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THE KIDS WERE ALT-RIGHT: RADICAL RIGHT YOUTH ACTIVISM AND THE ORIGINS OF THE WHITE POWER MOVEMENT, 1960-1980

Austin Zinkle

University of Kentucky, austinczinkle@gmail.com

Author ORCID Identifier:

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0237-6999>

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Austin Zinkle, Student

Dr. Anastasia Curwood, Major Professor

Hilary J. Jones, Director of Graduate Studies

THE KIDS WERE ALT-RIGHT:
RADICAL RIGHT YOUTH ACTIVISM AND THE ORIGINS OF THE WHITE
POWER MOVEMENT, 1960-1980

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By
Austin Chase Zinkle
Lexington, Kentucky
Director: Dr. Anastasia Curwood, Professor of History
Lexington, Kentucky
2023

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<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0237-6999>

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE KIDS WERE ALT-RIGHT: RADICAL RIGHT YOUTH ACTIVISM AND THE ORIGINS OF THE WHITE POWER MOVEMENT, 1960-1980

This dissertation explores the young people—primarily young men—involved and weaponized within the radical racist Right during the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. This project argues that young people were an active bedrock of support within racist and antisemitic organizations such as the American Nazi Party, the National Alliance, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and others, and created a unique coalition that ultimately developed into a revolutionary racist Right and eventual white power movement by the 1980s. This dissertation makes a significant intervention in scholarship on the radical Right's development over the past sixty years and serves as a historical foundation and origin for the youth-driven and internet dwelling alt-right and right-wing militias in the twenty-first century. This project reorients the scholarly lens of the genesis of the white power movement to decades prior to the militia movements of the 1980s, in dialogue with the social movements of the New Left and with attention to American youth as drivers of the movement. This analysis purposefully uses radical racist Right instead of far Right to describe a political identity based in a racist and antisemitic movement to dismantle liberal democracy, and demonstrates how youth involvement within the radical racist Right made up a significant counterculture movement of their own.

The Kids Were Alt-Right argues that youth activism within the radical racist Right began—in part—as a cooptation to leftist social movement organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), reappropriated leftist movement methods, organizational framework, and political language, but eventually metastasized as a unique revolutionary coalition. The deployment of youth culture by adult leadership, detailed primarily as racist jokes and humor, produced a unique youth identity that gravitated young people to these organizations. By the 1970s, the youth identity embraced a politics of violent rebellion and the youth dominated radical racist Right transitioned into the revolutionary racist Right. Using personal correspondence, organizational publications, newspapers, and extensive files from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, this dissertation chronologically examines the youth involved within radical racist Right organizations and the adult leadership that incorporated and mobilized young people and a youth identity for their own political purposes. Beginning in 1960 with the formation of Young Americans for Freedom as a reactionary conservative student movement—and whose membership later moved towards more openly racist and antisemitic organizations, *The Kids Were Alt-*

Right chronicles the youth and youth identities within the adult-led radical racist Right organizations like the American Nazi Party and the National Youth Alliance, the youth leadership in the 1970s revolutionary racist Right, and culminates in the paramilitary alliance that ignited in bloodshed at the Greensboro massacre in 1979 and the formation of a violent white power movement.

KEYWORDS: White Power, Neo-Nazism, Youth, Racism, United States Far Right,
United States Social Movements

Austin Chase Zinkle

07/14/2023

Date

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POWER MOVEMENT, 1960-1980

By
Austin Chase Zinkle

Anastasia Curwood

Director of Dissertation

Hilary J. Jones

Director of Graduate Studies

07/14/2023

Date

DEDICATION

For my parents, who taught me to choose love over hate and that we all have a responsibility to do what is right.

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unhesitatingly said, “yes.” The second instance, and much more significant, was during my PhD coursework when I asked her if I could deviate away from NAACP Youth Councils as a dissertation topic to instead research white supremacist youth. She encouraged me to pursue this interest and remained by my side through such a wild subject change. She built me up through every stage of this project and remains the chief champion of my work and abilities. I appreciate her time to meet for brainstorming sessions and working with me through chapter drafts. Her comments and detailed edits throughout the many stages of this project made this work so much better. I feel lucky to have a brilliant scholar and student advocate as a mentor and am forever indebted to her.

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am so lucky to have them in my life. Mom and Dad, you are my idols and the standard by which I measure everything in my life. This dissertation is dedicated to you.

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Introduction

In August 2017, a coalition of white supremacists, neo-Nazis, neo-Confederates, Ku Klux Klansmen, and others within the American far Right descended upon Charlottesville, Virginia.¹ According to the organizers, the “Unite the Right” rally was put together to both protest the decision of the Charlottesville City Council to remove a memorial for Robert E. Lee from Emancipation Park public spaces and to serve as an in-person organizing space away from the internet for the gathering and promotion of white supremacist, white nationalist, neo-fascist, and other variations of the White Power movement. On the night of August 11, brandishing flaming tiki torches, a large procession marched through the campus of the University of Virginia chanting “White Lives Matter” and “Jews will not replace us,” sometimes incorrectly reported as “*You* will not replace us.”² Difficult to ignore was the striking amount of young people—many dressed in a clean uniform of white polo shirts and khaki slacks—that made up a significant visual body of the demonstrators in Charlottesville, some of which were later

¹ In this dissertation, political identities like “the Right” or Right-wing, when used as a noun, are capitalized unless the terms are specifically not capitalized in quoted materials. The term “far Right” is often ambiguously defined in scholarship to include individuals, organizations, and identities that involve, but are not necessarily limited to, racist, antisemitic, sexist, antidemocratic, and conspiratorial elements within their communities and politics. The broadness of the term “far Right” can be helpful as a catch-all for all related positions, or restrictive due to its broad spectrum of ideologies. Sociologist Cynthia Miller-Idriss defines “far Right” as a political identity of overlapping categories: “antigovernment and antidemocratic practices and ideas, exclusionary beliefs, existential threats and conspiracies, and apocalyptic fantasies.” See Cynthia Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland: The New Global Far Right*, New edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020); *Ibid.*, 4-19. As further elaborated on in the *terminology* section of this introduction, I use “radical racist Right” throughout this dissertation in a purposeful distinction from “far Right.”

² “White Nationalists Rally at University of Virginia,” BBC News, August 12, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-40909547>.

identified by media outlets and social media as university students.³ The following afternoon on August 12, tensions intensified between “Unite the Right” marchers and counter-demonstrators who gathered in downtown Charlottesville to push against the white supremacists. Twenty-year-old James Fields escalated the violence and purposefully drove his car as a battering ram into a crowd of counter-demonstrators, injuring nineteen and killing one, Heather Heyer. Fields’ act of violence in defense of white supremacy was not a surprise to those who knew him. Radicalized at a young age, Fields was fascinated with Adolf Hitler, according to former high school classmates and teachers, and was considered the “Nazi” of his school in Union, Kentucky.⁴

Fields’ murder of Heyer is but one example of a series of violent and deadly attacks in the last decade that were perpetrated by young men engaged within the spectrum of White Power politics. Twenty-two year old Elliot Rodger killed six people and injured fourteen others in Isla Vista, California in 2014 after declaring in a misogynistic video manifesto his frustration over personal relationship rejection, college women—whom he referred to as “stuck-up, blond sluts,”—and interracial couples in general; Dylann Roof’s white supremacist and neo-Confederate attack on a predominantly African American church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015 was

³ Alyssa Newcomb, “Twitter Users Are Outing Charlottesville Protestors,” NBC News, August 14, 2017, <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/twitter-users-are-outing-charlottesville-protesters-n792501>.

⁴ James Pilcher, “Charlottesville suspect’s beliefs were ‘along the party lines of the neo-Nazi movement,’ ex-teacher says,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 13, 2017, <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/local/northern-ky/2017/08/13/charlottesville-suspects-beliefs-were-along-party-lines-neo-nazi-movement-ex-teacher-says/563139001/>; Alexa Liautaud, “Charlottesville suspect was known as ‘the Nazi’ of his high school,” Vice News, August 15, 2017, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/kzgxmw/charlottesville-attack-james-alex-field-jr>.

confessed as an attempt to ignite a race war; twenty-one year old William Edward Atchison posed as a student to enter Aztec High School in Aztec, New Mexico and killed two non-white students in December 2017; attacks in 2018 on faith-institutions by twenty-eight year old Brenton Tarrant against mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand and nineteen year old John Earnest against a synagogue in Poway, California were specifically motivated by Christian nationalism, anti-immigrant, and antisemitic beliefs.⁵ Recently, the pattern of young and violent men committing mass killings continues to intertwine with white supremacy. The 2019 mass shooting by twenty-one-year-old Patrick Crusius in an El Paso Walmart massacred twenty-three people, and claimed the attack was a response to “the Hispanic invasion of Texas.”⁶ In 2022, a shooting in a Buffalo, New York by eighteen-year-old Payton Gendron targeted a supermarket in a predominantly Black neighborhood, killing ten, and a shooting at a LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado Springs, Colorado by twenty-two-year-old Anderson Aldrich murdered five people and injured twenty-five others.⁷ These continuing incidents were motivated by,

⁵ Keegan Hankes and Alex Amend, “The Alt-Right is Killing People,” Southern Poverty Law Center, February 5, 2018, <https://www.splcenter.org/20180205/alt-right-killing-people>.

⁶ Robert Moore, “Man Who Killed 23 at El Paso Walmart Pleads Guilty to Hate Crimes,” *The Texas Tribune*, February 8, 2023.

⁷ “FBI director: Buffalo Shooting an ‘Act of Racially Motivated Violent Extremism’,” *Axios*, May 15, 2022, <https://www.axios.com/2022/05/14/buffalo-shooting-tops-supermarket>; Ivana Saric, “What We Know About the Club Q Shooting That Killed 5,” *Axios*, November 21, 2022, <https://www.axios.com/2022/11/20/colorado-springs-shooting-lgbtq-club-q>; Of note, Aldrich’s attorney later identified their client as non-binary and asked to use they/they pronouns. Separate comments from a former friend indicated that Aldrich perhaps did not identify as non-binary prior to the Colorado Springs shooting. This calls into question if the non-binary identification was used as a legal defense against a hate crime charge or even if Aldrich believed it was funny or ironic. See Jo Yurcaba, “Why Extremism Experts Say It’s Worth Discussing the Colorado Shooting Suspect’s Pronouns,” *NBC News*, December 10, 2022,

according to the shooters’ manifestos, earlier mass-murders against non-white people, internet radicalization to commit acts of violent hate, and white supremacist conspiracy theories such as the “Great Replacement,” a conspiracy that white populations are being racially destroyed and culturally “replaced” by non-white people, sometimes described by the conspiracy theorists as “invaders.”⁸

These incidents are not lone wolf activities, but part of an organized and mass movement that targets young people—often young men—as a means of advancing antisemitic, sexist, misogynist, white separatist, and white supremacist ideologies, among others. This organized cohort of young, internet dwelling white supremacists, is dubbed the Alt-Right—or *Alternative Right*—by organization members.⁹ Neo-Nazi Richard Spencer, a former PhD student in history at Duke University before becoming a prominent white supremacist, used the term Alt-Right as early as 2008, before the term became associated with the online radical racist Right. Alt-Right appeared in literature and meeting spaces associate with the white power movement, and was even used as the hashtag #altright by white supremacists on social media platforms like Twitter in 2015 and 2016. Alt-Right members often organized within internet chat rooms or message boards such as 4chan or 8kun, and other online spaces that offered anonymity and community for white identity politics These youth-driven communities—including some

<https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/extremism-experts-say-discussing-colorado-shooting-suspects-pronouns-rcna58969>.

⁸ “Murder and Extremism in the United States,” Center on Extremism, Anti-Defamation League, February 22, 2023, <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/murder-and-extremism-united-states-2022>; "Online radicalization led a white supremacist to target African-Americans," *The Economist*, May 19, 2022, <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2022/05/19/online-radicalisation-led-a-white-supremacist-to-target-african-americans>.

⁹ Keegan Hankes and Alex Amend, “The Alt-Right is Killing People.”

organized groups such as the Proud Boys, Boogaloo Boys, and Groypers—employ racist, antisemitic, misogynistic, and other forms of violent fantasies in the form of jokes, “trolling,” and other types of internet meme humor.¹⁰

Yet, this is not a twenty-first century phenomenon. Much of the structure of the Alt-Right and the larger White Power movement originates in a larger history of White Power activists incorporating young people into politics of hate and revolution. Despite the growth of academic and investigative literature on American Right-wing movements over the last thirty years, the narrative of youth and young people’s connections to the origins of the white power movement remains understudied. Long before social media platforms and internet message boards, members of the American far Right recruited, mobilized, and expended young people into a cause of hate—and ultimately violence, and employed similar activities associated with the twenty-first century Alt-Right with jokes and humor.

Looking back at the history of White Power, I argue that that young people had long been active within this social movement. Almost fifty years prior to the 2017 “Unite the Right” rally, an equally significant moment occurred in and around Chicago, Illinois. Chicago was the location Martin Luther King, Jr. singled out as the pressure point for his open housing drive in Illinois during the summer of 1966. In Chicago’s Marquette Park and in Cicero, Illinois—a suburb just southwest of the city—young people greeted civil rights marchers with taunts of racist slurs, rocks, and Nazi paraphernalia, including signs

¹⁰ Definitions for *Alt-Right*, like far Right, are not always consistent or clear, but the Alt-Right community generally contains elements best associated with online white power politics. For definitions, recent background, and further analysis of the Alt-Right, see George Hawley, *The Alt-Right: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

displaying swastikas and the phrase “white power.” George Lincoln Rockwell of the American Nazi Party—who in years prior had barely mustered rallies numbering a few dozen participants—took credit for the protest that saw as many as one thousand angry white people—“consisting of mostly teenagers” according to the *New York Times*—yelling and assaulting King and his supporters over a three-day period.¹¹

The American Nazi Party’s appearance in and around Chicago in August 1966 has been assigned limited significance by scholars of American Right-wing movements and twentieth century United States history. This event—if covered at all—is referenced in scholarship as an illustration of racist massive resistance to the civil rights era during the movement’s move outside of the Deep South following the 1965 Voting Rights Act, or sequestered to narratives about the Chicago Freedom Movement. In scholarship on the American Right, coverage of the Chicago march is more common, but the specific young people involved in the crowds—as well as the two young men involved in its planning—is not emphasized. This top-down analysis of white supremacist activities in the 1960s obscures the young people who connected organizations and methods. The demonstration by neo-Nazi and other white supremacist forces in the Chicago area in 1966 demonstrates a mobilization of youth-centered activism within the radical racist Right and, as I will demonstrate, was a foundational moment for the future white power movement.¹²

¹¹ Gene Roberts, “Whites in Chicago Mob Negro March: Police Fire Weapons in Air to Protect Housing Rally in Segregated District; Chicago Whites Mob a Negro March,” *New York Times*, Aug 08, 1966, 1; Quotation within Sydney H Schanberg, “Police in Chicago Clash with Whites After 3 Marches: Chicago Whites and Police Clash,” *New York Times*, Aug 15, 1966, 1

¹² For further scholarship that references King’s Chicago open-housing march and the violence in Cicero, see Taylor Branch, *At Canaan’s Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-1968* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006). For reading on the Chicago Freedom Movement, see Ed. Mary Lou Finley, Bernard LaFayette, James R. Ralph, and Pam Smith,

The Chicago events show that lurking behind the leftward social change of the 1960s was a growing consolidation of racist, antisemitic, white supremacist, and neo-Nazi activists that embodied organized Right-wing radicalism. King's open housing drive was part of his continuing participation in the larger civil rights movement, which, by 1966, transitioned from combating Jim Crow to battling economic inequality. In the same year, anti-war sentiment grew on university campuses and across the country to protest the United States' actions in Vietnam; Muhammad Ali's defiant statement, "I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong," positioned draft critiques with conversations about American racism and imperialism abroad; twenty eight women, including major voices from the women's liberation movement such as Betty Friedan, Kathryn F. Clarenbach, and Pauli Murray, founded the National Organization for Women to end sex discrimination and push the federal government to better enforce equal employment opportunities from the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Within a few years, newcomers such as gay liberation movements and environmental movements added to the list of social activism of the decade.¹³ Yet, it might seem paradoxical that the same political era that birthed a

The Chicago Freedom Movement: Martin Luther King Jr. and Civil Rights Activism in the North (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016); Robert B. McKersie, *A Decisive Decade: An Insider's View of the Chicago Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013). For Chicago 1966 from the perspective of Right-wing movements, see Frederick J. Simonelli, *American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

¹³ Charles Tilly and Lesley J. Wood, Lesley J. *Social Movements: 1768-2012, 3rd Edition* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2009); Colin Barker, "Some Reflections on Student Movements of the 1960s and Early 1970s," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, Issue 81, June 2008, p.43-91; Gerald J. DeGroot, *Student Protest: The Sixties and After*, (1998; reis. New York: Routledge, 2014).

massive expansion of democratic rights also seeded a radical racist movement, but in fact the two advanced in tandem.

To understand the impact of 1960s social movements, it is vital to include conservative and Right-wing groups: as antagonists to New Left social movements of the 1960s and 1970s and as organizers of their own social and political activism. While progressive energy from the New Left continued through the end of the 1960s in congressional majorities in the House of Representatives, state and local levels of politics, and ongoing social activism across the United States, Right-wing campaigns remained significant in their grounds from the margins of the public consciousness to the mainstream. In national politics, the liberal hour of the 1960s experienced a sudden pause with the 1968 election of “law and order” candidate Richard Nixon. Embraced by the Republican Party, practices such as the Southern Strategy reorganized the American South towards the new conservative wing of the GOP.¹⁴

Without accounting for the growth in political organizing on the right, the aftermath of the 1960s remains an ahistorical puzzle. Scholars have thus turned their attention to the exploration of Nixon’s success in the 1968 election as a continuation of an incremental, but persistent, growth of conservative political action within American political parties, from party leaders to political candidates, as well as multiple arenas of American society at large. The historiography of American conservatism is clear that conservative politics and policy positions have a steady history of consistent mobilization

¹⁴ Mary C Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995).

prior to their nationwide victories in the 1960s. Prior to the 1960s, conservative language of individual liberty, limited government intervention in a free market economy, and general de-regulation from the federal government were terms that generally brought together a coalition of Protestant Christians, anti-New Deal advocates, segregationists, and anti-Communists. These coalitions were not isolated to any particular party, but conservative mobilization did begin to grow as a caucus within the Republican Party as an opposition to Franklin Roosevelt's administration and policies, continuing through a rejection of government expansion of the welfare state under Lyndon Johnson's administration.

Much of the historical literature dealing with American conservatism in the post-war twentieth century argues that the 1964 Goldwater campaign was a political crossroads, with recent analysis arguing the landslide Goldwater defeat was the most important election loss in American presidential history. His campaign, with platforms focused on states' rights and the opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Johnson's Great Society programs, initiated a steady migration of voting patterns from southern conservatives out of the Democratic Party and into the Republican Party, a visible emergence of political conservatism on a national stage. Following Goldwater's failed run for the President, conservative politicians in national politics discovered new ways to rebrand themselves to groups angered by the social and cultural transformations in the United States. The failure of Goldwater revealed to conservative politicians a winning playbook, which resulted in social conservatives gaining ground in local, gubernatorial,

and congressional elections, the most famous of these wins being Ronald Reagan in California.¹⁵

However, the Right-wing influence in major American politics is not the complete story. Conservative energy and activism were never isolated to the presidential campaigns of Nixon or Goldwater, or to electoral politics of the Republican Party at large. This dissertation builds upon the work of historians who analyze Right wing social movements and American conservatism in political activism. But it also engages the growing body of literature that examines organizations and political activism in the United States far Right. By reframing the lens of study away from mainstream conservative action, this project exposes the obscure, and often misrepresented, radical activism on the Right that served as a unique counter to the Black Freedom Struggle and other successful New Left social movements.

I argue that, while often associated as participants of the political “fringe,” activists and groups classified as *far Right* in the 1960s and 1970s were an important continuation of a violent legacy into a new generation. Antisemites, anti-Communists, and violent terrorist groups, including segregationist-aligned groups like the Ku Klux Klan and Citizens’ Councils of America, and neo-Nazi and explicitly white supremacist groups like the American Nazi Party (ANP), the National Socialist White People’s Party

¹⁵ Despite his overwhelming electoral defeat to Lyndon Johnson in 1964, Goldwater still carried five Deep South states, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina, a first for the Republican Party, along with his home state of Arizona. For further reading on Goldwater, the 1964 election, and his connection to the rise of conservatism, see Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties*; Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001); Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); Gary Donaldson, *Liberalism’s Last Hurrah: The Presidential Campaign of 1964* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003).

(NSWPP), and National Alliance, intimidated religious, political, and racial minorities in an attempt to push back against progressive change in the United States. Furthermore, youth activism associated with the far Right during and after the classic civil rights era, as well as conservative youth in a broader sense, is dramatically understudied by historians and social scientists, in comparison to the literature on youth and the rise of the New Left.¹⁶ Young people within white supremacist and neo-Nazi operations made up a significantly understudied coalition, one that should be recognized as both a 1960s social movement and an equal part of the counterculture revolution.

Historiography

A study of radical racist Right youth considerably improves historical understandings of youth social activism, conservative political organizing, and even broader understandings of the history of American political and social change during the twentieth century. This project expands on previous youth-related scholarship and contributes to a larger understanding of the role young people and youth related to organizing in the radical racist Right and the development of a white power movement. In doing so, I build upon an intersecting historiography of conservatism, youth, and United States social movements.

In the decades following the end of the counterculture, historians mistakenly assessed that the 1960s should be singularly identified in scholarly and popular literature

¹⁶ For reading on a civil rights era instead of a singular movement, see Steven F. Lawson, “Freedom Then, Freedom Now: The Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 96, Issue 2, April 1991, 456–471; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall. “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 91, No. 4, March 2005, 1233–63.

as the liberal consensus that birthed such progressive government programs such as the Great Society, civil rights legislation, and second-wave feminism.¹⁷ These scholars correctly asserted that the creation of the New Left coalition was a foundational turning point in American society and politics during the decade. More recent scholars have discovered that, while it is true that the 1960s are a fertile decade for studies on the New Left, more researchers need to address and reinterpret the historical narrative of the period as the birthplace of the New Right and conservative extremism.

Generally, mid-to-late-century scholarship on American conservatism framed conservatism as either a politics of upholding tradition or a disjointed political identity, often downplaying the racist and nativist elements in the movement as extreme outliers to the political mainstream. Political scientist Samuel Huntington's 1957 essay, "Conservatism as an Ideology," echoes much of British philosopher Edmund Burke's eighteenth-century criticism of the French Revolution as a threat to the Church and the Monarchy's ability to preserve political and social order. Huntington concluded that American conservatism is a "situational ideology" that rises up at different moments when individuals want to defend historical institutions—such as religion, the family, or government hierarchies—and preserve the status quo.¹⁸ George H. Nash's 1976 history of

¹⁷ Examples of such literature include Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980); Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1984); Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-65* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988); Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

¹⁸ Edmund Burke was an eighteenth-century political theorist and is regarded as a philosophical founder of conservatism. See Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (orig. 1790). Samuel Huntington, "Conservatism as an Ideology," *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 51, no. 2 (June 1957), 454–73.

intellectual conservatism, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, argued that American conservatism, unlike European conservatism, was made up of three elements: libertarians, anti-communists, and “traditionalists,” defined by Nash as people who believe in order and a divinely established hierarchy of society. After World War II, Nash argues, these three elements merged as a singular political movement to confront their ideological opponents: secular communists. Sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset echoed Nash’s conclusions that American conservatism was distinct, but pushed the libertarian element further. In his 1989 article, “Liberalism, Conservatism, and Americanism,” Lipset postulated that American conservatives, as well as even American socialists and communists, are all different shades of “classical liberalism” that want to establish their own view of freedom and liberty in society.¹⁹ While instrumental works in the development of intellectual conservatism, Huntington, Nash, and Lipset are too distracted by a Cold War framework of American politics and significantly discount race and racism’s connection to the American Right, significantly limiting explanations for the far Right.

Some twentieth century scholarship acknowledged the illiberal elements that we define today as the far Right. Seymour Lipset, over thirty years prior to his “Liberalism, Conservatism, and Americanism” article, described anti-democratic and extremist elements in American politics, such as the Know-Nothing Party and the Ku Klux Klan, as the “radical right,” in his 1955 article “The Radical Right: A Problem for American Democracy.” Separate from his defined “moderate conservatives” in the American Right,

¹⁹ George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, (New York: Basic Books, 1976); Seymour Martin Lipset, “Liberalism, Conservatism, and Americanism,” *Ethics & International Affairs*, vol. 3, no. 1 (March 1989), 205-18.

Lipset described the “radical right” as unique political groups that disapproved of constitutional process and the rule of law, propped up during times of prosperity instead of economic depressions, and attacked specific “scapegoats” for threatening broadly defined American values. Contemporarily, Lipset positioned the anti-communist McCarthyism movement as an example of his “radical right,” and argued that, while it threatened democratic principles, it and other “radical right” movements could not organize themselves well enough for lasting political power. Sociologist Daniel Bell expanded on Lipset’s terminology in his 1962 edited volume, *The Radical Right*, which included a series of essays that connected 1950s McCarthyism with 1960s era anti-communist groups like The John Birch Society, as well as 1890s Populism and 1930s anti-New Deal conspiracism. These works were helpful additions to the framework of extremist political movements in the United States and helped popularize the “radical right” terminology as a historical explanation for groups and individuals opposed to pluralism in American society.²⁰

A similar conclusion was evident in Richard Hofstadter’s “The Paranoid Style in American Politics.” His 1964 essay, written in response to Barry Goldwater’s nomination for President of the United States by the Republican Party, concluded that there were multiple moments in American history when conspiratorial elements emerged in American politics.²¹ This research, like Lipset and Bell’s, had limitations, however. Hofstadter insisted that politics of conspiratorial anti-communism, nativism, or anti-

²⁰ Seymour Martin Lipset, “The Radical Right: A Problem for American Democracy,” *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 6, no. 2 (June 1955), 176-209; Ed. Daniel Bell, *The Radical Right* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963).

²¹ Richard Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics,” orig. *Harper’s Magazine*, (November 1964), 77-86.

intellectualism were marginal elements deeply out of touch with mainstream politics. Like Lipset and Bell, Hofstadter was wrapped within Cold War liberalism and positioned anti-communism as the unique factor that motivated the radical Right in the twentieth century, with nearly absent discussions of racism as any significant factor. Furthermore, the consensus was that these illiberal elements were “paranoid kooks,” aberrations to traditional American politics, and not part of any larger conservative movement or political traditions, significantly limiting the radical Right as a serious scholarly pursuit.

Since the 1990s, historical literature on conservatism in the United States expanded to recognize that conservative activism has long been present in American politics and society. In 1994, Alan Brinkley instigated a challenge to American historians in his argument that too few within the profession had written about the rise of U.S. conservative movements, or taken them seriously as subjects. Brinkley was one of the first voices to inquire why interpretations of the mid-twentieth century rarely touched on conservative voices. Leo Ribuffo, on the same panel at the American Historical Association as Brinkley, issued a passionate rebuttal in his argument that there indeed was an emerging literature on conservative politics—it was just that too few historians were familiar with such projects.²² Debates aside, following these discussions, historical research into conservative politics and activism boomed through the 1990s and first decade of the 2000s and began to break apart the narrow viewing of the 1960s and Cold War framework. Earlier misinterpretations of Right-wing populism and conservative

²² Alan Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," *American Historical Review* 99, No. 2 (April 1994), 409-29, and Leo Ribuffo, "Why Is There So Much Conservatism in the United States and Why Do So Few Historians Know Anything About It," *American Historical Review* 99, No. 2 (April 1994), 438-49.

movements from Richard Hofstadter, Seymour Martin Lipset, and, to some degree, Alan Brinkley, faded from the historiography as newer scholars of Right-wing movements argued that their subjects were more than just a collective of irrational actors and an exception to a rule of progressive social movements.

By the end of the twentieth century, historians began to reexamine the pivotal 1960s and 1970s to break apart the narrow political viewing of these decades. Mary Brennan, Rebecca Klatch, and Dan Carter pushed for a reinterpretation of conservative activism and success in American politics. Carter, especially, was instrumental in his examination of George Wallace, arguing that race and racism played a central role in the origins and success of the New Right.²³ John A. Andrew III and Gregory L. Schneider reexamined conservative movements through the lens of youth activism. Both scholars argued that the 1960s must be interpreted as a dichotomy of youth activism that saw movement organizing on both the Left and the Right.²⁴

However, Ribuffo, Carter, Schneider, and other historians who called for a greater attention to conservative movements themselves focused narrowly on a limited set of historical actors. Through the 1990s, much of the literature on the American Right remained transfixed on mainstream conservatism, outside of exceptions that analyzed segregationist-aligned groups like the Ku Klux Klan or White Citizens' Councils.²⁵ In the

²³ Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties*; Carter, *The Politics of Rage*; Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided - the New Left, the New Right and the 1960s*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

²⁴ John A. Andrew III, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1999).

²⁵ Frank P. Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right: Race, Conspiracy, and Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985); Kathleen Blee, *Women of the Klan:*

last twenty years, scholarship has moved towards studying the more extreme elements of social activism in the twentieth century, including more analysis of antisemites, neo-Nazis, white nationalists, and other types of radical Right participants.²⁶ Recent scholarship has challenged the organizational structure and political philosophies of this movement. Clive Webb's *Rabble Rousers* and Leonard Zeskind's *Blood and Politics* emphasize the divergence between southern segregationists and anti-communist conservatives. Still, besides some attention towards their antisemitic rhetoric, Webb inferred that far Right activists in the 1960s were primarily extensions of racist segregationists. He argued that these extremist groups, while intense, burned out along with Jim Crow by the end of the 1960s. Zeskind, on the other hand, expanded his gaze

Racism and Gender in the 1920s (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Nancy MacLean. *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Tyler Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994).

²⁶ Examples of this literature include David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Betty A. Dobratz and Stephanie L Shanks-Meile, "White Power, White Pride!": *The White Separatist Movement in the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997); Frederick J. Simonelli, *American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Chip Berlet and Matthew Lyons. *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort*, (New York: The Guilford Press, 2000); Kathleen M. Blee, *Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002); Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the making of Modern Conservatism*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Leonard Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement From the Margins to the Mainstream*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009); Clive Webb, *Rabble Rousers: the American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era*, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010); Stephanie R. Rolph, *Resisting Equality: The Citizens' Council, 1954-1989*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018); Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Cynthia Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland: The New Global Far Right*, New edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020).

past the civil rights era. His work documents how white nationalists transitioned away from “fringe” activism into a significant social movement by the 1980s, one that operated off a philosophy of leaderless resistance.²⁷

Another set of studies has argued for more recent origins for the movement, in the 1970s. Kathleen Belew’s *Bring the War Home* explores the genesis of white power activism within the Vietnam War and its aftermath. Vietnam veterans, Belew argues, came back from the war disenchanted by the United States government’s failure to defeat communism overseas. Upon returning home, these men joined forces with far Right groups to wage war against the United States. Furthermore, she writes that these former veterans used their military backgrounds to accelerate the levels of paramilitary violence against both “liberals” and the larger American state. Perhaps her greatest contribution to the historiography of radical Right activism is her insistence that, unlike Zeskind, this movement should not be referred to as “white nationalist,” but a larger white power movement. Belew argues that the white power movement was a coalition of “the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, militias, radical tax resisters, white separatists, and proponents of white theologies” that formally organized in 1979 with an attack killing five leftist demonstrators in Greensboro, North Carolina, and declared a violent revolution against the U.S. government in 1983.²⁸

While Belew emphasizes that the formal unification of the white power movement did not coalesce until the late 1970s, a social network between anti-Semites,

²⁷ Leonard Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement From the Margins to the Mainstream*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009); Clive Webb, *Rabble Rousers: the American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era*, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

²⁸ Belew, *Bring the War Home*; Quotation within *ibid.*, ix.

white racists, and anti-communists was present for at least half a decade prior, as articulated by Carol Mason in her book, *Reading Appalachia from Left to Right*. Examining a textbook controversy in West Virginia, Mason discovered that political alliances formed within the Right in spaces that welcomed both anti-Semitic and racial superiority language, moving right wing groups in the area away from the conservative politics of the anti-communist John Birch Society and prominent segregationists like George Wallace towards white nationalist groups like neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. Mason argues that individuals like George Dietz and William Pierce used the textbook controversy to espouse antisemitism and recreate the Appalachian region in “White Supremacist terms.”²⁹ More importantly, Pierce recruited young people to the movement and purchased compounds in West Virginia and the Pacific Northwest with the intention of creating a white nationalist utopian community. While Vietnam veterans are equally important, Dietz and Pierce saw young people in general not just as numbered bodies with youthful energy, but as essential tools to the continuation of white power ideology, as well as the literal future of the movement.

Despite the above inquiries, the historiography and historical memory of the white power movement are limited, a fact presently identified with contemporary newscasters consistently asking, “where did this come from?” following public displays of white nationalist violence in the United States, especially with events perpetuated by young people. An insignificant level of analysis has explained why not just so many white power affiliated groups were drawn towards Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential

²⁹ Carol Mason, *Reading Appalachia from Left to Right: Conservatives and the Kanawha County Textbook Controversy* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2009), 60.

campaign, but why so many were young people. In fact, Donald Trump developed a unique youth culture around him, especially present among white nationalists and a coalition known as the Alt-Right. This was seen within an Internet culture of message boards and social media dominated with young people. While popular culture and historical literature tends to emphasize adult white supremacist and racist activists, typically to emphasize the beliefs as dying or outdated, this does little service in explaining youth attraction towards ideologies of hate.

“The Kids Were Alt-Right” brings into relief the fact that youth activism was the energy behind the radical racist Right and its move towards a violent white power movement. My dissertation builds on Andrew and Schneider’s arguments of conservative youth movements, as well as Belew and Zeskind’s thoughts concerning far Right organizational cohesion, to investigate the radical racist Right youth during the 1960s and 1970s. This dissertation thus poses a new origin point for the political extremes seen within conservative politics in our current moment. At its core, this dissertation is intended to serve as a history of the contemporary Alt-Right, building off scholarly and media confusion around youth participation and youth-led demonstrations of white supremacy over the last decade. The project reorients conventional understandings of youth social and political activism in the mid-twentieth century and breaks ground in arguing that radical Right youth in the 1960s and 1970s established roots for a cohesive white power movement, nearly a decade prior to when current scholarship insists it began. I conduct a generational exploration of individuals that took up neo-Nazi beliefs in an era only slightly removed from American intervention in World War II. Youth pushed the white power movement forward, both in their calls for radical and violent action and

the deployment of young white bodies that signaled the presence of a continued generation of white supremacists. Although early organizations in the radical racist Right, such as George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party, embraced youth merely as an ideal or pathway for recruitment, or Willis Carto's Youth for Wallace and National Youth Alliance's use of youth as props to achieve political or financial success, young people still had agency of their own. In the post-civil rights era, as young people built upon experience as members and participants within radical racist Right organizations, youth activists took leadership roles and were responsible for elevating white power activism away from stagnancy and irrelevancy and towards a youth-centered and violent political identity that I refer to as the revolutionary racist Right.

This dissertation argues that the energy for the radical racist Right movement emanated from a mobilization of young voices that could challenge longstanding systems and political traditions, and that these youth would eventually lead the emerging white power movement by the end of the 1970s. More specifically, I argue that the nascent radical racist Right of earlier youth-oriented organizations evolved into the revolutionary racist Right by 1974 with the founding of David Duke Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and Joseph Tommasi's National Socialist Liberation Front. Within their own consciousness, young radical and revolutionary Right activists and members made real and intellectual decisions concerning political and social mobilization; often convinced that they were justified in their own actions. Youth commitment to Right-wing movements helps us understand the longevity of oppressive forces that regularly challenged the opening of democracy in the United States. Looking at young people in Right-wing social movements highlights an angle of passionate energy from activists that intersected with

larger national politics and propelled debates and campaigns on social activism into arenas separate from mainstream political action. Furthermore, this dissertation is interested in Right-wing youth movements as the understudied and neglected youth movement of the counter-culture era. With groups like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the civil rights movement, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and anti-war demonstrations on university campuses, historians often recognize the 1960s as a decade of youth activism. Research into the radical Right makes clear the fact that youth activism was not merely a phenomenon on the political Left.

Terminology

Terminology is important. The radical elements of the American Right are central elements in this project but the term “radical Right” and its meaning is often ambiguously interchanged within scholarship between “far Right” or “extremist Right.” Influenced by Seymour Martin Lipset’s terminology, I use radical Right—and more specifically radical racist Right—throughout this dissertation as an explanation for the anti-democratic and illiberal elements of the movement. However, I move beyond Lipset’s and other mid-twentieth century understandings of “radical” as fringe. Thus, this dissertation’s use of radical racist Right is a purposeful distinction to acknowledge the ideologies of white supremacy and racism as central to much of the American Right’s historical political identity—insofar as white supremacy is neither “far” nor “extreme” within historical and modern Right-wing circles in the United States—but the methodology and methods of actors engaged within militant antisemitism, violent white nationalism, and

antidemocratic practices are distinct from other Right-wing actors and best understood as a radical assault on liberal democracy.

“Counterculture,” and its relationship to the broadly defined 1960s counterculture movement, is also an essential element of this dissertation’s analysis. 1960s counterculture activism is typically conceptualized as a challenge to traditional authorities by young people on the New Left—best seen in the campus free speech movement, anti-war activism, the sexual revolution, and experimentation with recreational drugs. In some instances, counterculture tensions between younger and older generations inspired calls for revolutionary action to disrupt and destroy traditional hierarchies in American culture and politics.³⁰ Influenced by scholarship by Rebecca Klatch and John A. Andrew III, I employ “counterculture” as a movement that incorporated *all* forms of young people to push back against authority, whether on the Left or Right.³¹ Within this dissertation, some young people became involved in the radical racist Right as a countercultural endeavor to challenge new developments in the political status quo that threatened white hegemony, such as racial integration. Later, young people embraced violent solutions to destroy their political enemies, unified as the revolutionary racist Right. Ultimately, this dissertation places the racist, antisemitic, and

³⁰ For further reading on young people and their relationship with revolution in the New Left in the United States, see V. P. Franklin, *The Young Crusaders: The Untold Story of the Children and Teenagers Who Galvanized the Civil Rights Movement* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2021); Robyn C. Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Rebecca de Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World: Young People and America’s Long Struggle for Racial Equality* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2011); For reading on the New Left in Europe, see Terence Renaud, *New Lefts: The Making of a Radical Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 2021).

³¹ Andrew III, *The Other Side of the Sixties* (1997); Klatch, *A Generation Divided* (1999).

larger neo-Nazi political participation of young people in both the radical racist Right and the revolutionary racist Right as a significant counterculture movement.

The definition of “youth” is both nebulous and far-reaching. For some, youth refers exclusively to early adolescence, or childhood to teenage years. Adolescence itself is a somewhat unclear identity. For this dissertation and my purposes, I define biological youth as childhood through adolescence, ending at thirty-years-old. Youth activists appearing in this dissertation are teenagers, students, or young people under thirty-years-old who were committed to combating political enemies—which sometimes included other youth or student organizations—and ensuring a successful next generation of activism. In part, older and adult persons are much more concrete in their political identity. While not ubiquitous and explanatory for all people, political ideology and philosophy does not evolve at the same rapid degree that it would with someone in their youth. Young people are different, as the period of adolescence brings about change in ways within the self and in ways a young person sees the world around them. This dissertation posits, in part, that young people—specifically young men in the case of this project—were particularly vulnerable to radical and extremist political sentiments. Young people, sometimes due to inexperience or a curiosity about explaining the world around them, are susceptible to manipulation in exchange for comfort and confidence, especially in combination with propaganda and tactics that target young people, specifically. Yet, importantly, young people also have agency of their own. I document multiple instances of young people knowingly embracing white supremacist theories and identities even when presented alternatives.

Youth can—and should—be defined and understood more than biological age. To this end, youth as a concept appears in Right-wing movement scholarship related to gender. Kathleen Blee’s work on women in the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920s and women in Klan and neo-Nazi organizations in the late twentieth century details the significant role women played in creating and cultivating the next generation of white racists. Although women rarely held public positions in radical Right groups, women served within private roles as mothers and educators for white children. White women, thus, were essential to sustaining white identity politics. Elizabeth McRae’s *Mothers of Massive Resistance*, particularly her eighth chapter, “White Women, White Youth, and the Hope of the Nation,” expands on Blee’s research and explores how youth and *youthfulness* was an essential component of gender roles for white segregationist women in order to ensure a future white society, which she calls “next generation of Jim Crow’s white activists.”³²

Thus, I use youth as a social, cultural, gendered, and political identity in this dissertation. This framework is especially important when adult leaders in the radical racist Right invoke youth culture—including music, cartoons, comic strips, humor, and even clothing—to recruit young people to their organization or signal that their operation is an inviting space for youth. Building off McRae and Blee’s research on Right-wing women, I also explore the way a youth identity was gendered, in respect to the way activists in the radical racist Right and revolutionary racist Right considered strong and

³² Kathleen Blee, “Becoming a Racist: Women in Contemporary Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi Groups,” *Gender & Society* vol 9 issue 5 (1996), 680-702; Blee, *Women of the Klan*; Elizabeth McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 188, 155-216.

youthful masculinity as essential features for their movement. Specifically, I argue that young people in the radical racist Right ultimately built upon the politics of youth protest and revolutionary reform during the height of the counterculture era and created a violent coalitionary politics that was of their own.

Finally, this dissertation includes detailed and sometimes graphic descriptions of racism, antisemitism, misogyny, homophobia, and general bigotry, as well as ethnic and racial slurs. This material is abhorrent but included purposefully. The language is preserved in its original context as both an accurate representation of the historical record and a conscious effort to not downplay or minimize the violent and hateful language and opinions of my subjects. Racist and white supremacist terminology only exists in direct quotations and is presented in this project specifically for analytical examination. Furthermore, while some subjects of my analysis might not have described themselves as “white supremacists” or “neo-Nazis,” or, in the case of David Duke, an insistence to be described as a “racialist” instead of “racist,” I do not concede their attempt to further obfuscate their politics and I use terminology like racist and white supremacist as an accurate identifier for their political identity and actions.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter one begins in Summer and early September 1960 with the founding of Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), a conservative youth organization financed by William F. Buckley Jr. During the 1960s, YAF envisioned their role as a gatekeeper of traditional American values against the growing student left. While typically understood as an early libertarian student operation, YAF leadership was happy to work within

conservative and segregationist networks and took stands against Black civil rights activism as dangerous and disruptive to the United States. Following Barry Goldwater's 1964 defeat—whose campaign YAF passionately supported—some members abandoned the conservative movement as a legitimate pathway to political victory and the conservative student movement splintered into other organizations. Some members, radicalized by the failed Goldwater campaign, joined radical racist Right organizations like the National Youth Alliance.

Chapter two returns to earlier in the 1960s, as well as the late 1950s, and moves through 1966 to examine initial youth involvement in the radical racist Right during the counterculture era, specifically George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party, founded in 1959. Serving as Commander of a small group of young followers called Storm Troopers, Rockwell incorporated young people as strong and fit white soldiers in a battle against Jews, communists, and non-white people. In turn, the young people embraced their roles as racist provocateurs. Rockwell's ANP was never an explicitly youth or student operation, but chose to utilize young people in his organization as a mirror to the successful mobilization of youth in the civil rights movement. Although the operation was small, barely numbering more than one hundred active members, the ANP significantly embraced youth culture as a recruitment tool. Rockwell, alongside his young pseudo-second-in-command and chief propagandist John Patler, designed activism and demonstrations around inflammatory and absurdist tactics involving racist and antisemitic jokes and humor. The ANP produced propaganda cartoons, music albums, and mail-order pamphlets that included hate messages, an early instance of white power memes and troll culture in the twenty-first century Alt-Right. Rockwell and Patler's

specific embrace of “white power” as a battle cry echoed through future radical racist Right operations, and established Rockwell as a godfather of the eventual white power movement.

Chapter three examines Willis Carto’s role in weaponizing young people as an extension of his Liberty Lobby enterprise. Carto embraced a specific element of neo-Nazi idolatry that came from Francis Parker Yockey. Carto published Yockey’s book, *Imperium*, an antisemitic tome that argued for a pan-European definition of whiteness, and used the text as a guiding philosophy for neo-Nazi activism. Carto established the Youth for Wallace in 1968 to publicly support George Wallace’s run for President of the United States, but privately intended the group to be a front for both his Liberty Lobby publications and a pathway to curate a new generation of neo-Nazi “Yockeyites.” Carto transformed the Youth for Wallace into the National Youth Alliance after the 1968 election, stymieing and eventually frustrating the student and youth leadership who claimed to be unaware of the neo-Nazi roots of the operation. Although some young members of the NYA abandoned Carto, others—including Young Americans for Freedom expatriates—happily embraced the neo-Nazi elements of the organization. Yet, Carto’s mismanagement and failure to embrace youth leadership in the NYA drove the organization towards bankruptcy in 1970, and its youth members into the arms of the revolutionary minded William Luther Pierce.

Chapter four explores William Luther Pierce’s relationship to youth activism in the radical racist Right and his fatherly role of guiding young people towards a more explicitly revolutionary identity. Pierce’s idea of a National Front was the first blueprint for concepts that eventually metastasized into the white power movement. If George

Lincoln Rockwell was the messiah for white power messaging, then Pierce was his most important apostle; transitioning the struggling neo-Nazi movement deeper into radicalism and devoted to revolutionary violence against all enemies of “the white race.” Pierce’s experience—and near hostile takeover—within Rockwell’s former American Nazi Party led him to take over Carto’s National Youth Alliance in 1970. Unlike Willis Carto, Pierce believed in young people and saw them not as pawns but as equal collaborators towards victory for white people. Pierce’s background as a university educator and youth recruiter for Rockwell positioned him and the NYA to successfully mobilize young people to the radical racist Right and embrace revolutionary solutions—including open calls for violence. His idea of waging a war against “the System” further accelerated young white power activists to expand into violence political action as the necessary solution to their social and political grievances.

The final chapter analyzes the emergence of youth leadership within the radical racist Right and its concurrent transition towards explicit revolution. David Duke, Joseph Tommasi, and James Mason serve as case studies that represent the throughlines between multiple radical racist Right groups before each young man gained leadership control of an organization of their own. Under direction from young activists, the radical racist Right developed beyond a political movement model that some youth activists felt stagnated the larger goals of white power. Young people also demonstrated they were more than capable of leadership and creating their own white supremacist organizations. Duke’s White Youth Alliance, which he established as an undergraduate student at Louisiana State University, eventually became the basis for his Klan resurgence group, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. In 1974, Joseph Tommasi founded the National

Socialist Liberation Front using language and inspiration from Left-wing revolutionary groups and his mentor, William Pierce. By the late 1970s, and guided by experienced participants within the radical racist Right like James Mason, a youth-centered identity rematerialized as a driving force of recruitment and messaging into the revolutionary racist Right. This revolutionary activism called for a violent overthrow of the United States and, due to the coalitionary nature of young people in the movement, initiated the killings of five Communist Workers Party members in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1979. The new orientation toward violence led to the awakening of a coalesced white power movement.

As evidenced both in current events and the past, young people are attracted to the radical Right. As more and more contemporary events of white supremacist violence occur, and as more of these seem to involve young people, this dissertation explains that our present is built on a generation of youth activism on the radical racist Right. Furthermore, this project pushes the origins of the white power movement to the 1960s and 1970s, prior to anti-government militia activity in the 1980s and the American defeat in Vietnam. The Vietnam war might have been an expansion, but earlier youth involvement was the essential spark for the movement's formation. Instead, I argue that, throughout the 1960s, in reaction to New Left social and political gains over white supremacy and a perceived acceptance of these gains from the conservative Right, young people embraced white supremacist and antisemitic politics as solutions to their political anxieties. A youth identity—driven in part by desires for social reproduction of white power—served as a driving force for the radical racist Right. From 1960 through the 1970s, the interconnected relationships between radical racist Right groups, the evolution

towards a revolutionary racist Right via youth leadership, and an ultimate coalition of revolutionary and radical actors converged as a white power social movement.

Chapter 1. “Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice”: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of a New Right Counterrevolution

On July 16, 1964, amid the roar and jubilation from cheering admirers throughout the Cow Palace in Daly City, California, Barry Goldwater took to the stage to deliver his victory address. By winning the Republican Party’s nomination for President of the United States, the hardline conservative accomplished what was believed to be unattainable just two years before. All doubts of the ability of a conservative takeover of the Republican Party were cast aside once delegates from South Carolina put Goldwater over the top the previous night, and delegations from Mississippi to California erupted into celebratory applause. The fervent enthusiasm over Goldwater’s nomination carried over into the following evening when the Arizona senator gave his acceptance speech, ushering in a platform in defense of limited government and staunch anti-communism for the Republican Party. Goldwater described his policies of “preserving and enlarging freedom at home and safeguarding [freedom] from the forces of tyranny abroad.” His speech did not mention the senator’s opposition to the recently passed Civil Rights Act, but his comments about “freedom” and “liberty” from government bureaucracy signaled a possible home in the Republican Party for segregationists and racists angered by the civil rights movement. “Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice,” Goldwater stressed at the conclusion of his speech, generating a loud applause.¹

¹ Barry Goldwater, “Republican Nomination Acceptance Speech,” July 16, 1964; Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York, New York: New York University Press, 1999), 83.

