence against persons of color, members of the Jewish faith, and immigrants, to name a few.

Racist Video and Internet Games

Another way the hate movement seeks to lure new teenage recruits into their fold is through the use of video games. Resistance Records, was one of the first white supremacist groups to exploit this genre of entertainment. In January of 2002, they launched a video game entitled *Ethnic Cleansing*. This game is a first-person shooter game, similar to the popular video game *Doom*. Unlike *Doom* and other mainstream shooter games, the protagonist in *Ethnic Intimidation* is either a skinhead or a Klansman who earns points for killing people of color and Jews as he maneuvers through the various levels.

Resistance Records next planned to release *Turner Diaries: The Game*, which was based on *The Turner Diaries*, written under a pseudonym by William Pierce, founder of the National Alliance. The premise of *The Turner Diaries* depicts a “lone wolf” named Ed Turner, who uses a truck bomb to blow up a federal building in protest. Turner engages in other activities as well as he enters into a global racial holy war in which white “Aryans” conquer all non-whites and Jews. This book is considered to be one of the most significant writings within the hate movement. It has been reported that *The Turner Diaries* was very influential in Timothy McVeigh’s 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

Resistance Records then announced plans to release the game *White Law*, which is another first-person shooter video game. In *White Law*, the protagonist is a police officer who earns points for shooting African Americans and other people of color. If the gamer receives a high enough score, he or she is able to play a “bonus round” in which the objective is to kill Jews.

These National Alliance games are available online, through direct mail sales, and at racist concert events. These games are not available for sale or rent at the average store across America. In order to find these games, one must know where to look. Most people don’t even realize that games like this exist, so for the most part, they have not had a widespread impact as a recruitment tool. That is not to say, however, that there is no value to these games as a way to interest young people in the hate movement. In fact, the opposite is true. Because the games have decent graphic quality, they appeal to young gamers. Additionally, the theme of the games is taboo, which often enhances its attraction to teens who are looking for ways to rebel against their parents and society.

Another game that is currently very popular is one called *Border Patrol*. This game was first created in 2002 and is free to access on the Internet. Many racist sites include links to the game. The hate movement is trying to cash in on the recent controversy over immigration issues by attempting to polarize Americans against immigrants. *Border Patrol* depicts persons of Mexican heritage with very degrading and demeaning caricatures. The object of *Border Patrol*, like the other games mentioned, is to shoot and kill these caricatures as they try to illegally enter the United States.

One other videogame that raises concern is *Manhunt*, produced by Rockstar Games, a mainstream company that also produced the wildly popular *Grand Theft Auto* series. This extremely violent and graphic game which was released in November of 2003 has been banned or restricted in several countries around the globe, including New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom, and The Republic of Ireland. Within the game, there are five gangs, one of which is called, “The Skinz.” These characters wear rebel battle flag masks and clothing suggestive of the skinhead lifestyle.

While the games created and distributed by Resistance Records and other hate groups are more blatant in their hatred of non-white people, *Manhunt* and *Border Patrol* are arguably more dangerous because they are somewhat subtle in the delivery of their message and in doing so, are influencing the impressionable teens playing the games by making this type of violence seem like “fun.” Additionally, because *Border Patrol* is available free of charge on the Internet and *Manhunt* is available for rent or purchase at most stores throughout America, they are much more likely to end up in the hands of the average teenager than the games that were created and distributed by hate groups.

Hate on the Web

The most wide-reaching recruitment tool in the arsenal of the hate movement is the Internet. While the Internet is responsible for bringing people together and allowing searchers to quickly find facts and information on every conceivable topic, it has also allowed hate groups to reach literally thousands of people with their message of hatred and violence. This ability to reach into the homes of everyone who has Internet

access is a scary situation. In the past, in order to “hear” the propaganda of the hate movement, one would have to attend a public or private meeting of the group. Such is no longer the case, because one can become an “armchair” member of these groups without ever leaving the privacy of the home.

Each year the number of racist sites on the Internet grows. In 1995, the only racist Website was the one belonging to Stormfront, which billed itself as an umbrella site for various racist groups. In just 10 years, that number increased to 524 racist sites, as reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center’s *Intelligence Report*. In addition to these sites, if we include chatrooms and bulletin boards, there are well over 2,500 portals to hate on the World Wide Web. These sites provide not just the philosophy of each group but include contact information for people who can follow up with more information. The sites almost always include information about upcoming events. Additionally, many of these sites include special pages for children and teens which feature games and watered down information designed to attract and interest young people.

The Stormfront Website has a special children’s page which is purported to have been created by and is being maintained by a teenager named Derek, who invites white visitors to “take back our freedom and win for all to see our heritage in its greatest glory.”

The NSM has created a special subgroup, along with its own Webpage, just for young people—the Viking Youth Corps (VYC). This subgroup is designed to attract teenagers into the neo-Nazi philosophy of NSM. VYC was created to teach the young members about “military skills, national socialist theory and practice, the history of the white race and, in general, how to become ‘a more effective warrior.’”

Sites that specifically target young people are of obvious concern. However, of equal concern is the fact that many young people “surf the net” on a regular basis, looking for new sites to visit. Without proper Web content filters in place, youngsters can stumble onto hate group sites, Holocaust denial sites, and other racist chatrooms and bulletin boards which populate the Internet. In a worst-case scenario, students who are researching the Holocaust or the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for school assignments may be routed to racist sites by unfiltered search engines. There they will be indoctrinated with a very skewed and bigoted version of “history” including the liberal use of racial epithets and slurs.

Educators and those who work with young people must be cognizant of the threat posed by the hate movement as it specifically targets at-risk youth for recruitment into its folds. It is an alarming fact that many American young people are “latch-key kids” who are able to access the Internet without adult supervision. These kids may be stumbling across or purposely visiting one of the hundreds of hate sites on the Internet. They and others who lack adult supervision or meaningful relationships with adults may be listening to white power bands or playing racist Web games or videogames.

Next Steps

By educating ourselves to the realities of how these groups are targeting our youth, we will be able to address their influence. Thankfully, there are organizations that are already working to counteract the influence of hate, whether they arise from an organized hate group or from the fears, biases, prejudices, and stereotypes of everyday folks. Two groups that have expended considerable time, money and effort in the fight against racism and bigotry are the Anti-Defamation League (<http://www.adl.org>) and the Southern Poverty Law Center (<http://www.splcenter.org>). Both Websites feature searchable databases on various hate groups, racist rock bands, etc. Additionally, they feature information for activities and lessons about tolerance and diversity.

Other sites which contain helpful information include, but are not limited to

- The Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Museum of Tolerance (<http://www.museumoftolerance.com>)

- The Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence (<http://www.preventinghate.org>)
- The Pennsylvania Interagency Task Force on Civil Tension (<http://www.stopbias.org>)

Finally, we must make a decision to actively speak out against stereotypes and bigotry. Silence is the welcome mat for hate. When we choose to be silent in the face of bigotry, we give tacit permission for racism and bigotry to exist and to escalate. We must face the fact that everything that we permit, we promote. By sitting on the fence and not taking a stand against hatred, we silently align ourselves with the racists and bigots who scream their venom.

Edmund Burke, a British statesman and philosopher, who lived from 1729 to 1797, once said, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” This statement is as true today as when he said it more than 200 years ago. Only by arming ourselves with knowledge and then using that knowledge to challenge racism and bigotry will we be able to counteract the influence of hate in our society.

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