The nomination of Barry Goldwater for the Republican ticket for president in 1964 was a political flashpoint and a major success for movement conservatism and the New Right, resulting in what some historians argue was one of the most significant election losses in American presidential history. Despite his overwhelming electoral defeat to Lyndon Johnson, Goldwater still carried five Deep South states, a first for the Republican Party.² His campaign, thanks to his support for states' rights and the opposition to both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Johnson's Great Society programs launched what historian Nell Painter describes as "the migration of southern conservatives out of the Democratic Party and into the Republican Party."³ More than anything else, historians have placed Goldwater's campaign as the emergence of political conservatism in the Republican Party on the national stage.⁴

This chapter, however, is not centered on Barry Goldwater. As the confetti celebrating Goldwater's victory rained down it landed upon a confederation of relatively unknown individuals from an organization that helped push Goldwater well into the driver's seat of the Republican primary. David Franke, the twenty-six-year-old co-founder of Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), looked on in excitement as the

² Goldwater's victory in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina was combined with Arizona as the only states he won in 1964.

³ Nell I. Painter, *Creating Black Americans: African-American History and its Meanings, 1619 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 280; see also Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York, W.W. Norton and Company, 1991).

⁴ For a brief look into expansive historiography of Goldwater's presidential candidacy, see Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (Durham, University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton University Press, 2001); Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

candidate that he first fell in love with five years prior finally took to the podium, a validation of all that Franke and his coalition of young people worked towards. The rise of Goldwater to the status of Republican Party elite did more than change the ideology of the party. Goldwater's ascension of the electoral mountaintop was a moment when the political dreams of conservative youth were being realized.

The young people who supported Goldwater's candidacy are far more important than Goldwater himself for understanding conservative principles and political philosophies of the era, as well as the evolution of youth-centered Right-wing activism following his electoral defeat. Young people, specifically those involved in YAF, were instrumental in organizing and mobilizing interest among conservative leaning students—and sometimes even adult Americans—towards specific causes of limited government, tax reform, and anti-communism, as well as signaling their own contempt towards Black-led activism in the civil rights movement. Founded and financed by William F. Buckley Jr. alongside student conservative leaders, YAF was a backbone of conservative grassroots ideology in the 1960s and into the 1970s. During the 1960s, YAF imagined themselves as a revolutionary force against the student left and waged resistance campaigns against left-wing student groups like Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the National Student Association (NSA). The young men and women who made up YAF specifically mobilized for Goldwater as a political Moses that would take conservative political ideals to the electoral Promised Land. YAF members supported Goldwater with an almost religious devotion with leaflets and campus rallies, alongside editorials and advertisements in their monthly magazine, *The New Guard*. By November 1964, however, Goldwater lost the presidential election in an electoral

blowout. This loss devastated student supporters within YAF who believed the Arizona senator was their political deliverer. Following Goldwater's defeat, the YAF membership fractured, and the conservative student movement splintered, with some moving toward the radical racist Right.

The young people who had campaigned for Barry Goldwater espoused a range of conservative stances, including segregationism. Within detailed articles and editorials in YAF's newsletter, *The New Guard*, young people were able to have their voice heard and became successful politicians by writing expansive editorial pieces on Cuban relations, the threat of domestic Marxism, and similar essays that positioned themselves as anti-communist warriors. Generally, scholarship on the YAF argues that the organization and its membership were instrumental in bringing national attention to conservative causes, particularly on university campuses in their challenge to New Left student groups. Some conservative student activists continued after Goldwater's defeat in 1964. The YAF at large remained dedicated to conservative electoral politicking and mobilized for Richard Nixon's 1968 presidential victory as well as the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s.⁵

Yet, although YAF often positioned their members as exclusively freedom fighters against communist aggression, YAF membership appeared to be interested in race alongside anti-communism. YAF writings were regularly interested in preserving a normative white identity, especially clear in articles regarding the civil rights movement in the United States. Just like the adult politicians that YAF members looked up to, young

⁵ For a further overview on the larger Young Americans for Freedom, see Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1999); John A. Andrew III, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

conservatives in the YAF discussed race and Black political movements in coded, patronizing language. Editorials and articles in the *New Guard* referred to Black activists as radicals and socialists, and civil rights activism was always referenced in context to the violence that emerged—or perceived to emerge—from Black and leftist activism. As such, conservative young people in YAF happily weaponized their whiteness in defense of “liberty” and “freedom.” Racism was rarely overt, but racist condescension and assumptions existed in the organization and among the membership. These members of the Young Americans for Freedom privately cared about race issues as much as anyone else did in the 1960s, and through their allegiance to conservative adult leadership they also worked, perhaps tragically, as bull horns for the growing conservative movement.

This chapter is particularly concerned with YAF in the 1960s and how firm opposition to New Left student groups and the civil rights movement prepared members to not just be students for the conservative political movement, but soldiers in a war for “freedom” that saw enemies in liberals, socialists, and Black activists and communists. Students and youth within YAF were rarely outspoken racists and did not embrace the violent antisemitism of the contemporary radical Right. Yet the conservative politics, and language, within YAF devoted to “freedom” against an abstract enemy of liberal tyranny—and the ultimate failure of Goldwater’s candidacy to defeat such identified liberalism—prepared these student activists for future extremist causes and organizations that could move beyond electoral politics. YAF members had an inescapable connection to the larger Black Freedom Struggle due to their aligned politics with segregationists and racists, and it influenced the ways white student activists in YAF understood their oppositional role to social movements on the left. Student conservative activists in YAF

embraced and endorsed ideology positioned around liberty and freedom, but teased larger themes of white supremacy, readying members for an introduction into the radical racist Right.

Out of the Ashes of Segregation

The conservative Right held influential status in both major political parties in the post-war era. Within the Republican party, however, the conservative movement gained momentum through the 1950s and the 1960 presidential election appeared to be an excellent chance to position movement conservatism towards a national stage. However, the 1960 Republican National Convention ultimately resulted in what segregationists and conservatives saw as a terrible defeat. Despite the nomination of anticommunist Richard Nixon for President of the United States, conservatives in attendance felt that the selection was far too liberal for the desired future of the Republican Party.⁶ The Vice-President was hardly someone on the political Left, but conservatives like William F. Buckley Jr. became more and more frustrated with the Eisenhower administration. Despite the 1950s being the age of anti-communist McCarthyism, Buckley wrote that international communism continued to rise due to the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact and the Suez Crisis, which collectively challenged the theory of the United States properly containing communism. The editorial board of Buckley's *National Review* accused President Eisenhower of caving again and again to communist influences. The conservative wing of the Republican Party wanted specific policy changes around state

⁶ Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, 52

power, economic freedom, and a foreign policy centered on dominance of the enemies of the United States.⁷

Equally significant, the fallout of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision undid decades of white supremacist jurisprudence at the federal level. Eisenhower appeared to be of no help to the segregationist Right, as the emerging civil rights movement pushed onward without any federal intervention. The Montgomery Bus Boycott, public school integration, and the student sit-ins all loomed large in the minds of segregationists, as well as the conservative GOP, as American white supremacists concluded that Black gains in the civil rights movement equaled the collapse of white supremacist normativity in American society.⁸ Alongside the segregationist Right, Buckley and the conservative movement was fervently opposed to federal aid to education. But in 1957, in the context of major desegregation events like Little Rock, Arkansas and the United States Senate considering a new civil rights bill, Buckley published an aggressively racist editorial in his *National Review* magazine which revealed his favorable position towards not only segregationists, but white supremacists. Titled “Why the South Must Prevail,” Buckley argued that federally enforced racial integration and universal suffrage for Black people was unacceptable because white people were “the advanced race.” “It is not easy...to adduce statistics evidencing the median cultural superiority of White over Negro: but it is a fact,” Buckley wrote. In a clear alliance between his conservative movement and segregationists, Buckley emphasized “National Review believes that the South’s premises are correct.” Although

⁷ Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, 35.

⁸ George Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006).

the Cold War indeed created an accessible ideological enemy in communism for Buckley and his conservative movement to attack, Buckley's position on Black civil rights demonstrated that racism was the unifying factor that tied multiple factions of the American Right together.⁹

Although the twentieth century American conservative movement was long interested in youth alliances and generational continuation, rising anxiety about the Black freedom struggle injected new urgency into youth recruitment. The 1960 Republican convention became a launching pad for young conservatives. The idea of a platform that was "opposed" to more ideas than it was for likely drew many moderate Republicans away. Young people, however, were drawn to these ideas. The counterculture era of the 1960s included young people of all political ideologies, not just those on the left, rejecting long held ideas of the American status quo.¹⁰ Supporting conservative ideas was, then, a rejection of the more politically moderate and liberal factions that had long controlled the leadership of the Republican Party. Some college-aged youth were already mobilizing for the Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater to at least take the nomination of vice-president. Since the publication of Goldwater's political treatise, *The Conscience of A Conservative* at the beginning of the year, ideological conservatives treated the Senator like a political celebrity. Young people in particular, including those in the Young Republicans organization, emerged in droves to champion Goldwater as the answer to "modern Republicanism." Goldwater, being the most politically vocal conservative that did not come from the Jim Crow southern states, was a proverbial powder keg that had

⁹ William F. Buckley Jr., "Why the South Must Prevail," *National Review* (August 1957).

¹⁰ Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, 2.

the ability to destroy a political party that conservative youth felt needed to be changed. The young people formed their own coalition, and by the GOP convention in Chicago in July of 1960 the Students for Goldwater were a dominant organizational force.¹¹

The 1960 Republican National Convention divided the party into two coalitions. The conservative faction, including Buckley's allies in the *National Review* and the impressive Students for Goldwater for Vice President, envisioned a conservative control of the Republican Party. This group specifically rejected the liberal wing of the Republican Party that included New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller. Students for Goldwater emerged from small, organized circles within Young Republicans groups on college campuses. The group, which was much more of a committee of passionate Goldwater fans, was founded by Northwestern graduate student Robert Croll and managed by undergraduates, Robert Harley and Richard Noble.¹² Students for Goldwater were convinced that the Arizona governor had a chance for the vice-president nomination, however backroom dealings between Rockefeller and Nixon ensured that Goldwater, as well as any conservative for that matter, was not going to find a place on the 1960 Republican ticket. The *New York Times* reported that Goldwater and his constituents felt that Nixon struck a deal to "impose a platform [for] the ultra-liberals and that it will all but guarantee a Republican defeat in November."¹³

The conservative youth divide between Rockefeller and Goldwater was primarily isolated to a single issue. Both governors, for instance, held similar anti-communist views. Rockefeller, however, supported a stronger platform of African Americans' civil

¹¹ Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, 46-48.

¹² Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 27.

¹³ "Goldwater Hits Platform Accord," *New York Times*, 24 July 1960, 38.

rights. Conservatives, including Goldwater, argued that it was not up to the federal government to decide on issues of civil rights, succinctly embraced as a policy of states' rights, a term deeply connected to the legacy of slavery and white supremacy in the nineteenth century, and further weaponized by white racial segregationists in the Jim Crow South as an extension of a larger mythology of the Lost Cause. Thus, the presentation of full citizenship for Black Americans as a states' rights issue played well to the right-wing voting bloc of "Southern delegations and far-right fringe groups" such as the John Birch Society and Citizens' Councils.¹⁴ The conservative position supporting "states' rights," seen even within the Buckley backed coalition of young activists, emphasized an unwillingness to concede over Black integration without necessarily openly endorsing segregation. This dividing position revealed that racism and racist policies superseded even a policy agreement on anti-communism. While the Goldwater student group and its associates were not the rigid racists within the John Birch Society or the National States' Rights Party, the newly organized young conservatives exemplified the difference within the Republican coalition: disagreement was not over communism or liberalism, but over whether the social and political status quo for Black Americans should change. Students for Goldwater came down squarely on the side that it should not.

When racial conservatives failed to capture a piece of the 1960 Republican presidential ticket, their faction felt betrayed and frustrated with the Republican Party. A

¹⁴ For the connection between states' rights, the Lost Cause, and Jim Crow segregation, see David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Adam H. Domby, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020); "Goldwater Hits Platform Accord," *New York Times*, 24 July 1960, 38.

few weeks after the convention, Buckley wrote in a *National Review* editorial, “Conservatives now feel...that neither Kennedy-Nixon nor Democratic-Republican any longer offers conservatives a meaningful choice. If so, conservatives cannot in conscience support or vote for either one or the other, but must find other channels for giving expression to conservative principles.”¹⁵ His comment was a call to action. His channel for conservative principles would become Young Americans for Freedom (YAF). A continuation of the early coalition that was the Students for Goldwater, Buckley’s vision for YAF was an opportunity for youth and the student demographic to grow the larger conservative movement. Following the Chicago convention, Buckley met with David Franke and Douglas Caddy, two twenty-two-year-old Students for Goldwater co-founders, and worked with them to develop a national program of conservative principles for American young people. Together, they founded the Young Americans for Freedom at Buckley’s home estate in Sharon, Connecticut on September 11, 1960.¹⁶ The conservative youth message within YAF was an opportunity for not just political victory, but a social and cultural recapture of the United States, with barely disguised language about from whom that recapture would be.

The collection of YAF’s philosophies was organized into a mission statement that came to be known as the Sharon Statement. The Sharon Statement expressed YAF’s ideas of a limited government, the “individual’s use of his God-given free will,” the symbiotic relationship between personal freedom and economic freedom, and a strict, originalist interpretation of the United States Constitution. Abstract concepts like liberty

¹⁵ William F. Buckley Jr., *National Review* 9, August 13, 1960, 69-70.

¹⁶ “The Sharon Statement,” *National Review* 9, September 1960, 173; Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 32.

were defined by YAF as “the preservation of internal order, the provision of national defense, and the administration of justice.” A more perfect government, YAF believed, could emerge when government protects these freedoms and restrains itself from any abuse of power. The Sharon Statement did not overtly mention a position on civil rights but it was a loud subtext given the, albeit brief, presence of states’ rights language. “The genius of the Constitution...is summed up in the clause that reserves primacy to the several states...in those spheres not specifically delegated to the Federal government,” the statement argued. It continued saying, “[When government] takes from one man to bestow on another, it diminishes the incentive of the first [and] the integrity of the second.” The statement’s use of states’ rights language was framed as an essential legacy of the United States and another safeguard for individual liberty against an overbearing federal government.¹⁷

The Sharon Statement also made clear that the burgeoning YAF was—in all forms of its positions—inseparable from the larger political aspirations of conservatism, especially with regard to seeing political opponents as moral enemies. The document was clear that communists were moral enemy number one. The specific mentions of “international Communism” as the “single greatest threat [to liberty]” signaled YAF as anti-communist fighters within the conservative Cold War political apparatus. “The United States should stress victory over, rather than coexistence with, this menace [of communism],” the statement concluded, emphasizing not just a call-to-arms against political enemies, but implied eliminationist language that positioned an us-vs-them standoff. Even without direct acknowledgement of antiblackness or support for racial

¹⁷ “The Sharon Statement,” *National Review* 9, September 1960, 173.

segregation, YAF's initial statements invited a dangerous identity into the young members. These Cold War warriors were trained from the beginning to see political differences as blights that needed to be purged, and any extension or possible association with broadly defined "communists" should not exist as well.¹⁸

The Sharon Statement became a key instrument for YAF's growth and the spread of its message. Buckley published the Sharon Statement in the September 1960 issue of *National Review* and presented it as a distillation of the philosophies of the conservative political movement. In March 1961, YAF began publication of their own monthly newsmagazine, *The New Guard*. The name implied the YAF students were the new guardians of American freedom and liberty, further reinforcing the pseudo-militant identity of anticommunist warriors. From the beginning, the Sharon Statement was included as a commonplace publication within *New Guard*, clearly outlining the philosophy for any new reader.¹⁹ In the opening editorial of the first issue, twenty-eight-year-old editor Lee Edwards argued that *The New Guard*—and Young Americans for Liberty by extension—was essential to promote the "eternal truths" of freedom and liberty, as outlined in the Sharon Statement, and fight a "rebellion" against the evils of liberalism. "*Action* (emphasized in text) is the key word and principal motivation of Young Americans for Freedom...action is imperative for our preservation and that of the world," wrote Edwards. His antagonistic tone made clear that YAF was not necessarily a political movement interested in electoral reform but in a fight against a social and

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ The location of the Sharon Statement varied from monthly publication of the *New Guard*. Some issues carried the statement inside the front cover, others had it on the back page, and even some placed it somewhere in the middle of the magazine.

cultural—and perhaps even racial—enemy. Even words like “preservation,” popularly emphasized by openly neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups later in the decade, delineated members of YAF as fighters determined to uphold and defend a specific identity, which they called “conservatism.” “The tide of conservatism...[will leave behind] those unfortunates still chained to the rotting posts of ‘liberalism,’ collectivism, and statism,” he continued. “If [liberals] wish to sacrifice themselves for a lost cause, let them do so.”²⁰

With its manifesto now circulating, the majority of YAF’s attention turned to creating welcome environments for conservatives on university campuses and directing hostility towards campus liberals. On universities across the United States, YAF members organized in response to liberal and left-leaning student groups such as the National Student Association (NSA) or Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Although members of the student left were not necessarily formal or even acknowledged communists, the distinction did not matter to YAF members. Since communism was “the greatest single threat” to liberty in the United States, in the words of the Sharon Statement, student groups associated with any form of the political left were defined as enemies and harbingers of anti-American communism on United States campuses.²¹ In the October 1961 issue of *The New Guard*, Edwards attacked the NSA for being infested with “liberals” and “Cuba supporters.” Edwards insinuated that the left-leaning student group was a danger to universities because of its acceptance of “Marxist beliefs.”²² YAF used communism, and communist fears, in the same manner of many adult conservatives

²⁰ Lee Edwards, “Why...,” *The New Guard*, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1961, 3.

²¹ “The Sharon Statement,” *National Review* 9, September 1960, 173.

²² Lee Edwards, “NSA: The Opposition,” *The New Guard*, October 1961, 3.

in the Cold War era; as an easy means to vilify any and all political enemies of American conservatism.

The NSA was an especially popular target for YAF attacks in the early 1960s. *The New Guard* published numerous articles and editorials that criticized the liberal bias, in their view, of the confederation of student governments that were part of the larger NSA, and how, if left unchecked, these “radicals” would damage the future of the United States.²³ The NSA was even the cover story of the April 1964 issue, titled “The Rise and Fall of NSA,” which hoped to paint the organization as a group of subversive communists that was unable to represent the true needs of American university students²⁴ The attacks against the NSA also seemed to stem from an assumption by YAF members argued that platforming of liberal ideas by the NSA was a disgrace to the majority of American students, whom YAF believed must hold a conservative ideology. Howard Phillips, a nineteen-year-old YAF chapter member and student council president at Harvard University, alleged in “Inside NSA,” a mostly aggrandized exposé of April 1961, that NSA officials were hardly representative of “a national student viewpoint” and their national resolutions put the organization much closer to dangerous communist sympathizers. Phillips warned that that the NSA’s favorable positions on liberal policies, such as a unilateral nuclear weapon disarmament or rejecting loyalty oaths in education, were harmful to the greater interests of the United States. Phillips’ article scathingly

²³ Some of the larger articles about the NSA include Vera Tasse, “News Management: NSA Style,” *The New Guard*, June 1963, 10-11; “Vote ‘NO’ on NSA,” *The New Guard*, October 1963, 7, 18; Tom Huston, “You, Too, Can STOP NSA!: Words of Wisdom from an experienced warrior in the battle against campus domination by the National Student Association,” *The New Guard*, September 1964, 11-12.

²⁴ Tom Huston, “The Rise and Fall of NSA,” *The New Guard*, April 1964, 8-10.

criticized the NSA for its support of the sit-in movement led by Black students that began the previous year. Representation at a NSA summer congress from “left-wing” demonstrators and organizers from the Greensboro, North Carolina sit-in that protested segregated lunch counters demonstrated an unfair political bias, according to Phillips. “There was not one representative [at the NSA congress] of the opposing viewpoint, nor any reference to the possible violation of the right of property,” Phillips complained. This platforming of the Black Freedom Struggle was evidence to Phillips that the NSA was far too left-wing to possibly represent a majority of student voices, demonstrating again that YAF recognized their whiteness as normative and the civil rights movement as disruptive of their understanding of the United States. In this instance, a favoritism towards liberalism was understood as both a Cold War era framework of criticism of United States foreign policy against communism and a racialized lens in which “left-wing,” the defined enemies of YAF, also meant even casual support for the civil rights movement.²⁵

The New Guard and the Black Freedom Struggle

Harsh criticism of the civil rights movement made it into the pages of *The New Guard* remarkably often for an organization that was allegedly uninterested in supporting the segregationist wing of American conservatism. The civil rights movement directly challenged the YAF political ideology of liberty that comes from limited government interference, because government interference was exactly what was needed to enact full citizenship for Black Americans. Indifferent at best to the human rights abuses suffered under Jim Crow, the *New Guard* published extensive complaints about Black-led

²⁵ Howard Phillips, “Inside NSA,” *The New Guard*, Vol. 1, No. 2, April 1961, 12.

organizations and leadership. Exemplary of such criticism was the 1961 article written by twenty-three-year-old editor Antoni Gollan titled “At the CORE of Racial Tension”. Gollan decried the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) for their “affinity for the far left” and “provocative measures” that criticize capitalism. CORE was an early adopter of nonviolent direct action tactics to challenge Jim Crow in the entire United States. While not specifically a youth organization, CORE expanded into multiple college and university chapters across the United States in the 1960s and initiated student demonstrations. In 1961, CORE began the Freedom Rides, in which activists in CORE, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the leadership from the Nashville Student Movement joined together and rode interstate buses into the Deep South to challenge state and local laws regarding segregated bussing.²⁶ Gollan’s piece in *The New Guard* against CORE was in direct response to the Freedom Rides, which had garnered extensive national press coverage.

Gollan professed to be sympathetic to Black people’s “indignities” and fight against segregation because he had “Negro friends,” but he condemned CORE’s protests against racism in the United States as divisive and antithetical to how Americans should act. He wrote that CORE’s activities were also unnecessary because of recent Supreme Court decisions such as *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and *Boynton v. Virginia* in 1960, which ruled that racial segregation in public education and interstate public transportation, respectively, was unconstitutional. Thinking he had provided a clear

²⁶ For further reading on the Freedom Rides, see Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

refutation of CORE's protests, Gollan believed that there could be no other explanation for CORE's love of "disorder" than them being part of a sinister "communist-front" organization. returning to the typical tactic of red-baiting civil rights activists and organizations.²⁷ "Emotional moderation...is what must be demanded from [African Americans]...[and] ultimately, the dignity and progress of American Negroes shall be determined by their own good judgment."²⁸

Gollan's patronizing remarks disregarded any critiques of capitalism and structural racism from CORE members as signs that they were really radical communists with no legitimate grievances, and emotionally overwrought to boot. Gollan amplified the infantilizing belief that Black people needed to fight against racism *the right way*, and played to the idea that Black civil rights organizations were dangerous not just because they were Black, but because they were allegedly communist or communist-sympathizers. He also demonstrated ignorance of the structural existence of racism and white supremacy in the United States by asserting the *Brown* and *Boynton* Supreme Court decisions had ended Jim Crow.²⁹ Gollan's article was also selective in its evidence: it did not mention the brutal attacks against the Freedom Riders in Alabama where demonstrators were beaten by mobs and busses were firebombed. The dismissal of the

²⁷ Antoni Gollan, "At the CORE of Racial Tension," *The New Guard*, August 1961, 13-14, 17.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Although *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Boynton v. Virginia* indeed outlawed elements of segregation, the failure to enforce such desegregation, famously seen in 1955's *Brown II* order that desegregation occur "with all deliberate speed," continued segregation and discriminatory practices, and made demonstrations like the Freedom Rides necessary. For more on *Brown* and *Brown II*, see Charles J. Ogletree, *All Deliberate Speed: Reflections on the First Half Century of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004).

violence against Black activists seemed to be a strategic choice. By not mentioning the mob violence against American citizens, Gollan revealed that he likely did not care about the lives of Black people and was irritated that direct action methods by African American led groups like CORE disrupted everyday life in the South, similar to the argument made by YAF financier William F. Buckley Jr. four years earlier.³⁰ Consequently, when YAF articles ignored stories of terrorism by white racists, it hid the uncomfortable truth that local and state governments were unable to come to the assistance of their non-white citizenry and a federal response was necessary to ensure peaceful demonstration of First Amendment rights, and human lives more broadly. Ultimately, Gollan's critiques of civil rights protests appeared to resonate with the rest of the organization; he became the Southern Regional Director of YAF the following year in 1962.³¹

When violence was impossible to ignore, *New Guard* articles attacked both organizations *and* Black people who were associated with the fight against racism. Such was the case following the integration crisis at the University of Mississippi. When James Meredith's attempt to integrate erupted in racist mob violence on September 30, 1962 that injured over three hundred people and killed two civilians.³² Military response by the

³⁰ Buckley Jr., "Why the South Must Prevail," *National Review* (August 1957).

³¹ Antoni E. Gollan, "Negroes Have Been Failed," *The New Guard*, October 1963, 6; *Program for Testimonial Dinner Honoring Senator Spessard L. Holland*, September 22, 1962, State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, available online via <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/297449>.

³² For further reading on integration at the University of Mississippi, see James Meredith and William Doyle, *A Mission From God: A Memoir and Challenge for America*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012); Charles W. Eagles, "The Fight for Men's Minds': The Aftermath of the ole Miss Riot of 1962," *The Journal of Mississippi History*, No. 71 (Spring 2009), pp. 1-53; Nadine Cohodas, "James Meredith and the integration of Ole Miss," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, No. 16, (Summer 1997), pp. 112-122.

National Guard was necessary to resume peace and *New Guard* editor Lee Edwards felt he had no choice but to respond. Disavowing overt racism was not unusual in *The New Guard*, and writers argued, often passionately, that YAF members were not segregationists. Therefore, YAF had to perform a delicate rhetorical trick: respond to racist violence connected to the pro-segregationist faction of American conservatism and directly related to YAF's "states' rights" policy while still making the case for its principles concerning race, respectability, and *white* freedom.

Regarding the violence at the University of Mississippi, Edwards threaded this needle by both condemning the aggressors and arguing for the illegitimacy of James Meredith's actions. Edwards' editorial argued, "As conservatives we understand and support the theory of states' rights but as conservatives concerned about freedom and respectful of order, we cannot endorse lawlessness, insurrection or racism."³³ He then doubled down on previous allegations about the civil rights movement. Edwards asserted that Black men involved in the political sphere were dangerous to the stability of American society. "If [James] Meredith is a 'tool' of the NAACP he is a charlatan of the worst stripe," he wrote. The writing betrayed a feeling of disdain towards the idea of a politically active Black man. Edwards concluded, acknowledging conditional support: "But if he is a young man with a family interested in the best possible education, we wish him well as he pursues his course of studies."³⁴ Edwards might have expressed the desire

For integration at schools and universities across the United States, see Ed. Peter Wallenstein, *Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement: White Supremacy, Black Southerners, and College Campuses*, (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2008).

³³ Lee Edwards, "Meredith at Mississippi," *The New Guard*, November 1962, 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

for YAF to be an anti-segregation organization, but it was difficult to deny the racist stereotypes within his characterization of Meredith. While not an explicit statement of racial bigotry, Edwards' argument that Black men must only concern themselves with non-confrontational domestic values is representative of the underlying racism that YAF writers said they did not have.

The New Guard made clear that it stood for the freedoms of only some Americans. Despite writing about constitutional conservatism in issue after issue of the *New Guard*, editors did not recognize the hypocrisy for a group to project the constitutional needs for one group of people over another. This was not entirely unnoticed by readers, however. In a published letter to the editor of the June 1963 *New Guard*, Richard Gottfried of Flushing, New York asked if the YAF understood the freedom they claimed in their organizational title. “[A recent article] sounded as though [YAF] condones government restriction of thought,” Gottfried wrote. “Am I mistaken,” he continued, “or does YAF only support specific freedoms?”³⁵ From this letter, it seemed that not all readers of the *New Guard* shared the same views of coded bigotry that the editors held. Despite this and other letters of disapproval, editors of *New Guard* scoffed at the criticism with responses including, “Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors,” and “We hardly thought it necessary to point out that neither YAF nor the *New Guard* necessarily endorses all the products which are advertised.” One editorial response even belittled a reader writing, “To our dismay, some of our good readers are painfully humorless, failing to find

³⁵ Richard Gottfried, “Young Americans for What?,” *The New Guard*, June 1963, 2.

anything...funny.³⁶ Whether representative of a divide between the conservative leaning readers or not, editors, such as co-founder Lee Edwards, cared little for those that disagreed with his political views.

The New Guard published frequently on another theme: the ways that liberal politicians had allegedly failed African Americans. In 1963, editor Antoni Gollan wrote “Negroes Have Been Failed,” which specifically called out the Kennedy Administration and its policies related to Black Americans. The editorial described President Kennedy’s political attitude towards Black people as “sterile” and suggested that, “[Kennedy] does not know, or care to know[,] the people with whom he has had ‘limited experience.’”³⁷ Gollan further pointed out that if Kennedy really cared about the plight of Black people he would, “Stop playing golf on a segregated course and...send his daughter to a desegregated school.” Much of the editorial pressed that the Democratic Party only cared about the votes of Black Americans, to which Gollan specifically referred to as “counting noses.”³⁸ While some of this criticism could have been warranted, Gollan followed it up by writing that conservatives did not need to take up issues related to the rights of Black Americans either. “Because it is simply not in the cards for the conservative movement to be enlisted in the vanguard of the Negro movement, or to gain substantial increases in the Negro vote, conservatives do not have to ‘count noses’ before acting in behalf of the Negro,” Gollan wrote. “This allows a certain freedom, and a moral favor higher than that bestowed merely by political reward.”³⁹ This inconsistent logic exemplified the opinions

³⁶ The Editors, “Letters to the Editor Response,” *The New Guard*, June 1963, 2.

³⁷ Antoni E. Gollan, “Negroes Have Been Failed,” *The New Guard*, October 1963, 6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

of conservatives in YAF. This remained the case following the death of President Kennedy in November 1963, when the YAF turned its attention to Lyndon Johnson. Each issue of *The New Guard* included multiple articles criticizing the policies of the Johnson administration, especially the civil rights policies he proposed. One editorial referred to Johnson as “soft” on Black civil rights in “the eyes of Negro[e]s and white liberals.” and predicted that Johnson’s southern roots would create a dilemma where he would be unable to appease everyone in the Democratic Party coalition.⁴⁰ The editors of the *New Guard* only professed to care about Black Americans when it enumerated the shortcomings of liberals, and as an opportunity to criticize the Democratic Party as a failed political enemy.

The “civil rights question,” as they called it, was significant to YAF activists, but especially so due to the looming shadow of the coming 1964 election. YAF members sought out leading voices in the conservative movement to gain respect and political capital. YAF’s fixation on older conservative voices was evident in *The New Guard* editorials and articles, and certain figures became prominent figureheads of the conservative youth movement. From 1961 through 1964, the three conservative personalities that appeared time and time again were Barry Goldwater, William F. Buckley Jr., and Strom Thurmond. All three men were dominant voices for the segregationist side of the conservative movement, making them appropriate for inclusion in the young conservative magazine. Bill Buckley’s continued guidance of YAF was an

⁴⁰ Ben Stoker, “The Dozen Dilemmas of LBJ,” *The New Guard*, November 1963, 3; T.A. Quinn, “Plan for a Conservative Foreign Policy,” *The New Guard*, April 1964, 7; Donald J. Lambro, “Why America Can’t Stand Four More Years of Johnson,” *The New Guard*, September 1964, 15-16, 19; Charles A. MacBryde, “The Politics of Poverty,” *The New Guard*, October 1964, 13-14.

understandable explanation for reoccurring appearances and favoritism for *National Review* in YAF published writing. But Barry Goldwater and Strom Thurmond were figures all to their own—emphasized as saviors of the conservative movement that all young people needed to look up to. YAF’s devotion to the two senators can be explained by the obvious connection to the larger conservative movement, and yet both men also represented public positions and policies on race and implied white normativity that YAF publicly repudiated. Senator Goldwater, and especially Senator Thurmond, held strong opinions on civil rights activism and segregation in the United States. Despite YAF’s editorial pushback to not being racist, the endorsement of these voices in *The New Guard* was an endorsement for the political continuation of Jim Crow.

Courting Racists but not Racism in YAF⁴¹

Perhaps nothing illustrates YAF’s *The New Guard’s* implicit support for segregation more than its courtship of Strom Thurmond, a Democratic senator from South Carolina, in events and in the pages of *The New Guard*. Conservative political figures were no stranger to the YAF publication, but what separated the senator from others was his stance as a hardline segregationist and open racist. Thurmond served a brief, one-term, position in the South Carolina state senate as a Democrat from 1933-1938 and served as Governor of South Carolina after World War II in 1947 until 1951. In

⁴¹ YAF’s insistence in supporting acknowledged racists while still fervently committed to not embracing racism themselves is similar to Eduardo Bonilla-Silva’s scholarship on white people’s “color-blind racism” that emerged after the civil rights movement. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism & Racial Inequality in Contemporary America*, 3rd Edition, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010).

1948, Thurmond ran for president as a third party candidate for the States' Rights Democratic Party, popularly abbreviated as the Dixiecrat Party. Thurmond—and the Dixiecrat platform—specifically prohibited racial integration in the South and rejected President Harry Truman, a member of the Democratic Party, and his 1948 order to integrate the United States military. On a campaign stop in Louisville, Kentucky, Thurmond said civil rights initiatives would destroy the United States. Even civil rights proposals like Truman's military integration that mostly disrupt, and not even necessarily end, Jim Crow segregation were threats to the United States Constitution, in Thurmond's eyes. Thurmond argued in his speech—in a not dissimilar tactic employed by Cold War conservatives like the later YAF—that racial integration and ending Jim Crow segregation would “open the doors to eventual communistic control of the Republic.”⁴²

After Thurmond's failed run for president as a Dixiecrat, he returned to the Democratic Party and served as South Carolina's senator in the United States Senate, beginning in 1954. He continued to openly support segregation and attack the civil rights movement, even calling the recent *Brown v. Board* Supreme Court decision a “threat to the foundations of American democracy” on a CBS radio show just one month after his election to Congress.⁴³ Thurmond's prominent acts in Congress involved him directly opposing civil rights gains by African Americans. The most famous of these was the longest one-person filibuster in American history against the 1957 Civil Rights Act. The

⁴² For more on Thurmond and the Dixiecrats, see Kari A. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); “Thurmond Says Foes Yield to 'The Pinks',” *The New York Times*, October 14, 1948, 23.

⁴³ Associated Press, “Solon Says States' Rights Threat Great” *The Shreveport Times*, January 9, 1955, 8-B.

1957 bill was intended to support African American voting in the South by protecting voting from intimidation and coercion by any outside force. As a proud segregationist, Thurmond believed that the bill provided “unreasonable” power to the federal government. Over his twenty-four hours and eighteen-minute-long filibuster, Thurmond went state by state into the details of their constitutions to articulate why there were already sufficient voting protections in place. The senator also alleged that civil rights reform was a “corrupt” practice that sought to take expensive resources of the federal government’s and give them to a “race [not] ready for integration, and may never be.”⁴⁴ Thurmond was a proud and open segregationist and made his positions clear at multiple levels of his political career, making support from YAF especially significant.

But YAF did far more than just support Thurmond; he seemed inseparable from the organization. Thurmond was a constant guest speaker for YAF, including encouraging the young conservatives at a “Victory Over Communism” rally alongside Senator Barry Goldwater at Madison Square Garden in New York City in 1962. According to a report in *The New Guard*, the rally drew 18,000 people. When Thurmond appeared before the crowd to give his speech, the New York crowd allegedly sang “Dixie,” a song first used in nineteenth century minstrel shows, later embraced by the Confederate States of America as an unofficial national anthem during the Civil War, and revived in the twentieth century as piece of Lost Cause lore weaponized against non-white southerners and the civil rights movement.⁴⁵ The South Carolina senator also made

⁴⁴ Senator Thurmond, speaking on H.R. 6127, on August 28, 1957, 85th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 103, pt. 12:16263-16456; *Ibid.*, pt. 12:16397.

⁴⁵ “The Rally at Madison Square Garden,” *The New Guard*, Vol. II, No. 4, April 1962, 6; Strom Thurmond, “A Man of Courage,” *The New Guard*, October 1964, 6; On the song “Dixie” and its history with white supremacy in the South, see Tara McPherson,

a notable appearance at YAF's 3rd Annual Awards Rally in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in November 1963. There he gave a "stirring" speech—in the words of the subsequent write-up of the event—as the young audience waved signs and American flags.⁴⁶ Earlier that fall, Thurmond gave the Convocation speech at Howard College in Big Spring, Texas that YAF members helped set up. Following the speech, Thurmond took three YAF members with him on a flight to Greenville, South Carolina and spoke to the media of the great work "his YAF friends" were doing for "the cause of freedom."⁴⁷ Thurmond even appeared alongside YAF leaders at non-YAF sponsored events. At a 1962 dinner in celebration of Florida Senator Spessard L. Holland, a conservative Democrat who also advocated for states' rights and continued segregation of public accommodations, YAF members David Jones and Antoni Gollan joined Thurmond at the dinner to honor the Florida politician. Gollan, still YAF's Southern Regional Director, presented Holland a "YAF National Award" before Thurmond gave a tribute speech for his colleague later in the evening.⁴⁸

Thurmond was among the handful of Senators and Congressmen selected—possibly at the request of Buckley—to write in the "letter to the editor" space in *The New Guard's* second issue in April 1961. Thurmond's letter commended YAF for their "great work" informing young people of "liberties, economic stability, and constitutional

Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South (Duke University Press, 2003); Christian McWhirter, *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

⁴⁶ "YAF 3rd Annual Awards Rally," *The New Guard*, November-December 1963, 14.

⁴⁷ "Sen. Thurmond at Vulcan YAF," *The New Guard*, November-December 1963, 17.

⁴⁸ *Program for Testimonial Dinner Honoring Senator Spessard L. Holland*, September 22, 1962, State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, available online via <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/297449>.

government” to ward off “the march...toward socialism and welfare statism.” Notably, Thurmond was the second published letter on the page, underneath Senator Goldwater.⁴⁹ In the October 1964 issue, Thurmond appeared on the cover of the issue and published an editorial, titled “A Man of Courage.” In his YAF editorial, which was actually just the script of Thurmond’s televised announcement of his switch to the Republican Party, Thurmond proudly bragged on his decision to leave the Democratic Party and join the “Goldwater Republican Party” to preserve the “future of freedom and constitutional government.” He attacked the Democratic Party as the “Party of Socialism” that was engaged in invading the “private lives of people by using the power of government for coercion and intimidation of individuals.” Thurmond argued the Democratic Party now supported “judicial tyranny” from the Supreme Court instead of “the rights of the people and the States.” Although the editorial never directly mentioned the civil rights movement or African Americans, his argument of “judicial tyranny” to “wipe out local self-government [and] effective law enforcement” was a clear reference to Supreme Court decisions that, alongside Black-led civil rights protests, assaulted segregation and Jim Crow in the South. Thurmond called these threats on individual freedom part of “another reconstruction” mobilized by the Democratic Party. The word choice of “reconstruction” was purposeful and its negative use evoked a white supremacist mythology where the end of the civil war was not seen an opportunity for civil, social, and political freedoms for the newly emancipated African Americans, but a period white southern racists called “Negro rule.” Thurmond signaled to not just liberty-minded conservatives but angry southern white supremacists that governmental intervention to

⁴⁹ Strom Thurmond, “Letters to the Editor,” *The New Guard*, April 1961, 15.

assist Black people was an attack on *white* “local self-government.” This “reconstruction,” however, was “not only of the South, but of the entire nation,” Thurmond clarified, further stroking racist fears that the civil rights movement, in league with the Democratic Party, threatened white hegemony across the United States. Thurmond’s editorial, excitedly signed off by *New Guard* editorial staff and published in the critical timeslot of the month before the 1964 election, signaled to young and student readers of *The New Guard* across the United States that Black people demanding equal rights was dangerous and that Thurmond’s “courageous” vision of a conservative movement was directly related to upholding white supremacy.⁵⁰

Thurmond’s consistent appearances within *The New Guard* and alongside YAF leadership displayed that the South Carolina senator was more than a typical conservative politician for young conservatives in YAF. YAF described Thurmond as “one of our most outspoken supporters” since their founding and YAF student leaders were excited to attach him with their movement.⁵¹ YAF did not disavow Thurmond’s segregationist positions, nor publish any criticism of his association of Jim Crow with “freedom” and “liberty” conservatism. The connection between Thurmond and YAF underscored the organization’s attraction and endorsement of Thurmond as a constitutional conservative, yes, but were unbothered to legitimize Thurmond’s interpretation of the constitution that rejected Black freedom. While the YAF was adamant in some instances that they allegedly did not support ideas related to segregation or racism, in the paraphrased words

⁵⁰ Thurmond gave this same message originally on September 16, 1964 in a statewide television address seen in South Carolina. See, Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years 1963-65* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 493; Strom Thurmond, “A Man of Courage,” *The New Guard*, October 1964, 6-7.

⁵¹ Strom Thurmond, “A Man of Courage,” *The New Guard*, October 1964, 6.

of *New Guard* editor Lee Edwards for example, their proud support for a man that made his racial bigotry well known signaled their comfortability—and perhaps even acceptance—with open racism.

Strom Thurmond, however, was not the only conservative politician to tease white supremacy—and certainly not the largest political figure—that the YAF endorsed and fawned before. The October 1964 *New Guard* issue that carried Thurmond’s editorial also included the South Carolina senator on the cover of the magazine. Yet, Thurmond was dwarfed just to the right of the image by a large poster of Barry Goldwater’s face hovering in the background.⁵² Goldwater was YAF’s greatest hero, a position dating back to YAF co-founders Franke and Caddy’s Youth for Goldwater for Vice-President group in 1960. YAF loved Goldwater because of his political positions as a conservative, but Goldwater also displayed a willingness to address political opponents as militarized enemies. “Victory in the Cold War demands that we recognize that we are in a deadly, life-and-death struggle with the worldwide Communist movement,” said Goldwater at the 1962 Madison Square Garden rally. “[Communism] seeks the eradication of freedom...Our objective must be the destruction of the enemy” Goldwater demanded. “We must seek to destroy the decomposing virus [of communism],” he bellowed to the cheering crowd. Under Goldwater, young people in YAF learned that advocating for liberty was not enough. The success of YAF’s political movement required, according to Goldwater, the destruction of liberals and any left-associated group.⁵³

⁵² *The New Guard*, October 1964.

⁵³ “The Rally at Madison Square Garden,” *The New Guard*, Vol. II, No. 4, April 1962, 7.

YAF members did more than just campaign for Goldwater as their champion for “liberty” conservatism; they unequivocally were devoted to him down to a level that could have been described as an obsession. Advertisements in the *New Guard* magazine were covered with products related to the Republican candidate. Some promotions were the typical run-of-the-mill campaign objects, such as bumper stickers, campaign buttons, book covers, and sweatshirts. Some of the advertisements encouraged students to purchase the items to “bug the liberals and spread the word.” Despite the magazine’s obvious love for the senator, these items were hardly unorthodox for a political campaign.⁵⁴ There were, however, far more bizarre products advertised. *The New Guard* advertised “Goldwater Victory Lighters” that included an elephant head with Goldwater’s thick, horn-rimmed glasses on its face.⁵⁵ The most outlandish advertisement promoted a cologne titled, “Gold Water: A Cologne for Americans.” This play on the presidential candidate’s name was a product designed to make a buyer smell “spicy, partisan, and pungently American.” The advertisement continued with, “How to smell Barry nice: splash on Gold Water!” The advertisement instructed all interested buyers to “Order Gold Water for yourself, your friends, Christmas gifts, and at least one liberal.”⁵⁶

The obsession of Goldwater stretched beyond campaign advertisements. YAF members invited Goldwater to membership rallies, introduced him at campaign events

⁵⁴ “Help Barry and America: Use Goldwater in ’64 Bumper Stickers,” *The New Guard*, November-December 1963, 19; “Barry Goldwater Bookcovers,” *The New Guard*, November-December 1963, 12; “Barry Goldwater Buttons,” *The New Guard*, April 1964, 17; “Barry Goldwater Stamps,” *The New Guard*, October 1964, 23; “Order Now!! Goldwater Sweatshirts,” *The New Guard*, September 1964, 22; (quotation) “New Bumper Stickers,” *The New Guard*, October 1964, 24.

⁵⁵ “Goldwater Victory Lighters,” *The New Guard*, September 1964, 19.

⁵⁶ “Gold Water: A Cologne for Americans” *The New Guard*, November-December 1963, 19.

and defended his policies in *The New Guard*.⁵⁷ Goldwater published multiple editorials in YAF's magazine, including two in back-to-back issues in fall 1964.⁵⁸ Goldwater was so popular among members of the YAF that he seemed to appear in any story tangentially related to him. Following the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the YAF published a brief obituary for the slain former president. "One finds oneself groping about for the right words to express the feelings of this nation as they surely must be at this particular moment in history," began the piece. It continued, "Perhaps no one has better placed this entire tragedy within context than Senator Barry Goldwater."⁵⁹ Even when discussing the recent passing of the former president the YAF was unable to remove Goldwater from their mind.

Goldwater's connection to racism and segregation were, however, an inescapable element of his 1960s political career, again complicating YAF's open devotion to the senator. While Goldwater was not a member of the segregationist Right, he, too, embraced a constitutional conservatism that used "freedom" as a policy position to reject Black civil rights on the basis that the civil rights movement called for federal overreach against state and local power. This type of conservatism was not the same level as open support for segregation, but it was still a level of racism that disparaged efforts to dismantle Jim Crow. Black activists themselves identified Goldwater's alliance with segregationists. When Martin Luther King Jr. was asked about Goldwater's voting

⁵⁷ "Way Down South In the Land of Barry," *The New Guard*, April 1964, 16-18; William Kendall, "What Goldwaterism Is All About," *The New Guard*, October 1964, 8-9,12.

⁵⁸ Barry Goldwater, "A Message to Young Americans for Freedom from Senator Barry Goldwater," *The New Guard*, August 1964, 20; Barry Goldwater, "On the Side of Individual Choice," *The New Guard*, September 1964, 20.

⁵⁹ "JFK, RIP," *The New Guard*, November-December 1963, 4.

record, King said “While not himself a racist, Mr. Goldwater articulates a philosophy which gives aid and comfort to the racists.” Baseball legend Jackie Robinson, who joined other Black delegates for the Republican Party, made similar comments about Goldwater during the 1964 Republican national convention. Robinson, a longtime Republican, joined other Black delegates at the convention but responded in horror with Goldwater’s nomination, saying “A new breed of Republicans has taken over the GOP...which is seeking to sell to Americans a doctrine which is as old as mankind...the doctrine of white supremacy.”⁶⁰

Goldwater’s personal feelings toward racism and desegregation remain contested, but his voice as a conservative *and* critic of the 1964 Civil Rights Act ensured that, outside of open segregationists in the Democratic Party like Thurmond and George Wallace of Alabama, Goldwater was the largest political vehicle for the racial prejudices found in white southerners. Those that had long seen whiteness and white supremacy as the most important aspect of American life, specifically segregationists in the South, longed for a presidential candidate to speak on the dangers of federal government intervention that threatened historical systems of racism like Jim Crow. YAF’s endorsement of Goldwater also endorsed his criticism of civil rights legislation, which allowed racists to find a home in the movement.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Martin Luther King Jr., Statement on Republican nomination of Senator Barry Goldwater, July 16, 1964, Speech Collection, King Library and Archives, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Atlanta, Georgia, in Branch, *Pillar of Fire*, 396, n.77; Jackie Robinson, “Murder, Hate and Violence Will Be Weapons of ‘New’ Republicans,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 21, 1964; Branch, *Pillar of Fire*, 404.

⁶¹ For more on the historiographical debate on Goldwater’s connection to conservatism and racism in the changing Republican Party, see Perlstein, *Before the Storm*; Lee Edwards, *Goldwater: The Man Who Made a Revolution*, (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1995).

The students in YAF defended Goldwater's opposition to the 1964 Civil Rights Act in articles articulating the danger of federal control in the states. *The New Guard* editor Carol Bauman wrote that it did not matter what the political issue was, as federal intervention and "increased centralization" was a danger all Americans that valued individual liberty and state power.⁶² These young conservatives publicly reflected the rhetoric of state power over federal intervention into issues related to the civil rights movement. YAF may not have been as verbally infatuated with racism as white segregationists, but the support for Goldwater linked southern segregationists and the student Right as happy bedfellows, and perhaps further accommodated young conservatives to racist policies.

Thus, in the aftermath of the 1964 election, conservatives within YAF were disillusioned and deflated. Goldwater's electoral failure initiated an opportunity for student conservatives to question their movement and activism—perhaps for the first time. Conservative youth had to choose one of two paths: Some YAF members, like Lee Edwards, Robert Bauman, Douglas Caddy, and David Franke, continued working in conservative circles within or around the Republican Party. However, other YAF members abandoned the organization and turned toward spaces in the radical racist Right. The failure of Goldwater's presidential run—so deeply emphasized as *the* most important election for the conservative movement—pushed some members toward radicalism. Dennis C. McMahon, a high schooler, abandoned the group because of YAF's failure to effectively defeat campus leftists. By the end of the decade, McMahon would embrace openly explicit radical politics as a hope for a conservative victory and became a student

⁶² Carol D. Bauman, "Down with States," *The New Guard*, September 1964, 7.

supporter for segregationist George Wallace's 1968 presidential campaign. There, McMahon would meet Willis Carto, an antisemite and radical Right activist, and ultimately take a leadership position in Carto's neo-Nazi National Youth Alliance (NYA). McMahon was not alone: according to a later report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, most student leaders in the neo-Nazi NYA were former or ousted YAF members.⁶³

The YAF as a Radical Racist Right Vanguard

Young conservatives within YAF, despite insinuations to not being racist nor "fringe," could not fathom an idea of the federal government establishing specific freedoms and rights for a group of citizens that was not white. The concept of civil rights protestors taking rights away from white Americans was a common myth and fear tactic that segregationists used to ensure the power structure in the South remained intact. Still, the fact that southern whites had historically trampled the freedom of Black citizens did not matter to members of YAF. Echoing Goldwater's stance on federal intervention on behalf of civil rights, young people in YAF believed that the constitutional balance between the states and the federal government could not be compromised in the case of Black equality. Because of the stance of Senator Goldwater, YAF members were unwilling to consider assisting the cause of the civil rights movement.

⁶³ "NYA Success In New York," *Statecraft*, February-March, 1969, 4; Federal Bureau of Investigation file #157-3447: "National Alliance," May 20, 1969, 5, accessed within https://archive.org/details/foia_National_Alliance_aka_NYA-NYC-1/page/n175/mode/1up.

Compared to groups within the radical or conspiratorial Right such as the John Birch Society or the Ku Klux Klan, YAF conservatives often refrained from public support for radical political positions. Yet, there were instances where YAF material within *The New Guard*—even in their earliest issues—veered into radical territory. In the April 1961 *New Guard*, the second issue of the magazine, YAF member Robert Bauman—husband of editor Carol Bauman, who defended Goldwater’s stance on the 1964 Civil Rights Act—reviewed William Shirer’s 1960 bestselling chronicle of Nazi Germany, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. Notably, the review declined to condemn the fascist regime, making note of Adolf Hitler’s “evil genius” to take command of “a mighty nation.” Titled “Götterdämmerung,” or “Twilight of the Gods” in German, Bauman’s review seemed less about Shirer’s new book and more about an enchantment around Nazism. He wrote about Hitler with an admired respect for duty, citing that he learned the Nazi leader was “a man who could send millions to gas chambers but...faithfully attended the annual music festivals at Bayreuth.” Unsurprisingly, Bauman drew special attention towards the Nazi attacks against communists. He felt that Shirer’s book explained that Hitler “is responsible for many of the problems we face today, [such as] the Communist threat,” a conclusion that implied that Hitler’s failure was in not successfully eradicating all communists. The comfortable veneration from Bauman, as well as implicitly the editorial staff of *The New Guard*, of the genocidal dictatorship was an eerie departure from YAF’s image of patriotic conservatism, much closer to a Lost Cause level of mythologizing and evidence of fascination with Nazi material.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Robert E. Bauman, “Götterdämmerung,” *The New Guard*, April 1961, 10.

Moreover, not everyone in YAF was bothered with the “radical” characterization of conservatives by liberal detractors. M. Stanton Evans, a Yale graduate, editor of the *Indianapolis News*, and writer of YAF’s Sharon Statement, discussed the emergence of student conservatism in his 1961 book, *Revolt on the Campus*. The September 1961 issue of *The New Guard* published an excerpt of Evans’ book titled, “Can a Conservative Be a Radical?” Evans argued that conservatism referred to a specific “view of man, society, and the moral order,” and “today’s young rebels,”—as he defined student conservatives—must reject unnatural changes to “tradition” and “Western civilization.” Young conservatives, he concluded, must embrace radical methods when “essential tradition is...violated” and use whatever revolutionary acts necessary to restore “tradition.”⁶⁵

Subsequently, some YAF members embraced the “radical” title as a badge. In October 1961, a local YAF chapter picketed Trenny Auto Sales in Indianapolis, Indiana. The chapter members decided to picket the auto dealer as an “immoral” Communist sympathizer because the shop sold the Polish-made car, the Skoda. Following pushback from workers due to the multi-day disruption at the dealership, the lawyer for the auto dealer called out the YAF picketers as an “extremist group” that did not have the facts. Gordon Durnil, the chairman of the Indianapolis YAF chapter, was unfazed by the label. Durnil emphasized that “Communist slave labor” and the ideology “avowed to bury [the United States] had no right to exist in an American community.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ M. Stanton Evans, “Can a Conservative Be a Radical?,” *The New Guard*, September 1961, 8.

⁶⁶ Gordon L. Durnil, “Communist Cars and Polish Hams,” *The New Guard*, December 1961, 13.

There were other instances where the transition from conservative to radical happened much earlier than 1968. A former YAF member wrote a 1963 editorial in *The Stormtrooper*, the neo-Nazi newspaper of the American Nazi Party, titled “Why Conservatism Can’t Stop the Black Revolution.” The author, identified only as “A Former Conservative,” wrote that he was originally interested in the possibility of “Decentralization” argued by conservatives, until he felt that the conservative political movement was unable to effectively respond to the growing visibility of the civil rights movement. “The ‘non-violent’ Negroes...had been looting our stores, beating our outnumbered and unorganized men, and raping our women...Our conservative organization had completely collapsed,” cried the author. The editorial blamed conservative electoral politics and turned to antisemitism as a solution when he called out Goldwater for his Jewish ancestry. “Everything I had believed in collapsed around me,” he complained. “It was now crystal clear that Goldwater, the Jewish apostle of the tactics that had spelled defeat for the White man, was a phony, a Judas goat, leading us down the drain.” This former YAF member denounced “Goldwater, the Jew” over a year before the 1964 election, and insisted that abandoning conservatism in favor of Nazism was essential for white victory.⁶⁷

The young conservatives in YAF both confirm and complicate narratives of 1960s conservatism. Radical or fringe elements within American conservatism were not obscure, and these ideas continued to populate the larger political movement. Pushback to the civil rights era became an inflection point within the American Right and racism—

⁶⁷ A Former Conservative, “Why Conservatism Can’t Stop the Black Revolution,” *The Stormtrooper*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (July-August 1963), 18-21.

both silent and overt—quickly dominated conservative political identities as much as anti-communism did in the immediate post-war era.⁶⁸ But YAF members, in threading a path between explicit disavowal of segregationism and implicit white supremacist ideology, forged a path that the radical racist right would follow for decades to come. YAF members rarely discussed race on a public level, which could lead to interpretations that these young conservatives appeared to not care explicitly about race. Time and time again *New Guard* editors like Lee Edwards and Antoni Gollan wrote that a literal interpretation of the United States Constitution was all that kept the Soviet Union, not the civil rights movement, from destroying American principles of freedom and liberty. Yet, the coded language in YAF’s dissatisfaction of “radicals” and “communists”—and how these coded phrases were sometimes understood as descriptions of Black people and Black politics—paints a picture of conservative young people in YAF secretly wishing more would be done to confront “the Negro question,” whether that be ensuring Black Americans remained cut off from full citizenship, or perhaps—given the term’s usage by the former YAF member-turned neo-Nazi supporter—something genocidal.⁶⁹

YAF’s support for men like Strom Thurmond might be the key to understanding the ideology of the movement, as well as the move of Right-leaning youth from

⁶⁸ John S. Huntington, *Far-Right Vanguard: The Radical Roots of Modern Conservatism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021); Clive Webb, *Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010); Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (Durham, University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

⁶⁹ Lee Edwards, “Where the Iron Curtain Begins,” *The New Guard*, October 1961, 2; A Former Conservative, “Why Conservatism Can’t Stop the Black Revolution,” *The Stormtrooper*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (July-August 1963), 18-21.

conservatism to the radical racist Right. The deification of Thurmond and Goldwater by the YAF made it all but impossible that their antiblack racism would not bleed into YAF ideas. Support for Thurmond and Goldwater also made it easier to stomach other, increasingly extremist, positions. At the 1962 YAF rally at Madison Square Garden, where Thurmond teased support for segregation and Goldwater echoed aggressive militaristic language, there was also a speech from Goldwater's *The Conscience of a Conservative* ghostwriter and YAF co-founder, L. Brent Bozell Jr. Bozell called for a "reassertion of Western principles" within the conservative movement, implying that YAF's struggle was not only political but concerned heritage and some level of racial identity. Just outside the Garden, officially unrelated to the event in the eyes of YAF members, a handful of followers of the American Nazi Party (ANP) picketed to draw awareness to their antisemitic belief connecting communism and Jews. ANP members handed out pamphlets to attendees as they entered and left the rally. YAF leadership surely rejected any Nazi identity and disregarded the ANP as kooks, but the messaging within the arena might not have been too different from what was presented on picket signs just outside. For at least one college student, the author of the 1963 anti-conservatism article in *The Stormtrooper*, the ANP leaflet "really [had] some solid ideas" and he joined the organization a year later.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ "The Rally at Madison Square Garden," *The New Guard*, Vol. II, No. 4, April 1962, 6; A Former Conservative, "Why Conservatism Can't Stop the Black Revolution," *The Stormtrooper*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (July-August 1963), 20.

Barry Goldwater did not win the 1964 presidential election. Lyndon Johnson throttled Goldwater and won over 61 percent of the popular vote, the largest popular vote margin in modern American history.⁷¹ The 1964 Civil Rights Act passed Congress and the legislation was soon followed by the 1965 Voting Rights Act. For those living in the mid-1960s it could have appeared as if the conservative movement had failed. This, however, was not the case.

The early conservative youth activists and the longevity of their movement would find their moment later. While Lyndon Johnson's Great Society fundamentally transformed the United States and became a foundation of the 1960s liberal hour, conservative politicians dominated Republican primaries, won congressional seats and governor's houses in 1966, and the United States presidency in 1968, with "law and order" conservative Richard Nixon. Following the 1960s, after the proverbial dust settled, the organizers on the political Left who once marched down city streets had gone home, leaving behind federal policies that would be challenged by conservative Republicans. By the 1970s it seemed as if the energy of the New Left coalition had declined. The conservative activism, on the other hand, had only just begun. American conservatism continued and even thrived as a political enterprise in the subsequent decades, delivering not only a two-term presidency of Richard Nixon, but also the landslide victory of former YAF sponsor Ronald Reagan as the fortieth President of the United States in 1980.⁷²

⁷¹ David Leip, "1964 General Election Results," *Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections*, <http://uselectionatlas.org>.

⁷² On the political success of the conservative Right in the United States, see Donald T. Critchlow, *The Conservative Ascendancy: How the Republican Right Rose to Power in Modern America, Second Edition, Revised and Expanded* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011).

Perhaps young conservatives really were not racist, and they actually cared deeply about limited government policies and states' rights in as literal of a sense as they understood these positions. The pipeline from student conservative to radical racist was hardly direct. But it is erroneous to excuse YAF's flirtation with and even open embrace of segregationists as insignificant. Their obsession with Barry Goldwater as a vanguard for the conservative movement meant that they often repeated his policy positions, and left little wiggle room for disapproval. Goldwater's acceptance of segregationist bedfellows sanctioned the YAF to hold the same philosophy. But it also was not just Goldwater that stimulated racist thinking, and the multiple alliances YAF members held with segregationists complicates any insistence from members that they were race-blind or uninterested in "fringe" politics. Consequentially, the conservative student revolution initiated by YAF opened the door for young people to self-identify conservatism and Right-wing politics with racist ideas.

Goldwater's political defeat, ultimately, initiated a concern in some young people that traditional electoral politics—and perhaps even the entire electoral system—might not be the path to victory. Some turned from Goldwater to Wallace in 1968 and eventually found their way within the neo-Nazi National Youth Alliance. Others joined alongside George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party. These two paths, tempted, perhaps, to be labeled as only extreme outliers, still demonstrate a stable pathway from liberty-minded conservatism to more aggressive politics in the eyes of frustrated and disillusioned white youth. YAF activism reflected, at a minimum, a willing acceptance for policies that disparaged African Americans as subservient and liberalism as encompassing traitorous enemies in need of eradication. The militant rhetoric and racist

apologias within YAF did not produce the intended political victory, but instead became the gateway drug to future white power politics.

Chapter 2. Winning Young Men Over to Sanity: George Lincoln Rockwell and the Development of a White Power Youth Movement

In the late summer of 1966, Martin Luther King, Jr. traveled to Cicero, Illinois—a suburb to the west of Chicago—as part of his Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s (SCLC) alliance with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCOO) that, together, became the Chicago Freedom Movement. The Chicago Freedom Movement was a coordination of rallies and demonstrations in the Chicago area to protest housing discrimination and other forms of workplace and educational inequality and segregation. In league with Jesse Jackson’s Chicago chapter of Operation Breadbasket, an economic justice organization for Black communities, and Robert Lucas’ Chicago chapter of Congress for Racial Equality (CORE), marches like these in the predominantly white Chicago suburbs were significant contributions to expanding the larger Freedom Movement towards the issues of de facto segregation outside of the former Jim Crow South. Ultimately, the Chicago Freedom Movement was but one of many organized fair housing campaigns across the United States from 1966 through 1968 and roused national support for the passing of the eventual 1968 Civil Rights Act.¹

¹ For reading on the Chicago Freedom Movement, see Ed. Mary Lou Finley, Bernard LaFayette, James R. Ralph, and Pam Smith, *The Chicago Freedom Movement: Martin Luther King Jr. and Civil Rights Activism in the North* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016); Robert B. McKersie, *A Decisive Decade: An Insider's View of the Chicago Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013). On fair housing campaigns as part of the larger civil rights movement, see Rhonda Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggle Against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton University Press, 2005); Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years 1965-68* (New York:

Yet, the demonstrations that summer of 1966 in Cicero were also important for the counter demonstrations of white mobs that accosted the civil rights marchers. The attacks from white racists represented a flashpoint in the evolution of coalitionary organizing and activism within the radical racist Right. While in Cicero—and Chicago at large—white rage from local segregationists and white supremacists attacked the Black civil rights demonstrators with protest violence in ways King said he had not experienced in his years operating in the Deep South. “I can say that I have never seen, even in Mississippi and Alabama, a mob as hostile and as hate-filled as I have seen in Chicago,” King remarked to news reporters, after a day in which white protestors threw rocks, bottles, and even bricks into the march for housing integration.² Over a period of two weeks, the white mob burned multiple vehicles owned by Freedom marchers, assaulted members at the demonstrations, and consistently berated and harassed those associated with King’s protest.

Mixed amongst the crowd of white agitators was a substantial assembly of young people, including some small children, yelling slurs and threats of physical harm. Among these counter-demonstrators were typical mainstays of white counter protests, such as American and confederate flags. But also in attendance were highly visible swastikas, Nazi style uniforms and paraphernalia, and large black and white posters with the phrase “white power” displayed by dozens of angry young white people among a crowd one

Simon & Schuster, 2006); Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*, (New York: Random House, 2009).

² Gene Roberts, "Rock Hits Dr. King as Whites Attack March in Chicago: Felled Rights Leader Rises and Continues Protest as Crowd of 4,000 Riots; Rock hits Dr. King in Chicago Attack." *New York Times*, Aug 06, 1966, 1.

New York Times report described as nearing one thousand or more.³ News coverage captured what appeared to be a twenty-something year old dressed in an apparent homemade black SS body armor, complete with an era-appropriate German military helmet. King later recalled to news reporters that it was as if “swastikas bloomed in Chicago parks like misbegotten weeds.”⁴

This disruption of the Chicago Freedom Movement rally was not spontaneous. The display of white resistance in Cicero in August 1966 was part of an organized campaign of intimidation and provocation carried out by young neo-Nazi enthusiasts associated with George Lincoln Rockwell’s American Nazi Party (ANP). Much of the larger white power movement has owed its success and organizing practices to the ANP under Rockwell’s charismatic leadership. His ANP was successful in merging anti-communist rhetoric, racist hatred, antisemitic conspiracy theories, and organized protests, as well as his particular recruitment and radicalization of young men. Founded in 1959 by Rockwell after multiple failed stints in Right-wing organizations, the ANP draped itself in the physical iconography of Adolf Hitler’s Nazi Party and operated as an aggressive marriage of anti-communist rhetoric with antisemitism and anti-Black racism. This dedication to the imagery and messaging of Hitler’s Nazis lasted for about 8 years, up until internal division within the organization’s leadership structure and group’s rebranding as the National Socialist White People’s Party shortly before Rockwell’s

³ Gene Roberts, “Whites in Chicago Mob Negro March: Police Fire Weapons in Air to Protect Housing Rally in Segregated District; Chicago Whites Mob a Negro March,” *New York Times*, Aug 08, 1966, 1; Sydney H Schanberg, “Police in Chicago Clash with Whites After 3 Marches: Chicago Whites and Police Clash,” *New York Times*, Aug 15, 1966, 1; Jacques’ Nevard, “Marchers Pelted in Chicago Suburb: Police Hold Off White Mob Encircling Demonstrators,” *New York Times*, Aug 24, 1966, 34.

⁴ Roberts, “Rock Hits Dr. King,” *New York Times*, 1.

death in 1967. While much more of a social movement organization than an actual political party, Rockwell's ambitions for the ANP were for national electoral success: an ultimate installation of national socialist policies at the federal level after his hopeful election to the presidency of the United States in 1972, a promise Rockwell and his followers bellowed—and used as a banner hung in their headquarters—as “The Jews Are Through in Seventy-Two!” The ANP's political platform included a continuation of Hitler's genocidal ambitions from the Final Solution, specifically involving Rockwell's desire to gas “Marxist-Zionist traitors” and “the establishment of an International Treason Tribunal to investigate, try, and publicly hang, in front of the U.S. Capitol, all non-Jews who are convicted of having consciously acted as fronts for Jewish treason.”⁵

The organization, itself, was never particularly large and at its height only included a “few hundred” members according to FBI investigators.⁶ Although, despite the low membership it still consisted of a passionate assembly of members almost religiously loyal to Rockwell, along with—in Rockwell's words—thousands of people “who actively sympathize, write to us, and sometimes help us”—who were dissatisfied in one way or another with the political and social transformations of the 1960s. In a figure likely purposefully exaggerated to make the organization appear stronger than it was, or representative of Rockwell's inflated ego, he claimed “there are about 10 million Americans that are mighty grateful that we are operating.”⁷

⁵ Frederick J. Simonelli, *American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*, (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1999), 33-34; FBI File #9-39854: George Lincoln Rockwell, Monograph, “American Nazi Party,” June 1965, 17.

⁶ FBI File #9-39854: George Lincoln Rockwell, Monograph, “American Nazi Party,” June 1965, 32; Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 48.

⁷ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 141; FBI File #9-39854, “American Nazi Party Monograph,” 33.

So if the organization was little more than an “annoyance,” in the words of one Rockwell biographer, why should researchers care about this small collection of racists and bigots?⁸ Rockwell’s vitriolic politics—specifically the racism and anti-communism—were hardly on the fringe of the American political spectrum in the 1960s. Groups like the Ku Klux Klan and, by the 1950s, White Citizens’ Councils, were already successful organizational spaces for the racist Right, and the John Birch Society and William F. Buckley Jr.’s *National Review* crowd mobilized popular anti-communist rhetoric and combined it with neo-Patriot and American nationalist flair. The ANP fit within the Cold War era of the American Right and expanded beyond the larger bifurcation of right-wing movements that fell in either an anti-communist or openly racist camp.

The ANP’s explicit racism was similar to other hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan, but they moved beyond racist positions to embrace an anti-communism that was directly tied to antisemitism, separating them from radical Cold War warrior groups in the American Right like the John Birch Society. While not the first on the Right to use antisemitic tropes in one way or another, Rockwell was unique in associating antisemitic theories of Jewish global cabals with anxieties involving international communist conspiracies—theories popularized by the American Right during the Cold War. Rockwell’s brand of antisemitism made him a godfather of radical Right talking points. Rockwell popularized Holocaust denial within his ANP and moved these ideas to a more mainstream audience within the radical racist Right. Rockwell was not the first to dabble in Holocaust denial theories, but he successfully popularized them with his loud and

⁸ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 141.

bombastic messaging, tours across the country, and the eventual dissemination of his own members into future radical Right organizations. By the end of the 1960s, Rockwell's Holocaust denial viewpoints metastasized into a mandatory position of antisemitic ideology within right-wing communities.⁹

Rockwell leaned unapologetically into extremist messaging and conspiracy theories. His ANP called for a white ethno-state in the United States, often rejecting the “cowards” of the Birchers for not acknowledging an international Jewish conspiracy. He also disapproved of the tactics of the Klan and segregationist groups in the South, of which he saw as political “suicide” for holding such an exclusive, singular position that avoided a position on Jews.¹⁰ Rockwell specifically associated anti-communism with antisemitism, arguing communism was but a large conspiracy by international Jews to conquer the world. He then further incorporated racial separatism and anti-racial integration politics with his antisemitism by associating Black American liberation with a Jewish conspiracy. He then shrouded all of this within a Christian Identity framework—allowing followers of the Gospel with bigoted views or racist fears a safe space to associate their theology with hate. In other words, Rockwell congealed the racial purity and anti-Jewish philosophies of Hitler's Nazism within an American context of Right-wing politics.¹¹

⁹ Right wing political figures like Gerald L. K. Smith, founder of the America First Party in 1943 employed holocaust denial prior to Rockwell. See, Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, (New York: Plume, 1994); Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 2-3.

¹⁰ *The Stormtrooper*, no. 1, February 1962, p.23-24.

¹¹ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 4.

More important than his ideological influence, however, was Rockwell's mobilization of young people within his movement and his eccentric sense of humor that visually dominated ANP materials. Rockwell attracted youth both consciously and subconsciously in recruitment tactics, propaganda materials, and college speaking tours, but also used humor and irony as a weaponized tactic against his enemies and a creative tool for recruiting immature young people. In messaging and in their recruitment, the ANP believed that victory for their movement relied on winning over American youth to their cause.¹² Significantly, the organization was particularly popular amongst young white males, with the majority of the membership being high school or college dropouts in their twenties.¹³ Youth—primarily those in adolescence through late twenties—were specifically recruited and incorporated into the ANP to fulfill Rockwell's goal of mirroring the organizational demographics of civil rights and New Left groups such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Rockwell's involvement of youth within his "nazification" of anti-communist politics went far beyond this small group of racist disruptors and into a political groundwork for future radical racist Right campaigns and messaging, particularly among young people. While the ANP never set out to directly design their Party as a youth group, the organization's membership and party leadership was almost exclusively made up of those under twenty-five-years-of-age, and sometimes even high school aged teens. Rockwell's Nazi Party, in an effort to

¹² Matt Koehl, "Sneaking Made Me Sick: An Open Letter to the NSRP from its former National Security Officer, Matt Koehl, *The Stormtrooper*, Number 3, November 1962, 15; George Lincoln Rockwell, "From the Desk of the Commander," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol 3, No.1, Jan-Feb 1964, 18.

¹³ FBI File #9-39854, "American Nazi Party Monograph," 33.

respond to the usage of youth in the larger Black Freedom Struggle, weaponized elements of youth culture—such as comic books, record labels, and, in particular, humor—to create a unique youth identity associated with the radical racist Right, which laid the necessary groundwork for an early youth movement devoted to White Power.

Rockwell's Background

George Lincoln Rockwell was born in 1918 to George Lovejoy Rockwell and Claire Schade Rockwell., Rockwell's two parents had significant stage and performance backgrounds. His father was a vaudeville comic in the 1920s and 1930s and his mother was a former "toe dancer" who performed a dance act with her family before she was married to Rockwell's father.¹⁴ It is possible that the young Rockwell took these family experiences to heart, either consciously or subconsciously, and built them into his specific performative activism later in his life. According to family interviews, Rockwell's comic personality did not originate with his later antisemitism and neo-Nazism. He was a sarcastic child and often acted out as a prankster. Family member accounts of Rockwell's childhood and adolescence described him as having little respect for authority, perhaps in reaction to the lack of a consistent father figure ever since George Lovejoy divorced Claire and abandoned the family when Rockwell was around six years old.¹⁵

¹⁴ George Lovejoy Rockwell was relatively successful and was one of the "best-paid vaudevillians in the country," earning "\$3,500 a week" in the 1930s, Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 5.

¹⁵ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 7-9.

After moving between three different high schools, Rockwell attended Brown University. He remained at Brown for two years before joining the United States Navy in March 1941. Because of his service in the Pacific Theater during World War II, Rockwell was promoted to lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy, and later as a bomber squad commander when he was transferred to Iceland in 1952.¹⁶ Rockwell was proud of his status as a military commander and continued this fanning of himself for the rest of his life. Rockwell's identity as "Commander Rockwell" became his go-to title as leader of his American Nazi Party.¹⁷

While not a justification—or even a fair diagnosis—for the origin of his ideology, Rockwell's childhood experiences exposed him to racist ideologies that were essential to his later political worldviews. According to interviews from members of the Smyth family, a household Rockwell spent a significant amount of time with during his adolescence, Rockwell grew up surrounded by racist and antisemitic beliefs and commentary. Allegedly, Rockwell's father "came home [from work] and did nothing but rant about the Jews," most likely referencing his coworkers. The Smyth family specifically described themselves as holding "anti-Semitic, anti-black, anti-Catholic, and anti-Italian" beliefs, further corroborating that Rockwell existed in an environment where "Jews were regularly referred to as 'kikes' and African Americans as 'niggers'."¹⁸ Despite the fact that these beliefs and slurs were commonplace amongst white households

¹⁶ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 18; Alex Haley, "Interview with George Lincoln Rockwell," *Playboy* (April 1966).

¹⁷ See "From the desk of the Commander" editorials in the ANP newsletters as examples of his "commander" presentation. "From the desk of the Commander" editorials, American Nazi Party, *The Stormtrooper Magazine* (1962-1968). Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 18.

¹⁸ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 11-12.

during the 1920s and 1930s, Rockwell would take this racism to a new level, racial calling for mass killing later in life. In fact, Rockwell biographer Frederick Simonelli concluded that despite the likely equal exposure amongst the family members and close friends to an atmosphere of racism and bigotry, only Rockwell “made the prejudices...the core of his worldview.”¹⁹

Rockwell’s transition into a specific warrior for national socialism and the ideology of Adolf Hitler came around the time of his military transfer to Iceland in 1952. According to Rockwell’s autobiography, *This Time the World*, he became a devout follower of Nazism after he read Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* and the antisemitic fabrication, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.²⁰ Rockwell found Hitler’s ideas fascinating. Rockwell appears to have believed that he had uncovered a hidden truth about the inner workings of the world and that only a select few knew this information. This “truth,” for Rockwell, was what he called the “Jewishness of Communism” and concluded that American conservatives needed to incorporate explicit antisemitism to accurately oppose communism.²¹ After his release from military service in 1954, Rockwell returned to the United States ready to initiate a campaign for a national socialist revolution.²²

Rockwell’s start as a radical racist Right campaigner was an unceremonious failure. From 1955 through 1957 he founded and operated the American Federation of Conservative Organizations, yet by accounts he was the only member, and he produced a

¹⁹ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 11.

²⁰ George Lincoln Rockwell, *This Time the World*, (Self-published, New York: Parliament House, 1963), 154-155; Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 23

²¹ Rockwell, *This Time the World*, 141.

²² FBI file #9-39854, “American Nazi Party Monograph,” 7;

newsletter titled *The Conservative Times*.²³ He remained connected to other organizations, however. During this time, Rockwell attempted to join in with better-established right-wing groups. Rockwell volunteered with Robert Welch's John Birch Society and worked on the writing and promotion of subscriptions for William F. Buckley's *National Review* to university students, before Buckley founded Young Americans for Freedom.²⁴ For Rockwell, however, neither of these positions with Welch or Buckley lasted long, but his short six-month work with *National Review* likely sparked his later interest—and a familiarity—in using college campuses as a recruitment drive for his movement. But, like some of YAF's members would do after 1964, Rockwell grew dissatisfied with conventional conservatism and hoped to form his own organization.

Rockwell's political transformation came in 1958 after meeting DeWest Hooker, a white nationalist and neo-Nazi operating out of New York City.²⁵ During the 1950s, the FBI regarded Hooker as “one of the most active pro-Nazi anti-Semites” within the American Right. Rockwell, in his autobiography, described Hooker as “the nearest thing to a Nazi...since the Bund.”²⁶ Rockwell's relationship with Hooker was a foundational moment for Rockwell's political framing as a Nazi. Rockwell wrote that “[Hooker] first taught me to know the cunning and evil ways of the enemy.”²⁷ Hooker convinced Rockwell that coded racism and antisemitism needed to be abandoned in order to be a successful right-wing revolutionary. Hooker operated as an open Nazi, including

²³ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 25; FBI file #9-39854, “American Nazi Party Monograph”; Rockwell, *This Time the World*, 108-16.

²⁴ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 24.

²⁵ Rockwell, *This Time the World*, 217; Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 26.

²⁶ FBI file #9-39854, “American Nazi Party Monograph”; Rockwell, *This Time the World*, 217.

²⁷ Rockwell, *This Time the World*, acknowledgements.

swastikas and other iconography. He believed that the failure of national socialist and other white nationalist campaigns to gain a foothold in the United States came from political “cowards” on the Right that—Hooker argued—believed in the same antisemitic conspiracies but were too interested in conservative respectability to fully embrace and represent hardline racist and violent rhetoric effectively and successfully. Possibly spurred by Rockwell’s poor treatment and unacceptance from conservatives like Buckley and Welch, Hooker’s ideas for a Nazi political movement that rejected a mainstream Right as “cowards” captivated Rockwell. Hooker inspired the now forty-year-old burgeoning neo-Nazi to embrace Nazi imagery openly and aggressively in order for his political ambitions to be successful.²⁸

Alongside the validation of Rockwell’s obsession with national socialism, it was through Hooker that Rockwell was first introduced to a neo-Nazi organization operated and organized by young people. Hooker’s neo-Nazi organization, the Nationalist Youth League, successfully recruited and incorporated New York City young people into extremist activism. Rockwell was “deeply impressed” with this group and was particularly captivated with the ability to use youth, who Rockwell described as “gangs of tough kids and potential juvenile delinquents,” and mold them into neo-Nazi foot soldiers that “worshipped” Hooker. “[All it takes is] leadership and guts,” Rockwell wrote in *This Time the World*, “to make decent, dedicated Americans out of little lost baby

²⁸ Rockwell dedicated his autobiography to—amongst others—DeWest Hooker and included some of the most detailed—and outlandish—descriptions of DeWest Hooker’s activism, including a false claim that Hooker was related to “the Hooker who signed the Declaration of Independence,” implying that Rockwell both idolized him and possibly embellished Hooker’s significance in order to better prop up Rockwell’s own image. Rockwell, *This Time the World*, 218; Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 26.

gangsters.”²⁹ Members of Hooker’s Youth League pledged “fanatical loyalty” to “the White Race and Adolf Hitler,” and organized picket demonstrations against perceived “Jewish Communism.”³⁰ Some of the first storm troopers—a name taken from the paramilitary wing of Hitler’s Nazi Party—in Rockwell’s Nazi Party came from the Nationalist Youth League, such as Matt Koehl and John Patsolos (later Patler). Through Hooker, Rockwell gathered the political trimmings of a Nazi identity, but also the admiration for a political framework designed around youth. Rockwell’s admiration for Hooker was unquestionable. Thus, while not specifically mentioned in any of his formal writings, Rockwell likely learned from Hooker’s NYL that any successful mass movement in the radical racist Right needed to incorporate youth.

Rockwell set out to form his own national organization. The early years of what would become the American Nazi Party were hardly successful, with Rockwell constantly seeking validation from other figures on the American Right. When Rockwell initially began organizing his American Reich he found difficulty gaining support from mainline conservative voices, most of whom either ignored him completely or saw him with disdain. Rockwell mailed several pamphlets related to the ANP to William F. Buckley Jr., and he shared and advertised within the *National Review*. There is little reason to believe there was any sort of cooperative relationship between Buckley and Rockwell, and Rockwell appeared in his mailings as more of a yearning fan who had yet to garner enough fame to receive the proper attention from leaders within movement conservatism. When Buckley himself did respond to Rockwell, he wrote back in disgust

²⁹ Rockwell, *This Time the World*, 218.

³⁰ Rockwell, *This Time the World*, 218.

at the almost exclusively antisemitic messaging from Rockwell's literature. Buckley wrote "the things you sent me physically appalled me."³¹ Other right-wing groups responded in similar fashion, leading Rockwell to double down in his messaging and frustration with right-wing leadership within the United States. He came to believe that groups like the John Birch Society, and especially mainstream American political parties, were too cowardly to recognize and subsequently call out the threat of what Rockwell believed to be an international Jewish conspiracy. Rockwell was convinced all of the American Right shared his specific antisemitic views, but were too timid and "weak" to speak out on them.³²

The rejections from prominent right-wing leaders deeply wounded him, however. Later in life, Rockwell never ignored an opportunity to mock those he believed spurned him. Rockwell remained particularly vengeful towards most other right-wing organizations and individuals, but specifically targeted William Buckley—whom he called "worse than useless"—Robert Welch—described by Rockwell as "Rabbit Welch" and a "hypocrite" and "a bourgeoisie of the right wing"—and even larger figures like United States Senator, and future presidential candidate for the Republican Party, Barry Goldwater—who Rockwell implied was a "secret jew," and called him a "fake" and "Kosher Conservative."³³ This type of name-calling was not just popular for Rockwell,

³¹ William F. Buckley Jr. to George Lincoln Rockwell, 23 December 1958, Buckley Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University; Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 31.

³² Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 25-26.

³³ FBI file #9-39854, "American Nazi Party Monograph," 63; Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 26; "Stormtroopers Expose Goldwater," *The Stormtrooper*, September-October 1964, 13; "Goldwater Is A Fake!," *The Stormtrooper*, September-October 1964, 14.

but remained a staple within the radical racist Right—especially among young participants.

Building a Nazi Youth Movement

Rockwell was interested in modeling his movement on the messaging and organizational tactics employed by contemporary Left-wing social movements, particularly regarding the involvement of young people. According to Rockwell, the “Jew-Communists and their accomplices...have thousands and thousands of (young idealists) in their filthy apparatus of treason.” He believed that American conservatives could not “comprehend” the fight needed to take on leftists, communists, and—what he believed to be—their Jewish allies and financiers. “Conservatives,” which in writing Rockwell often put in quotation marks as an emphasis against their political legitimacy in his eyes, “won’t take the trouble to ANALYZE the political situation and imagine they can win the YOUNG, FIGHTING IDEALISTS we need by the thousands.” Rockwell argued that conservatism and American “right-wingism” was “mostly a movement of old folks, rich people and cowards who don’t dare say what they mean for fear they will be smeared or lose their money.” In contrast, Rockwell believed that young people, “are utterly repelled by the disgusting cowardice and pussy-footing of ‘right-wing’ leaders.” Rockwell’s Nazis, he believed, were different and would not only stand up against the old guard of American right-wingers, but would also win over “young idealists” to the cause of national socialism because of sincerity in messages and courage to fight. Rockwell proudly declared in his first editorial for the ANP’s newsmagazine, *The Stormtrooper*,

“Only a desperately fighting idealistic movement can win these red young men over to sanity, and we will soon have hundreds and then thousands of them.”³⁴

Rockwell wanted his Nazis to not only be a successful political movement but physically look the part as youthfully “strong, healthy, and full of FIGHT.”³⁵ The minimum age for party membership was eighteen, and the vast majority of ANP members—especially in the early years of the organization—were young people in their early twenties. Matt Koehl, who served as the National Secretary, and ultimately replaced Rockwell after Rockwell’s death in command of the National Socialist White People’s Party (NSWPP), was twenty-five-years old when he joined; Robert A. Lloyd (later Robert Lloyd III), the ANP Security Officer, and later senior leader within the NSWPP alongside Koehl, was twenty-years old when he joined the ANP in 1964; Deputy Commander Allen J Welch joined the movement as a 24 year old; and John Patler, cartoonist, editor of the Party’s subscription magazine: the *Stormtrooper*, captain of the ANP’s stormtrooper unit, and eventual assassin of Rockwell, joined the party at 21.³⁶ While it is unclear whether the Party’s initial intention was to be explicitly a youth movement, the ANP’s core membership outside of the forty-something-year-old Rockwell was inseparable from an image of youth.

³⁴ George Lincoln Rockwell, “The Commander’s Report,” *The Stormtrooper*, no. 1, Feb. 1962 (February, 1962), 23-24.

³⁵ George Lincoln Rockwell, “Preface,” “Official Stormtrooper’s Manual,” (1963), 1, available within Pamphlet Collection 15-311, Wisconsin Historical Society Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

³⁶ The *Stormtrooper* listed the names and ages of significant members of the organization in a 1964 issue. See, “We Stood Alone,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol 3 No 2 Mar-Aug 64 Summer Issue (March-August 1964), 25.

In 1960, his first year as “Commander” of the American Nazi Party, Rockwell organized a series of public talks and demonstrations in New York City and Washington D.C. to, in his words, “aggravate the Jews so bad” they would be forced to give him publicity. Rockwell and his handful of followers received some media attention, but the notoriety did not lead to enough financial growth to expand his movement.³⁷ Outside of occasional demonstrations, Rockwell struggled over the first two years of operation to get his Party off the ground. His planned release of the official ANP newspaper, *The Stormtrooper*, for 1961 ran into continuous delays. Although the “Commander” later claimed the delays were due to him being busy “conducting a war,” it is much more likely that the ANP was financially in disarray.³⁸

Rockwell’s fortune finally changed in 1962. In early 1962, Rockwell initiated a series of talks and presentations at colleges and universities across the United States. Rockwell enjoyed speaking to young people at American universities, but particularly relished any occasion to share his politics with an audience. “If we are able to speak,” Rockwell wrote in the first issue of *The Stormtrooper*, “we convince people by our facts, our logic, our argument, our sincerity and our courage that we are right.”³⁹ The speaking tours were often opportunities where Rockwell took advantage of the free speech movement; invited by university student groups interested in holding an open forum on a variety of political ideas. Although many of Rockwell’s early campus speeches drew large crowds, it was overwhelmingly made up of protestors or students with morbid curiosity. Typically, Rockwell’s talks came and went, but there were times when

³⁷ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 46-47.

³⁸ Rockwell, “The Commander’s Report,” *The Stormtrooper*, no. 1, (February 1962), 3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

Rockwell's ideas were openly challenged. In Spring 1962, Rockwell gave a talk at San Diego State College. Rockwell's diatribe included his usual talking point about a conspiratorial Jewish-Communist alliance. Counter demonstrators did not allow the speech to continue and attacked Rockwell on stage with shouts, rocks, and eggs during his presentation. The disruption made national news, ironically giving Rockwell the mass attention he desired. Likely privately upset and frustrated with the disruption, internal messaging within the ANP framed the demonstration against Rockwell as Jewish-backed "mob action."⁴⁰

Rockwell's movement, consciously recognizing that Left-wing movements held a growing favor with American youth, purposefully curated a cadre of youth shock troops dedicated to mimicking the successful elements of direct action protest. The popularity of boycotts and sit-ins during the civil rights movement meant that the ANP needed public demonstrations of their own. The ANP's version of direct action involved disruption and agitation tactics like picketing—often with aggressive slurs written on signs—or physical confrontations with violence including vandalism and fist fights.⁴¹ ANP direct action was theatrical. A favorite form of demonstration for the ANP was the publicity stunt: outlandish or purposefully exaggerated performance designed to garner attention to their movement or disrupt certain events. In May 1961, the ANP coordinated a "Hate Bus" ride of young storm troopers from Arlington, Virginia to New Orleans, Louisiana. The bus—a small Volkswagen bus with painted-on slogans such as "We DO Hate Race Mixing" and "We Hate Jew-Communism"—was a mockery of the CORE and SNCC

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 16-19; Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce* (1st Books Library, 2001), 86.

⁴¹ FBI file #9-39854, "American Nazi Party Monograph," 22-29.

organized “Freedom Rides” that began the same month. The ten “Hate Bus” riders included three ANP members younger than twenty-five years old and one, John Patler, only twenty-two. The bus followed the path of Freedom Riders down to New Orleans before they were stopped by local police. The provocation still worked as a successful recruitment tool and *The Stormtrooper* advertised the operation as a “total victory for the White Man and the American Nazi Party!” Some future ANP members referenced the “Hate Bus” as the event that initiated their interest in the Party.⁴²

Some of the racist demonstrations were even more confrontational. On June 18, 1964, during the final day of Senate debate on the future 1964 Civil Rights Act, eighteen-year-old ANP member Jerry Cochran jumped from his seat in the Senate gallery, waved a Nazi flag, and shouted, “The politicians have betrayed America’s White majority! Only Rockwell can save us now!” before Capital police removed him from the Capital building.⁴³ A second incident at the U.S. Capital Building occurred on January 4, 1965. Robert Lloyd, a twenty-one-year-old “Captain” in the ANP, ran onto the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives during a roll call dressed in blackface, a black full body leotard, a yellow bandana, and a stovepipe hat yelling “I’ze Mississippi delegation. Ah demands mah seat! Ah is equal people!” According to reports, Lloyd ran around the House floor for three minutes before he was tackled and detained by Capital police. D.C. authorities

⁴² “Final Victory in New Orleans,” *The Stormtrooper*, No. 2, August 1962 (1962), 14; Karl R. Allen, “Why I Joined the Nazi Party,” *The Stormtrooper*, Vol 2, No. 1, Jan-Feb 1963 (1963), 17.

⁴³ George Lincoln Rockwell, “From the Desk of the Commander,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol 3 No 2 Mar-Aug 64 Summer Issue (March-August 1964), 3; FBI file #9-39854, “American Nazi Party Monograph Monograph,” 29.

released Lloyd with a twenty dollar fine for the disturbance.⁴⁴ The racist stunt was a direct mockery of Black voting rights activist and organizer Fannie Lou Hamer's actions at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, where she demanded that she and her fellow Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegates be seated and granted representation at the Convention.⁴⁵

This was not Lloyd's first disruption for the ANP. The previous June, alongside Jerry Lynne, a twenty-seven-year-old ANP member, Lloyd interrupted a youth banquet at a NAACP Convention at the National Theater in Washington, D.C. Lloyd rushed the stage during the banquet, which included former baseball star Jackie Robinson as an honored guest, yelled, "Go back to Africa, Niggers!" and tossed slips of paper that read "free boat tickets" into the crowd. Before leaving, Lloyd and Lynne released mice into the banquet hall as a final disruption tactic. The following night, Lynne, dressed in blackface, "ragged clothes," and a top hat, walked into the Convention and yelled, "Ah's your Uncle Remus and Ah's come to take you niggers back to Africa!" Both Lloyd and Lynne were arrested by local police and fined ten dollars.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ "Combat Reports: U.S. Nazi In Blackface Ridicules Mississippi Niggers In Congress," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Nov-Dec-January 1985 Winter Issue (November-December, 1964, January, 1965), 12-14; FBI file #9-39854, "American Nazi Party Monograph," 29.

⁴⁵ Fannie Lou Hamer, Testimony before the Credentials Committee at the Democratic National Convention, Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 22, 1964. Available within Maegan Parker Brooks and Davis W. Houck, eds, *The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer: To Tell It Like It Is* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), 42-45.; For a larger overview of Hamer's activism and the work of the larger Mississippi Freedom Movement, see Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1995).

⁴⁶ "Down With the NAACP," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol 3 No 2 Mar-Aug 64 Summer Issue (March-August 1964), 21; FBI file #9-39854, "American Nazi Party Monograph," 29.

In 1963, twenty-five-year-old ANP member Andrew Chappell initiated a “50 Mile Run for the White Race” in a mockery of the 50 mile “peace walks” that took place across the United States in opposition to the Vietnam War.⁴⁷ Wearing a white t-shirt with a black swastika sewn on the front, Chappell allegedly ran 50 miles in 100 laps around Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C. The ANP reported that this action “displayed the superiority of American Nazis” against “liberals and (peace) creeps.” The emphasis of racial superiority also implied subtextual *youth* as an important component for this athletic feat, implying that American Nazis were young and fit.⁴⁸ The following year, Chappell performed a second multi-mile run to continue his presentation of white, youthful power. Chappell attempted a 110 mile run from Richmond, Virginia to the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. to demonstrate for a repeal of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. A write up of Chappell’s “run” in *The Stormtrooper* called it a “super-human feat of physical stamina” as he, allegedly, ran for a total of “24 hours and 20 minutes.”⁴⁹ However, an FBI report on the American Nazi Party was skeptical of the event, and stated “no sightings had been reported of any runner making his way along the highway between Richmond and Washington.”⁵⁰ The ANP blamed a Jewish conspiracy for news blackouts of the event and any claims decrying Chappell’s run as fake.⁵¹

⁴⁷ “50 Mile Run for the White Race,” *The Stormtrooper*, Mar-Apr, 1963 (March-April, 1963), 14-15; FBI file #9-39854, “American Nazi Party,” 27.

⁴⁸ “50 Mile Run for the White Race,” *The Stormtrooper*, Mar-Apr, 1963 (March-April, 1963), 14.

⁴⁹ “Andrew Chappell Does It Again! 110 Mile Run To Repeal the Civil Rights Bill,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol 3 No 2 Mar-Aug 64 Summer Issue (March-August 1964), 21.

⁵⁰ FBI file #9-39854, “American Nazi Party Monograph,” 28.

⁵¹ “Andrew Chappell Does It Again! 110 Mile Run To Repeal the Civil Rights Bill,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol 3 No 2 Mar-Aug 64 Summer Issue (March-August 1964), 21.

Rockwell's Nazis thrived on a style of theatrical and hyper-aggressive hate speech that used jokes to depict non-whites—most predominantly African Americans and racialized Jews—as subhuman. Rockwell's Nazi party embraced the label of provocateur and used purposefully absurd and inflammatory comments about deportation, mass killing, or a white ethnostate to instigate conflict and draw attention towards their organization. One of its more popular “joke” tactics was a pamphlet called a “Boat Ticket to Africa.” The ticket mentioned a boat “shaped like [a] Cadillac with fins,” with a “chicken coop and watermelon patch on deck,” and that “NAACP members may sit up front.” The leaflets sold for two cents in *The Stormtrooper* magazine to subscribers and were handed out to supporters at ANP rallies, or thrown at Black people or other passersby [1.1].⁵² The ticket was indeed racist, but designed to be purposefully outlandish and produce an emotional reaction from ANP enemies and amusement from racists. This messaging was effective, as the ANP often received letters of support, with some letters mentioning how popular they were with friends and how humorous they found the materials.⁵³ When confronted, Rockwell and other ANP members insisted that they were only engaging in hyperbolic humor that liberals found offensive.⁵⁴

Especially important, was how this exaggerated bigotry found an audience in American teens and young adults. Rockwell was interested in marshaling young people for the national socialist cause, but felt that youth culture needed to be improved. In one

⁵² “Coon-ard Lines: Boat Ticket to Africa,” American Nazi Party records, 1963-1970, SC-398, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁵³ Nick B., “Boat Tickets Hailed,” “Letters,” *The Stormtrooper*, Summer Issue 1965 (1965), 42; “Whiteman Comics,” J. W. V. and G. B., “Letters,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Nov. 1966, YF 77 (1966), 46.

⁵⁴ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 51.

of his “Rockwell Report” editorials, a separate publication in addition to *The Stormtrooper* newsmagazine, Rockwell discussed what he believed was an inherent racism that existed in all young white men. He believed young men, particularly “all over the southern United States,” happily identified as “nigger haters” and are “ready to put down the blacks by violence at the drop of a hat.” He argued that the nature of young white men, outside of the “Jewish-liberal atmosphere of the universities and colleges,” compelled them to recognize the importance of their whiteness, reject non-whites “as Nature intended them to,” and easily accept white supremacy as truth. Yet, Rockwell argued contemporary youth culture was a hang-up in awakening young people to a natural state of racism. He wrote that these same racist young men were nurtured—due to a “rotten (Jewish) monopoly of TV, records, movies, and all other media” to happily participate in culture that does not reflect white values. He was particularly disgusted by Black culture and Black music—likely referencing newly popular “rock and roll” music—which Rockwell called “cannibal music,” amongst other slurs. Jews, in Rockwell’s mind, controlled all media and purposefully put out Black music to “hypnotize” white youth and destroy “the subtleties (and) beauties of WHITE MAN’S MUSIC.” Culture, just as much as biology, mattered to Rockwell. Rockwell sought out a type of political activism where racist cultural items—such as music, literature, or art—must exist upstream from political awakening in order to flow towards eventual political power. Theorizing that Black culture acted as a type of Pavlovian control over even the most resilient racists, Rockwell ensured that his neo-Nazi movement would publish not only white supremacist ideas and policy to challenge Black politics, but challenge Black

culture and curate and produce white supremacist culture to regain the American white youth.⁵⁵

To attract young people, Rockwell's organization distributed materials like cartoons and pamphlets that used an absurdist style of racism, homophobia, antisemitism, and other bigotry to specifically target young people and youth trends. Odis Cochran—who at thirty-seven years old in 1964 was one of the older members of the ANP—produced and performed a series of “white folk songs” at ANP demonstrations and gatherings.⁵⁶ Along with a trio called “The Three Bigots,” Cochran and the ANP produced a record label called Hatenanny Records—a mock of the word “hootenanny”—to assist membership dues. The label produced a handful of singles and distributed them via mail-in orders via their *Stormtrooper* newspaper or at ANP rallies. The most notable record from “Odis Cochran and the Three Bigots,” was their two 1964 singles “Ship Those Niggers Back” and “We Is Non-Violent Niggers.” In a likely attempt to attract more, particularly young, members, *The Stormtrooper* ran advertisements for Hatenanny Records beginning in its September-October 1964 issue. Its listing in the mail-order sheet at the end of the issues claimed that the songs were, “Guaranteed to make you laugh or your money refunded.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ George Lincoln Rockwell, “Nigger Music and Pavlov,” *The Rockwell Report*, vol.2, no 13, April 15, 1963, 8-10, available via archive.org, The Rockwell Report (1963-1964)-American Nazi Party, <https://archive.org/details/rockwell-report-1963-1964/page/n27/mode/2up>.

⁵⁶ “We Stood Alone,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol 3 No 2 Mar-Aug 64 Summer Issue (March-August 1964), 25; “Hatenanny, Featuring Odis And His Guitar,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol 3 No 2 Mar-Aug 64 Summer Issue (March-August 1964), 27.

⁵⁷ “First again! Hatenanny! Hit Record, Country Music Star Odis Cochran & His Guitar! Songs By The 3 Bigots,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, September-October 1964 (September-October 1964), 32; “Just Arrived! A New Supply! Ship Those Niggers

This type of aggressive racist absurdity was also in the ANP's comic book, "Whiteman," a superhero dressed in a similar costume to the comic book superhero Superman, but with a large swastika instead of Superman's famous "S" shield in the center of the costume [1.2][1.3]. Designed by the young John Patler—the editor of *The Stormtrooper* and most of the various cartoons for the ANP—the Whiteman comic took advantage of the appeal of superhero comic books among children, teens, and young adults. The comic played off familiar tropes and design elements from popular characters like Superman and Captain Marvel, but also included blinding racism and antisemitism.⁵⁸ Antagonists in the comic book included "The Mighty Motza, Jew from Outer Space" and "Supercoon," a super-powered Black man drawn in an animalistic caricature. The character had a monkey-like tail and was in a costume resembling a prison jumpsuit with a banana as a crest on the front. The comic had a tag line "Jew Commies Tremble...Nigger Criminals Quake in Fear...Liberals Head for the Hills...Here Comes Whiteman!"⁵⁹

The comic first appeared in a 1966 issue of *The Stormtrooper*, and ANP members later distributed printings of "Whiteman" at demonstrations and college talks.⁶⁰ Like all

Back," *The Stormtrooper*, November 1966, 47; quotation, "Nazi Literature and Other Items For Sale," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, September-October 1964 (September-October 1964), 35.

⁵⁸ Alongside the Superman parallel within the Whiteman costume, Patler's character transformed into Whiteman by saying "Lieh Geis," or "Sieg Heil" backwards, itself a mock of the Timely Comics character Captain Marvel's transformation into a superhero with the phrase "Shazam.;" John Patler, "Here Comes Whiteman," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Spring Issue 1966 YF 77 (1966), 50-55.

⁵⁹ Patler, "Here Comes Whiteman," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; "Whiteman Comics," "Letters," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, November 1966, 46; John Patler, "Here Comes Whiteman," M 342, Box 13, Edward H. Peeples, Jr. Papers, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.

depictions of Black people in ANP cartoons, Black people in the “Whiteman” comic book spoke in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) with calls to “get dat white cracker!” and astonishment that “bullets jes bounce off dat white cat!,” all while “Whiteman” strikes each person in the face, muttering, “sweet dreams, jigaboo!”⁶¹ The comic was a power fantasy for Patler, as well as any other ANP member or reader who visualized themselves pummeling racial minorities with force. The outlandish racism within the designs and writing was deliberate. “Whiteman”—and cartoons throughout *The Stormtrooper* generally—were appealing to any racist or neo-Nazi audience, but particularly humorous for the young people in the ANP and provocative enough for youth recruits. In a letter to the editor section of a 1966 *Stormtrooper* magazine, a subscriber from New York City wrote that he loved the comic book—calling it a “smash.” He showed it to his friends and “they couldn’t stop laughing” and found the entire material interesting. Another letter writer from Seattle, Washington commented on the “Whiteman” comic saying, “this is the kind of material we need to win the attention of the present generation.”⁶²

It was no surprise that materials like the “Whiteman” comic were such a hit with young people; they were designed with an intention to attract young people. As a young twenty-something himself, artist John Patler was an excellent fit to mobilize youth within the ANP. Rockwell first met Patler in 1957 at a farewell party for DeWest Hooker. Hooker threw the get-together for the members of the Nationalist Youth League before

⁶¹ Patler, “Here Comes Whiteman.” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, 51.

⁶² G. B., “Whiteman Comics,” “Letters,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, November 1966, 46; J. W. V., “Whiteman Comics,” “Letters,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, November 1966, 46.

he departed for Italy, and invited Rockwell to attend.⁶³ At sixteen years old, Patler, along with his friends “Nick” and Charlie Beveridge, helped form the youth section of Hooker’s Nationalist Party, which became the Nationalist Youth League.⁶⁴ Patler was involved with creating propaganda materials for the Nationalist Youth League as young as seventeen years of age, and used this experience to later become the editor of *The Stormtrooper* and creator of the various political cartoons for the American Nazi Party once he joined Rockwell’s operation. Patler was actually born as Yanacki Patsolos to two Greek parents in New York City. In 1960, shortly before he joined the ANP, he changed his name to “Patler” to obscure his Greek heritage. According to allies within the Party, Patsolos changed his name to “Patler” in order to make it sound more like “Hitler.” Patler illustrates both the malleability of whiteness that was still shifting in post-war America, but also the emotional baggage for him to *be* white in order to exist in a neo-Nazi organization. Even if he shared the same politics as true born Aryans, Patler would not have been accepted into the movement as a “Patsolos.”⁶⁵

From 1960 until 1967, all the political cartoons, printed items, and organized events were designed or illustrated by John Patler.⁶⁶ His cartoons played off historically racist caricatures, with ape-like depictions of Black people and Jewish men drawn with exaggerated long noses. These images were not new or unique to Patler and ANP bigots. But Patler’s cartoons also included references to inherently youth-centered popular

⁶³ “Know Your Party Officers: John Patler,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Volume 6, No. 1 (1967), 29.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁵ Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds*, 109; Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 134.

⁶⁶ John Patler joined the American Nazi Party when he was twenty-two years old and designed cartoons until he was at least twenty-eight years old; “Some Further Notes Of Interest,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Volume 6, No. 1 (1967), 32.

culture. His “Whiteman” comic was just one of many comic caricatures for *Stormtrooper* based on youth culture, such as comic book superheroes. Another cartoon used the image of Batman and Robin, another popular comic book and successful ABC television show at the time, in a mockery of liberal activism with “Batcoon and his faithless kosher companion, Tweetiebooid.” The cartoon depicted “Batman” with large lips and “Robin” with the racist caricature of a long “jewish” nose. There was also a racist and homophobic mock-up of James Baldwin that Patler called “Faggotman,” where a printout of Baldwin’s face was placed on a body wearing a superhero costume on top—with a cape and a large “F” on his chest—and lingerie-style tights instead of pants. The cartoon had “Baldwin” pose with one hand on a hip and the other hand with a long cigarette holder, almost in the style of Audrey Hepburn in 1961’s *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* [1.4][1.5].⁶⁷ Patler’s young age gave him familiarity with youth culture and the trends and humor necessary to attract a younger audience. With Patler as the chief propagandist of the American Nazi Party, the materials and messaging drew young people into the cause of national socialism in the 1960s, establishing the groundwork for a youth driven Nazi party.⁶⁸

Rockwell had immense faith in Patler, and constantly gave him positions of leadership and responsibility. Patler spoke at ANP rallies, led demonstrations against, in Patler’s words, crowds of “hostile Jews,” and oversaw the Party’s “Hate Bus” ride

⁶⁷ Patler, “Here Comes Whiteman,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, 50-55; H.H. Booker II and John Patler, “Marxivision: Strictly Kosher,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Nov. 1966 YF 77 (November, 1966), 21; “Faggotman James Baldwin,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Spring Issue 1966 YF 77 (1966), 10.

⁶⁸ J. W. V., “Whiteman Comics,” “Letters,” *The Stormtrooper*, Spring 1966, 46.

through the South in May 1961.⁶⁹ Before the age of 21, Patler had significant leadership experience and, next to Rockwell, was the public face of the organization via his many cartoons and editorial work. The ideas and political philosophy of the American Nazi Party were indeed from Rockwell, yet it was the young Patler who was the most important influence for the Party transforming away from the political ramblings of Rockwell and into an organization with a visual politics of aggravation and organized hate.

In addition to cartoons, the organization's recruitment efforts involved specific outreach towards youth. ANP stormtroopers dispersed hate literature and made significant recruitment drives at high schools.⁷⁰ Rockwell continued to speak on college campuses, where he bragged that "thousands of college students across the country are receiving the message of the White Man," and that he "never failed to attract full-capacity college audiences."⁷¹ A large number of the university students who attended Rockwell speeches were there to protest, but Rockwell consistently mentioned that his message was popular with students. "If I can win even a small group...in each college, I can win the youth," Rockwell claimed.⁷²

⁶⁹ "Know Your Party Officers: John Patler," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Volume 6, No. 1 (1967), 32; "Final Victory in New Orleans," *The Stormtrooper*, No. 2, August 1962 (August, 1962), 14; Karl R. Allen, "Why I Joined the Nazi Party," *The Stormtrooper*, Vol 2, No. 1, Mar-Apr 1963 (March-April, 1963), 17.

⁷⁰ FBI file #9-39854, "American Nazi Party Monograph," 21.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 33, 35; "Thousands Flock to Hear CDR Rockwell: Students Pour Inside, Teachers Picket Outside!," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol 3 No 2 Mar-Aug 64 Summer Issue (March-August 1964), 16-17; quote: "Rockwell Speaks!," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Spring Issue 1966, 36-37, 40-41.

⁷² FBI file #9-39854, "American Nazi Party Monograph," 24-26; quotation, *Ibid.*, 24.

Although the minimum age for membership in the ANP was eighteen, one of the ANP's main target groups were teenagers. According to an FBI report on the ANP, Rockwell persistently attempted to gain a following among high school youth. This particular report discredited teenage association with Rockwell's ANP as "signs of mental instability or illness." In most of these cases, the FBI described teenagers associated with Rockwell's national socialism as "introverted," "antisocial," and generally anxious. One of these teens specifically referenced in this FBI report included a seventeen-year-old from Utah who was described as "high strung" and attempted suicide in the past.⁷³ The implication from the report is that this young person's interest in the ANP should only be chalked up to teenage angst or even mental instability. However, this conclusion underestimated the popularity of messaging from the racist right.

Teenagers who turned to Rockwell's National Socialism and antisemitism were not necessarily fringe or some version of crazy; they were young people seeking answers for the complications and disruptions of early adolescence and turned to the violent and bigoted messaging from Rockwell, who offered simplified answers to a complicated world. To be sure, the behavior of ANP adherents was disturbing and manifested in violent statements, such as comments made from a teen in Florida who told his friends that the ANP knows "how to kill Jews" and he was in correspondence with Rockwell because "he wanted to kill Jews also."⁷⁴ In other instances, the association with the ANP resulted in physical violence. In May 1963, four teens from Long Island, New York, armed with a submachine gun, participated in a mass shooting at their high school and the

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

home of a teacher who had given three of them poor grades. All four of them had visited Rockwell's headquarters in Arlington, Virginia and took home quantities of Nazi hate literature that was later uncovered in the home of one of the teens.⁷⁵

Others were not initially interested in the genocidal violence of overt Nazism. Despite his passion for an American government molded after the politics of Adolf Hitler, Rockwell recognized that he needed to attract supporters who would still support his racist and antisemitic views but were uncomfortable with swastikas and other historical Nazi symbols. Thus, Rockwell formed two ANP front organizations, the Fighting American Nationalists and the White Youth Corps. Both groups were designed to serve as an introduction to future membership into the ANP and specifically targeted people under eighteen years of age, the minimum age for ANP membership.⁷⁶

The Fighting American Nationalists and the White Youth Corps, founded in 1960 and 1961, respectively, had memberships across the United States, including units in New York City, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Washington, D.C, and Chicago. Membership varied between cities, with Chicago having the largest unit with over 40 members.⁷⁷ The White Youth Corps was especially interested in recruiting young people between the ages of 14 and 18 who could be molded and radicalized into future ANP leadership positions. By specifically targeting youth under 18, these groups served almost as a pipeline to promote and disseminate Rockwell's propaganda into high school circles. Similar to the operational tactics of the ANP, members of the WYC and FAN picketed New Left or civil rights movement

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 54-57.

demonstrations. In an October 1961 picketing outside a New York City newspaper office, teenage members carried signs including one reading “Gas Red Traitors and Support Racial Separation.” Other popular slogans included, “Death to Red Traitors” and “Gas Chamber Only Cure for Treason.” Members distributed pamphlets that, amongst many demands, associated activists in the Black Freedom Struggle with an international Jewish conspiracy to take over the United States and called for all Black Americans to be shipped back to Africa. Seventeen-year-old WYC leader in New York, Marlin Wayne Thomas, picketed the New York City headquarters of CORE to discourage “race-mixing.” By late 1964, however, specific interest into the WYC and FAN declined, and Chicago and Baltimore remained the only active chapters of WYC and FAN. Rockwell transitioned what remained of the youth membership into the larger ANP apparatus.⁷⁸

Despite the unsuccessful venture of these front organizations, Rockwell still specifically targeted a young audience into the ANP with the production of youth-centered materials and messages within his propaganda flyers and pamphlets. Messages in the distributed literature were hardly subtle in its way to go after young people. One instance of this was a specific call to action against the 1963 March on Washington, in which Rockwell urged all “frustrated young White Men” to gather in the streets to march against a “swarming black nightmare ‘army’ coming to Washington D.C.” In these propaganda flyers, Rockwell consistently mentioned he had a following of “hundreds of White Christian American YOUTH,” of which he said the majority of whom were

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 55-57.

veterans.⁷⁹ Throughout his time as leader of the ANP, Rockwell was known to exaggerate his membership numbers and the overall size of his following. Following a speech at Stanford University in 1964, Rockwell said, “We have about 700 hardcore...stormtroopers all over the country...But in addition to that I have about 12,000 people who actively sympathize, write to us, and sometimes help us. In addition to that... I think there are about 10 million Americans that are mighty grateful that we are operating.”⁸⁰ Despite Rockwell’s exaggerated claims of hundreds to thousands of supporters, FBI records from June 1965 listed the ANP’s membership as barely over 100 people.⁸¹ Rockwell’s desire for fame and political success eclipsed the reality that the ANP barely survived as an organized group, let alone as any sort of Party.

Chicago, 1966

The summer of 1966 became a transformation for both the ANP and the larger radical racist Right. It was an organizational test that the ANP’s young leaders passed with flying colors. The Chicago chapter of the ANP, led by “Lieutenant” Christopher Vidnjevich, took advantage of King’s appearance and staged a series of counter demonstrations against the marchers. On July 31, 1966, approximately 550 Black and white demonstrators marched into Chicago’s Marquette Park. According to *The New York Times*, “about 700 whites waited at Marquette park,” chanting slurs and “White Power!” The event quickly turned violent as the Vidnjevich-led Nazis assaulted the

⁷⁹ “George Lincoln Rockwell, Richmond, Va., July 4, 1963 [publicity flyer],” *Social Welfare History Image Portal*, accessed February 2, 2019, <https://images.socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu>.

⁸⁰ FBI file #9-39854, “American Nazi Party Monograph,” 32-33.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

marchers with bricks and bottles. Vehicles with “Union to End Slums” bumper stickers, which were owned by the Freedom Movement marchers, were targeted by the Chicago Nazis and overturned and set ablaze. “Riot-helmeted policemen” attempted to separate the crowds amidst heckles of “nigger lovin’ cops,” and the ensuing clash resulted in “50 injuries and 18 cars set on fire.” Vidnjevič and his followers were thrilled.⁸²

Christopher Vidnjevič was only twenty-three years old when he organized the massive counter demonstrations to King’s Open Housing marches. Vidnjevič had a long history with white supremacist politics and neo-fascism more generally. According to an activist profile in *The Stormtrooper*, Vidnjevič’s father was a “high ranking political officer” in the pro-Nazi armed forces in the puppet state of Croatia in 1940s Yugoslavia.⁸³ He was also a member of the “Ustasha,” an ultranationalist and pro-fascist organization that, during World War II, was responsible for mass atrocities connected to the Holocaust, including the murder of hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews, Roma, and other political enemies in Yugoslavia. In contrast, Vidnjevič’s profile described the Ustasha as a group of “Croatian patriots which spread fear and terror among the Communists.”⁸⁴ In 1945, his father was hung in a public execution under the new pro-Communist Josip Broz Tito regime. Unsurprisingly, *The Stormtrooper* saw Vidnjevič as a martyr, and referred to Vidnjevič’s father as a “patriot” who died at the hands of “Communist Tito’s butchers.”⁸⁵

⁸² “Chicago! White Power!,” *The Stormtrooper*, November, 1966, 6-8.; United Press International, “54 Hurt as Whites in Chicago Hurl Bricks at Rights Marchers; Whites in Chicago Attack Marchers,” *New York Times*, August 1, 1966, p. A1.

⁸³ “Chicago Nazi Leader,” *The Stormtrooper*, Nov-Dec-January 1965 Winter Issue, 21.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Vidnjevich had joined the American Nazi Party at eighteen years old in 1962, and within two years he moved up to Chicago Unit Leader. His position as leader of the Chicago branch of the Party is significant given his young age, and demonstrates both an attraction the organization had to some young people, as well as a willingness to allow young members to serve in leadership positions. ANP publications described Vidnjevich as a “dedicated” member and during a visit to Chicago in 1964, George Lincoln Rockwell praised the twenty-year-old Vidnjevich for “his loyalty, hard work and perseverance in organizing and preparing the new (Chicago headquarters)” that was under construction.⁸⁶ The Chicago chapter of the ANP was in a state of disarray and “degeneration” for years since its founding in 1960. The unit—which at one point held an estimated membership “at a maximum of 10 to 12 persons”—seemed to represent a micro study for the complete disorganization and even unseriousness of the larger Party.⁸⁷ Yet, under Vidnjevich’s leadership, the Chicago unit grew to be loved by the Party, with stories of their exploits featured in multiple issues of *The Stormtrooper* publication. Thus, when King and his allies came to Chicago, the necessary conditions were in place for Vidnjevich and the ANP to gain a national audience.

The ANP had a new message at the ready. The phrase “white power,” was a recent addition to the ANP’s grab bag of slogans. Picket signs in the past five years often stuck to statements of a Black, Jewish, and communist conspiracy against white Americans, often specifically littered with racist or antisemitic slurs. Yet, this use of “white power” as a mobilizing phrase came about as a way of emphasizing—in

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*; “Commander Rockwell Visits Chicago Unit,” *The Stormtrooper*, September-October 1964, 14.

⁸⁷ FBI file #9-39854, “American Nazi Party Monograph,” 41.

Rockwell's mind—a unification around the belief that all white people—which Rockwell's definition now including those outside of German or Nordic heritage—shared a single destiny of strength and vitality. For Rockwell, and his young propagandist, John Patler, “white power” was not just a neo-nazi rallying cry, but an opportunity to expand his movement to a broader coalition of white racists. Rockwell's electoral campaigns had not been successful, and it seemed likely that overt Nazism was not politically palpable for a majority of Americans. Battle cries of “Sieg Heil” or “Heil Hitler” needed to be amended, but still directly embrace a call for white vigor. Allegedly, like Rockwell's previous instances of reappropriating successful ideas and organizing tactics from Black civil rights movement leaders, the ANP was inspired by current SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael's recently coined phrase, “Black Power.” Rockwell had heard a speech where Carmichael used “Black Power,” and Rockwell decided that white people needed a rallying cry of their own.⁸⁸

The “White Power” phrase became the unifying tool that Rockwell had long desired for his movement. The ANP's gathering in Chicago was more successful than any previous event for the organization and the emerging White Power movement. Despite Rockwell's claims of a mass movement, the organization had struggled since its inception to have more than a hundred at most, and typically only a few dozen, attendees at demonstrations and marches over the years. Chicago was a decisive transformation, with up to two thousand attendees. The November 1966 issue of *The Stormtrooper* was

⁸⁸ Simonelli, *American Fuehrer*, 99-100; Rockwell later published his new philosophy in a single volume that was eventually sold alongside other radical Right or neo-Nazi materials by the ANP. See, George Lincoln Rockwell, *White Power*, Self-published, 1966.

dedicated to the events in Chicago. A write up within the issue, possibly written by editor John Patler, described that summer's Chicago demonstrations as "the turning point in the war against the Black revolution in America." "For the first time since the beginning of the civil rights revolution," the article read, "White working people stopped running, and started fighting back!"⁸⁹ What began as a few hundred organized by Vidnjevich's Chicago ANP branch quickly became, according to *The Stormtrooper*, "thousands of White working people" organized to assault Dr. King and civil rights marchers, who Patler described as an "army of black scum."⁹⁰ While the ANP had a pattern for exaggerating its popularity and attendance at demonstrations, reporting from *The New York Times* mentioned crowds of at least a few hundred to as many as a couple thousand consistently gathered to heckle and mock civil rights marchers. "Thousands of jeering whites" screaming "white power, white power!" formed a mob that included youth in "paper Ku Klux Klan hoods" to assault civil rights marchers on August 7; "About 1,500 to 2,000 and consisting of mostly teenagers" gathered against civil rights marchers on August 14; and "several thousand screaming and cursing whites" disrupted a march lead by Dr. King on August 23.⁹¹ Vidnjevich and Patler successfully coordinated these demonstrations, which were larger than anything the American Nazi Party had seen up to this point. The two held a series of evening rallies where Vidnjevich distributed racist literature and Patler led chants for "white power" in the middle of Chicago's Gage and Marquette Park. Local chapters of the Ku Klux Klan and the States' Rights Party joined

⁸⁹ "Chicago! White Power!," *The Stormtrooper*, Nov, 1966, 6-7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹¹ Roberts, "Whites in Chicago Mob Negro March," *New York Times*, Aug 08, 1966, 1; Schanberg, "Police in Chicago Clash with Whites," *New York Times*, Aug 15, 1966, 1; Nevard, "Marchers Pelted in Chicago Suburb," *New York Times*, Aug 24, 1966, 34.

in these attacks against King and his allies, yet the hundreds of visible “white power” signs and t-shirts among the white mobs underlined this moment as a specific ANP coordinated event.⁹²

On August 21, Rockwell arrived in Chicago and held a rally that night at Marquette Park alongside Patler and Vidjevich. Over the next couple of days, the three Nazi leaders drove a camping vehicle, draped with swastikas and the White Power slogans, around Chicago and invoked their usual talking points about a Black “invasion.” They held a series of rallies in Marquette Park and at the Chicago Nazi Party headquarters where Patler reported that over 200 people came to listen to Vidjevich, Rockwell, and himself.⁹³ Rockwell took advantage of this moment in Chicago. In the past, Rockwell attempted to shadow Martin Luther King and disrupt his demonstrations. Rockwell had a brief interaction with King in Selma, Alabama in 1965. Yet, Rockwell was barely above a nuisance and was flanked by only two other members.⁹⁴ Chicago was entirely different, and as soon as Rockwell entered the city he immediately coordinated with Patler and Vidjevich a massive counter-demonstration to the Freedom Movement. At each rally during the evenings of August 22 and 23, Rockwell handed out “White Power” T-shirts—displaying a large, black, swastika in the middle—and pamphlets advertising a “White Peoples Rally.” The flyer advertised Rockwell as “the man who is fighting the black slum invasion of our neighborhoods.” The flyers also mentioned a “Giant, Mass Rally of White People” later that night, with entertainment provided by the

⁹² “Chicago! White Power!,” *The Stormtrooper*, Nov, 1966, 7-12; Roberts, “Whites in Chicago.”

⁹³ “Chicago! White Power!,” *The Stormtrooper*, Nov, 1966, 12.

⁹⁴ *The Stormtrooper*, Nov-Dec-January 1965, Winter Issue (1965), 10.

ANP's "hatenanny" performer, Odis Cochran, who the flyer described as a "country music star."⁹⁵

While still not the thousands originally predicted by Rockwell, hundreds still joined Rockwell for his "White People's March." According to the *New York Times*, the "White People's March" in the predominantly Black Englewood neighborhood of Southwest Chicago included "150 strong and predominantly teenagers," carrying "American and Confederate flags" and wore white t-shirts with bold, black "White Power" lettering above a large swastika. Rockwell's marchers in Englewood were met with some organized pushback from groups like the Congress for Racial Equality and the Deacons for Defense, who were blocked by Chicago police barricades from the white marchers. Still, the *Times* reported one Black youth broke through the police line to attack the marchers and was "clubbed and arrested." While reporting implied the Chicago police acted in a neutral capacity, by the end of the march, four people—all non-marchers—were injured, and local CORE chapter leader, Robert L. Lucas, was arrested for "the nonpayment of fines" in connection to a previous arrest for "disorderly conduct and the obstruction of traffic" during a civil rights demonstration the previous summer.⁹⁶ The Chicago police also arrested Rockwell during the end of the September 10th march. They cited a "violation of city laws" that included holding a rally without a permit at the public Marquette Park on August 28th.⁹⁷ However, the removal of Rockwell from the scene did not disrupt the march. Following Rockwell's arrest, Patler and Vidnjevic took

⁹⁵ George Lincoln Rockwell, "White People's March," Chicago History Museum, ICHI-037344-A.

⁹⁶ Thomas A. Johnson, "Rockwell Seized in Chicago March: Nazi Chief Arrested at Start of Trek to Negro Area; CORE Leader is Held," *New York Times*, Sep 11, 1966.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

command of the day's events and completed the "White People's March" back to its starting position at Gage Park, where they each continued to speak to the large crowd of supporters.⁹⁸

The 1966 rallies and marches against the Black civil rights demonstrations in Chicago revealed a burgeoning coalition for the Racist Right, and an evolution towards a new rallying cry: "White Power." Rockwell's neo-Nazis, who to this point had demonstrations—outside of talks at college campuses—only in the dozens or so, witnessed the largest attendance for their rallies and marches in the history of their movement here in Chicago. Northern segregationists and racists, conscious or not of the history of the American Nazi Party, gathered in mobs numbering in the hundreds and even thousands at certain points to listen to ideas of an "invasion" of "black filth" moving into white neighborhoods, and chant "white power" alongside the ANP leadership.⁹⁹ Significantly, these massive gatherings were all organized not by Rockwell, but by the two young leaders John Patler and Chris Vidnjevič. After years of organizing, the most successful gathering for the American Nazi Party, which included a coordinated alliance with local chapters of the Ku Klux Klan and the States' Rights Party, was brought about by neo-Nazi youth.¹⁰⁰ Thus, Chicago became a flashpoint of organized white hatred, a genesis of an early white power coalition, and the first significant instance that the future

⁹⁸ "Chicago! White Power!," *The Stormtrooper*, Nov, 1966, 18; Johnson, "Rockwell Seized in Chicago March," *New York Times*, Sep 11, 1966.

⁹⁹ "Chicago! White Power!," *The Stormtrooper*, Nov, 1966, 8-9.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 7-12; Roberts, "Whites in Chicago Mob Negro March."

white power movement was a youth driven and organized social movement, in both membership and cultural identity.

The inflammatory nature of the tactics used by the ANP makes sense in the context of the age of the members who coordinated and participated in these events. The ridiculousness and even bullying nature of the many public disruptions are akin to teenage pranks or a general sense of immaturity. Twenty-first century activists would call these actions “trolls,” and Rockwell’s youth excitedly embraced racist trolling for recruitment and personal enjoyment. The young people within the ANP might not have originated the act of political “trolling,” but they continued to perfect these tactics with picketing and disrupted events. Rockwell, furthermore, felt that these tactics were just the first phase in the move towards political revolution. In a 1964 editorial for *The Stormtrooper*, Rockwell wrote, “Today we are armed with boat tickets, black-face, mice and the weapons of ridicule. But the young men with the flaming courage to perform these deeds of single heroism wait only for the day when our beloved U.S.A. is attacked with violent and bloody revolution.”¹⁰¹

George Lincoln Rockwell’s greatest contribution to the radical racist Right was in mobilizing a generation of young, white, neo-Nazi activists. Too, Rockwell’s American Nazi Party was a precursor to the racism, misogyny, and Holocaust denial elements found within the “troll culture” of future radical racist Right movements. Rockwell himself would be dead by 1967 and his American Nazi Party would be transformed into the National Socialist White People’s Party. The youth Rockwell mentored did not all remain

¹⁰¹ George Lincoln Rockwell, “From the Desk of the Commander,” *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol 3 No 2 Mar-Aug 64 Summer Issue (March-August 1964), 33.

loyal to the organization. And they did not partake in a political revolution that would have seen that “the Jews are through in 72.” Still, they were initiated into neo-Nazism and a youth identity connected to “white power” politics now permeated the radical racist Right. As a group, they represented a vanguard of new activists, even as they did not remain in the same organization under one leader. Some splintered into new organizations that were more specifically designed for youth activism, such as William Luther Pierce’s National Youth Alliance, while other members or devotees, like eighteen-year-old David Duke, took what he learned from Rockwell and established white nationalist operations all on their own. The ANP had laid the groundwork for a violent youth-led revolution.

Chapter 3. Wallace to White Power: The Dividing Philosophies of Neo-Nazi Youth Activism within the Early National Youth Alliance

In January 1969, two months after former and future Alabama governor George Wallace concluded his second failed run for President of the United States, members of the former Youth for Wallace (YFW) met at Conley's Motel just outside of Monroeville, Pennsylvania. These college student supporters of Wallace had recently reorganized shortly after the November 1968 election as a new organization, the National Youth Alliance (NYA). The expectation among the student leaders was that the NYA would retain the same goals of YFW—including passionate anti-communist rhetoric and veiled support for racial segregation—and remain dedicated to combating liberalism on college and university campuses. John Acord, National Chairman of the former YFW and now NYA, had heard rumors of a re-branding beyond Wallace's segregationist platform. But he still believed that the NYA was first and foremost a movement for college conservatives—similar to the William F. Buckley-backed Young Americans for Liberty.¹

Acord and other student leaders traveled to the small town in Pennsylvania to hear updates from their financial backer and to discuss the direction for their organization for the coming year. As chairman, Acord's goal was to initiate a grassroots movement to defeat "communism"—as he understood it—within American universities and lay a

¹ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 4, within FBI file #62-106941, 255, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>; Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson, "Our Hitler Youth," *New York Post*, April 21, 1969; Joseph Trento and Joseph Spear, "How Nazi Nut Power Has Invaded Capitol Hill," *True For Today's Man* (November, 1969), 124; Frank P. Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right: Race, Conspiracy, and Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 129.

groundwork for successful conservative political victories in upcoming elections.² Acord was in for a shock: as he walked into the NYA meeting room he was greeted by large swastika flags and other “Nazi trappings.”³ He and other students soon discovered they were a part of a larger neo-Nazi takeover of their organization, and the January 1969 meeting at Conley’s Motel was the first step in the genesis of the most prominent United States neo-Nazi and neo-fascist organization of the late twentieth century.

The young people involved in the 1968 Youth for Wallace campaign found out that weekend that their leadership had been exploited by neo-Nazis from the beginning. Their financial backer, Willis Carto, was a political activist invested in moving the American Right beyond anti-communism and individual liberty and towards antisemitism and the larger radical racist Right. Carto had founded YFW as the first step in his vision of an American Nazi movement. The YFW, and later the NYA, reflected his position that American conservatism needed to embrace conspiratorial antisemitism and assertive white supremacy, and this political victory could best come from young people. Carto managed the Liberty Lobby, a group famous for its antisemitic conspiracy theories and Holocaust denial, and was also a founder of a collection of Nazi apologists called the Francis Parker Yockey Movement (FPYM). Carto and his Yockey movement were transitioning the Youth for Wallace organization into a budding Hitler Youth movement.

Despite the professed bewilderment from student leaders like John Acord, the Nazification of the NYA was neither sudden nor scandalous. The segregationist

² Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 1-2, within FBI file #62-106941, 252-253, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>.

³ Joseph Trento and Joseph Spear, “How Nazi Nut Power Has Invaded Capitol Hill,” *True For Today’s Man* (November, 1969), 124.

presidential campaign they had proudly endorsed was not too far off from the larger goals of white supremacists in the radical racist Right, particularly with respect to African American civil and human rights. Importantly, youth who embraced Wallace's segregationist politics also found themselves moving comfortably closer to antisemitic conspiracy theories and violence during the YFW transition to the NYA. By the end of the 1960s, the NYA would still be engaged within the segregationist and racist rhetoric of Wallace, but would expand into white nationalism and antisemitic ideologies, as well as calls for a national socialist revolution. The NYA became a model for transitioning impressionable young people, often high school or university drop-outs frustrated with political and social change, away from garden-variety conservative political action within the mainstream Right and towards the violent rhetoric and action of White Power.

Unlike George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party—which existed as a youth driven organization as a matter of circumstance—the National Youth Alliance was, from the beginning, designed as a youth and student driven organization for fighting leftist student groups. Like Rockwell's ANP, the NYA was generally organized and envisioned by older men, often in their forties, as a means of weaponizing young people for these adults' own purposes. These older leaders imposed a top-down organization structure. In the few instances when youth and students were able to seize control and put forth their own vision for the NYA, older adult leadership quickly stepped in to squash any resistance to their own agenda. Thus, the story of the NYA is a story of weaponization and subjugation of young people by older men with financial and political power. Carto and others used young people for their own ends of fundraising, notoriety, and a national socialist community.

Willis Carto and Neo-Nazi Enterprise

Willis Carto was a passionate and obsessively devoted Wallace supporter who lived not in Alabama or the Deep South, but in San Francisco, California. Carto's interest in Adolf Hitler existed decades earlier through his curation and publication of racist and antisemitic material. Deeply interested in white identity politics, Carto had supported George Wallace as a presidential candidate because of his political whiteness, not just that he aligned with the American Right.⁴ Carto worked as a right-wing propagandist for his own organization, the Liberty Lobby, and published newsletters and pamphlets that promoted anti-Semitic, white separatist, and neo-Nazi conspiracy theories. Some of his popular beliefs included an insistence to disprove what he referred to as the "myth of the Holocaust," and to convince those who would listen that racial integration, or what Carto called "racial amalgamation," was the greatest threat facing the security of "Western Civilization."⁵ Carto referred to African Americans as "Blacky" and was convinced a massive conspiracy between African Americans, Jews, Communists, and their liberal allies had taken root in the United States.⁶ Specifically, Carto's racism materialized in his

⁴ George Wallace's adamant and public opposition to racial integration in Alabama and his infamous "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever" speech jettisoned the governor to the national spotlight as both the face of political opposition to the civil rights movement as well as the most prominent American politician in support of white supremacy; See, Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995).

⁵ Quotation in Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 296-297; For Carto's full relationship with the radical racist Right, see George Michael, *Willis Carto and the American Far Right* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2008); Frank P. Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right: Race, Conspiracy, and Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985).

⁶ Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 297.

ramblings about an “ethnological” revolution from Black civil rights activists and their liberal allies in the form of “organized Jewry.” The goal of this potential leftist revolution, according to Carto, was to allegedly destroy a traditionally white ethnic identity in the United States in favor of the “niggerfication of America.”⁷ Carto sincerely believed in these theories and concluded that an organized, right-wing, opposition was not only necessary but part of his duty as a white American.

Like many that came to embody the conspiratorial and racist Right in the 1960s, such as fellow neo-Nazi George Lincoln Rockwell, Willis Carto spent time courting Robert Welch’s John Birch Society and briefly worked for it in 1959. He only stayed for a little under a year, but he contributed articles critiquing “Marxism” to the Society’s magazine, *American Opinion*.⁸ Two years earlier, while his own Liberty Lobby was still in its infancy, Carto attempted to draw Welch’s favor, asking Welch to serve on the Liberty Lobby’s Advisory Board and generally promote the Lobby within Welch’s circles of influence. Welch responded to Carto that he was “unwilling to become a part of, or let [his] name be used by, any organization in which [Welch] (did) not take an active interest.” While Welch believed he and Carto were “working for the same cause,” he also felt that Carto was too “harsh on other conservatives” and needed to “learn to hold together better” as conservatives to “save our country and our civilization from [Left

⁷ C.H. Simonds, “The Strange Story of Willis Carto- his fronts, his friends, his philosophy, his ‘Lobby for Patriotism,’” *National Review* (September 10, 1971), 978-979.

⁸ Simonds, “The Strange Story of Willis Carto” *National Review*, 979; Chip Berlet and Matthew Nemiroff Lyons, *Right-wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2000), 187.

wing] schemes to destroy both.”⁹ In a series of follow-up letters, Carto still asked for Welch to “actively [promote] the Liberty Lobby concept,” and disagreed with Welch’s criticism, writing, “[The Liberty Lobby] in trying to be...a focal point for the entire Rightwing must whenever possible thrust aside compromise.”¹⁰ While Carto and Welch agreed that American liberalism was, in their view, a disease to western civilization, the two differed regarding the desired cure. Carto recognized Welch’s influence within rightwing networks and seemed determined to use that influence for personal publicity and financial gain. But Carto did not think the Birch Society was radical enough. Carto was unwilling to compromise with conservatives-in-name-only, or American conservatives who, according to Carto, did not fully embrace specific racist and antisemitic worldviews beyond anti-communism.

Although Carto and the John Birch Society remained friendly for years—and even shared ideas and personnel—Carto’s white nationalist and antisemitic ideology ensured the partnership could not exist as a true united front against leftists and liberals.¹¹ Bigotry and even shrouded antisemitism was generally accepted within the John Birch Society, but the Birchers still revoked memberships from members who embraced violent antisemitic theories, white nationalism, and racial genocide. In 1966, Revilo P. Oliver—

⁹ Robert H. W. Welch, Jr. to Willis A. Carto, December 4, 1957, dictated November 29, 1957, in *Correspondence With Robert Welch*, <https://williscarto.org/articles-1/f/correspondence-withrobert-welch?blogcategory=Welch%2C+Robert+>.

¹⁰ Willis A. Carto to Robert H. W. Welch, December 21, 1957, in *Correspondence With Robert Welch*, <https://williscarto.org/articles-1/f/correspondence-withrobert-welch?blogcategory=Welch%2C+Robert+>; Willis A. Carto to Robert H. W. Welch, December 16, 1957 in *Correspondence With Robert Welch*, <https://williscarto.org/articles-1/f/correspondence-withrobert-welch?blogcategory=Welch%2C+Robert+>.

¹¹ Berlet and Lyons, *Right-wing Populism in America*, 187; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 81, 141-162.

a classics professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, co-founder of both the *National Review* and the John Birch Society, and a staple within right wing conspiratorial and white nationalist circles during the 1970s—was “forced to resign” from the John Birch Society after claiming during a Bircher rally that “if only by some miracle all the Bolsheviks, or all the Illuminati, or all Jews were vaporized tomorrow, we should have nothing more to worry about.”¹² Following his departure from the Birchers, Oliver quickly allied himself with Carto. Oliver published his writings within the Liberty Lobby and later became a dedicated speaker for the National Youth Alliance.¹³ Carto, and those like Oliver, realized that hardline racism and antisemitic hatred could not thrive under the limitations of conspiratorial anti-communism alone. Thus, the Liberty Lobby was an excellent opportunity for Carto—and those who allied with him—to explore extremist positions of Holocaust denial, racial separatism, and larger antisemitic hatred.

Carto’s beliefs echoed those of a larger community of racists, antisemites, and neo-Nazis. But Carto’s ideas went farther, advocating violent takeover of American society and the end of liberal democracy itself. He owed much of his neo-Nazi fanaticism to the anti-American writings of Francis Parker Yockey. Yockey was part of the German-American Bund in the 1930s and a Nazi sympathizer during World War 2. Like Hitler’s Nazis, Yockey believed and promoted theories of Aryan racial supremacy and bloodline based racial identities. He felt that non-whites and especially Jews were subhuman

¹² “Prof. Oliver, Known For Strong Anti-Jewish View, Quits Birch Society,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, (August 17, 1966), 4; Berlet and Lyons, *Right-wing Populism in America*, 181-182; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 172-173.

¹³ Oliver’s “After Fifty Years” speech to the NYA is printed and available within Charles H McGuire, 1971-1977, Folder 14, Box 14, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 131, 137.

groups that needed to be removed from a white Euro-centric society. Yockey, however, differed from his neo-Nazi contemporaries in the United States. Despite being an American, he was not an “American-Nazi” and identified the United States as an enemy and threat to European society. He resented the United States for fighting Germany in World War II and punishing Nazi officers during the Nuremberg trials. During the early Cold War years, Yockey even promoted ideas of a European-Soviet alliance as an opportunity to harm American international influence. He traveled Europe and the United States condemning Jewish influences in “western” society and was ultimately arrested by the FBI for passport fraud in June 1960, before committing suicide in his prison cell shortly afterwards.¹⁴

Nevertheless, Yockey lived on in his writings. Yockey’s book, *Imperium: The Philosophy of History and Politics*, would be deeply inspirational to Carto. Written under the pseudonym Ulick Varange and published in 1948, *Imperium* was a notorious antisemitic tome—over six hundred pages in length—dedicated to the fallen German Nazi regime. Alongside excusing Nazi Germany’s actions during World War II as necessary for the continuation of Western culture and a Western empire, *Imperium* detailed Western society as a sort of living culture—primarily involving “Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, and Scandinavia”—that was under assault from Jews who, in the book’s argument, controlled all major banking systems and influenced racial strife between white people and non-whites. Jewish culture, *Imperium* argued, distorted Western culture and promoted materialism, a rejection of authority—in this case referring

¹⁴ For a biographic overview of Francis Parker Yockey, his writings, and his influence, see Kevin Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Postwar Fascist International* (New York: Autonomedia, 1999).

to the decline of the influence of the Catholic Church in European politics—and national indebtedness, which all combined in a form of “cultural retardation.” Yockey wrote that the United States was the worst case of cultural retardation as it had been, allegedly, invaded by Jews that disrupted the original American identity. Thus, the Nazi regime, in Yockey’s view, was an opportunity to return culture to an original balance of power centered around European empire. *Imperium* concluded that liberal democracy was a mistake and that Nazism was a necessary solution to the ills of Western culture.¹⁵

Imperium and Yockey’s ideas crystalized into a movement because of Willis Carto. *Imperium* attracted numerous neo-Nazis and antisemites, but it was particularly significant for Carto. Carto had visited Yockey in prison in June 1960, shortly before Yockey’s suicide. It is unclear what transpired during the meeting, but Carto was undoubtedly captivated with Yockey’s philosophies and came away from the meeting insistent in continuing Yockey’s ideology in the form of a political movement. Carto, in fact, might have been the press agent Yockey never had. Yockey biographer Kevin Coogan argued that Yockey might have passed into obscurity if not for Carto’s reprinting of *Imperium* and the subsequent marketing of the book to mass right wing audiences via his Liberty Lobby.¹⁶ Carto adored *Imperium* and reprinted it in 1962 and again in 1969 via his Noontide Press imprint. The 1962 edition—and all subsequent editions printed by

¹⁵ Francis Parker Yockey (as Ulick Varange), *Imperium: The Philosophy of History and Politics* (Self-published: Westropa Press, 1948); Quotations within, Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 23-31; Berlet and Lyons, *Right-wing Populism in America*, 187.

¹⁶ Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day*, 562, n16.

Noontide Press—including an introduction written by Carto himself.¹⁷ The thirty-five-page introduction was part biography of Yockey and part political call-to-arms, building upon Yockey’s language of a declining living culture to inspire readers to reform a sickly western civilization in the United States. “Those who are to save the West,” Carto wrote, “must realize at the outset that only part of it can be saved, that much must be sacrificed and that the resulting structure will be different from the past.” He continued writing, “And although our job is to REBUILD, we must not lose sight of the reality, for we cannot rebuild until we have captured...political power.”¹⁸ Carto’s language fashioned images of warfare, with white “patriots” locked in battle as soldiers against leftists. *Imperium*, then, would act as the guidebook for this coming war, and a war that would ultimately instill right wing political power in the United States. Carto concluded his *Imperium* introduction writing, “The significance of *Imperium*... (is) now, for the first time, those soldiers who enlist in the service of the West have a profound theory to inspire and guide them.”¹⁹

During Carto’s 1960s activism, *Imperium* was part political road map and other part pseudo-gospel of a proposed national socialist community. Carto’s fellow Yockey followers came to embody a clandestine society called the Francis Parker Yockey movement. Unlike George Lincoln Rockwell’s American Nazi Party, which used the swastika and other German Nazi trappings as a flashy aesthetic, Carto’s Yockey movement existed more as a subterranean undertaking, with code names, secret rituals,

¹⁷ Willis A. Carto, Introduction to *Imperium* by Francis Parker Yockey (New York: Truth Seeker, 1962; Los Angeles and Sausalito: Noontide Press, 1969), ix-xvi; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 24, 70.

¹⁸ Carto, Introduction to *Imperium*, xix.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xlii.

and underground meetings. The origins of this “movement” are vague, but reports indicate that Carto unofficially gathered followers as soon as 1960, a short time after Yockey’s jail-cell suicide. Official membership is difficult to ascertain, outside of Carto and a handful of former Bircher castoffs like Revilo P. Oliver and Lou Byers, but the group seemed to attract upper middle class “doctors, lawyers, writers, and businessmen,” according to columnist Drew Pearson’s report on the movement.²⁰ Ultimately, the Francis Parker Yockey movement was a loose conglomeration of infatuated Yockey enthusiasts that operated more as a secret social club rather than a political organization.

While the Yockey movement operated in the shadows, Carto’s Liberty Lobby was the visible and more politically palpable organization. Officially founded in 1957, but not fully operational until 1961, the Liberty Lobby framed itself as a political lobbying organization—with its own “Research Department”—to identify conservative political action and legislation and promote a right-wing political culture and “national sovereignty.” The Lobby, via its newsletters and other published paraphernalia, rated U.S. Senators and congressmen—and their subsequent legislation—based on an adherence to conservative principles of free market enterprise, local and limited government, and anti-Soviet and anti-communist policies.²¹ The Lobby brought Carto to political ascendancy, granting him favor with prominent right-wing senators and

²⁰ Drew Pearson, “Government Overthrow Neo-Nazi Group’s Goal,” *Merry-Go-Round*, *Washington Post*, April 17, 1969.

²¹ Quotation within, Berlet and Lyons, *Right-wing Populism in America*, 185-186; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 85-105.

congressmen including South Carolina's Sen. Strom Thurmond, Louisiana's Rep. Otto Passman, and California Rep. James B. Utt.²²

But the Lobby was also invested in upholding segregation and embracing white supremacy within its published materials. Generally, the Lobby was a publishing arm for Carto's interests in antisemitic and racist literature, primarily built around conspiracy. Carto published multiple radical Right newsletters and magazines under their Noontide Press publishing label throughout the 1960s until the Lobby's demise in 2001. Some of the Lobby's original publications included the *Liberty Letter*, the *Liberty Lowdown*, the *Washington Observer*, and *Western Destiny*. In 1966, Carto purchased the publishing rights for *American Mercury*, a long running magazine that began in the 1920s but by the 1960s was a significant magazine for the racist right. Collectively, Carto's publications provided him access to hundreds of thousands of subscribers, and the vast network generated a significant impression for extremist ideology in conservative spaces.²³ Despite its image as a conservative group, these publications were opportunities for Carto to insert Yockey-ist and other neo-Nazi ideology into articles and editorials, all within a veil of liberty and constitutional conservatism. The first editorial for *Western Destiny* described a new form of "power politics" that called upon "Western people" to seize control of "Western Culture and Spirituality" back from "liberal and Marxist" propaganda that was brainwashing Americans. The March 1966 issue went even further,

²² Jack Anderson, "The Many Loves of a Hate Peddler," *Parade*, November 26, 1967, 7; Drew Pearson, "Government Overthrow Neo-Nazi Group's Goal," *Merry-Go-Round*, *Washington Post*, April 17, 1969; Joseph Trento and Joseph Spear, "How Nazi Nut Power Has Invaded Capitol Hill," *True For Today's Man* (November, 1969), 36

²³ Berlet and Lyons, *Right-wing Populism in America*, 185-186; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 85-105.

and was centered around Francis Parker Yockey, with an image of Yockey handcuffed on the front cover.²⁴

Despite Carto's vast media empire and political connections, the Liberty Lobby was not a vehicle for political or revolutionary action in-and-of-itself. The Lobby served as a front for his Yockey-driven ideologies, but publications were not the same as activism. Carto still needed "soldiers" under his command to fight against his leftist enemies. The leftists had soldiers in the form of the students and other youths who supported the Black Freedom Struggle, the Free Speech Movement, and liberal presidential candidates. Carto would use a presidential campaign on the Right to identify and recruit his own army in 1968.

The Liberty Lobby was not new to presidential campaigns. Like other conservative and Right-wing political groups in the early 1960s, it supported Barry Goldwater for the Republican nomination for President in 1964 as an opportunity to sustain Right-wing political power at the federal level. Carto, however, was skeptical of the Republican nominee due to Goldwater's unwillingness to openly embrace segregationism and white supremacy.²⁵ Following Goldwater's blowout electoral defeat, Carto became transfixed with George Wallace's political potential. Wallace was a far better fit with Carto's priorities. Wallace both blended in within a suit-and-tie type of American conservatism—often exhibited by groups like the White Citizens Councils or even William F. Buckley Jr.'s *National Review* magazine—and also had no trepidation

²⁴ Editorial, *Western Destiny*, June 1964; *Western Destiny*, March 1966.

²⁵ Charles Callan Tansill, "Time for Decision: An End to Betrayal in 1964," *Western Destiny*, June 1964, 6-7; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 86-87, 94; Berlet and Lyons, *Right-wing Populism in America*, 189.

towards embracing the conspiratorial hate and intolerance echoed by Klansmen and Carto's Liberty Lobby. After the 1964 election, the Liberty Lobby published a twelve-page pamphlet, "Stand Up for America: The Story of George C. Wallace" which detailed Wallace's policies against "Blacky" and asserted he was the only elected official capable of defeating communist infiltration within the federal government.²⁶

"Stand Up for America" detailed the Lobby's conspiratorial views of a communist alliance, coded as Jewish influence, with the civil rights movement and American liberalism, thus illustrating a larger alliance of anti-communist conservatism and segregationist racism. The pamphlet's promotion of Wallace as favorable to the radical racist Right further presented Wallace as an avenue for political power that Goldwater could not deliver for white supremacists. Wallace tacitly accepted the Lobby's support. In the leadup to a potential campaign in 1968, Wallace appeared to have no qualm accepting the Lobby's campaign donations and pamphlets, although the Wallace appeared to distance himself from Carto in public.²⁷ Still, Carto remained committed to Wallace's potential as a national figure for a racist revolution.

Riding his national fame as a public opponent to racial integration and the civil rights movement, Wallace announced a presidential campaign in 1968. While not as outwardly bigoted as his 1963 campaign for governor, in which during his inaugural address Wallace famously decreed "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever," Wallace's third-party presidential run on the American Independent Party ticket spoke in enough coded language to attract racist white Americans that felt that their

²⁶ *Stand Up for America* (Washington, D.C.: Liberty Lobby, 1965); Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 297; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 95-96.

²⁷ Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 297.

country was leaving them behind. His non-interventionist foreign policy positions, support for ending federal efforts at racial integration, and a political message of “law and order” that rivaled Republican candidate Richard Nixon had some pundits concerned that Wallace would split the conservative vote. By this point, American conservatism was a messy coalition of Old Right anti-New Deal-ers, anti-communists, and former segregationists, alongside New Right libertarians and anti-government anarchists. Some conservatives, including even members of the intellectual Right like William F. Buckley Jr., believed that desegregation and the civil rights movement was federal intervention into local power, violated individual liberty, and threatened states’ rights. Wallace thus threatened to disrupt the growing conservative coalition in the Republican Party that was already targeting former segregationists in the South. Sometimes referenced as the “Southernization of American politics,” George Wallace and Richard Nixon’s political absorption within American movement conservatism and—in the case of Nixon—the Republican Party, signaled a specific rightward turn of American politics of embracing language and rhetoric popularly associated with the Jim Crow South and white supremacy in general.²⁸

Despite the attempts of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act to legislate racial segregation and discrimination away from American society, Wallace’s appeal to more than just white southerners verified longstanding concerns from activists

²⁸ On 1960s American conservatism, see Nancy MacLean, *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right’s Stealth Plan for America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2017); Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Nation Books, 2001); On Wallace, see Carter, *The Politics of Rage*; quotations within Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 324, 339-341.

within the Black Freedom Struggle that the rhetoric of nativism and white supremacy was never isolated to a specific region, place, or community within the United States.²⁹ Carto seized upon the campaign as an opportunity to recruit a new generation to white supremacy.

Youth for Wallace

In May 1968, Carto established Youth for Wallace.³⁰ The Youth for Wallace (YFW) was the next step for Carto's vision of counterrevolutionary political action against the American Left, and an attempt for Carto to expand his influence specifically into youth activism, forging the next generation of Yockey "soldiers" Carto yearned for. The Liberty Lobby already had a history engaging with youth and educational policies. Among many issues, Carto's Lobby rejected Federal aid to education, primarily because of a concern of federal control and influence over American education. According to a Liberty Lobby brochure, "education is a matter for local communities, not Washington bureaucrats." The Lobby's concern over education related to Carto's desire to develop student youth groups to challenge his perception of liberal dominance within that arena.³¹ Instead of establishing a new arm of the Liberty Lobby designed around young people, however, Carto, took advantage of Wallace's campaign. For Carto, Wallace was a brand,

²⁹ One such instance of Black activists recognizing the false promise of a non-racist North involved Malcom X's portrait of the South, saying, "If you black, you were born in jail...As long as you South of the Canadian border, you South." See Marcus Anthony Hunter and Zandria F. Robinson, *Chocolate Cities: The Black Map of American Life* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 2.

³⁰ Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 128-129.

³¹ "Who's Your Lobbyist in Washington?: The Story of Liberty Lobby," *American Nazi Party Records, 1963-1970*, Anti-Semitism III+IV, SC-398, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

and the name held the national recognition Carto needed for recruitment. Furthermore, Wallace's political ideology—anti-communism, racial segregation, and right-wing populism—offered far more revolutionary potential within the political space of the radical racist right than Richard Nixon, who was already endorsed by Carto's enemies in the “respectable right,” such as William F. Buckley and his allies within *National Review*.³² Thus, publicly, the YFW appeared to any onlooker as an outgrowth of Wallace's grassroots presidential campaign. But the Wallace name was ultimately just a cloak for Carto's own radical Right agenda. Financed and organized entirely by Carto, the group was never officially affiliated with the Wallace campaign.³³ Carto envisioned the organization as serving a more specific agenda of gathering young people beyond the respectability policies of movement conservatism and to instead embrace Carto's antisemitism and white supremacist politics.

Despite operating as a front for the Liberty Lobby, YFW was well organized with an experienced internal leadership structure. Twenty-four-year-old John Patrick Acord joined YFW in May 1968 and served as the National Chairman of Youth for Wallace beginning on July 1, 1968. Acord was from California and had a history of involvement within conservative political groups such as “Young Republicans in California.” Sometime around 1967, Acord moved to Washington D.C. to attend law school at George Washington University. At the same time, he was a founder of the American-Southern Africa Council, an anti-Black Nationalist group that organized against international

³² Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 9, 131-133.

³³ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 2, within FBI file #62-106941, 252, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 129.

communism, often within the context of Rhodesian independence. The American-Southern Africa Council used anti-communism as a public cover for their support of white minority rule in south African nations, allying him just as much with segregationists and white supremacists as other elements of American conservatism.³⁴

Acord likely did not come upon Carto's YFW by chance as Acord was, in his own words, associated with the Liberty Lobby for "a number of years" prior to 1968 and "wholeheartedly approved of its public positions and most matters." He believed the Liberty Lobby was "doing a great deal to preserve the Republican institutions of our great nation and [carry] on an effective fight against internal subversion at home and communist treachery abroad." Alongside his approval of Carto and Liberty Lobby's policies, Acord also believed that American young people needed "vigorous" conservative youth and student organizations that could stand up to "SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) militancy, violence, [and] destructiveness." Acord's feelings mirrored the larger conservative movement's interest in developing a student-Right movement to counter the student-Left, first introduced earlier in the decade in William Buckley's Young Americans for Freedom. But Acord wanted something more than the conservative politics currently courted by the Republican Party. The George Wallace campaign, Acord felt, was an opportunity to "bring together many young patriots who felt as I do that neither the leftism of the Democratic Party nor the rhetoric of the

³⁴ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 1-2, within FBI file #62-106941, 252, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>; For further reading on 1960s American conservatives' interest in southern Africa, see Stephanie R. Rolph, "The Citizens' Council and Africa: White Supremacy in Global Perspective," *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 82, no. 3 (August 2016), 617-650.

Republican Party was the answer to the many problems facing the United States.” It is unknown whether Acord and Carto were friends, but their familiarity with each other and similar drive for conservative political victory likely influenced Carto’s decision to appoint Acord as YFW’s national leader.³⁵

Acord personally organized recruitment drives and advertising campaigns during the summer and fall of 1968. Recruitment, according to Acord, targeted “more liberal” university campuses, which seemed purposefully designed to tap into any youth voices that rejected more liberal student groups such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) or groups and individuals associated with Black Power, women’s liberation, or the anti-war movement. Acord and YFW established early footholds and memberships within the University of California at Berkeley, Columbia University, and Harvard. By late September 1968, Acord claimed that YFW membership included “precisely 6,322 students,” in chapters that included “New York University, Ohio State, UCLA, Dartmouth, St. John’s University, Creighton, the University of Kentucky, and North Carolina State.” Acord was proud of YFW recruitment and felt that these September numbers were impressive, particularly given that he had only been organizing up to that point during summer school sessions.³⁶

In the leadup to the 1968 election, YFW continued to grow. Dennis C. McMahon, an eighteen-year-old freshman at Fordham University in New York City and former

³⁵ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 1, within FBI file #62-106941, 252, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>; “Behind the Pearson Smear,” *Statecraft*, July-August, 1969, 4.

³⁶ “Wallace youth corps spreads to campuses,” *Indianapolis Recorder*, September 28, 1968.

member of Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), joined Acord during the summer as the National Vice-Chairman of YFW.³⁷ McMahon and Acord soon became friends and spent the remainder of the summer recruiting new members from their office in Washington D.C. McMahon abandoned YAF due to frustrations over the organization's leadership and tactics, that McMahon felt were effeminate and lacked the strong convictions needed to aggressively combat university leftists.³⁸ The gendered language seemed purposeful, and McMahon—as well as other young men that soon joined the organization—seemed to associate conservative political action with masculinity.³⁹ Whatever their tactics, Acord recounted in a statement in 1969 that under his and McMahon's leadership YFW recruited upwards of seventeen thousand total members prior to the 1968 election.⁴⁰ However, Acord's overly precise numbers invite skepticism and imply a degree of self-service. Much more likely, the seventeen thousand number is better explained as the number of names included on a YFW mailing list.

³⁷ FBI file #157-3447: "National Alliance," May 20, 1969, 3, accessed within https://archive.org/details/foia_National_Alliance_aka_NYA-NYC-1/page/n175/mode/1up?q=between.

³⁸ "NYA Success In New York," *Statecraft*, February-March, 1969, 4; FBI file #157-3447: "National Alliance," 102, https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthalliancencyc1573447_201907/page/n101/mode/1up?q=McMahon.

³⁹ On masculinity and the radical Right, see ed. Abby L. Ferber, *Home-Grown Hate: Gender and Organized Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Abby L. Ferber, *White Man Falling: Race, Gender, and White Supremacy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998); Nik Linders, Stefan Dudink, and Niels Spierings, "Masculinity and Sexuality in Populist Radical Right Leadership," *Politics & Gender*, 2022, 1–22.

⁴⁰ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 2, within FBI file #62-106941, 253, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>; Simonds, "The Strange Story of Willis Carto," *National Review* (September 10, 1971), 978-989, available in <https://www.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/people/c/carto.willis/carto.002>.

Still, YFW was not an insignificant or unknown student group. Chapters and demonstrations were visible across the county—and sometimes made showy statements to stand out. One example included a chapter at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia that set up tables in classroom buildings with “Wanted: For President” poster with George Wallace’s face in the center, a copy of the Declaration of Independence, large posters of a Soviet Union flag and Vladimir Lenin, and a final poster reading “WE’RE GOING TO TURN THIS COUNTRY AROUND”: JOIN Youth for Wallace.⁴¹ It is not entirely clear what the connection was between the Soviet posters and the YFW paraphernalia. Perhaps the intended message was that George Wallace—and the YFW organization—could save America from the evils of communism and return the nation to its roots in the Declaration of Independence, further bridging the gap between the segregationist and anti-communist factions of the American Right. Overt patriotism was also evident at a YFW recruitment drive based out of Hartford, Connecticut. Here YFW members dressed up in “red, white, and blue to pass out brochures.”⁴²

Membership included young, college-aged men, with an age cap set at thirty years old. Douglas W. Schell, the Chairman of the New York State YFW, pushing back against a claim that all Wallace supporters were “hicks,” said YFW included “[members] having doctorate degrees to persons who didn’t graduate high school,” as well as support

⁴¹ “Youth for Wallace Posters,” Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collections, <https://dc.lib.odu.edu/digital/collection/oduphotos/id/10339/rec/3>

⁴² William Borders Special to The New York Times, “Wallace Forces in Connecticut Hold Candidate can Win State.” *New York Times*, September 22, 1968. <http://ezproxy.uky.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/wallace-forces-connecticut-hold-candidate-can-win/docview/118244706/se-2>.

from “students from every state in the United States.”⁴³ Ultimately, similar to Acord’s claims about total membership, specific statistics for YFW are unverifiable and, in the case of Schell and Acord, asserted by those with an interest in promoting the group. But these alleged membership numbers demonstrate that those close to YFW sincerely believed the group held a not insignificant footprint within 1968 political geography. YFW recruitment ads touted Wallace as the only presidential candidate that had the “courageous, constructive leadership” to provide a “sane” future for the “youth of America,” making him the candidate for “young Americans who really *think*.” Wallace has courage, the ads declared, to stand up against “pseudo-intellectual professors, the hippies, the press, and the entire liberal Establishment.”⁴⁴

Schell, in a letter to the editor of the Black weekly the *New York Amsterdam News*, wrote that the Wallace campaign was an opportunity for Americans to see “the problems that face the United States.” He claimed that the Wallace campaign, and YFW by extent, welcomed “the support of all Americans whether rich or poor, formally educated or from the school of hard knocks, black or white,” while later decreeing that YFW rejected support from “all those, whether on the left or right...who believe in rioting and looting.” Concluding, Schell believed further engagement with young people of all varieties was the answer to political progress. “We hope that greater rapport can be obtained as a result of youth, both black and white, trying to see the problems that face

⁴³ Douglas W. Schell, "George Wallace," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 14, 1968. <http://ezproxy.uky.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/george-wallace/docview/226783481/se-2>.

⁴⁴ “Youth for Wallace flyer,” Correspondence, 1973, Folder 11a, Box 3, Papers of Willis A. Carto, RH WL MS 51, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

the United States...can only be solved in an atmosphere of law and order.”⁴⁵ Schell’s exact reason for writing to a Black paper is unknown. Although unlikely, perhaps he genuinely wished to expand the Wallace tent beyond ardent segregationists. His “rioting and looting” qualifier, however, demonstrates that even if he and other YFW members wanted Black support, they still saw Black people with patronizing attitudes. Yet, for leaders like Schell, it seemed as if YFW’s ability to mobilize a youth vote for George Wallace—perhaps even beyond the traditional elements of the American Right—was a necessary part towards establishing a bedrock of their conservative political action.

Even John Acord felt that the YFW organization was the start of a larger movement. As early as September 1968, Acord mentioned that YFW would continue after the election under a new name and “probably be transformed into a ‘National Conservative Youth’ organization.” “Regardless of the outcome of the election,” Acord wrote, “the Youth for Wallace will form itself into a permanent organization (outside of George Wallace).”⁴⁶ McMahon felt similarly, especially because he had an axe to grind with YAF. He was determined to establish a right-wing student organization that would not only compete against YAF as a second right-wing organization on college campuses, but specifically take the fight to SDS and campus liberals. McMahon believed left wing

⁴⁵ Douglas W. Schell, "George Wallace," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 14, 1968. <http://ezproxy.uky.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/george-wallace/docview/226783481/se-2>.

⁴⁶ First quotation within “Wallace youth corps spreads to campuses,” *Indianapolis Recorder*, September 28, 1968; Second quotation within notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 2, within FBI file #62-106941, 253, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>; Simonds, “The Strange Story of Willis Carto,” *National Review* (September 10, 1971), 978-989, available in <https://www.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/people/c/carto.willis/carto.002>.

student groups intended to corrupt “America’s productive youth” and “destroy our Nation’s campuses.”⁴⁷ Thus, McMahon’s vision of a political battlefield did not rest just in a presidential election, but in a competitive fight against an enemy of America-hating liberals that needed to be challenged and, perhaps, destroyed.

Carto and the actual youths in YFW had overlapping, but not identical, interests. Acord and McMahon imagined a culture war for the soul of a nation and linked back to Willis Carto’s vision for a right-wing revolutionary cadre. Carto controlled YFW’s finances, and contributed between forty and fifty thousand dollars to the organization via the Liberty Lobby and other Carto associates.⁴⁸ YFW recruitment ads also promoted Liberty Lobby’s “Stand Up For America” Wallace pamphlet and promised to mail it to all new members.⁴⁹ Despite this financial power, it is unclear how effective his influence was over the organization’s specific philosophies and tactics—at least to the degree that Carto desired. Although Carto originally conceived YFW as only using the Wallace name as a cover, YFW managed to gather college students sincerely interested in Wallace’s presidential run. If left to its own machinations the organization had the possibility to grow outside of Carto’s shadow. Acord, himself, was no stooge. In his mind he was the public leader of YFW; the face of the conservative student fight against leftists

⁴⁷ “NYA Success In New York,” *Statecraft*, February-March, 1969, 4; FBI file #157-3447: “National Alliance,” 102, https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthalliancencyc1573447_201907/page/n101/mode/1up?q=McMahon.

⁴⁸ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 2, within FBI file #62-106941, 253, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>.

⁴⁹ “Youth for Wallace flyer,” Correspondence, 1973, Folder 11a, Box 3, Papers of Willis A. Carto, RH WL MS 51, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

determined to assault American freedoms.⁵⁰ In interviews leading up to the election, Acord appeared coy while discussing YFW's financial backers, insisting it included "four or five individuals who desire[d] to remain anonymous."⁵¹

Yet, Carto slyly attempted to influence the political philosophy within the YFW leadership. As early as the summer of 1968, Carto met with Acord and gave him a copy of Francis Parker Yockey's *Imperium*.⁵² According to Acord in a statement made nearly a year later, he did not have time to read *Imperium* due to the "press of the campaign and [Acord's] own business." He allegedly took the book with him on a trip to Rhodesia and Mozambique in late November-early December 1968 and completed it in January 1969, claiming that he was "quite impressed with the quality of the writing and quality of exposition" despite also being "quite disturbed by its content."⁵³ It is unknown how truthful Acord was towards his familiarity with Yockey's book, but Carto's interest in sharing and promoting Yockey's neo-Nazi ideology amongst YFW leadership reveals Carto's desire to influence and perhaps control the organization from within. Acord's comments reveal that Carto's attempts would not always succeed. Carto, for his part, wanted to seize complete command of YFW away from student leadership pushing for their own interests, but would need more than just ideological winks and nudging. To accomplish his goal, Carto needed the right opportunity.

⁵⁰ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 2-5, within FBI file #62-106941, 252-259; "Wallace youth corps spreads to campuses," *Indianapolis Recorder*, September 28, 1968; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 129.

⁵¹ "Wallace youth corps spreads to campuses," *Indianapolis Recorder*, September 28, 1968.

⁵² Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 129

⁵³ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 2-3, within FBI file #62-106941, 253-254, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>.

Following George Wallace's failed 1968 bid for president, members of the Youth for Wallace no longer held the uniting purpose of specifically working towards electing Governor Wallace. Wallace's failure was the opportunity Carto needed to reform the organization. He wasted no time transitioning the organization away from Wallace and into something more in line with his vision of the radical racist Right. On November 15, 1968, ten days after the end of the 1968 election, at the Army and Navy Club in Washington D.C., Carto—flanked by Liberty Lobby lackeys like retired Col. Curtis B. Hall—officially reformed the Youth for Wallace into the National Youth Alliance (NYA). While no official policy statement was drafted, those in attendance adopted a loose series of positions for the NYA centered around opposition to drugs, Black Power, the SDS and other leftists on college campuses, and “American involvement in foreign wars.” Furthermore, Francis Parker Yockey's *Imperium* was decided upon as the “guiding ideological force for the NYA.” By the end of the meeting, Carto and his allies celebrated and distributed copies of *Imperium*, a signifier that the days of a Wallace centered organization were over.⁵⁴

Of course, not everyone involved in the new NYA were comfortable with the transition. John Acord, in a statement made months afterward, referred to the November 15th meeting as a “semi-secret meeting” where Carto was ultimately laying the

⁵⁴ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 3, within FBI file #62-106941, 254, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>; First quotation within Simonds, “The Strange Story of Willis Carto,” *National Review* (September 10, 1971), 986; Second quotation within Federal Bureau of Investigation, “National Youth Alliance memorandum,” 1, within FBI file #157-3447: “National Alliance,” 109, accessed within https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthalliancencyc1573447_201907/page/n108/mode/1up?q=vote.

groundwork for a “youthful Brownshirt organization.” Acord seemed to have been in denial that the “groundwork” was already initiated with YFW. Acord attended the November meeting along with other former YFW leaders. But by the end of the evening it was obvious to Acord that the new NYA was a different entity from what he managed, as well as what he likely envisioned as a future organization. At the meeting, Carto explained to Acord that the goal of the NYA was to “build a youth organization skilled in the arts of agitating, military and martial arts, self-defense, and armed with the teachings of Francis Parker Yockey to actively confront the leftists.” The NYA’s main enemies, according to Carto’s conversation with Acord, were Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), and Black Student Union (BSU) “radicals.”⁵⁵ Despite any alleged reservations about Carto’s vision for the NYA, both Acord and Dennis McMahon accepted leadership roles as national chairman and vice-chairman, respectively, of the NYA.⁵⁶

Following the meeting in Washington D.C., Carto wasted little time installing the necessary pieces so that he and his allies had creative control of the NYA. Carto placed one of his Liberty Lobby loyalists, Louis T. Byers, in direct charge of the NYA and tasked him with mobilizing the group’s original Youth for Wallace mailing list to easily distribute Liberty Lobby publications. While Acord was the chairman and official leader of NYA, Byers served in an unofficial capacity as advisor to the student leaders. Byers was a former coordinator for the John Birch Society until he left in 1968 to become a

⁵⁵ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 3, within FBI file #62-106941, 254, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>.

⁵⁶ Simonds, “The Strange Story of Willis Carto,” *National Review* (September 10, 1971), 986.

field organizer for the George Wallace campaign in Pennsylvania. That summer and fall he worked alongside Youth for Wallace groups and established a connection with Carto and other YFW leaders.⁵⁷ Byers, like Carto, was enamored with Francis Parker Yockey and was a chief organizer and member within Carto's Francis Parker Yockey movement. Thus, he was an excellent choice to establish Yockey doctrines within the NYA community, and further evidence of Carto's larger control over the new organization.

Between November 1968 and February 1969, Carto and Byers launched a series of leadership conferences to steer the new organization and officially launch the NYA nationally. The conferences took place in Atlanta, Georgia on December 28, 1968; New Orleans, Louisiana on January 4, 1969; Washington D.C. on January 11, 1969; Chicago, Illinois on January 18, 1969; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on January 25, 1969; New York City on February 1, 1969; Provo, Utah at Brigham Young University on February 8, 1969; and the University of California at Los Angeles on February 15, 1969. Here, NYA leadership officially established and voted on a four-point program for organization, based around the loosely assembled material points from the founding meeting in Washington D.C. Emerging from these conferences were the following objectives: "(1) To oppose the use of dangerous drugs and narcotics on campuses and to run pushers off college campuses. (2) To neutralize and overcome black power. (3) To restore law and order to the campuses. To use violent means to combat the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) if college officials do nothing. (4) To bring peace to America and oppose

⁵⁷ Paul W. Valentine, "The Student Right: Racist, Martial, Insular," *Washington Post*, May 15, 1969.

involvement in wars overseas.”⁵⁸ Some of the language within these objectives changed over the following weeks with more violently coded language. By the first issue of *National Youth Alliance News* in February 1969, objective three now referred to SDS as “anarchist.”⁵⁹ Privately, NYA meetings in early February wanted to incorporate further Yockey-ist language within their objectives, asking that the goal of NYA was to “preserve Western civilization.” In reflection of their racism, objective two was privately discussed as calling for the defeat of Black Power to ensure “a better future for western man.”⁶⁰

Unlike earlier conservative youth groups like Young Americans for Freedom, the NYA embraced its militant desires and situated itself as part of a new era of the radical racist Right youth movement. Still, despite Carto’s incorporation of Yockey principles, the newly named NYA was not explicitly framed, initially, as a neo-Nazi group in the eyes of its young members. Many of the former members of YFW envisioned the NYA would remain committed to the principles of the Wallace campaign, only now the organization had the flexibility to expand further into conservative student activism. The group’s mission included “uniting young conservatives” to the message of anti-Communism and American liberty, all while combating a perceived threat of New Left

⁵⁸ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “National Youth Alliance memorandum,” 1, within FBI file #157-3447: “National Alliance,” 109, accessed within https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthallianceny1573447_201907/page/n108/mode/1up.

⁵⁹ *National Youth Alliance News*, no. 1 (?) (undated/February 1969?), 1.

⁶⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “National Youth Alliance memorandum,” February 11, 1969, 2, within FBI file #157-3447: “National Alliance,” accessed within https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthallianceny1573447_201907/page/n82/mode/1up; Estelle P. Sammis, “New Youth Group Backs Rightist Cause,” *Long Island Press*, February 4, 1969, 16.

political and social movements on college and university campuses.⁶¹ “We wanted to build a truly active Conservative organization...[and] we here of the NYA [believe] that our greatest enemy [is] Communism,” wrote an unnamed NYA chapter member from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio.⁶² Members within the former Youth for Wallace were interested, in part, in continuing to carry the torch of the rhetoric of the Wallace campaign amongst college students, but they specifically claimed that the organization’s goals included combating “communism” on college campuses—not fighting racial integration or attacking Jews—and were “looking forward to the backing of a conservative candidate in 1972.”⁶³ Still, these talking points of eradicating liberalism, communism, and Marxism—which at times came to be used interchangeably—laid the bedrock for the organization’s members ultimately falling prey to the rhetoric of White Power politics.

The NYA and the Nazis

The moment of reckoning for the youth leaders of the NYA came at the January 25, 1969 conference in Pennsylvania. The NYA leadership, including chairman John Acord and vice-chairman Dennis McMahon, met at Conley’s Motel in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, just outside of Pittsburgh. There were little reasons to anticipate it being

⁶¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Alliance aka NYA-NYC-1. 157-3447. “National Youth Alliance,” Memorandum, March 12, 1969.

https://archive.org/details/foia_National_Alliance_aka_NYA-NYC-1/page/n125.

⁶² The name of this individual and his or her position within the NYA appears redacted by the FBI; Unnamed, “Unnamed to the Federal Bureau of Investigation,” April, 23, 1969, FBI File #157-12589, *National Alliance Part 1 of 13*, 14, https://archive.org/details/foia_National_Alliance_aka_NYA-HQ-1/page/n13/mode/1up.

⁶³ G.C. Moore to W.C. Sullivan, “National Youth Alliance (NYA) Racial Matters- White Hate Groups,” March 4, 1969, FBI File #157-12589, *National Alliance Part 1 of 13*, 6.

any different from the previous four organizational meetings, but the conference in Monroeville altered the trajectory of the NYA and made it clear Carto had created a neo-Nazi operation. The morning of the 25th, prior to the conference, John Acord and Dennis McMahon appeared for a taped television interview for a Pittsburgh network station, and initiated controversy when Acord admitted to the commentator that the NYA was a segregationist organization, possibly echoing its connection to the defunct Wallace campaign. Following the interview, Acord and McMahon were barred from any future comments to the press. Lou Byers became responsible for all future media statements and intended to project the NYA as a moderate organization.⁶⁴ Moderation, of course, was far-removed from the reality of the NYA.

The conference itself remained uneventful, as NYA members voted on the four-point program for the organization. The evening activities, on the other hand, were shocking to the youth leaders. Byers invited Acord, McMahon, and an unknown third NYA youth leader—possibly Louis Andrews given his co-signed resignation letter alongside Acord and McMahon later that spring—to attend a cocktail party hosted by the Francis Parker Yockey Movement (FPYM) in honor of Willis Carto. The party was at a FPYM member’s home in Pittsburgh and adorned with Nazi paraphernalia and war relics. Those in attendance, identified as “Associate Members of the NYA,” wore Nazi jewelry, cufflinks, and lapel pins. McMahon described the host showing off a display case containing a World War I shotgun “allegedly banned by the Geneva Convention,”

⁶⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “National Youth Alliance Memorandum,” May 20, 1969, 4, within FBI file #62-106941, 112, accessed within https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthalliancencyc1573447_201907/page/n108/mode/1up.

German lugers, and other pieces of weaponry and ammunition. The record player and hi-fi speaker system played Nazi war songs with members bellowing alongside in proud unison, removing any doubt that the young NYA leaders walked into a Nazi celebration.⁶⁵

Following the cocktail party, the evening continued with a buffet dinner back at Conley's Motel. NYA leadership returned to the same meeting space where just hours prior they held their conference, only now the meeting room was overrun with swastika banners and thirty to forty FPYM followers. After the meal, Byers announced the start of an official FPYM meeting, signaled with the singing of "Horst Wessel Lied," the anthem of Hitler's Nazi Party, with the men standing with uplifted arms in salute. For the rest of the evening, speakers babbled fanatically about a "nigrified and judeaized America" and Plato's similarity to *Mein Kampf* and *Imperium* in a talk titled, "Plato the Fascist." "They were not of the George Lincoln Rockwell stripe," Acord wrote in description of the FPYM members in attendance. The FPYM's neo-Nazis felt serious and perhaps even terrifying when compared to street-theater pranks and the pseudo-ridiculousness associated with Rockwell's American Nazi Party. The Yockey-ites, Acord felt, were "very serious about bringing about a National Socialist Revolution in the United States."

⁶⁵ John Acord (name redacted), notarized statement, May 14, 1969, 3, within FBI file #62-106941, 254, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>; First quotation within (name redacted), notarized statement, April 22, 1969, 1, within FBI file #62-106941, 260, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n259/mode/1up?q=Alliance>; Second quotation within Dennis McMahon (name redacted), notarized statement, May 10, 1969, 1, withing FBI file #62-106941, 262, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n261/mode/1up?q=Alliance>.

Speakers discussed new Hitler-centric literature, with special attention given to the forthcoming Noontide Press publication, “Myth of the Six Million,” of which Byers ecstatically claimed was a book “badly needed (for) those seeking to revive the Nazi movement.” In a twisted humor, he turned to the audience and proclaimed that although the Holocaust-denial book documented (falsely) “only a few hundred thousand...(Jews) had been liquidated,” he chuckled that “next time the final solution to the Jewish problem will be more efficiently executed.”⁶⁶

After the laughter subsided, Carto—the guest of honor—finally took the podium. In a drawn-out presentation, Carto bragged about his jail cell meeting with Yockey and proclaimed—in a line almost identical from his *Imperium* introduction—that the political power he was building would soon bring “the Imperium of which all Yockeyites dream.” The breakdown in law and order, the degeneration of democratic and liberal institutions, (and) the collapse of...morals,” Carto claimed, would soon create the necessary environment for the resurgence of authoritarianism. Carto exclaimed that it was necessary for Yockeyites to “capture the leadership of as many conservative elements as possible” as the United States moved further to the right. The mainstream right was weak and unserious in Carto’s eyes. The real enemies of Yockeyites, according to Carto, were, of course, Jews, but he especially despised “the leaders of the legitimate right,” who Carto included William Buckley Jr., U.S. Representative John Ashbrook, and journalist Fulton Lewis III. Carto’s speech ended with a scheduled phone conversation with Revilo P.

⁶⁶ John Acord (name redacted), notarized statement, May 14, 1969, 4, within FBI file #62-106941, 255, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>.

Oliver in Illinois, who both continued to rave about *Imperium* and possible answers to “the final solution to the Jewish question.”⁶⁷

Carto, as well as Byers, used the conference to impose the larger Yockey movement upon Acord and the other student leaders, purposefully lambasting conservatives and libertarians as enemies if they were unwilling to fall in line with the coming antisemitic and racist revolution. It was not just that Yockeyites and Nazis made themselves known at a NYA conference, but the shameless and grandiose way they conducted the evening signaled the power they held over the NYA. Carto had long endorsed Nazism, and his previous attempts to influence YFW—or at least John Acord—with passing praise and recommendations of Yockey’s *Imperium* signaled the Conley Motel meeting was a continuation, not necessarily an inciting incident. Despite Acord’s feelings of shock and horror towards what he witnessed that evening, the Pennsylvania conference was not so much a neo-Nazi coup but a confirmation that this philosophy was already embedded within the NYA, and youth leadership needed to fall in line. Acord specifically described Byers making thinly veiled threats about loyalty and the importance of secrecy during the FPYM meeting, swearing that “squealers would be promptly dealt with.”⁶⁸ These comments, of course, could have been directed towards

⁶⁷ John Acord (name redacted), notarized statement, May 14, 1969, 4-5, within FBI file #62-106941, 255-256, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>; Dennis McMahan (name redacted), notarized statement, May 10, 1969, 1-2, within FBI file #62-106941, 262-263, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n261/mode/1up?q=Alliance>; Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right*, 129.

⁶⁸ John Acord (name redacted), notarized statement, May 14, 1969, 4, within FBI file #62-106941, 255, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>

anyone in attendance, but Carto and Byers' larger goal for control of NYA signal the messages—as well as the entire evening's events—were intimidation tactics against the NYA student leaders.

Unlike Acord, vice-chairman Dennis McMahon did not seem too ashamed to associate with—and perhaps even embrace—Nazism. Following the fascist speeches at the January 25th meeting, McMahon gathered with small groups of Yockey-ites selling Nazi artifacts and relics and purchased “a few items” that included a “swastika armband, a Nazi party pin, and a record album of German war songs.”⁶⁹ In the Spring 1969 issue for the Carto owned *American Mercury* magazine, McMahon wrote an article titled “The National Youth Alliance: A Young Nationalist's Battle Cry,” announcing the new organization for Carto's audience and detailing the four-point objectives decided in the earlier conferences. McMahon's language was unmistakably militant, referencing the NYA as made up of “self-sacrificing young people...ready to fight, and die if necessary, for the sacred Cause.” Conjuring images of a violent assault on campus leftists, he described the NYA as a movement “dedicated to the total destruction and annihilation of the campus red front,” and the NYA was prepared to “bury” and “liquidate the enemies of the American people.”⁷⁰ McMahon's Nazi-sounding language was commonplace as he made similar remarks at a public speech at a New York regional meeting of the NYA.

⁶⁹ Dennis McMahon (name redacted), notarized statement, May 10, 1969, 2, within FBI file #62-106941, 263, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n261/mode/1up?q=Alliance>; New York SAC to FBI Director, National Youth Alliance Memorandum, July 28, 1969, 2, within FBI file #62-106941, 145, accessed within https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthalliancencyc1573447_201907/page/n144/mode/1up.

⁷⁰ Dennis McMahon, “The National Youth Alliance: A Young Nationalist's Battle Cry,” *American Mercury*, Spring 1969, 61-63.

“(The NYA) will not surrender to...liberal tyranny. The future belongs only to those who will stand up and fight for it,” echoing that previous right-wing groups like YAF were too weak to properly combat “red and black destruction.” “The day of black power savagery is over,” he proclaimed. “If a few heads have to be split, so be it.”⁷¹

After the Takeover

The February 1969 issue of Carto’s *Liberty Letter* announced the official formation of the National Youth Alliance. Perhaps because of his incendiary rhetoric, the announcement—likely endorsed by Carto—proclaimed McMahon the leader of the NYA, despite Acord still serving as national chairman.⁷² McMahon also joined the editorial staff of *Statecraft*, a radical Right newspaper managed by two NYA members. *Statecraft* described itself as a “patriotic action group” but the newspaper was littered with racism and antisemitism within editorials and cartoons.⁷³ McMahon’s expansion within the NYA echoed the rise in neo-Nazi and neo-fascist language in NYA official publications that embraced eliminationist politics. The first edition of “National Youth Alliance News,” the organization’s monthly newsletter, presented the NYA’s four-point objectives with detailed explanations of the group’s enemies. It described SDS as responsible for anarchy and chaos on university campuses and explained that university administrators should remove the “troublemakers.” “If college leaders lack the will,” it declared, “they should be replaced.” Elsewhere, the newsletter described Stokely Carmichael and “Black Power

⁷¹ “NYA Success In New York,” *Statecraft*, February-March, 1969, 4.

⁷² *Liberty Letter*, February, 1969, 3.

⁷³ *Statecraft*, February-March, 1969, 2.

enthusiasts” as threats to western civilization. “We, as...descendants of the builders of Western Civilization, intend to survive and to create...a better future for Western men.”⁷⁴

However, despite the open calls for violence, NYA members did not publicly present themselves as extremist. C.B. Baker, NYA member and co-editor of *Statecraft*, spoke in a radio interview that “the NYA is not a racist organization.” He added, “We are equally against black power political opposition, as well as the white trash SDS.”⁷⁵ Even adult Carto allies kept up the facade that the NYA and its philosophies were not *really* white supremacist. On a July 2, 1969 radio show in New York City, Louis Byers scoffed at the host’s insistence that Yockey’s *Imperium* was a “latter day Mein Kampf.” Byers unequivocally denied the NYA “bible” being a neo-Nazi text and defended it as “a philosophical treatise.” In the same interview, Byers stated that the NYA was “opposed to any sort of totalitarianism, whether from the left or right.” He argued, somewhat smugly however, that the NYA is against democracy. “Democracy is the worst system to man. A republican form of government is much superior to ‘mobocracy,’” unable to hold back his true feelings.⁷⁶ Carto and his allies seemed aware that open embrace of neo-Nazi slogans and symbols was toxic, politically. And thus, while Carto still stewarded the NYA towards a clear white supremacist angle of the radical racist Right, much of the political rhetoric remained as coded as his Liberty Lobby projects or even the George Wallace campaign.

⁷⁴ *National Youth Alliance News*, No. 1, February, 1969?.

⁷⁵ “NYA Success In New York,” *Statecraft*, February-March, 1969, 4.

⁷⁶ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “National Youth Alliance memorandum,” July 28, 1969, 3, within FBI file #157-3447: “National Alliance,” 146, accessed within https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthalliancencyc1573447_201907/page/n145/mode/1up.

John Acord, and a few allies within NYA student leadership, rejected the radical racist Right turn within the organization, or what he called “subversive.”⁷⁷ On March 2, 1969, Acord resigned as national chairman. Carto wasted little time to take exclusive financial control of the NYA. Carto, or likely one of his lackeys, broke into the NYA Washington D.C. office on March 5th and stole a file cabinet containing the mailing lists for the NYA and former Youth for Wallace. Following the break-in, Carto officially changed the NYA mailing address to the Liberty Lobby headquarters. Despite the outcry from Acord—as well as a threat of legal action—the damage was already done. Acord lacked the funds to effectively sue for control of the NYA.⁷⁸ However, Acord organized a crew of anti-Carto members to retake control of the organization at the next leadership conference. On March 29, 1969, the NYA leadership met at the Pick-Roosevelt Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to elect new national officers. With the backing of Acord, Patrick Tifer—a college student from Detroit, Michigan—was elected the new National Chairman. The student leadership also elected Acord as Director of Finance as well as McMahon—who recently flipped to Acord’s side—as Executive Director. Carto and his “Associate Members of the NYA,” the adult Yockey-ites and Carto stooges, were furious. Carto demanded a re-vote and claimed the election was invalid because Acord had already resigned from NYA. After a lengthy tirade, the organizers held a second

⁷⁷ John Acord (name redacted), notarized statement, May 14, 1969, 6, within FBI file #62-106941, 257, accessed within

<https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*; Federal Bureau of Investigation, “National Youth Alliance Memorandum,” May 20, 1969, 4, within FBI file #62-106941, 112, accessed within

https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthalliancencyc1573447_201907/page/n108/mode/1up; Trento and Spear, “How Nazi Nut Power Has Invaded Capitol Hill,” *True For Today’s Man* (November, 1969), 124.

election and elected two Carto-backed students in place of Acord and McMahon—Cary Winters and James Ferris. The meeting concluded with the expulsion of Acord and McMahon amidst claims that the two former leaders attempted to subvert the organization for their own interests. Tifer would attempt to stand up to Carto over the next few months in his position as National Chairman, but Carto’s financial power over the NYA proved insurmountable to Tifer. Carto had his lackey, Louis Byers, remove Tifer and other like-minded students from the NYA. By May 1969, Carto gained complete control of the organization and celebrated June 1969 as the *true* founding of the NYA.⁷⁹

Acord’s fighting with Carto’s Yockey-ites continued after his removal from the NYA. In April, Acord leaked his side of the story to columnist Drew Pearson. Pearson produced a series of columns illuminating the neo-Nazi connections with the NYA and Carto’s Liberty Lobby.⁸⁰ The pro-Carto forces within the NYA were furious and responded with a series of attack articles within *Statecraft* that called Acord a “Patriot for Profit” and a manure-spewing leaker to “slime lord, Pearson.”⁸¹ Acord later confided to

⁷⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “National Youth Alliance Memorandum,” May 20, 1969, 6, 7, within FBI file #62-106941, 114, 115, accessed within https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthalliancencyc1573447_201907/page/n108/mode/1up; “The Year in Retrospect,” *National Youth Alliance Action*, no. 12, June 1970, 1-2.

⁸⁰ Drew Pearson, “Neo-Nazis Threaten U.S.,” *New Orleans Daily States-Item*, April 17, 1969; Drew Pearson, “Neo-Nazis Grab ‘Wallace Youth’,” *New Orleans Daily States-Item*, April 21, 1969; Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson, “Our Hitler Youth,” *New York Post*, April 21, 1969.

⁸¹ “John Acord-Patriot for Profit,” *Statecraft*, Volume 2, Number 3, April-May, 1969, 1, 7; “Behind the Pearson Smear,” *Statecraft*, Volume 2, Number 3, July-August, 1969, 4-5.

the FBI that, alongside telephoned death threats, he discovered that Byers privately told NYA leaders that Acord should be “liquidated.”⁸²

The fallout from Carto’s and the neo-Nazi control over the NYA rippled all the way up to George Wallace, himself. In June 1969, George Wallace expressed “extreme concern” over Carto’s takeover of the youth organization that bore the former governor’s name. In what amounted little more than a quibbling over terminology and brand association, Wallace and his people felt that it was dramatically inappropriate that they could ever be associated with a Nazi youth movement.⁸³ This bickering, of course, misses the larger element of how Wallace’s rhetoric—particularly his support for racism—easily transitioned into language approved by extremists in the radical racist Right. Although the anti-Carto youth leadership wanted to downplay the neo-Nazi element as a surprise, the NYA and the YFW movement were already a heaven for racism and bigotry, and attracted people perhaps more interested in the radical Right than they wanted to admit.

In an effort to continue to fight back against Carto’s control of the NYA, and perhaps a sign of them willing to do anything to return to the organization they helped found, Acord and McMahon became FBI informants and reported on the entire Yockey-ite takeover of the NYA. In each of their notarized affidavits, they swore that they had no knowledge of what they called “subversive” opinions from Carto prior to the January 25th meeting in Pennsylvania, although saying such was beneficial to their central claim of

⁸² John Acord (name redacted), notarized statement, May 14, 1969, 6, within FBI file #62-106941, 257, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up>.

⁸³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Alliance aka NYA-NYC-1. 157-3447. “George Wallace Expresses Concern,” *National Youth Alliance News*, Number 2, June, 1969, 1.

being innocent bystanders. McMahon's affidavit claimed he only purchased Nazi paraphernalia as a ruse to infiltrate the FPYM. He insisted that any Nazi activity and language—including his *American Mercury* article—were done to maintain his cover.⁸⁴ Although the story was possible, McMahon had every reason to lie about his politics. Whether McMahon purchased Nazi artifacts as an act, as a joke, or out of sincerity, he walked back his violent and neo-fascist messages only after he lost power within the organization he and Acord helped found. Furthermore, Acord also had every reason to present himself as the moderate alternative to Carto's Nazism, crafting the perfect narrative being usurped by a radical extremist. However, Acord's presentation of innocence is disingenuous. Prior to coming on as the head of YFW, Acord had previous leadership experience as the national field director of "America's Victory Force," a right-wing organization based out of Washington D.C. committed to countering anti-war demonstrations, as well as a leader within the "America Southern Africa Council," which proudly supported white minority rule as a defense against, in his view, communist-supporting Black Nationalists.⁸⁵ Even more broadly, Acord enthusiastically embraced his role as national chairman of Youth for Wallace, unequivocally endorsing Wallace's Right-wing statures like segregation. Acord did not admit it to the FBI, but he shared racist politics not too far from Carto's white supremacist identity, minus a swastika. Sanctioning racism and coded antisemitism were acceptable for conservatives like Acord,

⁸⁴ Dennis McMahon (name redacted), notarized statement, May 10, 1969, 1-2, within FBI file #62-106941, 263, accessed within <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n261/mode/1up?q=Alliance>.

⁸⁵ Notarized statement of John Acord (name redacted), May 14, 1969, 1-2, within FBI file #62-106941, 252, accessed within https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n251/mode/1up_

as long as the politics were veiled underneath “patriotic conservatism” instead of open Nazism.

The public fallout and criticism from the anti-Yockey faction did not hurt Carto’s resolve to continue the NYA. With full command of the membership mailing lists, Carto wasted little time to take exclusive financial control of the NYA. Carto appointed Louis Byers as the new national chairman, and Byers mobilized the original Youth for Wallace mailing list to easily distribute Liberty Lobby publications. Under Byers and Carto, and without the political cover of the Wallace campaign or a need to conform to mainstream conservative voices, the NYA members were recipients of not just anti-communist propaganda but Carto’s own antisemitic and racist material. Alongside newsletters like *American Mercury*, *Statecraft*, and the two official NYA publications, *Action* and *National Youth Alliance News*, Byers dispersed “fund-raising letters in the hundreds of thousands.”⁸⁶ Carto’s NYA became a Liberty Lobby publishing arm, with few examples of actual direct mobilization or activism. *National Youth Alliance News* was a short news bulletin sent out to NYA members to detail important events and how students could become involved. At times, *News* included language about taking the fight to liberals or how the NYA was in a battle for the “survival of our race and civilization.”⁸⁷ But the NYA—at least from its official publication—seemed more interested in selling copies of Yockey’s *Imperium*. Moreover, *Imperium* was plastered throughout the issues, with a section called “quotation from Imperium” appearing in issues as a sort of monthly

⁸⁶ Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce* (1st Books Library, 2001), 118.

⁸⁷ *National Youth Alliance News*, No. 3, July 1969, 1.

devotional.⁸⁸ Similar to the use of the pro-Wallace Liberty Lobby “Stand Up For America” pamphlet that was heavily advertised with the Youth for Wallace, the NYA was heavily invested in selling copies of *Imperium* and other Right-wing tabloids to make money for Carto; not start a revolution.

Louis Byers, though, was more interested in rebuilding NYA. The NYA was hemorrhaging members and their dues ever since the public split from the former student leaders. Byers attempted to resuscitate the group by doubling down in calls for violent revolution, albeit with specific coded language. Alongside the news bulletin, Byers helped the NYA publish a four-page newspaper, *Action*. The *Action* newspaper included longer and more detailed articles about NYA activities, although some issues still included a “Quotation from *Imperium*” section, likely at Carto’s request.⁸⁹ The NYA also developed a new slogan under the new Byers and Carto leadership: “Free men are not equal and equal men are not free.” Accompanying the slogan was the new official logo for the NYA, a mathematical equal sign with a slash through it, meaning “does not equal.” Although not an open call for “white power,” the language was a clear hostility to movements advocating equality, such as the civil rights movement, second wave feminism, and gay liberation movement, as well as criticism against the welfare state and any other government initiatives—such as affirmative action—where white racists felt

⁸⁸ *National Youth Alliance News*, No. 2, May 1969, 2; *National Youth Alliance News*, No. 3, July 1969, 3; *National Youth Alliance News*, No. 4, July 1969, 2.

⁸⁹ *Action*, no. 5 (August 1969), 2; *Action*, no. 7 (December 1969), 3.

that by the government providing for one underserved community that it was taking something away from whiteness.⁹⁰

Byers leaned into radical racist Right programming, too. Byers invited University of Illinois classics professor Revilo P. Oliver—the Carto ally and former Bircher leader—to speak before a crowd of NYA members at an NYA leadership conference in May 1969. Oliver’s speech eulogized the “greatness of the United States” and demanded action from young people in the NYA. His talk, titled “After Fifty Years,” lamented the people, culture, and “tactics” of the 1920s, a decade in which he felt collected the glory years of the United States. Oliver described the 1920s as a period where “the majority of adult Americans believed in Christianity,” Americans still “had manhood and self-respect” for the monuments of the “uniquely noble and uniquely powerful...Indo-European or Aryan (civilization),” and the United States Constitution “retained considerable prestige” despite the attacks from “aliens who wheedled gullible Americans such booby-traps as the White Slave Act (originally called the ‘Income Tax’) and the ‘Federal Reserve’ swindle. In all, Oliver felt that the twilight of American greatness had arrived and that it was up to young conservatives to take on what called this “last effort of the West” to combat Marxism, “social justice,” and a falsified narrative of American history perpetrated by universities funding “an ‘education’ by ‘liberals’” designed to brainwash the coming generations away from achieving such greatness. Following Oliver’s presentation, the NYA distributed the entire speech in a pamphlet mailed out to members. Oliver also repurposed his speech into a thirty-seven-minute documentary film

⁹⁰ It is unclear when the new slogan and logo first premiered and could have been before Carto’s complete takeover of NYA and the removal of John Acord. See *National Youth Alliance News*, no. 1 (?) (undated/February 1969?).

of sorts in which the sixty-one-year-old recorded himself staring directly into the camera while flanked by dusty bookshelves. The video, like the printed speech, was distributed at NYA events.⁹¹ Byers intended Oliver's "After Fifty Years" to inspire NYA membership to seek action, just like the name of the NYA newspaper.

Throughout much of 1969, several events that emerged from the Oliver presentation suggested possibility that the NYA would move beyond its struggles and be the vehicle for revolutionary youth white power activism Carto desired. On July 16, 1969, the NYA chapter at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) held a "Right Power Rally." The flyer for the event advertised a speech from Byers and called for attendees to "demand law and order" and "STOP RIOT POWER AT THE RIGHT POWER RALLY," in reference to leftist campus demonstrations in Los Angeles, Cornell, and Columbia.⁹²

The "right power" campaign spread to the majority of NYA rallies and functions. "Right power" creatively distinguished themselves from the radical racist Right battle cry, White Power, and perhaps gave the NYA coverage to demonstrate on a university campus without administrative pushback. The tongue-in-cheek nature seemed as if the phrase could just as easily have been a carryover from the outlandish American Nazi Party activities, but the intention was more to distance the NYA away from overt Nazi

⁹¹ Although Oliver does not specifically allude to it, it is worth noting that the 1920s were also the decade that saw the height of the second iteration of the Ku Klux Klan; Revilo P. Oliver, "After Fifty Years," Charles H McGuire, 1971-1977, Folder 14, Box 14, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁹² See "Right Power Rally," accessed within https://archive.org/details/foia_National_Alliance_aka_NYA-HQ-2/page/n27/mode/2up; "Rightists present demands," *Action*, No. 5 (August 1969), 1-2.

imagery and messaging while still signaling to those in the know. Right Power rallies continued throughout 1969 and into 1970 in Baltimore, MD; Pittsburgh, PA; Buffalo, NY; Seattle, WA, Auburn, AL; and New York City. Of these locations, the year-in-review issue of *Action* highlighted UCLA, Baltimore, and Auburn University as successful events that demonstrated the power of “Right Wing American Youth” on campuses across the country.⁹³ Auburn University appeared multiple times in *Action*, due to Auburn student—and NYA Alabama Chairman—Charles Muncaster wanting to organize NYA to challenge the draft. Although it was much more common in the 1960s for Right-wing and conservative organizations to attack anyone criticizing the draft as “un-American,” Muncaster refused to “voluntarily submit himself to the jurisdiction of the United Nations” and wanted to signal “the end of leftist monopoly of the draft issue.” *Action* praised the Auburn student for the “first time that a young person on the Right has stood up in opposition...to the no-win war in Vietnam.”⁹⁴

Through 1969 and into 1970, the NYA thrived and made national headlines as an authoritarian group on college campuses. A December 1969 article in the *Washington Post*, titled “NYA: Alive and Well Here,” described the NYA as a “hard-right group” interested in “get-tough tactics against campus radicals,” implying—perhaps inadvertently—a comparison between NYA’s veiled neo-Nazism and a left-wing “radical” group demonstrating for women’s liberation. The *Post* article detailed that Byers and the leadership of NYA wanted the group to be seen as revolutionary, noting

⁹³ “The Year in Retrospect,” *Action*, No. 12 (June 1970), 1-2.

⁹⁴ Quotation within “NYA’er Challenges Draft!,” *Action*, No. 9 (February 1970), 1; “Right-Wing Youth Group Seeks to Organize Chapter At Auburn,” *Action*, No. 10 (March/April 1970), 1; “The Year in Retrospect,” *Action*, No. 12 (June 1970), 2.

that “Byers...wants not only to crush radical student and black power movements but also assert positive values of ‘Western destiny.’” At the top included a large full page photo of Louis Byers and two student members of NYA, twenty-seven-year-old Michael Russell and twenty-two-year-old Carey Winters, discussing stories for the *Action* newspaper. Within the photo, sat a large poster of Francis Parker Yockey on the side wall of the NYA office, always watching over the actions of the young members. In the article Louis Byers detailed—and heavily exaggerated—the NYA history as expanding from “a one-man, mailing-list operation to a booming, solvent, tightly-knit network of chapters across the country.” Byers proudly cited the mailing list growth from 2,000 to 4,000 recipients, with revenue “pouring in” at \$300 a day.⁹⁵

In both the *Post* and in their own publications, the NYA seemed prepared to make the next step towards student revolution. In December 1969, NYA hosted a series of “Action Seminars” where members practiced how to “disarm a knife-wielding attacker,” how to break out of choke holds, and other ways to counter “New Left tactics” and “Black Power demonstrations.” In more of a preparation for violence than political action, the January 1970 issue of *Action* doubled-down on the soldier identity and emphasized that the NYA was “equipping itself for the battle ahead.” In a call to arms on the front page of the issue, it read, “We need you—not only as a member, but also as an active participant in the struggle to preserve the West.” “Now is the time,” it concluded “when all Western youth must unite toward the common goal of survival.”⁹⁶ An earlier issue of the NYA newsletter best laid out the NYA’s new belief system: “NYA is a

⁹⁵ Paul W. Valentine, “NYA: Alive and Well Here,” *The Washington Post*, December 22, 1969, A3.

⁹⁶ “Action Seminars Begin,” *Action* No. 8 (January 1970), 1.

fighting movement, not a talking one or a money-raising one, and therefore it is structured like an army.”⁹⁷

The move towards student-led warfare seemed assured. Unfortunately for the NYA, the organization perhaps needed to be more of a “money-raising” movement as the group neared bankruptcy. By Fall 1970, the NYA was allegedly over \$40,000 in debt. The June 1970 issue of *Action*, celebrated as a one-year-anniversary special, was the last full issue under the Carto and Byers leadership. The July issue was combined with August and became the final issue for this era of the NYA.⁹⁸

Despite the public image, privately the NYA was doing far worse and nearing collapse. By the fall of 1970, the once impressive mailing list was bringing in fewer and fewer donations every month. Carto and Byers’ vision for a revolutionary guard of youth that would welcome a new era of Right-wing power politics to the forefront did not come to pass. The NYA under their leadership did not develop the network necessary to sustain itself. Externally, the “right power” rallies and recruitment videos with high production value did not bring the NYA notoriety as much as they claimed in their publications. NYA was perhaps even more unknown to the larger radical racist Right—and, thus, less of a national threat—than Rockwell’s American Nazi Party. A September 1969 report into other White Hate organizations in the United States concluded that groups like the National Socialist White People’s Party (NSWPP)—Rockwell’s successor

⁹⁷ *National Youth Alliance News*, No. 3 (June 1969), 1.

⁹⁸ *Action* No. 12 (June 1970); *Action* No. 13 (July-August 1970); Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds*, 115-119

organization—was possibly not “even aware of the existence of the NYA.”⁹⁹ Although Willis Carto finally had his soldiers for a Yockey-ite revolution, there was no coalition to save the failing NYA.

The takeaway of the life cycle and transition of the membership in the National Youth Alliance is twofold: first, members of a politically mainstream conservative campaign group were easily transitioned towards extremism. Second, older adult leaders of such groups felt that young people were appropriate and necessary cadres for a campaign of antisemitism, national socialism, and white supremacy. This is noteworthy because it shows how those within radical racist Right groups decided to operate. In the waning years of the civil rights movement and the height of New Left activism, the radical Right sought to capitalize on the success of youth activism and began to integrate it into their own movements. Carto’s vision of a youth-soldier leading the way towards national socialist political victory was, perhaps, much more possible than it ever was for George Lincoln Rockwell’s ANP. Yet, with both Rockwell and Carto, their movements were constrained by the level of engagement from their young activists and the extent they could stay financially solvent.

The initial civil war for control of the NYA damaged the organization and perhaps made it difficult to retain membership in the months after the public split. But the infighting also reveals something about conservative activism. As early as 1969,

⁹⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Youth Alliance Memorandum, September 17, 1969, 4, within FBI file #157-12589-32ep2, accessed within https://archive.org/details/foia_National_Alliance_aka_NYA-HQ-2/page/n9/mode/2up.

members and leadership of the former Youth for Wallace no longer remained engaged with the failed former governor's run for the White House. The original YFW youth leadership insisted that the Yockey-driven ideology that captured the NYA was a radical departure from their patriotic conservatism. For the former YFW members that remained, it is tempting to say they were "radicalized" or duped into falling for a neo-Nazi operation. But the pro-segregation and white-populist identity rhetoric of the Wallace campaign was hardly separate from the hyper-nationalism, racism, and coded antisemitism within the NYA. It is not so much that the youth in the NYA departed from rhetoric of segregation towards an ideology of antisemitism and white supremacy. Rather, that transition was readily available, navigable, and accessible to those that could wade through the political code phrases.

The NYA also represented a new era of Right-wing organizing emerging from the 1960s. The NYA combined the Old Right, who organized against New Deal-era liberalism and unified as anti-communists, and the racist and nativist right that rejected religious, racial, ethnic, or gender minorities as pariahs subverting western traditionalism. The NYA emerged alongside the New Right's turn towards culture war and libertarian philosophies, but did not see them as allies. This "Newer" Right responded to the social movement successes of the New Left and the New Right's failures to regain political hegemony in the 1960s by creating a youth-driven political movement that saw both liberalism and the conservative Right as enemies. NYA leaders rejected leftist groups like Students for a Democratic Society alongside libertarian and conservative movements that—in their failure to halt the civil rights movement—NYA members blamed for the rise of Black Power. In terms of the story of young people within the radical racist Right,

it would be Carto's successor who would push this activism forward into a new political identity.

Students and young people, however, still did not have a large influence within the movement. When young voices did attempt to gain power within the NYA, the adult forces asserted their economic and political influence to suppress youth power.

Paradoxically, the emerging white power elements of the radical racist Right recognized youth as necessary actors for the coming political revolution, but were unwilling to share or apportion organizational power with young people. The NYA was the final crossroads before rejected youth leaders abandoned adult guidance and established youth centered and youth organized white power crusades. Carto, through all of his puppeteering to finally establish a neo-Nazi youth movement, did not administer this generational transformation. It would be Carto's usurper—William Luther Pierce—that oversaw the NYA's guidance towards a youth-led white power revolution.

Chapter 4. The Revolution Begins: William Luther Pierce, the Ideological Tug of War, and White Power Youth Insurgents

In the summer of 1978, twenty-five-year-old Nick Camerota was thrilled to send in the proofs for his latest book review for *Attack!*, the official newspaper for the National Youth Alliance (NYA). He had worked as the book and film reviewer for the newspaper since 1972 and covered plenty of publications—new and old—related to topics about white power, Aryan heritage, and national socialism. But this particular review was different. The summer 1978 issue of *Attack!* printed a full review of *The Turner Diaries*, the first full-length novel written by their devout leader, William Luther Pierce. *The Turner Diaries* first appeared in monthly installments in *Attack!*, but now was available as a complete paperback edition. The novel’s premise involved a racist fantasy of white revolutionaries overthrowing the United States government and instituting a race war that led to the extermination of all non-whites in the country. Alongside the indulgently sadistic language of violent attacks against “race traitors” and government officials, the novel featured illustrations drawn by NYA member Dennis Nix. Camerota praised Nix’s artwork of bombings and destruction. “The one of the *Washington Post* blowing up was delightful. Come to think of it,” the review continued, “the drawing depicting the charred ruins of the FBI building was pretty good too.”¹

Camerota was not alone in his admiration of the white supremacist fantasy depicted in *The Turner Diaries*. The novel aroused devotees of all ages within the radical racist Right and would become a guidebook for antigovernment groups, militia units,

¹ Nick Camerota, “The Turner Diaries Book Review,” *Attack!*, 1978, cited within Tyler Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994), 44.

neo-Nazis, and others involved in the larger white power movement. But Camerota likely admired the *The Turner Diaries* in part because he admired its author. The novel was just one element of Pierce's writings that represented a turn towards more aggressive political—and even explicitly militant—action that commanded white youth like Camerota to rise up in revolution. The NYA under Pierce would move beyond electoral politics and language of violent revolution against political enemies (particularly the perceived enemies of white people) to a militaristic vision of white power Pierce took over the failing NYA at the end of the 1960s and transformed it into a vibrant organization. He introduced the idea of the System, which he theorized as an insidious collusion to keep white people out of power that needed to be fought with violence. Through works like *The Turner Diaries* and other published material that emerged from his NYA, and later National Alliance, Pierce both brought white supremacist ideas to a new generation and empowered them to imagine themselves as warriors for a white cause. These new recruits engaged in a wave of extremist antigovernment militia activities in the last quarter of the twentieth century and became leaders in the broader white power movement.

Pierce was the mentor to radical racist Right activism in the early 1970s. Due to his connections with white supremacists and neo-Nazis in the 1960s, he built the NYA to take on the successful traits of past organizations—such as Rockwell's weaponization of youth culture—but chartered new territory for the movement as well. Pierce operated as a fulfillment of Rockwell's vision of white power political victory, sans the inflammatory tactics and behaviors. He was a link between Rockwell's ANP—and the subsequent NSWPP—and the later revolutionary elements of white power activism. Through his

takeover of the NYA, Pierce moved to establish a National Socialist movement that would fulfil the goal of political victory for white racists, by any means necessary. Pierce's vision for a united front, to which he referred as the National Front, became the basis for the early white power movement in the 1970s. This philosophy instigated the importance of coalitionary activism based around *whiteness*—instead of explicit neo-Nazism—and established young people as the foundation for a racist revolution.

Where Willis Carto had led from the top down, Pierce let youth define the tone of the organization's activities, and ultimately transformed the direction of youth activism within the radical racist Right. The youth of the NYA were empowered to call for specific revolutionary action against not just Jews and Black people, but all in the United States that were—in their view—unsupportive of white people and white power in the government. NYA publications called for violence against the state, including police officers, postal workers, and federal officials, and articles even included instructions on how to shoot guns and build home-made explosives. Embracing the revolutionary language of young people in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this white power youth group was a complete renovation from the dominant messaging and tactics of previous radical racist right operations. These successful changes came about because of Pierce's leadership. Inspired by the political and messaging failures from previous National Socialist organizations, Pierce oversaw a transition in white power activism that moved beyond pompously racist disruptions and political messaging in the radical racist Right, and towards specific messaging for violent revolutionary direct action, centered explicitly around young people as cadres of the forthcoming white utopia.

Pierce and the American Nazi Party

William Luther Pierce was a self-described National Socialist and a former member of the John Birch Society and Rockwell's American Nazi Party (ANP). Pierce was a significant associate of George Lincoln Rockwell's during the mid-1960s and workshopped many techniques and philosophies he carried over as an organizational leader of his own. During the transition between the American Nazi Party and its renaming as the National Socialist White People's Party (NSWPP), Pierce served as the editor for one of the group's publications, *National Socialist World*, and participated in student recruitment on university campuses. But it was Pierce's leadership of the National Youth Alliance (NYA)—the precursor to the eventual National Alliance (NA)—that would jettison him to the heights of neo-Nazi stardom.²

Pierce came to right wing political action via the John Birch Society. He joined in 1962, shortly after earning his Ph.D. in physics from the University of Colorado. He attended "a few meetings," but did not stay long and left after three months. Like others who would move into white supremacist organizations, he was frustrated with Robert Welsh and the group's focus on anti-communism instead of what Pierce saw as the "race and Jewish questions." While he agreed with the Birch Society that communism was a significant element within the civil rights movement and thus needed to be addressed, Pierce insisted that "the fundamental significance of the civil rights activist was racial not political." Furthermore, Pierce, like other antisemites within the Right, believed communism was part of a larger Jewish conspiracy to control the world. "If the Birchers

² Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce* (1st Books Library, 2001), 85, 112.

were going to stress the communist aspect of the civil rights movement,” Pierce argued with his biographer, Robert S. Griffin, “why were they unwilling to look at exactly who these communists were?” Pierce left the Birch Society in frustration and resolved to find a political movement eager to engage antisemitism and more open expressions of racism.³

Pierce found his home in George Lincoln Rockwell’s American Nazi Party. Pierce became familiar with Rockwell’s methods and activities after watching a 1962 television newscast. In March 1962, Rockwell had given a talk at San Diego State College that was met with counter demonstrators attacking the stage with shouts, rocks, and eggs. The disruption made national news and the broadcast introduced Pierce to Rockwell and his antics. Pierce recalled that the television report inspired him to write Rockwell a letter and initiated a political awakening within Pierce that he was a “national socialist.”⁴ Rockwell and Pierce eventually established a working relationship. For Pierce, Rockwell might have been an unserious “clown,” but Rockwell’s publishing experience was an opportunity for Pierce to jump start his dream intellectual project: a monthly journal called *National Socialist World*. Pierce was unfamiliar with what was needed to put out a monthly publication, but Rockwell had enough resources and an available subscription base that Pierce could use as a launch pad for writings. Nevertheless, Pierce did not become an official member of the ANP. While Pierce was eager to use Rockwell’s resources and standing in the National Socialist community, he wanted little else to do with what he saw as the “defective people” Rockwell kept around

³*Ibid.*, 85.

⁴ *The Stormtrooper*, number 1, February 1962, 16-19; Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds*, 86.

him in the Party, referring primarily to Rockwell's Nazis as more immature street performers than hardened soldiers for revolution.⁵

Eventually, Pierce and Rockwell decided that Pierce would take on a leadership role in a new publication. They drafted a contract for *National Socialist World* on December 31, 1965 that decreed Pierce would “manage and edit” the magazine and make all pertinent decisions concerning “content and editorial policy,” while Rockwell had veto power over any material he wanted removed from publication. Pierce printed the journal under Rockwell's United Union of World National Socialists branding, giving the publication the standing and weight—at least among the neo-Nazi communities—Pierce desired. Pierce also appeared to broker a great financial deal for himself regarding the new publication: Pierce would pay all publishing expenses but would also receive a generous salary deal that included two hundred and fifty dollars per month, twenty-five percent of the journal's profit after covering publication costs, a final ten percent of all remaining funds, and “a reasonable amount, in Pierce's judgement, for editorial expenses.” In return, Rockwell was only promised whatever, likely minimal, funds remained. Further still, the two agreed to “share equally the publication cost of the first issue,” ensuring that Pierce was not financially harmed if the journal failed and was unable to turn a profit. It is unclear why Rockwell agreed to a deal weighted so much in favor of Pierce, but the two men “agreed to and signed (the agreement) in good faith.”⁶

⁵ *Ibid.*, 86, 103-104.

⁶ “Agreement between William Pierce and Lincoln Rockwell,” December 31, 1965, 1-3, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

Pierce targeted university students as an audience from his first issue. The recruitment of young people away from leftist politics on American campuses was a significant piece of his political philosophy. Pierce was well familiar with young people in his previous career as an assistant professor of physics at Oregon State University. He had left his position in 1965 to take on a research physicist position in New Haven, Connecticut, while also contemplating his role as a national socialist intellectual. His understanding of himself as a teacher might explain his decisions to continue to include young people as an extension of his work and in larger goals for white power.⁷

National Socialist World debuted in spring 1966. Pierce demanded that ANP employees rush to finish the journal so that it could be mailed out “at least a week before universities close for the summer.” Although the journal’s larger intended audience were “intellectuals,” rather than the common man audience of the ANP’s *The Stormtrooper*, Pierce also catered towards university student interests, such as the article “From Ivory Tower to Privy Wall: On the Art of Propaganda.” The article, written by George Lincoln Rockwell, described “left-wing [jewish professors]” who poisoned the minds of American students.⁸ Pierce and Rockwell printed and mailed “approximately five

⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigations file #(redacted), Field Office #157-1673, “William Luther Pierce,” January 30, 1967, 6, 12, accessed via archive.org, https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1/page/n17/mode/2up.

⁸ William L. Pierce (as Bill Pierce) to John Patler, “National Socialist World memorandum,” May 16, 1966, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; Federal Bureau of Investigations file #(redacted), Field Office #157-1673, “William Luther Pierce,” January 30, 1967, 11-12, accessed via https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1/page/n29/mode/2up; For Rockwell’s article on propaganda, see George Lincoln Rockwell, “From Ivory Tower to Privy Wall: On the Art of Propaganda,” *National Socialist World*, Number 1, (Spring 1966), 8-12, accessed via “National Socialist World- Part 1,” archive.org, <https://archive.org/details/ns-world-000/NS%20World%200008.jpg>.

thousand copies” of the first issue of *National Socialist World*, a number likely larger than a typical subscription order of the ANP’s main publication, *The Stormtrooper*.⁹

Pierce was soon asserting his authority regarding all editorial matters. He took advantage of the ANP’s apparatus and micromanaged existing officers such as John Patler—a seasoned editor at this point from his work with ANP’s newsmagazine *The Stormtrooper*—over much of the journal’s design and structure. Twenty-eight-year-old Patler was not only an editor, but ANP’s cartoonist and Rockwell confidant. Perhaps aware of this special relationship, Pierce seemed to enjoy ordering Patler around in the leadup to the first issue of *National Socialist World*. He told Patler to change dates from “April, 1966” to “Spring, 1966,” instructed him how to set margins for the journal, and how quickly he needed to finish copy edits in order to mail out the issues on time. Their relationship grew adversarial. The less experienced Pierce constantly pushed Patler, later referring to him as “a very aggressive little turd.” In return, Patler came to intensely hate Pierce.¹⁰ Pierce even had no qualms supervising Rockwell in his work for the new journal. In one instance, Pierce directed Rockwell that the ANP commander was moving too slow and that the publication might have to go on without him. Pierce passively-actively urged Rockwell to finish up his “article on propaganda” because everything else was ready for the debut issue. Although, according to the original agreement on *National Socialist World*, Rockwell held veto power over any article in the journal,

⁹ “Agreement between William Pierce and Lincoln Rockwell,” December 31, 1965, 3, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

¹⁰ William L. Pierce (as Bill Pierce) to John Patler, “National Socialist World memorandum,” May 16, 1966, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds*, 110.

Pierce implied if Rockwell waited too late to use his veto ability that Pierce would ignore the request. Pierce even asked that if Rockwell wanted to “discuss any last-minute details” about the issue, then it was on Rockwell, not Pierce, to travel up to Connecticut to visit the non-ANP. It would “save me \$50 if I can avoid another trip to Arlington,” Pierce wrote to Rockwell, flexing his power over the ANP leader.¹¹

Despite working at a distance from the ANP’s ground operations, Pierce was ideologically committed to the organization and served as a de facto leader. In January 1967, the ANP rebranded away from the incendiary “Nazi” name and became the National Socialist White People’s Party (NSWPP). According to comments made to his biographer, Pierce claimed he influenced Rockwell on the name change. “This American Nazi Party thing was a circus, not a political party; it doesn’t sound real,” Pierce detailed.¹² Pierce envisioned a sophisticated political movement and did not feel that Rockwell’s exaggerated actions were leading to real success. Through 1967 he published two more issues of *National Socialist World* and assisted with the continuing development of the new NSWPP. Within only a year of connecting with Rockwell, Pierce directed ANP officers, guided policy, and operated with the confidence of a long-term coordinator, all without being a card-carrying member. A 1968 report on Pierce from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) described Pierce as the “ideological brains” of the party and theorized that Pierce “could become the new leader of the

¹¹ “William Pierce (signed as Bill) to Commander Lincoln Rockwell,” February 12, 1966, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

¹² Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds*, 112.

(NSWPP).”¹³ Pierce behaved as an ANP commander without the official title—a shadow leader who was the real puppeteer of the ANP turned NSWPP.

If not for the events of August 1967, it is not irrational to imagine Pierce indeed held momentum to take official command of the operation. But that summer, Pierce’s trajectory shifted. John Patler fell out of favor with Rockwell earlier in 1967. The exact reason for Patler’s expulsion is unclear in the historical record, although Rockwell biographer, Frederick Simonelli, insinuated that the ANP commander might have slept with Patler’s wife or Patler even felt that there was unrequited love between himself and Rockwell.¹⁴ Nonetheless, Patler’s irritation with Rockwell eventually turned to rage. On August 25, 1967, the young former apprentice assassinated Rockwell with shots from a long-range rifle as the party commander left a laundromat in Arlington, Virginia. The now twenty-nine-year-old Patler was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to twenty years in prison.¹⁵ Following Rockwell’s death, leadership of the NSWPP was presumably up for grabs and Pierce was in an excellent position to gain command of the white power operation. Yet, leadership of the NSWPP fell to Matt Koehl, who was the National Secretary and with the ANP since 1960.¹⁶

¹³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, FH 157-1673, “William Luther Pierce,” 5-6, accessed via https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1/page/n41/mode/2up.

¹⁴ Frederick J. Simonelli, *American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*, (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1999), 134-136.

¹⁵ Fred P. Graham, “Rockwell, U.S. Nazi, Slain; Ex-Aide Is Held as Sniper,” *The New York Times* (August 26, 1967), 1, 14; Associated Press, “Patler convicted, faces 20 years,” *Free Lance-Star*, (December 16, 1967).

¹⁶ Matt Koehl, “Sneaking Made Me Sick: An Open Letter to the NSRP from its former National Security Officer, Matt Koehl, *The Stormtrooper*, Number 3, November 1962, 15;

Matt Koehl quickly established himself as the new “National Leader”—not Commander—of the NSWPP, including establishing his own mythology of his ascension to leadership. Koehl claimed that he “was chosen by The Commander to carry on his work” before Rockwell’s death.¹⁷ While his claims were ridiculous, Koehl also had reason to fear a coup from Pierce to take over the organization. Pierce was a whisperer in Rockwell’s ear for months and his ambition for leadership was evident. Pierce told his biographer that on multiple occasions he did not to trust Patler, and that Rockwell even told him he was planning on removing Patler from the ANP, although this recollection seems perhaps more in favor of Pierce presenting himself as superior to the young Patler.¹⁸ Patler and Rockwell were close and, next to Matt Koehl, it was not improbable that Patler could have been named Rockwell’s successor if not for their elaborate falling out. Perhaps Pierce was aware of this and wanted to remove those in his way to achieve official control of Rockwell’s operation all to himself. It is possible that Pierce could have influenced Patler’s dismissal from the NSWPP, or even gone as far as to influence Patler to assassinate Rockwell. This possible conspiracy was entertained by the FBI as early as February 1968 when, according to a FBI report on Pierce, a confidential source believed that Pierce might have been “trying to establish an intellectual coup d’etat in the NSWPP.” This FBI source, whose name is redacted in the available FBI file, advised that they believed Pierce—as well as an unknown number of individuals also redacted in the file—had “something to do with George Lincoln Rockwell’s assassination.”¹⁹

¹⁷ “Dedication”, *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 1968, inside cover.

¹⁸ Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds*, 110-111.

¹⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation File #157-13485, Field Office #157-16, “William Luther Pierce,” April 23, 1970, 4-5, accessed via https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1/page/n69/mode/2up.

Building a Youth Organization in the NSWPP

Between the fall of 1967 and 1970, Pierce took a larger role within radical racist Right activism. Pierce became a full-time member of the NSWPP, perhaps recognizing he could not rise any further in the movement without officially joining the party. Years later, Pierce claimed that he officially joined because he felt obligated to repay Rockwell for his help in providing the infrastructure needed to initiate *National Socialist World*.²⁰ Given his later actions as an aspirational leader of national socialism, the truth for his joining likely rests between admiration and ambition. Pierce's official title in the organization, at least as advertised on some event flyers, was "NSWPP information officer."²¹ He, however, continued to have his hands attached to multiple avenues of activism. His *National Socialist World* continued to grow, and he published six issues between 1966 and 1968. He also wrote articles for the NSWPP's new newspaper *White Power*.²² In the fall of 1968, Pierce obtained a permit to become a legal "arms dealer" in Virginia. He created a company he called National Socialist Arms, abbreviated as N S Arms, to sell "riot guns, handguns, several semi-automatic rifles, and chemical mace." He advertised the weapons as "Negro control equipment" and advised white Virginians to stockpile guns to ward off incoming federal firearms regulations. Pierce likely had in his mind the urban rebellions that erupted in the United States the summer prior—informally described as the "long, hot, summer" of 1967—as well as other revolts such as the Watts

²⁰ Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds*, 112-113.

²¹ National Socialist White People's Party flyer, ca.1969, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

²² Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds*, 113.

Uprising in 1965 and more recent uprisings during the summer of 1968 in response to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. The NS Arms advertisements played off racist fears of urban unrest and urged people to “Stock your home NOW—with weapons for the coming race war!” By 1969, however, N S Arms ceased operations due to the recently signed Gun Control Act of 1968 that prohibited the shipping of firearms and ammunition.²³

In late 1968, Pierce established the White Power Message on behalf of the NSWPP. The White Power Message was a series of pre-recorded phone messages written and delivered by Pierce. Those interested in the content only needed to call a Virginia area code phone number, which then played the message over the phone. In operation through the summer of 1970, the semi-weekly White Power Message was primarily a racist and antisemitic news round-up meant to incite the listener to action. Some of the topics in Pierce’s messages connected to youth or public education. In an October 1969 White Power Message, Pierce condemned the growing number of Black students in Washington D.C. schools and associated the growth with increased crime in the city. Pierce discussed what he saw as a danger of teaching in D.C. public schools, claiming that teachers were required to now have walkie talkies in order to deal with crime from new Black students. “Until we’ve taken the Blacks—all of them—out of America, our

²³ “Nazis Set Up Gun-Selling Operation,” *The Free Lance-Star*, September 20, 1968, pg. 11; Federal Bureau of Investigation File #157-13485, Field Office #157-1673, “William Luther Pierce,” April 23, 1970, 19-20, accessed via https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1/page/n85/mode/2up; For more on 1968 gun control legislation in the United States, see Adam Winkler, *Gunfight: The Battle Over the Right to Bear Arms in America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011). For more on urban rebellions in the 1960s, and 1967 in particular, see Malcolm McLaughlin, *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967: Urban Rebellion in America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

cities are going to remain jungles,” Pierce threatened.²⁴ Other topics included the dangers of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which Pierce called “the System’s liberal-Marxist wing,” the ineffectiveness of conservative youth groups like Young Americans for Freedom to properly defeat campus Marxists, and the American military involvement in Vietnam as the “number-one issue” on college campuses.²⁵ Generally, these messages were primarily a call to arms for white racists to join together against Black people. But Pierce’s specific mentioning of schools was a wink to implore racists to protect white student interests, and his attention to youth interests were part of his vision to mobilize young white students to become involved in white power activism.

But it was his work cultivating youth activists that distinguished Pierce from his fellow leaders in the years between 1967 and 1971. From even his early days working with the ANP, Pierce had been concerned with engaging and recruiting young people. Pierce’s time in the NSWPP highlighted his developing strategy to expand youths’ roles in the larger movement. The previous ANP was already youth-adjacent, and Rockwell’s ANP used youth as a strategy to combat liberal and left-wing activist groups that incorporated young people into their social movements. Rockwell believed young people were important for the continuation of national socialist ideas and embraced youth culture with provocative cartoons, music, graphic t-shirts, and absurdist humor. But the ANP was never a direct youth movement, at least not in the ways Pierce envisioned. Pierce wanted

²⁴ William Luther Pierce, “White Power Message notes,” October 5, 1969, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

²⁵ William Luther Pierce, “Series of White Power Message notes,” William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

to take up Rockwell's mantle and continue to involve youth, but wanted to move beyond the youth *identity* as the central factor of recruitment and towards physical youth bodies as cadres of a revolution. Pierce's vision of youth involvement, evidenced in his White Power Messages and mail-order firearm shop, was more than youth-culture signaling, and instead it was about taking in young people as serious soldiers for a national socialist revolution.²⁶

Pierce's main obstacle to pursuing his revolutionary vision was the NSWPP itself. While Rockwell's Nazis found the majority of its Party leadership made up of young twenty-somethings, the post-Rockwell era of the NSWPP offered less and less to college-aged young people. Although the presentation of youth culture might have been enough a few years prior, a young person living in a post New Left era of campus activism during the late 1960s desired much more. Pierce was concerned about of the growing campus activism that dominated political and social movements by 1970. He felt that students and young people needed to see commitments to serious action to join a movement. Koehl's NSWPP leadership, however, steered further away from political reform and the fewer and fewer public demonstrations held by the group were only a means to remain visible in the public eye. Pierce felt that these actions were meaningless, and even hurtful to the larger movement. Radical right organizations such as the NSWPP needed to engage within the revolutionary language of the times if they hoped to achieve any level of notoriety.²⁷

²⁶ Ed. Jeffrey Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power: A Sourcebook on the Radical Racist Right*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 246-247.

²⁷ William L. Pierce memorandum to Matt Koehl, June 1, 1970, reprinted within William L. Pierce memorandum to NSWPP members, August 5, 1970, page 2-4, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth

In addition to targeting university students with his *National Socialist World*, Pierce's contributions to the new NSWPP—like the White Power Message—involved some element of youth recruitment or youth-related material. Echoing Rockwell's infamous university tours, Pierce traveled to college campuses to give lectures on behalf of the NSWPP. A 1969 flyer from the program read, "Looking for an interesting political speaker for a campus program? Let a National Socialist give you a presentation which students will find thought-provoking...uncommon...relevant." The flyer—which printed a headshot of Pierce and presented him as a clean-cut thirty-six-year-old in a suit and tie—advertised the NSWPP information officer as a speaker who could present a true rebuttal to the viewpoints of the "revolutionary left" that was not from the perspective of the "erroneous...conservatives or non-revolutionary liberals." School appearances, the flyer pointed out, required "a modest fee of \$200" in order to cover expenses and perhaps even serve as a form of salary for Pierce.²⁸ Pierce's speeches, such as one before approximately 450 students at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania, included luridly racist and antisemitic comments. "(Removing all Black people and Jews from the United States) may come down to machineguns and Molotov cocktails, but it must be done," Pierce claimed in his talk. "We might ask all the Blacks to return to Africa, or else!" he theorized before slyly continuing, "Of course it would probably be 'or else'."

Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; On student protests as a social movement, see Colin Barker, "Some Reflections on Student Movements of the 1960s and Early 1970s," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, Issue 81, June 2008, p.43-91; Gerald J. DeGroot, *Student Protest: The Sixties and After*, (1998; reis. New York: Routledge, 2014).

²⁸ National Socialist White People's Party flyer, ca.1969, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

“We invite you to join us,” he concluded, emphasizing that his vision for a white revolution needed young people. Students at the University of Scranton, however, responded to Pierce’s racist ramblings with laughter. Interestingly, the FBI took note of Pierce’s talk at the University of Scranton but only documented Pierce’s comment that “(President Nixon) should be dragged out of office and shot,” and not the racist and antisemitic threats.²⁹

Pierce’s youth outreach did not stop at college speaking tours but also included young students still in high school. Pierce gave talks and held pseudo-recruitment meetings at regional high schools, often those around the NSWPP headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. Before the winter break in 1969, Pierce spoke before two history classes at Langley High School in McLean, Virginia. Here, Pierce indicated that he wanted young, white teenagers to become politically active. He said that white youth are an “ideologic activist minority who...are living in a time of rapid change...a revolutionary time.”. White power, Pierce argued, was the only serious response to the leftist revolution. Despite his coded language, the students recognized his talks as racist. A newspaper write-up of one of Pierce’s talks revealed that these students detected “intense racial bigotry.” Pierce continued to speak in high schools and was sometimes more explicit, as in one talk on National Socialism given at a school in the Little Falls neighborhood in Arlington, Virginia. Whether his school talks were successful in

²⁹ Doug Miele, “Laughter, No Violence As Nazi Talks at U of S,” *The Scranton Tribune*, Scranton, PA, April 10, 1970, 3, available within Federal Bureau of Investigation File #157-6353, “William L. Pierce,” 2-3, accessed via https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1/page/n55/mode/2up; For the FBI write-up of the event, see FBI File #157-6353, “William L. Pierce,” 1, accessed via FOIA: Pierce, William L.-HQ-1, 50-52, 56, https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1/page/n49/mode/2up.

recruiting actual members or even producing paid subscriptions to NSWPP publications is unknown. But Pierce's intention to mobilize such a young audience shows a dedicated effort to take command of the next generation.³⁰

Pierce even chose a high school as the venue for the NSWPP's first major public event after Rockwell's assassination. While his intention is not explicit in documentation, Pierce's choice of a local high school as a meeting location suggests that he hoped to attract teenagers and other young people to the rally. The "White Power" rally scheduled for March 7, 1970 was to be held at Yorktown High School in Arlington, Virginia. With the permission of the school superintendent, the NSWPP rented out the school's auditorium for a rally that would include four speakers and welcome "only non-Jewish white persons." Pierce, one of the scheduled speakers, prepared a talk titled, "Building a White People's Revolution in America." Pierce intended for this rally to mark the start of the next stage of the party's multi-stage program for political victory, a concept originally devised by Rockwell that involved street-level agitation for awareness, moving to grass-roots political recruitment in Phase II, and a final phase of political victory. However, the event never came to be. The Arlington School Board canceled the rally after fears of "damage to school property." The school's superintendent, Robert Chisholm, appeared shocked in a news report that the group he had allowed to rent out the auditorium, named the National Socialist White People's Party, was a neo-Nazi operation.³¹

³⁰ FBI File #157-6353, "William L. Pierce," April 23, 1970, 8-9, accessed via Ernie Lazar FOIA: Pierce, William L.-HQ-1, 74-75, https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1/page/n73/mode/2up.

³¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation File #157-13485, Field Office File #157-16, "William L. Pierce," 10-11, available within FIOA: Pierce, William L.-HQ-1, archive.org, https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-

Pierce's most impactful strategy was creating proteges. Pierce fostered relationships with young men and boys and brought them into the NSWPP apparatus. Many of these teenagers who passed through the NSWPP, such as David Duke from Louisiana, Joseph Tommasi from California, James Mason from Ohio, and Joseph Paul Franklin and Don Black from Alabama all went on to become significant leaders of their own right in white supremacist and white power institutions. It is unlikely, given that the NSWPP already included a youth division, that Pierce cultivated these young associates in secret and away from the knowledge of other NSWPP leaders like Koehl. Yet, Pierce was the only NSWPP leader who was interested in these future cadres for his imagined National Socialist insurgency and appeared to be the only recruiter for these young men.

Pierce fostered bond with many of these mentees, evidenced within a series of personal correspondence between some of these prospective members and, in later years, entrusting these young men with leadership positions. In perhaps the most extreme example, Pierce built a years-long relationship with James Mason that began when Mason was approximately sixteen years old in 1968.³² Mason originally joined the youth division of Rockwell's ANP at fourteen years old in 1966, and continued on through its rebranding as the NSWPP. He took on a much more expansive role in the Party when he dropped out of high school and moved away from his home in Chillicothe, Ohio and into

1/page/n75/mode/2up?q=Rockwell; Lance Gay, "Torn Neo-Nazis Striving to Resurface," *The Sunday Star*, March 8, 1970, B-1.

³² William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

the Party's headquarters in Arlington, Virginia at Pierce's request. Pierce paid all of Mason's expenses until he turned eighteen and legally joined the Party.³³

Other relationships included Joseph Paul Franklin, the racist serial killer who targeted Black people and Jews between 1977 and 1980 and was responsible for the deaths of approximately twenty people. Franklin spent time as a member of the NSWPP during Pierce's tenure prior to engaging in his killing spree. In 1989, Pierce dedicated his White Power fantasy novel, *Hunter*, to Franklin, implying a significant relationship between the two. The inscription said, "Joseph Paul Franklin, the Lone Hunter who saw his duty as a White man and did what a responsible son of his race must do, to the best of his ability and without regard for personal consequences."³⁴

Joseph Tommasi was one of Pierce's greater successes in crafting a young white power soldier. Tommasi, like Mason, joined the Rockwell-era NSWPP in 1966 at only fifteen years old. He worked closely under Pierce and was eventually handpicked to establish and operate the National Socialist Liberation Front (NSLF) in 1969. The NSLF was Pierce's first attempt at a larger youth-centered operation, still within the NSWPP, that would deal with direct action protests and calls for revolution. Officially, Tommasi founded the organization, but Pierce conceived of the idea and encouraged Tommasi

³³ James Mason, "Mason biographical notes," Folder 4, Box 35, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 194-195; *Ibid.*, 247; Southern Poverty Law Center, "James Mason," available online in <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/james-mason>.

³⁴ On Joseph Paul Franklin's killings, see Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 112-114; On Pierce's dedication to Franklin, see Don Perry, "Murder's Price," *Intelligence Report*, 2014 Spring Issue, Southern Poverty Law Center (February 24, 2014), available online in <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2014/murders-price>; William Luther Pierce (as Andrew Macdonald), *Hunter: A Novel* (National Vanguard Books, 1989).

from behind the scenes to move forward as its leader. Initially, the NSLF was only the supplementary youth group that was part of the larger NSWPP network, comparable to Rockwell's original White Youth Corps offshoot of his ANP and the original NSWPP youth branch, the National Socialist Youth Movement. The NSLF saw little success outside of networking for the NSWPP but did recruit a handful of prominent White Power figures, such as future Klan leader David Duke. Years later, after Pierce had left the NSWPP, the mentor and mentee would rejoin and reestablish a new iteration of the NSLF, conceived as a much more militant network devoted to curbing leftist influences against young people on college campuses. Pierce once again placed Tommasi, now twenty-two-years-old, as the leader in March 1974. Tommasi led the NSLF until his murder a year later in August 1975.³⁵

Pierce also adopted young proteges already well-established within the ANP/NSWPP operation. Robert Lloyd III was a member of Rockwell's ANP in the 1960s as a teenager and in his early twenty's. He was most known for his stunt in the United States House of Representatives in 1965, where he interrupted a session wearing a racist costume of ragged clothes, a black top hat, and in blackface while yelling that he "demanded to be seated," mocking Fannie Lou Hamer's testimony at the 1964 Democratic National Convention.³⁶ By 1966 and through early 1977, Lloyd was an

³⁵ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 302.

³⁶ For Robert Lloyd III's 1965 outburst, see "Combat Reports: U.S. Nazi In Blackface Ridicules Mississippi Niggers In Congress," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Nov-Dec-January 1985 Winter Issue (November-December, 1964, January, 1965), 12-14; FBI file #9-39854, "American Nazi Party," 29; For Fannie Lou Hamer's speech, see Fannie Lou Hamer, Testimony before the Credentials Committee at the Democratic National Convention, Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 22, 1964. Available within Maegan Parker Brooks and Davis W. Houck, eds, *The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer: To Tell It Like It Is* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), 42-45.

executive officer in the NSWPP, captain of the organization's stormtrooper division, and the National Director of the National Socialist Youth Movement (NSYM), the youth branch of the NSWPP for those under twenty-one years old. Lloyd left the NSWPP shortly before Rockwell's death in August 1967, but returned at the request of Matt Koehl due to Lloyd's experience. In the post-Rockwell years, Lloyd, like the other young men drawn to the NSWPP's intelligence officer, developed a close relationship with Pierce. If Koehl ever suspected a coup within the NSWPP, it was because of Pierce and Lloyd's friendship and a perceived alliance.

The Struggle for Control of the NSWPP

While his proteges were loyal, Pierce's relationships and connections with young men spawned several philosophical and organizational differences with Koehl's NSWPP. Pierce's more rebellious vision for the movement and desire to grow the party with young voices became a source of conflict. By the summer of 1970, Pierce became increasingly frustrated with the NSWPP's slow-moving progress towards political victory and felt that he reached an impasse with the group. On June 1, Pierce sent a lengthy memorandum—totaling over six pages—to Matt Koehl. Pierce argued that he had outgrown the limited constraints of the national socialism offered by Koehl and the other former Rockwell devotees. Pierce criticized the party's introversion in recruitment, inflexibility to adapt to new styles of activism, and a restrictive internal structure. Pierce suggested to Koehl that the party needed serious restructuring if the party was to survive. Particularly, Pierce argued that the three party leaders—Koehl, Pierce, and twenty-five-year-old Robert Lloyd—needed to operate within their each “natural sphere.” Pierce advised that Koehl

serve as the party leader and direct internal day-to-day operations, Pierce manage party propaganda and publications, and Lloyd run external operations that included recruitment, member training, and meeting organization. Although Pierce indeed included Koehl as the leader of the group, it was clear that Pierce envisioned an operation where he and Lloyd had far more creative control and Koehl was much more of a figurehead.³⁷

Koehl, according to Pierce, initially ignored the June 1 memo and became increasingly distant for several weeks. He also began to withdraw funds from the main organizational account, stashing cash in a personal security deposit box. In early July, Pierce confronted Koehl and learned that Koehl viewed Pierce as a traitor to the organization and feared a coup. Koehl locked Pierce and Lloyd—seen as a Pierce loyalist—out of their offices and ransacked their belongings. Publicly, Koehl mailed a smear letter against Pierce to NSWPP supporters on July 28, calling him a traitor and usurper.³⁸

Koehl likely believed that Pierce had ambitions to push out leaders like himself and to then take complete command of the Party. Pierce was ambitious and his rise through the ranks of the former Rockwell movement, as well as a growing legion of devoted youth followers, emphasized that Pierce had the ability and following to take control. Yet it seemed Koehl was uninterested in the youth revolution Pierce was selling.

³⁷ William L. Pierce memorandum to Matt Koehl, June 1, 1970, reprinted within William L. Pierce memorandum to NSWPP members, August 5, 1970, page 1-7, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

³⁸ William L. Pierce memorandum to NSWPP members, August 5, 1970, page 1-12, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

Koehl, as other former NSWPP members later lamented, was a leader unwilling to compromise or allow individuals flexibility with programing that diverted from his passion for an organization devoted to the idolization of German Nazism and little else.³⁹ A radical youth revolution, particularly under a under a much more magnetic figure like Pierce, was not part of his vision.

Instead of pushing Koehl out, Pierce abandoned ship. Pierce left the NSWPP in late July 1970. On August 5, he issued a scathing memorandum to those on the organization's mailing list. In his memo, Pierce argued that it was his duty to "defend (himself) against untrue charges and innuendoes" presented by Koehl. Pierce blasted Koehl as a leader who was unwilling to move beyond an antiquated model of activism that was not much more than a Hitler "fan club."⁴⁰

Pierce and Willis Carto's National Youth Alliance

After his departure from the NSWPP, Pierce attempted to pursue a larger brand for his vision of a national socialist revolution. That August, Pierce wrote a proposal for a new operation, a "National Front" that combined multiple organizations into a unified movement for White Power. He sent his "Prospectus for a National Front" to "likeminded national socialists around the country," which included some of his young followers such as James Mason. This National Front, according to Pierce, was to challenge the "Reds' united front" and establish and guide "a White people's revolution in America." The

³⁹ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 227.

⁴⁰ William L. Pierce memorandum to NSWPP members, August 5, 1970, 1, 7-12, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

operation was not a student group, but the prospectus included “student radicals” as essential members alongside policemen, “housewives,” the working class, and other white-centered right-wing organizations or parties in his vision for a white revolution.⁴¹ Pierce’s National Front did not come to be, but it was clear he desired a position of leadership within the radical racist Right.

His goals for a revolutionary movement for white power became much more achievable when he set his sights on the National Youth Alliance. Willis Carto and Louis Byers’ National Youth Alliance was in all but complete disarray by fall 1970. Subscriptions to their two publications—the newspaper *Action* and news bulletin *National Youth Alliance News*—continued to diminish over the past year. Byers toyed with the idea of getting out a third publication, *Attack!*, but it was not successful. Despite the organization’s founding mission to “crush radical left action” on American campuses, there was little sign of any meaningful action from student members. Due to piling debts, Byers reduced the size of the staff to find extra money to pay back creditors. Two burglaries at their national office further crippled the NYA as the thieves stole “several thousand dollars[‘] worth of office equipment, films, postage stamps, and mail-handling machinery.” Despite Carto’s fierce attempt to gain complete control of the NYA away from the former Youth for Wallace student leadership, he oversaw the student group’s near complete collapse.⁴²

⁴¹ William Luther Pierce, “Prospectus for a National Front,” August 31, 1970, 1-8, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁴² “Reorganization: New NYA Emerges,” *Action*, Number 14, December 1970, 1.

Pierce joined the National Youth Alliance in the fall of 1970. What brought him to the NYA is not entirely clear and the only available narrative describing this moment comes from Pierce's authorized biography. According to Pierce, he learned about the NYA the same way he discovered Rockwell's ANP: a television news report. Pierce was interested in the NYA as a counter to campus leftists like SDS, and he loved their potential as a "radically conservative" organization compared to Young Americans for Liberty. He met with Lou Byers and learned that the NYA was "a half-million dollars in debt" and that Byers intended "to fold the organization." Pierce was enchanted with the potential of a radical Right student operation all of his own and told Byers he was happy to take the reins of the group. There was no formal exchange of ownership, but Pierce now had control of an organization to enact his fantasy of white student revolutionaries.⁴³

After Pierce took over leadership capabilities from Byers, he rechartered the NYA on October 14, 1970 in the state of Virginia. Operating out of a new headquarters just northeast of Georgetown University, Pierce began writing for the organization and served as editor for *Attack!*. Within a few months, he began reforming the NYA away from just a mailing list and into a more active and mobilized unit of neo-fascist youth. Pierce's vision was for his NYA to serve as a premiere neo-Nazi organization that sought to defeat liberalism, Marxism, and any Jewish influence in the United States, particularly on colleges and universities. Unlike previous conservative operations, Pierce was uninterested in masquerading as an anti-communist organization and instead envisioned an alliance of proud national socialist young people preparing themselves for a political—and possibly violent—revolution against their enemies. Similar to the original

⁴³ Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds*, 115-119.

NYA, this new iteration still focused their activism on university campuses and described themselves as an “alternative (for young people) to the drug usage and lawlessness of today’s campus left.” But unlike Carto’s grift for his Noontide Press and other Liberty Lobby publications, Pierce’s envisioned his NYA to aggressively take the fight to SDS and other left-wing youth groups.⁴⁴

Pierce quickly changed the staff and management of the organization, installing his own allies. Robert Lloyd III followed Pierce to the NYA almost immediately in 1970. At twenty-five-years-old, Lloyd served as the NYA’s National Organizer, a second-in-command position under Pierce’s leadership. Lloyd replaced Louis Byers, who Pierce moved up to NYA President in order to manage the transition. But Pierce believed in Lloyd due to his previous experience with young people at the NSWPP. Lloyd supervised on-campus distributions of the new newspaper, *Attack!* and was responsible for all NYA activities, including rallies, demonstrations, and any other public event that could raise awareness of the group. Lloyd also rebranded the bookstore to promote the NYA, instead of the NSWPP. Alongside Lloyd as a recent addition was Charles H. McGuire, whose age was not clear. He served as the National Office Manager and collected membership dues and organized the NYA’s finances.⁴⁵

Willis Carto, meanwhile, was blindsided by Byers’ transfer of leadership to Pierce. Although Carto was not a facilitator for the NYA’s day-to-day operations, he was unhappy that Byers did not consult him on the handover of the organization to a person with no history with the group and—perhaps worse in Carto’s eyes—someone who was

⁴⁴ “What Is NYA?,” National Youth Alliance, undated, Box: 4, Folder: 15. Karl Allen collection, RH WL MS 60, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁴⁵ “New National Office Personnel,” *Action*, No. 14 (December 1970) 4.

not a Carto disciple. Pierce was not a Yockeyite and had not read Francis Parker Yockey's *Imperium*, the pro-Nazi text that Carto used as a guidebook for the NYA and his other national socialist endeavors.⁴⁶ Between October and December 1970, Pierce and Carto engaged in dramatic infighting over the direction of the organization. Pierce felt that the United States needed a revolution brought on by national socialists and that a legion of young people was the best opportunity to achieve such a vision. Carto, according to Pierce, was more interested in keeping the NYA for its fundraising opportunities on American campuses and using it as a front to attract young readers to his publications. Carto felt that Pierce had stolen the organization from him and was using NYA publications to attack the leaders of the Liberty Lobby—a belief that was not unfounded. Pierce did indeed use the publishing power of the NYA to distance themselves from the Carto-led Yockey movement, explicitly referring to Carto supporters as “pro-Zionists” and part of an illegitimate right-wing group.⁴⁷

Ultimately, the falling out between Pierce and Carto was too irreconcilable for the organization to survive intact. The division was noticeable as early as December 1970, when Carto retaliated against Pierce's leadership and instructed some of his allies to steal the NYA mailing list from the Washington D.C. office. This was not the first time Carto realized that organizational control existed within the mailing list, as he had done the same during his dispute with John Acord, the original National Chairman of the NYA.

⁴⁶ Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds*, 117. For further reading on Carto's connection to *Imperium*, see Frank P. Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right: Race, Conspiracy, and Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 23-31; George Michael, *Willis Carto and the American Far Right* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2008).

⁴⁷ “‘Statecraft’ Investigation- The Plot Deepens,” *Action* No. 16 (March 1971), 3-4.

Carto quickly reestablished control of the narrative and published a Carto-friendly version of the NYA takeover in the December issue of *Statecraft*, a newspaper previously associated with the NYA but with strong connections to Carto. The *Statecraft* article alleged that it was actually Byers and Pierce that deceived Carto and stole subscription and membership lists away from “the real National Youth Alliance.” Titled “NYA Reorganizes,” the new pro-Carto National Youth Alliance asked—in typical Carto fashion—to “send money” to the new headquarters in Center Line, Michigan. Carto’s forces used the stolen list of subscribers taken from Byers’ office to mail copies of *Statecraft*, quickly poisoning the well before Byers or Pierce could effectively retaliate and ultimately attempt to legitimize the Michigan NYA the true continuation of the organization. Byers and Pierce were furious with the Michigan startup and Byers issued a memorandum of his own to what subscribers he could find. Byers’ letter declared that the *Statecraft* faction were built up of “Zionist agents” and a “cheap fraud” to the legitimate NYA.⁴⁸

Carto refused to give up control of his creation and the organization split into factions. By January 1971, there were two competing National Youth Alliances: the Pierce faction in Washington D.C. and a group of Carto financed and endorsed young people that operated out of Center Line, Michigan. Patrick Tifer led the Michigan faction, which published the newsletter *Centerline*. Tifer had been part of the early leadership of the NYA in 1969. Originally, Tifer rejected Carto’s “philosophy of Nazi-ism,” and supported the leadership of ousted National Chairman, John Acord. Carto and then-

⁴⁸ “Louis T. Byers letter to Friend,” December 7, 1970, 1-3, National Youth Alliance, Folder 11, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

National Organizer Louis Byers removed Tifer from the NYA in spring 1969. But Carto was desperate and he returned to Tifer to offer him a chance to lead the NYA-in-exile branch. It is unclear how the two reconciled, but their new NYA began “stirring up white student militancy at Detroit area high schools,” as early as January 8, 1971.⁴⁹

Carto and Tifer’s operation was not the only NYA splinter group. In fall 1971, Luke Herda and Ken Hoop established Youth Action. Herda, was a former officer in Tifer’s NYA, but experienced a falling out with Tifer’s direction. Peter C. Reynolds and Charles Bryant (C.B.) Baker also joined Youth Action as the organization’s Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.⁵⁰ Baker was the former editor of the white nationalist newspaper, *Statecraft*, published by his friend Daniel Paulson. Both Baker and Paulson were extremely friendly toward Carto’s original NYA, even though it was never an official NYA publication. However, the closeness to Carto and *Statecraft*’s recruitment of former Carto-led NYA members to edit their paper explain why some reports in the FBI were conflicted over whether or not *Statecraft* was an un-official extension of Carto’s movement.⁵¹ As such, Carto moved on from Tifer’s NYA in early 1972 and financed

⁴⁹ For Tifer’s original feelings towards Carto, see Federal Bureau of Investigation, “National Youth Alliance Memorandum,” May 20, 1969, 6, 7, within FBI file #62-106941, 114, 115, accessed within https://archive.org/details/nationalyouthalliancencyc1573447_201907/page/n108/mode/lup. For reporting on the Michigan-based NYA, see “Right-Wingers Plan War Trial,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 4, 1971, 4c; National Youth Alliance biographical report, (June, 1972), Box 1, Folder 13. MS-354. Michael G. Rapp Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁵⁰ National Youth Alliance biographical report, (June, 1972), Box 1, Folder 13. MS-354. Michael G. Rapp Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio; “Youth Action Materials,” Folder 8, Box 3, Papers of Willis A. Carto, RH WL MS 51, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁵¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “National Youth Alliance Memorandum,” March 12, 1969, within FBI file 157-3447, “National Youth Alliance,” accessed via FOIA: National Alliance aka NYA-NYC-1, 126, Ernie Lazar FOIA Collection,

Youth Action activities and publications. Due to his familiarity with Carto at *Statecraft* or recruited simply due to his experience with editing and publishing newsletters, Baker served as both Youth Action Treasurer and published their newspaper, *Youth Action news*. One of the first activities from Herda's Youth Action was to initiate so-called "War Crimes Trials," a project Carto found interesting and was originally conceived by Tifer's group.⁵²

The New National Youth Alliance and the "System"

Meanwhile, Pierce was further establishing his NYA as an authentic successor to radical racist Right activism. He legitimized his NYA through respected figures in radical Right politics. One such figure was Revilo P. Oliver. On April 3, 1971, Oliver wrote to Pierce to express his support for Pierce's, not Carto's, NYA. Oliver was friendly with Carto and had served as an advisor for his NYA in 1969 and 1970. Thus, Oliver represented a continuation between the two NYA factions and a voice of legitimacy for Pierce's vision. In his letter, printed in the April issue of the NYA newsletter, *Action*, Oliver disparaged "decorous conservatism" that "indulges in sentimental dreams of preserving the ghosts of a vanished past." Oliver implied that Carto's NYA wasted its

https://archive.org/details/foia_National_Alliance_aka_NYA-NYC-1/page/n125/mode/1up; "National Youth Alliance Memorandum," March 14, 1969, 1-2, within FBI file 157-3447, "National Youth Alliance," accessed via FOIA: National Alliance aka NYA-NYC-1, 126, Ernie Lazar FOIA Collection, https://archive.org/details/foia_National_Alliance_aka_NYA-NYC-1/page/n123/mode/1up.

⁵² National Youth Alliance biographical report, (June, 1972), Box 1, Folder 13. MS-354. Michael G. Rapp Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio. For planning of "War Crimes Trials" see "Correspondence 1972," Box 3a, Folder 2, Papers of Willis A. Carto, RH WL MS 51, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

“great potential” and was thankful to see Pierce as the “legitimate successor,” Oliver declared that “a youth movement...is the only hope for the survival for our race and of the great, noble, and unique civilization that it created.” Oliver continued, praising Pierce’s NYA as “the only organization that is making a serious effort to rally the young men and women of America.”⁵³

The ultimate victory for Pierce’s path to NYA legitimacy came after Carto stopped fighting for claim to the NYA brand. On September 14, 1971, William Gillespie, a New York based member of the NYA who described himself as representative of “the average NYA member,” wrote to Carto to plead for the mudslinging to cease. “Smears and counter-smear...helps only our enemies” he wrote. His letter described the pros and cons of the Tifer and Pierce NYA factions, arguing that while Tifer’s NYA had “some good members,” Tifer had a “poor caliber of members” following him that were “detrimental to the image of the NYA.” Pierce’s NYA, on the other hand, had “able propagandists for our movement,” and praised *Attack!* as “one of the finest recruiting tools on the Right.” His letter urged Carto to recognize the Pierce group as the legitimate heir to the NYA and Yockeyist vision. In order for “American youths (to) take over the country in the distant future and lead it to glory,” the author concluded, Tifer should drop

⁵³ On Oliver’s expulsion from the John Birch Society, see “Prof. Oliver, Known For Strong Anti-Jewish View, Quits Birch Society,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, (August 17, 1966), 4; Chip Berlet and Matthew Nemiroff Lyons, *Right-wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2000), 181-182; Frank P. Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right: Race, Conspiracy, and Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 172-173; For Oliver’s letter to Pierce, see “Revilo P. Oliver to Dr. Pierce,” April 3, 1971, printed within *Action*, number 17, April 1971, 4.

the NYA name and join “the Klan” instead.⁵⁴ Carto ultimately backed off his assault against Pierce’s NYA and abandoned support for the NYA brand entirely. That fall, Carto moved on from Tifer’s failing NYA operation and instead supported its splinter group, Youth Action.

The first few months of Pierce’s NYA were spent digging out of the financial hole that Carto’s had fallen into. The first few issues of NYA’s newspaper, *Action*, encouraged subscribers to keep up with membership dues, make extra monthly contributions, buy more copies of the *Attack!* newsletter, or even commit to making a bequest for the NYA in a will.⁵⁵ Pierce was never shy to request financial donations, asking for sums of 1,000, 500, 100, or “as much as you can.” Donations, alongside including the NYA “in your prayers” were the two things Pierce said would allow “fine and decent people of this great country” to “sleep at night.”⁵⁶

The *Attack!* newsletter was surprisingly popular in the early months of the new NYA. The first issue sold extremely well, and some members requested multiple copies in order to pass them out to friends or leave in their communities. The issue was popular because it was controversial. Pierce published the first issue as one of his first tasks when he took over the NYA and his addition of more incendiary articles about race—especially related to Jews—was likely a surprise to some readers who did not experience that from

⁵⁴ “William Gillespie to Mr. Carto,” September 14, 1971, Correspondence 1971, Folder 7, Box 3, Papers of Willis A. Carto, RH WL MS 51, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁵⁵ “Order Extra Copies of ATTACK!,” *Action*, No. 15 (January 1971), 3; “Members Should Send Dues Now,” *Action*, No. 16 (March 1971), 2; “Notes,” *Action*, No. 16 (March 1971), 3.

⁵⁶ William Luther Pierce, “National Youth Alliance Solicitation Letter,” October 22, 1971. Accessed within FBI File # NYC 157-3447, 10, <https://archive.org/details/NationalYouthAllianceNYC1573447/page/n9/mode/2up>.

Carto's NYA. Carto's NYA publications did, indeed, tease a level of radical action and pushed readers to consider themselves as warriors. But these were warriors against liberals and leftists, something easily digestible for student conservatives. The first issue of *Attack!*, in the words of an editorial likely written by Pierce, attacked the "pro-Zionist bias" that ignores the aspects of Israel that include "land-grabbing and genocide" and "dared to question the sanctity of the Zionist cause." The issue also included graphic images of mutilated Arab and Palestinian bodies, arguing that the United States was supporting the *real* genocidal murderer in its support for Israel. Some members wrote to the NYA and felt that the gruesome pictures of atrocities were not "in good taste." In an editorial, again likely written by Pierce, it responded to these complaints with "Facts are facts. There can be no denying that the response to this [issue] has been overwhelmingly favorable."⁵⁷

Pierce doubled down on explicit antisemitism and racism in the subsequent issues of *Attack!*. Moving from his veiled antisemitism to clear racism, Pierce used *Attack!* articles as a trial-and-error for what he could or could not introduce to the NYA audience. In the third issue, he criticized modern encyclopedias for being too favorable to Black people and not covering what he felt were basic scientific facts. "Negroes, for example have brains which are substantially smaller, on the average, than those of Caucasians," Pierce wrote. "This is not racist theory but scientific fact... Today, however, it has become 'unfact.'"⁵⁸ As months moved on and criticism against articles in *Attack!* slowed,

⁵⁷ "Latest ATTACK! Raises Furor," *Action*, No. 14 (December 1970), 2.

⁵⁸ "Facts of Racial Science Blatantly Suppressed," *Attack!*, No. 3 (January 1971).

Pierce realized that *Attack!* would continue to be his best platform to express his ideas of revolutionary reform.

Throughout 1971, Pierce's political influence in the NYA was clearly present throughout the organization's published messaging—especially after any concern of overwatch from Carto dissipated. Under Pierce's guidance, the NYA became an exclusively National Socialist activist group focused on revolutionary violence and victory against leftists and “enemies” of the white race. Pierce's leadership oversaw a change away from the Yockey-influenced language of vague Right-wing platitudes towards explicit rhetoric of militant revolution. Within the summer 1971 issue of *Attack!*, Pierce's editorial “Why Revolution?” called for young people to stand up and become the “bullet” against, what he called, “the alien controlled anti-American and anti-White revolution of the Marxists.” To defeat the System, according to Pierce, young people needed to “put a bullet into its brain and hammer a stake through its heart.” This same issue also included an article titled “Revolutionary Notes,” which included detailed instructions—including a drawn diagram for reference—on how to properly construct medium sized bombs to engage in “urban guerrilla warfare” against “Marxist activists.” “Whenever possible, the urban guerrilla should employ factory-produced commercial or military explosives,” the article cautioned. Pierce instructed young readers on the best way to connect a detonator to commercial dynamite and store the bomb in a metal container for convenience, “like a lunch box.” Both “Why Revolution?” and “Revolutionary Notes” demonstrate Pierce's insistence on pushing the NYA as a

militaristic fighting force and that *Attack!* was the best platform for carrying out his revolutionary messaging.⁵⁹

Attack! also introduced a key piece of Pierce's revolutionary ideology to a broader audience. In "The Nature of the Beast" Pierce introduced the concept of the "System" to the NYA in the second issue of *Attack*. Generally, Pierce's "System" referred to a conspiratorial belief of a Jewish-led group of elites that allegedly controlled the world, including the United States. "The Establishment is those persons, taken collectively, who run the System...[and] it reaches into our minds and our souls and twists our wills to its own ends." The System, capitalized by Pierce to signal it was a proper noun, was an ancient society of people that controlled world events, and had agents, for example, in world wars and other global conflicts. "In twentieth century America, that group is predominantly Jewish," Pierce emphasized.⁶⁰ Pierce had developed this idea prior to joining the NYA, as it did appear in his White Power Messages during his time in the NSWPP.⁶¹ But in the NYA, the System came to be the definitive focus for the organization's goals, and a way to expand antisemitism away from swastikas and explicit caricatures.

The System, particularly in the way Pierce explained it to his young audience, offered a palatable explanation for any modern frustration for a young white supremacist, such as the military-industrial complex, the civil rights movement, or perceived media

⁵⁹ William Pierce, "Why Revolution?," *Attack!* No. 6, Summer 1971, 4-6; Pierce, "Revolutionary Notes," *Attack!* No. 6, Summer 1971, 6.

⁶⁰ William Luther Pierce, "The Nature of the Beast," *Attack!*, No. 2, Fall 1970.

⁶¹ William Luther Pierce, "Series of White Power Message notes," William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

bias. Pierce described the System as omnipresent and powerful enough to remove real “choice” in political decisions. “We never get both sides of an issue from the media,” Pierce explained. “We are given the same sort of ‘choice’ in [electing] Democrats and Republicans.” Because Pierce defined the enemy of NYA as an all-encompassing force, typical electoral action was, thus, not enough to defeat something like the System. “There is only one way to fight,” Pierce concluded in the *Attack!* editorial. “Smash the System! Death to the Establishment!”⁶² Political violence was the only rational conclusion for anyone that believed their enemy was not just Black people, Jews, or liberals, but an entire system of people that worked together to harm white power.

Like other material in these early issues of *Attack!*, the language of the System initially shocked some NYA members and *Attack!* subscribers. Pierce quickly responded in a follow-up editorial in NYA’s *Action* newsletter in January 1971. He explained that he accepted that some people took offense or were concerned with the overtly militaristic language in *Attack!*, but clarified that NYA materials were for people, especially young ones, willing to open their minds away from mainstream attitudes. “The principal function of *Attack!* is not to elicit contributions from the respectable right wingers on our mailing list,” he said, “it is to serve as an agitational and recruiting tool among young Americans.” He went on to explain that the more extreme language in his new NYA reflected the radical nature of contemporary young people. “There is a generation gap in America. The customs, language, life-style, and taboos of American youths are

⁶² Pierce, “The Nature of the Beast,” *Attack!*, No. 2, Fall 1970.

significantly different from those of their parents. And it is the youths that we are addressing in *Attack!*, not their parents.”⁶³

That fall, Pierce’s NYA attached a solicitation letter to mailed copies of *Attack!* that openly advocated for armed struggle. He again cautioned readers not to be alarmed by the enclosed language. “Our country is at war,” Pierce wrote. “We cannot reach young people any other way, except to present it in fighting language—the language of the young.”⁶⁴ The fall 1971 issue of *Attack!* continued calls for revolutionary violence. Pierce’s editorial titled, “What We Must Do Now,” advocated “revolutionary action” and assassinations against supporters of the System.”⁶⁵ There is no mistaking that Pierce envisioned a society where young people must be on the front lines of a violent and militarized revolution—not in the jungles of a foreign country, but instead in urban cities across the United States—designed to complete a fantasy of a neo-fascist and neo-Nazi state.

Pierce’s fiery language and ideology enabled him to remake the NYA into something far different from previous youth-centered organizations. The “clean-cut Americans” of the NYA were, as Pierce described, “itching for action that other groups cannot give them.” Pierce’s NYA distinguished itself as unabashedly militant, echoing in a recruitment letter, “(young people) are tired of hearing people *talk* about saving the country. Right now, you can help build an *army* of young, patriotic Americans.” Joining

⁶³ William Luther Pierce, “About Those 12-Letter Words,” *Action*, No. 15 (January 1971), 2.

⁶⁴ William Luther Pierce, “National Youth Alliance Solicitation Letter,” October 22, 1971. Accessed within FBI File # NYC 157-3447, 10, <https://archive.org/details/NationalYouthAllianceNYC1573447/page/n9/mode/2up>.

⁶⁵ “What We Must Do Now,” *Attack!*, Fall 1971.

the NYA meant that a young person would no longer have to listen to “liberal and Marxist professors and teachers lie and twist (students’) minds,” but achieve measurable action now. “Fight now, within the law,” Pierce clarified, “to stop those who would destroy America.”⁶⁶

The urgency attached to Pierce’s language separated him from Carto’s, and even Rockwell’s, visions for a white power victory. Earlier white power revolutionaries peddled a promise for a future white utopia, but the promise remained in the not-so-distant-future. Rockwell’s infamous, “The Jews Are Through in Seventy-Two!” battle cry, referencing Rockwell’s vision for a supposed political victory as President of the United States in the 1972 election, was a promise about a future that never came.⁶⁷ Pierce, conversely, was interested in the present, and his call-to-arms centered young people as soldiers in his war against American leftists. In an attack against previous White Power leadership, Pierce wrote that convincing members of the general public to fight and disrupt the System would never come from “printed programs or by verbal boasts...only by revolutionary deeds.”⁶⁸ Thus, Pierce recruited young people with the promise that change did not have to wait for an upcoming election or the next fundraiser, but as soon as someone signed up.

The sense of urgency was also tied to Pierce’s view of the future not being a political struggle of ideas but a military engagement. He identified NYA enemies as

⁶⁶ William Luther Pierce, “National Youth Alliance Solicitation Letter,” October 22, 1971. Accessed within FBI File # NYC 157-3447, 10, <https://archive.org/details/NationalYouthAllianceNYC1573447/page/n9/mode/2up>.

⁶⁷ Frederick J. Simonelli, *American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*, (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1999), 33-34; FBI File #9-39854: George Lincoln Rockwell, Monograph, “American Nazi Party,” June 1965, 17.

⁶⁸ William Luther Pierce, “What We Must Do Now,” *Attack!*, No. 7, Fall 1971, 7.

“Marxists, the Black Panthers, and other (leftist) militants” that could one day attack NYA members “in the streets.” Pierce described the young people within the NYA as “the only hope for a counter-measure” against a leftist threat. “We must build (our) ranks quickly to survive!” he said in a NYA recruitment letter.⁶⁹ “Revolutionary Notes” became a regular series in *Attack!*, further emphasizing Pierce’s militarized vision that young white men needed to prepare for a violent conflict. Each “Revolutionary Notes” appearance detailed a new method by which to wage war and were training manuals to initiate a young person into militarized violence. Examples from the articles included the best shotguns and rifles to use for “urban guerrilla” fighting, a comparison between revolvers vs automatic pistols, the best techniques to fire a sniper rifle, and how to best create improvised explosives. Home-made explosives were especially popular in “Revolutionary Notes,” appearing in five separate “Notes” segments, each with a different type or style of explosive. Pierce’s “improvised explosives” were aluminum tubes, oil drums with fertilizer, blocks of plaster, and Molotov cocktails, as well the commercial dynamite wired to a detonator described in his first “Revolutionary Notes.” These editorials, aimed at all young subscribers to *Attack!*, suggested that revolutionary tactics—including sabotage and assassinations—were more important than political activism for the future of the NYA.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ William Luther Pierce, “National Youth Alliance Solicitation Letter,” October 22, 1971. Accessed within FBI File # NYC 157-3447, 10, <https://archive.org/details/NationalYouthAllianceNYC1573447/page/n9/mode/2up>.

⁷⁰ See “Revolutionary Notes,” *Attack!*, within FBI# 157-2396, William Luther Pierce, September 21, 1972, 27, 39-46, available online, “FOIA: Pierce, William L.-HQ-2,” 50, 62-69, https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-2/page/n49/mode/1up.

Youth recruitment in NYA did not just fall on Pierce. Charles McGuire, the NYA National Office Manager, sent out letters to any interested parties as part of an information packet about the NYA. This packet clarified what a young person could expect about the operation, and that a person could join as either an “Active Member,” (under thirty years old), or an “Associate Member” (over thirty years old). McGuire’s letter explained what made NYA different from other Right-wing operations. Unlike “other anti-communist and pro-American groups,” McGuire wrote, “the NYA does not rely for its effectiveness upon having its members read NYA publications and write to their congressmen,” a possible shot at Carto but also just as easily an attack against mainstream conservative groups as well. “Instead,” McGuire clarified, “NYA has an action program for organizing young Americans into a militant force for building a better America.” McGuire emphasized that the NYA emphasized “tireless organizing, constant involvement in key issues, and direct action” in their work, framing the NYA as an active participant in political activism. “The NYA is the *one* American youth organization which is *effectively* opposing the tide of drugs, treason, and nihilism sweeping over so many young people today.” The goal was to empower young people to move into more active involvement with their political interests, no matter if the young person was already interested in the radical racist Right or just a conservative student. Young and eager bodies were all that was necessary to move towards revolutionary action.⁷¹

Recruitment also happened in the streets. Pierce’s NYA continued Rockwell’s strategy of public antisemitic spectacle, yet Pierce’s strategy abandoned the agitation

⁷¹ Charles H. McGuire, “Introduction to NYA letter,” October, 1971, Charles H McGuire, 1971-1977 File 14 Box 14 of James Mason Papers

tactics in favor of more direct action demonstrations against the System in the United States. The NYA rarely wasted opportunities to attack perceived Jewish political power, such as the United States' relationship with Israel. In 1972, the NYA infiltrated an anti-Vietnam war rally to express demands that the anti-war movement also oppose American military funding of arms to Israel. In 1973, Nick Camerota, a senior leader in the NYA and "Book and Film reviewer" for *Attack!*, traveled to Washington D.C. and testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee against the nomination of Henry Kissinger for Secretary of State. Camerota argued that Kissinger was a Jew who would favor the "fortunes of Israel" over the United States. Kissinger's confirmation, Camerota believed, would not be for "the best interests of the majority of white, gentile Americans."⁷²

The National Alliance and *The Turner Diaries*

After years of activism centered around university campuses and youth outreach, Pierce felt that the organization had grown strong enough to shed its skin of appealing only to young people and believed the NYA needed to expand outside of the thirty-year-old age limit. In the February, 1974 issue of *Attack!*, Pierce announced the transition from the National Youth Alliance to a more "inclusive" National Alliance (NA). In the article, Pierce wrote that the new NA would be a "superstructure for an anticipated array of

⁷² Camerota quotation, see Bernard Gwertzman, "Foes of Kissinger Have Their Say," *New York Times*, September 15, 1973; *Attack!*, no 12, June 1972; *Attack!*, no 17, January, 1973; *Attack!*, no 23, September 1973.

specialized, coordinate groups.” The NYA would continue, however, for a short while longer and remain as a youth group for people thirty years old or younger.⁷³

The rebrand into the NA coincided with the publication of what eventually became one of the most significant white power texts of the twentieth century. In January 1975, Pierce began publishing “The Turner Diary,” a serialized story about a white power revolution, in the pages of *Attack!*. Each month, Pierce, under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald, published a new chapter of his dystopian white power novel as a special feature in the official newsmagazine until 1978 when the chapters were collected into a single paperback novel, *The Turner Diaries*.⁷⁴ Set in a possible future of the 1980s, the story detailed a series of coordinated attacks from a group of white resistance fighters, called the Order, against a Jewish-dominated United States government. The monthly instalments impressed *Attack!* readers and even drew the attention of the FBI. In June 1975, an FBI report signaled their concern over the recently published sixth “episode” of “The Turner Diary,” which described a successful bombing of the FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C., killing 700 employees. The FBI wrote, “The organization stole an office/supply company truck, loaded it with forty-four, 100 pound bags of nitrate fertilizer and parked the vehicle in the...basement of the FBI Headquarters.”⁷⁵

⁷³ FBI, “Appendix: National Alliance; National Youth Alliance,” FBI File #157-6353 William Luther Pierce, January 8, 1975, 4, available online within FOIA: Pierce, William L.-HQ-2, archive.org, 184, https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-2/page/n183/mode/1up.

⁷⁴ J.M. Berger, “The Turner Legacy: The Storied Origins and Enduring Impact of White Nationalism’s Deadly Bible,” *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague*, 7, no. 8 (2016), 9.

⁷⁵ FBI, “National Alliance/National Youth Alliance,” June 26, 1975, 1, FBI File #157-12589, National Alliance party 11 of 13, available online within FOIA: National Alliance aka NYA-HQ-11, archive.org, https://archive.org/details/foia_National_Alliance_aka_NYA-HQ-11.

Significantly, beyond the details of open violence against the United States, Pierce published his story for a youth audience. Even after the rebrand, *Attack!* remained the official newspaper of the National Youth Alliance, not the new National Alliance. Although the NYA was designed to work as a subsidiary of the larger NA, Pierce's choice to publish his white power fantasy in a *youth* publication instead of the recently created *National Alliance Bulletin*, signals the importance Pierce still saw for young people after the rebrand.⁷⁶

Each chapter of what became *The Turner Diaries* included cartoons accompanying the narrative, drawn by NYA/NA member Dennis Nix.⁷⁷ Nix was already a growing cartoonist for the organization, and continued George Lincoln Rockwell's tradition of explicitly outlandish cartoons and comic books from the American Nazi Party era that promoted white power messages. One of Nix's popular comics was his "Eric Thompson, National Socialist Youth" in the 1973 story "White Power Comes to Midvale." In the comic, a short white teen is being mugged by three Black men, drawn with large biceps and Black Power graphics on their shirts. The white teen is saved by Eric Thompson as he overpowers the three Black attackers. Thompson, a much larger white teen, throttles the Black men with punches and makes quippy remarks like "Hope I'm not violating your civil rights," and "I'm going to repay you for the American cities you're destroying, the white people you've beaten and killed, and the women you raped." Afterwards, the principal of the high school—designed as a racist Jewish caricature—

⁷⁶ J.M. Berger, "The Turner Legacy."; Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds*, 120-121.

⁷⁷ Andrew Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, (National Alliance, 1978), front cover; Leonard Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement From the Margins to the Mainstream*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 41.

tries to reprimand Eric Thompson for not being tolerant of Black people. “We need to understand the problems of those less fortunate than ourselves...and the Constitution says we are equal,” says the principal, presented with a sinister glare in the comic. Eric Thompson replied that schools need to teach accurate history of the constitution: that “Negroes are 3/5ths of a free white man.” When the principal asked that Thompson keep these comments to himself, Thompson opened his shirt to reveal a “White Power” t-shirt underneath—the same design as Rockwell’s original swastika-centered white power t-shirt. The image of the shirt scared the principal away. The comic ends with Thompson and now the younger white teen continuing to fight off Black attackers. Thompson comments to the teen, as well as the audience of likely young white teens reading the comic, that “A National Socialist isn’t fighting for just himself, but for the future of his race! Someday our people will see through the System’s lies.”⁷⁸

Nix’s role within the NA and *The Turner Diaries* speaks to the continuing longevity of youth elements still present in radical racist Right organizations. Nix’s youth centered cartoons demonstrate that the NA was still interested in youth recruitment and activism even after the removal of “Youth” from its name. The creator of high school themed comics was not only a continuing cartoonist for NA and the illustrator for the “The Turner Diary” but also created the cover illustrations for the first edition of the novel in 1978. Furthermore, Pierce’s decision to specifically use Nix as the artist for *The*

⁷⁸ Dennis Nix, “White Power Comes to Midvale,” 1973; A Ku Klux Klan version of Nix’s cartoon is available within “White Power Comes to Midvale,” undated, Tom Metzger KKK 1977-92, Folder 9, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

Turner Diaries was evidence, subconscious or not, of Pierce and the new NA still holding onto youth identity and messaging as key factors of white power politics.

The National Alliance later came to be one of the best-organized white nationalist organizations of the late twentieth century. Pierce continued to expand his operation beyond a political movement through the late-1970s and into the 1980s. In 1985, Pierce moved the NA away from Arlington, Virginia to a rural area of West Virginia, and established a compound residence that became a community made up exclusively of NA followers. Here, Pierce and his followers lived within a white nationalist fantasy of exclusive white identity to ensure a generational continuity of white power ideas. Through all these transitions, however, youth remained at the center of Pierce's radical racist Right organizing. The NA continued to produce comic books and audio cassettes aimed at young people and, in the early 1990s, Pierce entered into the world of video games with "Ethnic Cleansing" and "White Law," both games involving a protagonist hunting down and killing non-white minorities in New York City. The closed community in the NA's West Virginia compound, itself, was also an opportunity for "youth" to remain in the organization. In this instance, "youth" was not just about the biological age of members, but a social reproduction of white power into the next generation.⁷⁹ Because of Pierce, legions of young followers were engrossed into a National Socialist movement

⁷⁹ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 219, 249; Martin Durham, *White Rage: The Extreme Right and American Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 30.

and, due to his philosophy of violent revolution, a newer generation was ready to take up the gun for themselves.

William Luther Pierce was more than just the next-man-up as a leader of a fascist youth organization. Unlike many of his predecessors, he appeared to genuinely believe in the power of youth activism. More so, he inspired a new generation to take up arms against the System and engage in revolutionary national socialism that became a standard for the white power movement less than a decade later. In addition, his determination to climb the ladder to a seat of prominence in the growing White Power movement cannot be overlooked. As soon as Pierce began working with the ANP to produce *National Socialist World*, he took significant control of many elements of the organization and held serious influence within the party, nearly taking command of the ANP/NSWPP following Rockwell's assassination.⁸⁰ Conspiracy or not, Koehl ultimately feared Pierce's cutthroat nature and expelled him before his influence grew too unstoppable. Pierce's infiltration and subsequent total control of the National Youth Alliance further speaks to his cunning intelligence and Machiavellian leadership tactics. Truly, there were few others in White Power networks who gained as much and rose as rapidly as Pierce.

But Pierce, while incessantly and passionately calling for revolutionary violence, never engaged in such violent action himself, at least not as a street-level provocateur. Rather, Pierce acted more as a commanding officer who sent legions of young foot soldiers to do his bidding, all while he remained safe behind the front lines. Pierce, indeed, was fond of young people and saw his youthful followers as a counterforce that

⁸⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation File #157-13485, Field Office #157-16, "William Luther Pierce," April 23, 1970, 4-5, accessed via https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1/page/n69/mode/2up.

could realize his vision. He trusted and empowered young people far more than previous White Power movement figures like Willis Carto, Matt Koehl, and even George Lincoln Rockwell. Yet, Pierce—while he was a true believer in the capabilities of youth power and activism—did not see his youth “soldiers” as much more than pawns he could weaponize and send into the fray, all while he himself remained safe from any violent action. To Pierce, young men could still be used for another, older, man’s purpose, and at the expense of their personal safety. However, the emphasis of the growing White Power movement during Pierce’s leadership of the National Youth Alliance swung toward more youth-generated agency. After introducing ideas of National Socialist revolution to young men in the late 1960s and early 1970s, many of Pierce’s young followers and acquaintances were prepared to step away from the shell of adult tutelage and seek radical—and material—political power with White Power focused operations all of their own.

Chapter 5. Rockwell's Children: Joseph Tommasi, David Duke, James Mason, and the Youth Mobilization of the Revolutionary Racist Right Coalition

On July 23, 1970, civil rights activist and defense attorney William Kunstler arrived at Tulane University to give a public talk to the student body. Just over five months earlier, Kunstler was a national story for his legal defense for the “Chicago Seven,” the seven defendants charged by the United States for conspiracy and inciting a riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois.¹ It was a hot day, typical for July in Louisiana, and plenty of the students arrived to listen to Kunstler in short-sleeve shirts, open-toed shoes, and skirts and sun dresses. Standing out among the crowd was a young, twenty-year-old dressed head-to-toe in a perfectly recreated Nazi officer uniform: the brown shirt and pants, black tie and boots, and a red, white, and black swastika armband to complete his look. By 1970, the young David Duke was already a known racist and antisemite due to his constant hate speech tirades at Louisiana State University (LSU)'s Free Speech Alley, where Duke attended as an undergraduate student. But the summer before Duke's junior year, he decided to travel a little over eighty miles southeast from Baton Rouge to New Orleans to picket Kunstler's talk. Duke protested outside the entrance to the speech in his Nazi garb and walked up and down with a large white poster with a wooden handle, with a message reading “Kunstler is a Communist Jew” on the front and “GAS the Chicago 7” on the back. The letter C in “Chicago” on Duke's sign was replaced with a reversed “Hammer and Sickle” so that the

¹ For further reading on Kunstler and the Chicago Seven, see Ed. Jon Wiener, *Conspiracy in the Streets: The Extraordinary Trial of the Chicago Seven* (New York: The New Press, 2006); John Schultz, *The Chicago Conspiracy Trial: Revised Edition* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

sickle could form a “C,” strategically associating the former defendants as dangerous, anti-American, communists.²

David Duke is the most prominent United States white supremacist of the last third of the twentieth century. Duke attempted to resurrect the Ku Klux Klan nearly a decade after the Klan name became a social and political pariah. Bombings and assassinations by Klansmen produced public and government backlash in the later years of the civil rights era, and KKK chapters became more common targets for federal investigations and prosecution. But the KKK did not die with its aging members. Instead, it was revived by a younger man who had come to white supremacy in his youth. Duke successfully transitioned the Klan away from near irrelevance and into an efficient business of hate. Pushing against Klan tradition, Duke opened Klan recruitment to women, Catholics, and teenagers. Duke is also noteworthy for overseeing the “Nazification” of the Klan; a period where Klan literature and members openly embraced antisemitism and united around a shared “Nordic” white heritage. By the time of Duke’s late 1980s and early 1990s political runs for Louisiana state government—including winning a seat in the Louisiana House of Representatives and a close runoff loss for

² The Soviet Union’s hammer and sickle symbol fashioned into a letter “C” was not a David Duke invention. The same style was visible in earlier neo-Nazi marches, including pre-1966 American Nazi Party material and as early as a 1946 march by a pro-Nazi group in Atlanta, Georgia, the Columbians. Both groups inserted the soviet symbol in place of a C in words like “NAACP” and “CORE,” implying a communist association with the organizations; “Neo-Nazi Demonstration,” Jewish Women’s Archive, <https://jwa.org/media/neo-nazi-demonstration>; “Combat Reports: Washington,” *The Stormtrooper*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (November-December, 1963), 6; “Nazis “Welcome” NAACP,” *The Stormtrooper*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March-August, 1964), cover. For further reading on Right-wing movements and the association of Black civil rights organizations with communism, see Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948-1968*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press,) 2004.

Louisiana governor—and a series of runs for United States Senate, Duke was easily “the most effective spokesman for disaffected whites since Alabama governor George Wallace.”³

Duke captured white grievance politics in ways not seen in a generation, and incorporated racist and antisemitic talking points under a veil of nationalist populism and the former American Nazi Party battle cry: White Power. There is already a healthy scholarship on Duke as an important figure in the racist Right and American Right more broadly, yet these biographical accounts are far more interested in Duke’s role as a Ku Klux Klan leader or his political activism in the 1980s and beyond, only briefly touching on his life as a student and role as a youth organizer, if mentioned at all. But Duke’s time as a teenager and twenty-something is important for understanding the larger youth movement within the radical racist Right and deserves more attention.

Duke was the perfect example of the young, firebrand, white power activist the radical racist Right was looking for. He was involved in the radical racist Right since his teenage years when he attended Citizens Council meetings with his father. Duke supported George Lincoln Rockwell’s American Nazi Party and was a proud member of the National Socialist White People’s Party (NSWPP) and their William Luther Pierce-founded student division, the National Socialist Liberation Front (NSLF), both while a student at LSU. Duke also helped lead neo-Nazi student groups the White Student

³ On the Ku Klux Klan in the 1960s, see David Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A.: The Rise and Fall of the Civil Rights-Era Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). On David Duke and his Klan developments, see Tyler Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994), 37-40; John Drabble, “From White Supremacy to White Power: The FBI, COINTELPRO-WHITEHATE, and the Nazification of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1970s”. *American Studies* 48, no. 3 (September 1, 2007): 49–74. Quotation within Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, xiii.

Alliance and the White Youth Alliance all before turning twenty-two-years-old. Only after a handful of years of experience as a campus reactionary, disruptor, and student-group manager did he transition to a national stage as leader of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Once in the Klan, Duke continued to demonstrate a learned appreciation for his past mentors in the radical Right: repurposing cartoons, literature, and jokes for the continued purpose of effectively courting young people into his operation. Duke was an excellent example of a young radical racist Right activist who grew up within the movement and continued to deploy, or improve upon, the tactics he experienced from earlier in his career. Duke is especially significant as one of multiple young activists in the radical racist Right who populated neo-Nazi organizations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and how their path from activists to organizational leaders demonstrates a culmination of youth driven operations in the origins of white power activism.⁴

Duke, while the most notable, does not entirely capture the entire political development within youth activists in the radical Right. Duke was one of many young radical racists that began their political activism within white supremacist and neo-Nazi spaces and organizations before taking it upon themselves to establish their own White Power operations. Alongside David Duke, young people including Frank Collin, Joseph Tommasi, James Mason, Don Black, and Harold Covington first encountered White Power philosophies as teenagers, joined youth-affiliated organizations, and then moved

⁴ For further reading on David Duke, see Brian Fairbanks, *Wizards: David Duke, America's Wildest Election, and the Rise of the Far Right*, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2022); Ed. John C. Kuzenski, Charles S. Bullock, and Ronald Keith Gaddie, *David Duke and the Politics of Race in the South*, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1995); Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*.

beyond the constraints of adult leadership to establish youth-centered and youth-led radical racist Right operations all on their own.

Collin, Duke, Tommasi, and Mason's 1970s activism demonstrate that a specific lens of youth activism and their identities is essential to understand the move towards revolutionary violence in scholarship on the far Right. The Rockwell era of theatrical distractions, but nonexistent political victory for National Socialism continued even with the changes within the NSWPP. Youth activists learned all they could with the decaying Rockwell legacy-operation and sought out new mentors like William Luther Pierce and National Youth Alliance. Younger generations continued to come into the movement and continued to learn from older mentors, as well as their fellow colleagues. The young revolutionaries that achieved leadership positions in the radical racist Right—including Duke, Tommasi, and Mason—successfully adopted and improved on materials and ideology from their mentors, and embraced partnerships with their friends in the larger movement.

By the 1970s, the radical racist Right youth movement evolved into the revolutionary racist right. Joseph Tommasi, for example, came of age in neo-Nazi spaces and organizations like the NSWPP, but after a few years he—and young people that joined him—were no longer interested in serving as either political pawns for adult leaders or following what Tommasi saw as a failed political action model of organizing. Specifically, Tommasi's mentee relationship with William Pierce encouraged the young activist to expand beyond electoral politics and towards political violence. Tommasi incorporated violent Right-wing revolutionary action in his own organization, the National Socialist Liberation Front, and attracted other young white power upstarts like

David Duke and James Mason. This coalition of young, white, and at times, violent, Americans became a new style of political organizing: what I have termed the revolutionary racist Right coalition, a precursor to the white power movement.

The white power movement could not have coalesced without the alliances of young people in the revolutionary racist Right. Alliances from older members and participants within the radical racist Right in the 1960s and early 1970s fractured and shattered, in part, due to ideological difference—such as degrees of antisemitism or open support for Nazi identities. But partnerships also collapsed from leadership ego and difference in political goals, despite sharing a similar vision for white power. For example, in the early years of his activism, Willis Carto promoted an alliance with George Lincoln Rockwell. In 1960, in the final issue of Carto’s publication *Right*, Carto editorially advocated for readers to support Rockwell’s American Nazi Party (ANP). Rockwell, however, rejected Carto’s neo-Nazi muse, Francis Parker Yockey. Rockwell disagreed with Yockey’s framing of antisemitism as cultural instead of racial and believed Yockey’s criticism of the United States made him a subversive Soviet sympathizer. In Rockwell’s eyes, Carto’s promotion of Yockey’s ideology made him unfit for an alliance.⁵ William Luther Pierce also publicly fought against Matt Koehl’s National Socialist White People’s Party in 1970 and Carto’s National Youth Alliance

⁵ On Willis Carto’s promotion of Rockwell, see Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Willis A. Carto: A survey of his activities,” within file # 62_106941-76 14, “Willis A. Carto,” December 1, 1966, available online via archive.org, Liberty Lobby-Willis Carto HQ 62-106941, <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n13/mode/1up>. For Rockwell’s distrust of Yockey, see George Lincoln Rockwell, “What’s Behind ‘Yockeyism’?,” *The Rockwell Report* Vol. 3, No. 18-19 (July 15, 1964), 6-7; George Lincoln Rockwell, “More On ‘Yockeyism’,” *The Rockwell Report* (September, 1964), 19-20.

later that year and into 1971. Generally, Pierce criticizing both leaders for their interest in fundraising and showmanship instead of embracing his revolutionary ideology.⁶ Thus, while organizations still operated around a related white power philosophy, the individual groups rarely crossed over and a unified white power movement seemed unlikely under the present conditions of adult guidance.

This changed when young people gained leadership control. Young activists and members within these radical racist Right organizations recognized the flaws of unconnected leadership. Some white power activists—such as James Mason and David Duke—moved between different radical Right operations over the course of their teenage and young adult years and picked up on the successes and failures of each operation. Many radical Right youth also gained an appreciation for revolutionary politics, also spawned by a mentor figure, William Pierce. Throughout the 1970s, after years of young people serving as disposable tools for adult leadership, radical racist youth molded their own social movement ideology that reflected a centralized ideology of violent revolution.

By the end of the 1970s, these independent white power groups slowly unified. Revolutionary racist youth, now in positions of leadership, encouraged organizations to more easily embrace coalition philosophies due to their familiarity with each other. Individual members typically belonged to multiple organizations and became leaders in their own right, but they were not attracted or beholden to any one national organization. For example, James Mason was a member of Rockwell's ANP, Koehl's NSWPP, and

⁶ William L. Pierce memorandum to Matt Koehl, June 1, 1970, reprinted within William L. Pierce memorandum to NSWPP members, August 5, 1970, page 1-7, William Pierce 1970-1979, Folder 33, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; "'Statecraft' Investigation- The Plot Deepens," *Action* No. 16 (March 1971), 3-4.

Pierce's NYA. He recognized that dispersed and disjointed radical Right organizations were not achieving political success. Throughout much of the 1970s, Mason connected with other young leadership figures in the movement, particularly Joseph Tommasi and David Duke, and exchanged ideas, advice, and hate literature. In a series of letters to Duke, Mason asked that his explicitly violent neo-Nazi faction of the movement combine forces with Duke's Klan element. Two years later, in 1979, Klansmen associated with Duke's operation joined with neo-Nazi organizations in Greensboro, North Carolina to violently oppose leftist demonstrations. After nearly two decades of speeches, disruption-style protests, and violence limited to racist and antisemitic pamphlets and newsletters, this coalition of the revolutionary racist Right shot and killed five Communist Workers' Party members and affiliates in Greensboro on November 3, 1979, birthing a new paramilitary white power alliance.⁷

Young people interested in white supremacist activism in the 1960s strived for leadership positions—or even opportunities to be recognized as equals—but were regularly stymied by adult factions. Once young people gained positions of power, many learned from the mistakes of previous radical racist Right organizing, developed alliances with each other, and turned towards revolutionary action and violence. Although leaders like Duke later struggled with the student and youth identity as a specific framework for

⁷ On Mason and Duke's relationship, see "James Mason to David Duke Correspondence," David E. Duke 1971-74, 1993, Folder 28, Box 12, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; "James N. Mason to David E. Duke, December 13, 1977, David E. Duke 1978-87, Folder 29, Box 12, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. For an overview of the "Greensboro massacre," see Kathleen Belew, "A Unified Movement," *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 55-76.

his operation, colleagues like Tommasi and Mason reveal that “youth” morphed away from a literal description of age and into a philosophical and political identity. Consequently, the revolutionary racist Right’s political foundation rested on youth-inspired ideologies and desires for structural reform against an older and—perceived by the activists—failed strategies for success. The older tactics of a visible mass movement that hoped to convert Americans to a neo-Nazi cause did not produce political victory, so newer tactics—embraced by young people—were a generational transformation, moving the movement forward into calls for revolution and begetting a white power movement that replaced the dysfunction of the past.

Rockwell’s Imperfect Chicago Legacy: Frank Collin

Opportunities for youth leadership within the radical racist Right were rare in the 1960s. George Lincoln Rockwell’s American Nazi Party (ANP) held the best opportunity for youth input, but it was still under Rockwell’s ultimate control. After his assassination, the youth-driven political movement had laid fractured and leadership could not decide on the best course of action to proceed. Matt Koehl had taken command of Rockwell’s former Nazi party, and the renamed National Socialist White People’s Party (NSWPP) operated in much of the same manner as the previous iteration. And yet, the operation fragmented under the weight of Koehl’s stubbornness and unwillingness to adapt to the changing political and social dynamics of the United States. Koehl frustrated Party leaders and other members, ultimately pushing out many young voices attracted to National Socialism. In a poetic continuation of the issues radical Right followers like Rockwell, Willis Carto, and William Pierce experienced with Robert Welch’s John Birch

Society—which introduced many future white power activists to radical Right ideology before they abandoned for a more racist or antisemitic operation—the NSWPP introduced a new generation of angry white males to Nazi identities and philosophies, but left nearly all of these members irritated and estranged from the Party after just a short time in the organization.⁸

Despite dysfunction that engulfed much of the larger ANP/NSWPP apparatus, the youth-led-and-operated unit in Chicago was a unique success story. Outside of the main headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, the Chicago division was the most successful unit in the Party, with membership and activities that drew national attention. In most instances, this was not a high bar to cross, as ANP membership and activism was miniscule outside of splashy demonstrations in the Washington D.C. area. Yet the Chicago unit, led by the young Christopher Vidnjevič, had orchestrated the successful “White People’s March” and disruption of Martin Luther King Jr.’s open housing demonstration in August 1966. The twenty-four-year-old “Captain” Vidnjevič was one of a handful of Nazi youth that lived in the Chicago headquarters. The young delinquents of the Chicago ANP unit often demonstrated in Chicago’s Marquette Park—home to a growing non-white community on the southwest side of the city—as well as the historically-Irish and Eastern European Gage Park neighborhood for recruitment drives. They were also branching out to actions in other cities. On April 20, 1967, Vidnjevič and two other members of the Chicago unit traveled to Louisville, Kentucky for a “White Power” counter-protest against open housing marches in the city. Louisville police arrested the three ANP members and

⁸ Ed. Jeffrey Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power: A Sourcebook on the Radical Racist Right*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 227.

Vidnjevich—for reasons that are unknown—left the Party in May 1967.⁹ Thereafter, the Chicago chapter restructured around a twenty-three-year-old Frank Collin.

Frank Collin—sometimes incorrectly written as “Collins” in newspapers and secondary texts—joined the former ANP at twenty-three or twenty-four-years-old in 1968. Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, Collin had dropped out of Southern Illinois University. He found a natural home at the Chicago chapter and took over leadership from Chris Vidnjevich. The young neo-Nazi served as the Midwest Coordinator for the NSWPP, although the title sounded overly prestigious for an organization that rarely included more than 100 members nationally.¹⁰ Collin’s activities were not too distinct from earlier ANP/NSWPP behaviors, such as disruptive protests and recruitment drives around the Chicago area. In February 1970, Collin gave an invited speech at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, about sixty-five miles west of Chicago. His hour-and-a-half long rant focused on the value of “National Socialism as the only antidote for Communism.” Parroting the now dated racist Right-wing criticism of the civil rights movement, Collin proclaimed that Black people were under the control of “Communist Jews” and that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was “the black arm of the Communist party.” Predictably, boos and outbursts from the crowd of students began, especially after Collin claimed that “biological” Jews

⁹ Folder, "Vidnjevich, Christopher," Records of the NACCD (Kerner Commission), Embargoed Series, Box 12,1-13, LBJ Presidential Library, <https://www.discoverlbj.org/item/kerner-embg-b12-f02>; Michael McGovern, “U.S. Nazis Sow Hate, Look for ‘Revolution’,” *The Deseret News*, October 19, 1966, A17.
¹⁰ “Is he or isn’t he?: Nazi denies Jewish blood, but dad claims otherwise,” *The Bulletin*, Bend, OR, April 24, 1970, 6; Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 60. On ANP membership, see FBI File #9-39854: George Lincoln Rockwell, Monograph, “American Nazi Party,” June 1965, 32.

are the cause of “every major social problem today.” According to local reporting, the crowd never became violent but Collin and ten of his Nazi allies quickly left the stage through a back exit with a police escort.¹¹

Collin was booted out of the NSWPP not long after, however. His antisemitism bona fides came into question when, in April, Collin’s father, Max, disclosed that he was Jewish and that the family had changed their name to Collin from Cohen. If not inflammatory enough, Max Cohen claimed he was born in Munich, Germany in 1913 and was imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp in 1938 for three months, before he was released and allowed to emigrate to the United States, likely because Cohen “voluntarily” gave up his property for Hitler’s Nazi regime.¹² Frank Collin furiously denied his father’s confession and claimed his father was a liar. Collin’s antisemitic neo-Nazi allies in the NSWPP, however, were dismayed at the revelation. His Jewish heritage, combined with a direct family member who survived the Holocaust, was more than enough for an exorcism from organized neo-Nazism. By June, NSWPP leader Matt Koehl arranged for Collin’s expulsion from the Party, citing the organization confirmed “reports we had received that (Collin) had Jewish relatives.”¹³ Collin never directly confirmed his Jewish heritage, and perhaps—similar to others within the movement that

¹¹ “NIU Pupils Charge Nazi Speaker,” *Dixon Evening Telegraph*, Dixon, IL, February 20, 1970, 2.

¹² “Is he or isn’t he?: Nazi denies Jewish blood, but dad claims otherwise,” *The Bulletin*, Bend, OR, April 24, 1970, 6; Up until the start of World War II, prisoners in Dachau were offered the opportunity to emigrate overseas as long as they “voluntarily” abandoned their property to the Nazi government. For further reading on the Dachau concentration camp, see Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹³ “Neo-Nazi party head is having his troubles,” *The Cleveland Press*, December 9, 1970, F8, accessed within American Nazi Party records, 1963-1970, SC-398, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

changed their names to something more “Aryan”—Collin’s denial and shame was part of his own internalized antisemitism. However, some of Collin’s young contemporaries, like the teenage Harold Covington, refused to believe any report of Collin’s Jewish ancestry and instead concluded that documents must have been forged by Koehl and the NSWPP.¹⁴

Collin, now twenty-six years old, did not let his expulsion from the NSWPP stop his activism or his antisemitism. He gathered what remained of his materials in Chicago and, alongside three other NSWPP deserters, founded the National Socialist party of America (NSPA) in late 1970. Collin based the NSPA near his original NSWPP Chicago chapter, but purchased a new building he named “Rockwell Hall.” This new headquarters was one of many steps where the former Rockwell devotee wanted to signal his operation as the true successor to the ANP. Collin’s NSPA adorned itself in much of Rockwell’s Nazi iconography, including full-body German-style Nazi uniforms for members, echoed Rockwell’s “White Power” battle cry, and even reprinted old Rockwell-era cartoons and pamphlets in their multiple publications. The main newspaper for the NSPA was *The New Order*, with a Fredrich Nietzsche quotation at the top of each issue reading, “What does not destroy me, makes me stronger.” Both the newspaper’s title and the material within the issues presented the NSPA as not so much as an imitation of Koehl’s Virginia based Party, but a much more vengeful operation that Collin made entirely his own.¹⁵

¹⁴ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 62-63.

¹⁵ The German philosopher Nietzsche was associated with fascism and Nazism due to manipulated edits of his work by his sister after his death. Although Nietzsche rejected antisemitism, his concepts of strength and the power of wills were attractive to both the Nazi party and subsequent neo-Nazi organizations. See, Max Whyte, “The Uses and Abuses of Nietzsche in the Third Reich: Alfred Baeumler’s ‘Heroic Realism.’” *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 43, no. 2 (April 2008): 171–94. “Selected National Socialist

The NSPA, as an organization founded by a young person, took youth activism much further than the NSWPP or even Rockwell's ANP. The twenty-six-year-old Collin was joined in the NSPA leadership by Gary Lauck and Harold Covington, both eighteen years old, and nineteen-year-old Michael Allen.¹⁶ With their assistance, Collin created two youth affiliates of his neo-Nazi organization, one for teenagers and another for twelve years and younger, and each with their own newspaper. Collin also founded both groups on April 20th, Adolf Hitler's birthday.¹⁷ The teenage operation was called The Young National Socialist Corps and described on a flyer as a group for white youth between thirteen and seventeen years of age. The flyer asked that young people join The Young National Socialist Corps in order to help "create a new society: an all-white America."¹⁸ Its newspaper, *The Exterminator*, focused on violence and intimidation tactics in the Chicago area. The logo for the newspaper involves a large boot—draped in an American flag—kicking a caricatured small monkey with human facial features that holds a "Black Power!" sign. The caricature is, of course, meant to be racist, but also reminiscent of the ANP era of racist humor pitched toward young people. The racism continued in the newspaper with an article titled "Race Mixing is Sick," detailing a

Party of America materials," National Socialist Party of America (NSPA), Folder 16, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; Stephen E. Atkins, *Encyclopedia of Right-Wing Extremism in Modern American History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 94-95; Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 60-61.

¹⁶ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 60-61.

¹⁷ "1975 Calendar of Events," *The New Order* (November 9, 1975), 2, National Socialist Party of America (NSPA), Folder 16, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

¹⁸ "White Youth—Fight!," National Socialist Party of America (NSPA), Folder 16, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

conspiracy of Black people “stealing” white women away from white men, and a separate corner of the paper explaining the importance to throw rocks and bricks at “passing nigger Cadillacs.”¹⁹ The youngest NSPA youth group, the White Youth Front, also seemed to continue the theme of violence and vengeance. The White Youth Front’s published newspaper was *The Young Wolves*, a name also used by the NSPA to describe those who joined up with the youth group. “The White Youth Front is calling together all White school children to fight like a wolf pack,” a July 1976 publication read. The message concluded violently with “The Young Wolves of the WYF will tear the Black animals to pieces!”²⁰

Collin’s NSPA was far more invested in mobilizing young people than either of his previous neo-Nazi leaders. He was already invested in youth activism due to his age, but he was also invested in the youth-focused methods of Rockwell’s ANP. Reprints of John Patler’s “Uncle Remus” and “Whiteman” comics were available to youth members, only now with some re-arranged panels and a removal of Patler’s name from the strips. The racist characters and outlandish sequences remained.²¹ The NSPA held “white power marches” in Marquette Park near Chicago’s South Side and frequently exhibited young people, particularly young children, at these marches wearing “white power” t-shirts and holding signs that read, “Niggers Beware! Marquette Stays White!” Due to Collin, young

¹⁹ *The Exterminator*, (undated), National Socialist Party of America (NSPA), Folder 16, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

²⁰ *The Young Wolves*, July 17, 1976, National Socialist Party of America (NSPA), Folder 16, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

²¹ “Whiteman,” National Socialist Party of America (NSPA), Folder 16, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

people were participants in the radical racist Right at a greater level than before in the movement's history. Although the NSPA only operated out of Chicago, they were a frequent menace at Marquette Park, continuing a legacy that began when ANP members stormed on Chicago a decade or so earlier. "The Youth are always in the forefront of the struggle for White Power," read a line from *The Exterminator*. "In 1966," it continued, "it was mainly the Youth who burned the cars of Martin Luther King and his invading black hordes. The same spirit of White resistance in the Youth will someday strike a nationwide up-rising against Black terror and White betrayal!" Collin was perhaps unsure just how significant these claims would become, but he was articulating the larger outline of the eventual white power movement.²²

Collin also differed from the older leaders in the radical racist Right in his willingness to adopt tactics from multiple leaders in the movement. Not only did Collin's NSPA embrace a Rockwell neo-Nazi identity, but it also incorporated William Luther Pierce's "White Power Message" tactic. Pierce and Collin were both in the NSWPP at the same time, and likely that is where Collin became familiar with Pierce's phone messages. Collin's White Power Messages, which he also called the "White Power hot line," were recounts of NSPA activities and protests, as well as racist and antisemitic attacks against local Chicago government. In 1974, Collin even used the White Power Message as his own campaign tool when he ran for city alderman, putting the number on flyers across Chicago. Collin's open embrace of Nazism and calls for supporters to "think white, vote

²² The Young Wolves materials, National Socialist Party of America (NSPA), Folder 16, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; *The Exterminator* (undated), National Socialist Party of America (NSPA), Folder 16, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

white,” made it difficult to believe Chicago voters were unaware of his politics. Yet, perhaps due to the pervasiveness of the White Power Message, Collin garnered a surprising sixteen percent of the vote in the election for alderman.²³

Collin seemed to be on track for success as a young leader in the radical racist Right. His dedicated recruitment and mobilization of young people, especially those far younger than other radical racist Right operations, and his record of building off the success of multiple mentors distinguished his organization. Yet, Collin had a limited social network. His operation was almost exclusively isolated to Chicago and, despite published editorials that implied the contrary, the NSPA only had around a dozen or so active members.²⁴ He also found himself caught up with significant legal controversy. In 1978, fellow NSPA officer Harold Covington discovered a large photographic archive of child pornography in Collin’s living space in “Rockwell Hall.” The photographs included “nude and seminude young boys, sometimes posed in uniforms or with weapons.” Covington reported Collin to the Chicago police, after which he was arrested and sentenced to seven years in prison. Although the NSPA attempted to continue on without their leader, it ultimately dissolved by 1980.²⁵

Joseph Tommasi, the “Tomato Head Führer”

²³ Assorted White Power Messages, (October-November 1974), Box 1, Folder 10. MS-354. Michael G. Rapp Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio; “White Power Message,” (October 14, 1974), Box 1, Folder 10. MS-354. Michael G. Rapp Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio; Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 61.

²⁴ Atkins, *Encyclopedia of Right-Wing Extremism*, 94-95.

²⁵ Quotation within Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 62; *Ibid.*, 32-33; Atkins, *Encyclopedia of Right-Wing Extremism*, 95-96.

Alongside Collin, plenty of other young neo-Nazis were either dismissed from the NSWPP or found themselves frustrated with Koehl's leadership style and left on their own accord. Some members, such as Robert Lloyd III, who was a part of the Party since he was a teenager, left Koehl's operation to join William Luther Pierce's National Youth Alliance. Pierce, indeed, was the linkage between the Rockwell era of radical racist Right organizing and the more explicitly revolutionary rhetoric of the movement emerging in the 1970s that empowered young people to rebel against a traditional order. In short, Rockwell brought young people to neo-Nazism and Pierce encouraged them to continue the fight. Young white power activists were drawn to the organizational legacy of Koehl's NSWPP, but many quickly abandoned the group to establish operations much more in line with their interests.

One such Pierce-influenced youth activist was Joseph Tommasi. Tommasi came to the American Nazi Party in 1966 at fifteen years old and joined the California-based West Coast branch of Rockwell's operation. Between February and November 1967, during the name change between the ANP and the NSWPP, the sixteen-year-old Tommasi attended twenty-one neo-Nazi meetings. Tommasi quickly rose through ranks of the party, despite his young age, but perhaps more evidence towards the limited membership and engagement within the West Coast branch. On March 8, 1968, Tommasi was officially sworn into the NSWPP as a Storm Trooper. He was promoted to Group Leader on April 5, and then promoted in November to Storm Trooper leader—a position originally held by former ANP propagandist and Rockwell's assassin, John Patler.²⁶ The

²⁶ FBI file-Los Angeles #157-1599, Joseph C. Tommasi, accessed within Ernie Lazar FOIA Collection, Internet Archive, https://archive.org/details/TOMMASIJosephC.LosAngeles1571599/mode/1up_

headquarters of the West Coast NSWPP, sometimes referred in official party materials as the Western Division, was based in Tommasi's hometown of El Monte, California, located in Los Angeles County just east of downtown. The historical record—particularly a Federal Bureau of Investigation file on Tommasi that began in 1967—is unclear whether the location of the headquarters was by coincidence or choice from Tommasi in his capacity as leader of the division. Nevertheless, as Group Leader and Storm Trooper leader of the West Coast chapter, Tommasi tried to rejuvenate the previously failed activity from the California based branch by holding regular meetings, distributing party literature, and planning “defensive and offensive” activities “for the protection of (the) White Race.”²⁷

Tommasi published a newsletter specifically pertaining to the west coast chapter, the *Western Division NSWPP Bulletin*, which he first issued in November 1968. The *Bulletin* detailed chapter activities, meetings details, and other pertinent information. The first issue highlighted a march led by Tommasi and four other young men to disrupt an anti-war march in Los Angeles. The NSWPP members, described by the Los Angeles Times as “Nazi Youths,” called out the anti-war protestors as “traitors” and “Jew-Commie-creeps.” The “Peace Parade” march concluded in front of the Wallace for President headquarters when Tommasi and his allies, bearing a large “White Power” banner that included a large black swastika in the corner, collided with the antiwar demonstrators. Two “Stormtroopers” were beaten, resulting in small concussions,

²⁷*Ibid.*; Joe Tommasi to Fellow White Man, fall 1968, FBI file-Los Angeles #157-1599, Joseph C. Tommasi, January 3, 1969, accessed within Ernie Lazar FOIA Collection, Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/TOMMASIJosephC.LosAngeles1571599/page/n8/mode/1up>.

according to the *Bulletin* report. The Los Angeles police broke up the fight and defended the neo-Nazis, allowing them to escape. Despite the violent disruption from Tommasi's "Nazi youths," the Los Angeles police did not detain any NSWPP members, but did arrest two anti-war demonstrators.²⁸

Tommasi's early activities as the Western Division leader were typical for other NSWPP chapter events, but this would change. The direct-action disruption tactics made headlines, but after nearly a decade of following Rockwell's—and now Matt Koehl's—plan of public agitation, notoriety was not enough for young activists like Tommasi. Tommasi made the acquaintance of William Pierce in 1969. Like plenty of other young men who encountered the thirty-something former academic, Pierce primed the teenager for joining Pierce's revolutionary fight against the System, Pierce's term for a conspiracy of Jews who used communism to control governments and disrupt so-called traditional values.

Pierce's influence on Tommasi was also seen within NSWPP Western Division activities. Like Frank Collin did years later with his National Socialist Party of American, Tommasi repackaged one of Pierce's creations, the "White Power message" telephone recordings. But the connection between Tommasi and Pierce seemed much more personal than with Collin. Pierce recorded his "White Power message" and distributed the phone number for the dial-in message in the Arlington, Virginia area beginning in early January 1969. Pierce advised Tommasi on January 21 on the process to set up a west coast

²⁸ FBI file-Los Angeles #157-1599, Joseph C. Tommasi, accessed within Ernie Lazar FOIA Collection, Internet Archive, 10-12, <https://archive.org/details/TOMMASIJosephC.LosAngeles1571599/page/n9/mode/1up>; John Kendall, "L.A. Peace March Collides With Nazi Youths; 5 Arrested," *Los Angeles Times*, October 27, 1968, 3.

version of the “White Power message,” including advice on the cost of answering machines and working with telephone companies. By February 5, Tommasi’s NSWPP unit finalized recordings and advertised the message in local newspapers, including the campus newspaper for the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), *UCLA Daily Bruin*. The first “White Power messages” out of the El Monte headquarters were re-recordings of Pierce’s messages, and emphasized the far more extreme measures that became commonplace in Tommasi’s ideology. The first message included Pierce ranting about “anarchy and chaos” on college campuses due to “gangs of black thugs.” “There is only one effective way to deal with the rampaging blacks on our campuses and in our cities,” the message proclaimed. “That is to kill them.” The message quickly produced backlash as the *UCLA Daily Bruin* removed the “White Power” advertisement and California’s state attorney general’s office attempted to remove the phone from the El Monte headquarters and shut down the recorded messages for calling for a “race war.” Despite legal attention in March that removed the telephone line, the messages resumed in April, primarily due to First Amendment protections.²⁹

Tommasi continued to play Pierce’s recorded white power messages throughout 1969, fighting off persistent legal action that attempted to shut down the phone line. In 1970, Tommasi started recording his own “White Power messages.” His first message, on November 16, 1970, was a call to action for young white students to push back against racial integration in high schools. Tommasi told a story about an alleged assault—which

²⁹ FBI file-Los Angeles #157-1599, Joseph C. Tommasi, March 26, 1969, 1-10, accessed within Ernie Lazar FOIA Collection, Internet Archive, 25-34, <https://archive.org/details/TOMMASIJosephC.LosAngeles1571599/page/n24/mode/1up>; Lee Dye, “Court Ban Sets Stage for Hate Message Test,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 1969.

he admits was “not recorded in the papers”—where a white high school senior in Alexandria, Virginia was ambushed and attacked by an undisclosed number of Black people, identified by Tommasi as a “gang of black apes.” “Is this to happen in California schools? Do you as a white student want to live among these savages, one-hundred years out of the jungle?” “It is about time we, as white students stuck together and fought these savages,” Tommasi declared. The message continued by inviting listeners to join the White Student Alliance (WSA), a student network organized by the NSWPP.³⁰

Tommasi’s relationship with Pierce expanded beyond the NSWPP programing and soon led to the creation of a new student organization designed to embrace Pierce’s revolutionary activism. With Pierce’s assistance, Tommasi founded the National Socialist Liberation Front (NSLF) in 1969, a student group based out of the West Coast branch headquarters of the NSWPP in El Monte, California. Initially designed—at least in the eyes of leaders like Matt Koehl—to be a youth wing of the NSWPP that would distribute flyers and organize against college leftists, Tommasi and Pierce envisioned revolutionary potential for the group. Likely influenced by Pierce’s calls for revolutionary reform, Tommasi represented a new generation of American Nazis affiliated within the NSWPP that were frustrated with the adult leadership within the movement. Tommasi wanted the movement to move past what he perceived as the sluggish progress that made adult members comfortable and aspired to incite immediate organized “guerrilla campaigns.”³¹

³⁰ FBI file-Los Angeles #157-1599, Joseph C. Tommasi, November 19, 1970, 2-3, accessed within “Tommasi, Joseph C.—Los Angeles 157-1599, 132-133, Ernie Lazar FOIA Collection, <https://archive.org/details/TOMMASIJosephC.LosAngeles1571599/page/n131/mode/1up>.

³¹ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 305.

Tommasi centered this revolutionary energy within his new student organization; in politics and presentation. Politically, the NSLF sought to disrupt the pattern of street theater demonstrations that dominated NSWPP protests and move towards physical confrontations with leftist enemies on college campuses. In its name, the National Socialist Liberation Front took inspiration from the National Liberation Front in Vietnam—pejoratively referred as the “Viet Cong” by South Vietnamese and American forces. Just in name, the student group clearly fashioned an association with armed political resistance. The NSLF published a quarterly newsletter, *The Liberator*, a name also in reference to the famous abolitionist newspaper in the nineteenth century. The historical record is unclear on the specific intention behind these two names, but consciously or not, Tommasi’s NSLF co-opted leftist liberation identities to present the causes of white supremacy as a social justice initiative in equal footing to Black freedom or anti-imperialism.³²

Beyond the NSLF, Tommasi demonstrated that he was uninterested in playing by traditional rules of his fellow American national socialists. As he aged, the long-haired Tommasi was a true child of the late 1960s, as he enjoyed smoking marijuana and listening to loud rock and roll music on NSWPP property. In one instance, Koehl caught Tommasi inviting his girlfriend over to the party headquarters in Arlington to have sex. Ethnically, Tommasi was also different from the many blonde-haired or “Aryan” obsessed associates. He had thick, dark black hair and a “dark olive” skin complexion. His Italian heritage earned him the nickname “Tomato Head Führer.”³³ His politics

³² Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 302-303.

³³ “Info concerning NSWPP congress, 9/4-5/71 at Alexandria VA,” 5, within FBI file #157-1599, Joseph C. Tommasi, accessed within Ernie Lazar FOIA Collection, Internet

further reflected his distinctiveness. Tommasi emphasized direct-action-style street rebellions instead of a gradualist movement within the present political system. In a speech before the Second Party Congress of the NSWPP in 1970, Tommasi lambasted the orthodox party members as far too cautious in their vision for National Socialist victory and shocked the attendees with his calls for immediate revolution.³⁴

Tommasi's NSWPP-auxiliary organization set out to establish chapters on university campuses across the United States. Like other Rockwell-inspired neo-Nazi operations, however, there was not a wide audience for overt Nazi support among the general student body. Membership in the NSLF was low and support seemed to only come from previously devoted white power supporters. Some chapters were as small as one-man units, such as the Louisiana NSLF, managed by the passionate David Duke.³⁵

David Duke and Louisiana Student Activism

Before David Duke's time advertising the NSLF at LSU, and long before he became the most famous name in modern Ku Klux Klan history—and racist activism more broadly—Duke came to the radical racist Right as a teenager. Duke grew up in an all-white segregated community in New Orleans, Louisiana. Duke's mother struggled with alcohol and prescription drug addiction for most of his childhood and his father frequently traveled for work before finally leaving the family and moving to Laos to work for the United States Agency for International Development. In 1964, fourteen-

Archive, 17,
<https://archive.org/details/TOMMASIJosephC.LosAngeles1571599/page/n16/mode/1up>;
Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 302.

³⁴ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 302.

³⁵ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 98-99.

year-old Duke began attending local Citizen Councils of America meetings. Alongside the segregationist meetings, Duke embraced explicitly racist viewpoints after reading *Race and Reason: A Yankee View*, a white separatist and white supremacist book popular with pro-segregationists in the American South. In his later autobiography, Duke referred to *Race and Reason* as the contributing text to his awakening as a racist.³⁶

For the rest of high school, Duke continued to attend White Citizens' Council meetings and began speaking before the members about Jewish conspiracies within the civil rights movement.³⁷ Duke's overt neo-Nazi turn, however, is ambiguous and made more difficult to discern due to Duke's constant repudiation of his neo-Nazi interests decades later as childish curiosities and jokes.³⁸ Despite some scholarship claiming Duke was a member of the American Nazi Party, records about Duke's involvement in neo-Nazi organizations—such as George Lincoln Rockwell's under-eighteen youth group affiliated with the ANP, the White Youth Corps—during high school are unknown. The ANP's two youth front operations, the White Youth Corps and the Fighting American Nationalists, primarily operated out of Chicago and the northeast, respectively, and ceased operations by 1964, the same year of Duke's white supremacist and antisemitic “awakening.”³⁹

³⁶ David Duke, “Transformation,” in *My Awakening: A Path to Radical Understanding* (Free Speech Press, 1998).

³⁷ Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 8-10.

³⁸ Associated Press, “Johnson Takes Lead Over Duke in Louisiana,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1990; Scott McLemee, “Old Nazi in a New Suit,” *Against the Current*, No. 36 (January/February 1992); Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 17-21.

³⁹ Charitably, there is a possibility that scholarship that claims ANP membership for Duke actually uses the ANP and the NSWPP, its later iteration, interchangeably. Duke was a member of the NSWPP's student group White Student Alliance; See, Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 98-99; Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 19-20. For an overview of the ANP youth front groups see, FBI file #9-39854, “American Nazi Party,”

However, Duke proudly embraced Nazi ideology as a teenager and was, specifically, more than passingly aware of Rockwell and his American Nazi Party. Over time, Duke concerned some Citizen's Council members with his increasingly antisemitic remarks in his talks during meetings and was sometimes spotted with a copy of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. During his high school junior year at an all-boys military boarding school, school officials caught Duke with a Nazi swastika flag displayed in his dorm room and was sometimes seen by classmates wearing a German "iron cross" necklace or a swastika-imbedded ring. William Luther Pierce, a then leader within the NSWPP, recalled receiving a letter from a sixteen-year-old Duke who wrote for clarification on political views. Significantly, Duke also referred to George Lincoln Rockwell as "the greatest American who ever lived" and reportedly cried after hearing the news of Rockwell's assassination.⁴⁰ Hence, the Louisiana teen was not a person who accidentally stumbled upon neo-Nazi material, nor unfamiliar with organized neo-Nazi hate movements. Even if Duke was not an official member of Rockwell's organization, Duke's familiarity with "the Commander" and his possession of Nazi materials is enough to suspect that the future Klan leader might have been one of the many young subscribers who read ANP propaganda materials. Although, by the end of the 1960s and his move to Baton Rouge for college, Duke's connection to neo-Nazism was no longer ambiguous.

Duke's grand coming out as a radical racist Right youth activist was as a college student at LSU. In high school, Duke generally kept to himself and was a frequent loner, only mumbling antisemitic and pro-Hitler factoids to unwilling participants such as

54-57; Frederick J. Simonelli, *American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*, (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1999).

⁴⁰ Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 8-12, 13, 43.

classmates or Citizens' Council members.⁴¹ During his freshmen year at LSU, beginning in fall 1968, Duke remained relatively anonymous, but continued to revel in sharing Nazi-themed material and jokes. A fellow student recalled visiting Duke in his dorm room where Duke played recordings of Rockwell's ANP speeches as if they were hit records and passed around "photographs of Jewish corpses from Nazi concentration camps."⁴² Beginning his sophomore year, Duke took part in large public gatherings on the campus' Free Speech Alley, a popular gathering place where students met up on Wednesdays in front of the Student Union to share any topic of interest. Duke's participation—where he publicly ranted about racist and antisemitic conspiracies that threatened white people—quickly drew large counter-protest crowds and interest from the student newspaper, *The Daily Reveille*. Perhaps taking cues from his deceased idol Rockwell, Duke's appearances became a sort of performance art filled with edgy material designed to agitate the student body. In one instance, a Black student, Carl Tickle, confronted Duke after listening to a racist lecture about white people as "the master race." "What's the difference [between my hands and yours]?" Tickle asked Duke. A white student joined Tickle and both pricked their fingers to demonstrate that each hand bled red blood. Duke, in a sneering reply, dismissed the demonstration by comparing Tickle to vermin—echoing an old Nazi trope. "I could go across the street to the scientific laboratory and get the biggest, hairiest, dirty rat that you could find and slit that and it's going to bleed," Duke retorted. "It's a rat! What the hell does that prove?"⁴³

⁴¹ Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 10, 13.

⁴² Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 14.

⁴³ Bob Anderson and Roger Tanner, "Jews, Blacks Lambasted at Heated Alley," *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 30, November 13, 1969, 1; Duke quotation within Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 15.

Duke continued to make headlines within LSU's school newspaper. *The Daily Reveille* loved Duke's antics and he appeared in articles or was mentioned by students for his Free Speech Alley rants in ten issues in November and December 1969, alone.⁴⁴ Duke, however, was not just entertainment for editors and readers of the student paper as he also published white supremacist guest editorials. Duke's first article in *The Daily Reveille* ran in November 1969, following the newspaper's publication of his racist statements at free speech ally. Titled "Duke On Nazism—His Superior System," the nineteen-year-old defended his "National Socialist" politics as not about "exterminate[ing] all Jews" and "ship[ing] all of the Negroes back to Africa," but instead a defense of "cultural, spiritual, and racial values" for "Western Civilization." "[National Socialists] believe that the quality and spirit of our people are by far the most important issues of our time," Duke proclaimed to the LSU student body.⁴⁵

It was also during Duke's sophomore year that he officially joined the NSWPP and their student affiliates, the NSLF and (WSA). As its lone member, Duke handed out NSLF materials alone and wrote an article for the student newspaper defending the organization and its open affiliation for "National Socialism." "The NSLF has different views from the run-of-the-mill political groups on campus," wrote a nineteen-year-old Duke. "We believe that race plays a primary part in our civilization and our culture," he

⁴⁴ See *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 28, November 11, 1969; *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 30, November 13, 1969; *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 33, November 19, 1969; *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 34, November 20, 1969; *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 37, December 3, 1969; *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 39, December 5, 1969; *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 40, December 9, 1969; *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 42, December 11, 1969; *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 44, December 16, 1969; *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 46, December 18, 1969.

⁴⁵ David Duke, "Duke On Nazism—His Superior System," *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 33, November 19, 1969, 2.

explained, later expanding that the NSLF wants to recruit university students to reject the “Jewish-Marxist system” in order to save “Western civilization and the white race.” “This is not prejudice and bigotry—this is fact,” wrote Duke in a defense of the organization’s values. The NSLF was necessary, Duke wrote, to fight alleged Jewish control on campus and so young people could “build the leadership we need to liberate our own people so that they can determine their own destiny.”⁴⁶ These messages did not grow the NSLF chapter at LSU outside of a handful of devotees, nicknamed “Dukies.”⁴⁷ The standard among the student body, however, was Duke’s immense unpopularity. His recruitment pitches did not work, and Duke and the NSLF were ostracized on campus, and recognized as an annoyance. In response to Duke’s editorial in *The Daily Reveille*, one student said it was “the biggest piece of trash we’ve ever seen in the Reveille.”⁴⁸

Although recruitment stalled, Duke eventually drew praise from NSWPP leadership for his passion for National Socialism. Matt Koehl invited the LSU sophomore to speak at their summer 1969 conference in Arlington, Virginia and again at their second annual conference in summer 1970.⁴⁹ Through NSWPP membership, Duke also expanded his connections to other young radical racist Right activists. Along with

⁴⁶ David Duke, “Duke On Nazism—His Superior System,” *The Daily Reveille*, November 19, 1969, 2; “Repeat Performances,” *The Daily Reveille*, No. 6, September 25, 1970, 2; Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 16-17; Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 98-99.

⁴⁷ Michael Zatarain, *Evolution of a Klansman* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1990), 117-118.

⁴⁸ Glen Smith, “More Tripe,” *The Daily Reveille*, Vol. 74, No. 37, December 3, 1969, 2.

⁴⁹ “Second Annual North American Congress of the World Union of National Socialists conference program,” available within FBI file #157-1599, Joseph Charles Tommasi, May 1, 1970, 5, 7-10, accessed via Tommasi, Joseph C.—Los Angeles, Ernie Lazar FOIA, 121-123, <https://archive.org/details/TOMMASIJosephC.LosAngeles1571599/page/n120/mode/1up>

Tommasi of the NSLF, Duke developed a close friendship with Don Black and Joseph Paul Franklin, two rising young leaders. Duke met sixteen-year-old Black and nineteen-year-old Franklin in summer 1969 while the three carpooled together from Louisiana to the NSWPP first annual conference in Arlington, Virginia. During the twelve-hour long road trip, the three shared snacks, listened to Southern Rock, and bonded over white power politics. Franklin, nineteen years old and still going by James Clayton Vaughn in 1969, eventually distanced himself from organized racist activism. But by 1980 he became a horrendous racist serial killer, targeting primarily Black and Jewish people. Franklin was convicted of eight murders but some reports indicate he was responsible for up to twenty. Black and Duke, however, remained close friends since their summer 1969 road trip. Despite the larger stagnation of student groups like the NSLF, the radical racist Right movement within the NSWPP still brought young people together. These newly established alliances became significant for the larger growth of white power activism throughout the 1970s.⁵⁰

After returning from the NSWPP conference, Duke and Don Black spent more time building up the White Student Alliance for the NSWPP. Like the Tommasi-managed NSLF, the WSA wanted to build white student power in universities across the United States, but attempted recruitment under a less intensive banner. In the fall of 1970, it seemed that the national organization wanted to rebrand away from the “liberation” angle and messaging in Tommasi’s NSLF. The NSWPP invested more attention to the WSA, perhaps due to the group’s name specifically referencing “white students” instead of a

⁵⁰ Heidi Beirich, “White Homicide Worldwide,” Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report, (Summer 2014), 6; Eli Saslow, *Rising Out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist* (New York: Anchor Books, 2018), 103-105.

vague, broader revolution. It is unclear if the WSA was any more successful in recruitment than the NSLF, but the organization served a much more significant purpose for the growing white power youth social movement. This youth-organized operation initiated a coalition between multiple radical Right youth leaders across the country, including a network between the teens and university students that attended the NSWPP conference in Arlington earlier in the summer. Furthermore, the NSWPP gave leadership control of the WSA to David Duke, now a junior at LSU.⁵¹ Duke quickly established a newspaper, *The Racialist*, named after a term he came up with alongside the NSWPP. “Racialist,” or what Duke sometimes called “racial idealism,” became Duke’s go-to cover against racism in the WSA. Decades after his university days, Duke continued to describe himself as a racialist instead of a racist.⁵²

Even through the rebranding and the use of smug terms like “racialist,” both Tommasi and Duke still openly advocated for racism and white power in WSA materials. In a November 1970 “White Power message,” Tommasi shared information on behalf of his own WSA in El Monte, California and railed against integrated schools, claiming “White students are shaken down and robbed” by Black students and “White girls are pawed over, molested, and attacked by gangs of grinning black apes.” Tommasi’s solution? Join the WSA. “If you’re a white student or a parent interested in building a healthy society, one in which white young people can go to school and get a decent

⁵¹ Kenneth S. Stern, “David Duke: A Nazi in Politics,” *Issues in National Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (The American Jewish Committee, 1991).

⁵² David Duke, “The White Power Program,” *The Racialist*, September 1970, 1; Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 21-22.

education without fear of the black terrorism, then write to the White Student Alliance.”⁵³ Meanwhile, Duke’s first editorial for *The Racialist* newspaper—plastered on the front page of the issue—was “The White Power Program.” In the article, Duke complained that “political power in America today is held by the ANTIWHITE minority” and a return to white power was necessary to save the United States and the white race. “The plain truth is our race is losing,” Duke wrote. “We’re losing our schools to Black savagery, losing our hard-earned pay to Black welfare, losing our lives to NO-WIN Red treason and Black crime, losing our culture to Jewish and black degeneracy, and we are losing our most precious possession, our White racial heritage, to race-mixing.” Both Tommasi’s and Duke’s messages not only echoed white supremacist fears of Black societal gains resulting in white decimation, but also revealed their concern for school-aged white youth. The messages involved an explicit call-to-arms for young white Americans to join the student alliance as well as an implicit fear that white inaction against racial minorities will destroy future white generations. Violence was the solution they proposed.

Duke and Tommasi Build the Road to Revolution in the Early 1970s

In the early years of the 1970s, the new youth leaders abandoned some of the old iconography and symbols even as they reprised familiar messages. Their creativity and flexibility led them to forge new coalitions between neo-Nazis, Klansmen, and

⁵³ Joe Tommasi, “White Power Message,” November 16, 1970, FBI file #157-1599, Tommasi, Joseph C.—Los Angeles, November 19, 1970, 2-3, accessed via Ernie Lazar FOIA Collection, 132-133, <https://archive.org/details/TOMMASIJosephC.LosAngeles1571599/page/n132/mode/1up>

segregationists, as David Duke did, and take up new revolutionary tactics, as Joe Tommasi did. In February 1971, Duke moved the White Student Alliance away from underneath the tent of the NSWPP. Duke renamed the group the White Youth Alliance (WYA) and moved its headquarters from Arlington, Virginia to Baton Rouge, Louisiana where he could exclusively control its operations from LSU's campus. Duke, still accompanied by a handful of "Dukies" on campus, continued to make appearances at Free Speech Alley and held demonstrations against campus speakers. Allegedly, Duke's WYA grew to around two hundred and seventy-five members and supporters at LSU, although the number was perhaps inflated by Duke and the WYA.⁵⁴

Like his earlier term "racialist," Duke continued to evolve away from open Nazi imagery, like the swastika, in his WYA. Instead, Duke adopted another legacy symbol of white supremacy, and one more American. The WYA's new logo was a cross within a circle, based on the "crosswheel" logo of the twentieth century Ku Klux Klan and Thomas Dixon's 1905 racist and ahistorical novel on the Reconstruction-era Klan, *The Clansman*.⁵⁵ But the adoption of Klan iconography was strategic, not ideological. Duke continued to promote racism and even neo-Nazi material in the WYA. The WYA sold copies of the antisemitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*—spelled as "Kamph," perhaps as a joke or simple cover against critics for Nazi worship. The cross logo was used and sold as "red, white, and black" arm bands,

⁵⁴ The "two hundred and seventy-five" number is mentioned in a 1990 biography of Duke, but the book does not include a citation for the figure. Michael Zatarain, *Evolution of a Klansman* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1990), 140.

⁵⁵ Zatarain, *Evolution of a Klansman*, 139; Thomas Dixon, Jr., *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (New York: A. Wessels Company, 1905).

nearly identical to the Nazi-style swastika bands, demonstrated on campus with “White Power” signs, and preached about Black and Jewish threats to white students.⁵⁶

Duke also continued to publish *The Racialist*, which did not lose a step as a mouthpiece for neo-Nazi and white power messages. Within the WYA newspaper, Duke adopted and repurposed multiple elements from other radical racist Right operations and his former mentors. The paper included a section called “WYA ACTION,” similar to William Luther Pierce’s *Action* publication for the National Youth Alliance, and sold recordings of George Lincoln Rockwell speeches: cassettes for four dollars and 8-track tapes for five dollars. Duke’s WYA also had a “White Power Message,” based on Pierce’s original concept, and republished multiple pieces of racist American Nazi Party literature, including the infamous “Boat Ticket to Africa” flyer originally used by ANP members a decade earlier. Racist humor was especially prevalent in WYA materials, a representation of Duke’s clear admiration for Rockwell’s ANP tactics. There were racist comic strips and advertisements for a “book” called “Great Achievements of the Negro Race,” in which all the pages were blank.⁵⁷ Duke’s activism, thus, was the perfect amalgamation and continuation of previous radical racist Right accomplishments, repackaged for a new generation.

Duke continued to evolve his political messaging. Before his would-be senior year, Duke decided to leave LSU in May 1971 to travel internationally and run the WYA

⁵⁶ *The Racialist*, Vol. 2, No. 2, February 1, 1971, available within Box 32, File 19, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁵⁷ *The Racialist*, Vol. 2, No. 2, February 1, 1971, available within Box 32, File 19, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; Kenneth S. Stern, “David Duke: A Nazi in Politics,” *Issues in National Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (The American Jewish Committee, 1991), 4, n9.

full time. Upon his return to Louisiana in November 1971, felt he was ready for another change.⁵⁸ In January 1972, Duke reorganized his student group once again. Duke announced the change from the White Youth Alliance to the National Party in letter to all “members and supporters.” In discussing the rebrand, Duke clarified that the National Party will still be centered in youth activism. “The WYA has proven that young people can be reached; that they are not in reality pro-Communist—but anti-Communist, and that they are, in spite of oceans of propaganda, not race-mixing—but race-conscious.” Duke praised the WYA for giving “young people victories, victories (young white people) desperately need,” and highlighted victories over “campus reds” and the NAACP’s “multi-million dollar machine.” He clarified, however, that “great political victory” will not come from “just a student organization.” “We must be youth oriented,” wrote Duke, “but all our people are needed in this struggle.”⁵⁹

Duke’s claim to move beyond the framework of a student organization did not mean he abandoned youth, or even a youth identity. Duke’s National Party still described itself as a home for youth-driven activism. One of the bullet points on an informational pamphlet about the National Party declared, [t]“National Party is youth oriented. Future political power will be in the hands of the youth today.”⁶⁰ The National Party’s official publication, *The Nationalist*, also continued to publish racist jokes designed for a young—or immature—audience. Two examples include, “How many niggers does it take

⁵⁸ Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 20, 30.

⁵⁹ “National Party: Program,” David E. Duke 1971-74; 1993, File 19, Box 32, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁶⁰ “National Party: Program,” David E. Duke 1971-74, 1993, Folder 28, Box 12, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

to pop popcorn? Four, one to hold the pot and three to shake the stove”; “How many pallbearers were there at Martin Luther King’s funeral? Two, one for each end of the garbage can.”⁶¹ Within the National Party, Duke wanted to broaden his audience outside of the college campus, while remaining dedicated to the successful tactics of his and earlier radical racist Right organizations: a youth identity.

In January 1974, Duke reorganized his group a third and final time. He had returned to school after almost two years away and had just graduated from LSU. This time, he expanded his former student activism into a much broader vision. That year, Duke reincorporated the National Party into the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (KKKK), an organization that would bring together racism and antisemitism under youth-driven leadership. By the 1970s, the civil rights era Ku Klux Klan was in significant decline. National outrage had grown against Klan-sponsored violence after the 1963 Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, when four Klan members had murdered four young girls. After the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Klan terrorism had significantly waned, and FBI infiltration of Klan chapters left much of the once dominant force in American white supremacy nearly depleted.⁶² Duke, acting as both Grand Wizard and “national director,” a term he came up with to legitimize the Klan away from the cloaks and ritual of the past.⁶³ Thus, Duke established his version of the Klan as an updated vehicle for white power politics based around his previous leadership experiences and attempted to make it as inclusive as possible for all white power fanatics. Duke published a newspaper, *The Crusader*, brought old friends from his NSWPP days

⁶¹ Stern, “David Duke: A Nazi in Politics,” 4, n11.

⁶² Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 37-38; Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A.*.

⁶³ Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 55.

as recruits—such as twenty-two-year-old University of Alabama graduate Don Black—and opened membership to Catholics, women, and teenagers.⁶⁴ These changes to Klan tradition brought out criticism from legacy leaders in the KKK. But Duke did not seem to care. He was enigmatic and brought a fresh energy to the Klan.⁶⁵ Five years after he established the KKKK, an article from the Willis Carto owned publication *The Liberty Bell*, described Duke as “the most articulate and...charismatic young leader on the racist scene today.”⁶⁶

Duke’s willingness to bring together multiple elements of the radical Right under a single blanket of Klan-themed White Power was a colossal change for the movement. Under Duke’s young leadership, the KKKK had an eye on the past, while sternly interested in moving forward into a new frontier of the racist Right. Duke’s Klan, similar to his previous operations, recycled materials from other groups in the spectrum of the radical racist Right, including his own, but with an updated “Klan” coat of paint. An “Introduction to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan” pamphlet included similar language to the informational pamphlet for Duke’s National Party, including the assertion that “the Klan is youth oriented.” The KKKK sold an updated version of the ANP white power t-shirt, replacing the swastika with the crosswheel Klan logo in the center but still with the black “White Power” lettering on a white shirt. Other youth-centered material continued to use older ANP designs, including a recruitment flyer for the under-seventeen Klan Youth Corps that included a Rockwell era cartoon of a strongman, breaking through

⁶⁴ Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 38, 40, 44;

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

⁶⁶ Carl Alessi, “A Revolution is Not a Dinner Party!,” *The Liberty Bell* (September 1980), 1, available within Duke 1978-87, Box 12, File 29, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

chained handcuffs, and the message “Fight for White Power.”⁶⁷ Duke’s Klan also introduced elements from William Luther Pierce’s National Youth Alliance. The “White Power Comes to Midvale” comic, originally written and drawn by NYA member and artist of *The Turner Diaries*, Denis Nix, was reused in KKKK subscription and recruitment leaflets. Duke’s Klan version replaced the words “National Socialist” with “The Ku Klux Klan,” and switched out the Nazi-styled white power shirt worn by the main character with Duke’s updated Klan t-shirt[1.7].⁶⁸ Further still, Duke’s newspaper, *The Crusader*, included advertisements for the NYA newspaper, *Attack!*, republished multiple Pierce articles from the NYA, and even reprinted a positive review for *The Turner Diaries* first seen in *Attack!*, complete with an option to purchase a copy of the book for \$4.95.⁶⁹

At the same time Duke launched the KKKK, the changing tide of youth-led racist activism was also evident in Joseph Tommasi’s resurgent National Socialist Liberation Front. In March 1974, Tommasi liberated the operation from the NSWPP for his own uses. A year prior, Matt Koehl had expelled Tommasi from the NSWPP for bad behavior: in multiple instances Tommasi had spent the night in the Los Angeles office with women

⁶⁷ “An Introduction to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan,” Duke 1978-87, Box 12, File 29, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; “Klan shirts order form,” Duke 1978-87, Box 12, File 29, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; “White Students! Fight for White Power,” Duke 1978-87, Box 12, File 29, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁶⁸ “White Power Comes to Midvale,” Duke 1978-87, Box 12, File 29, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; “White Power Comes to Midvale,” Tom Metzger KKK 1977-92, Folder 9, Box 27, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁶⁹ Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 43-44; Stern, “David Duke: A Nazi in Politics,” 6.

whom he had snuck in for sex, he continued to use marijuana, and there were rumors that Tommasi misused party funds as west coast chapter leader. One of Tommasi's supporters thought the real reason was that Koehl was jealous of the young organizer's ability to recruit and mobilize members more effectively than the national headquarters. According to this theory, Tommasi's dismissal was an opportunity to remove a "potential rival."⁷⁰ Tommasi himself, later presented a similar excuse and claimed that he was forced out due to his politics. There is possible truth to the claims of political jealousy between Koehl's Nazi movement and Tommasi's young, firebrand energy, but these conspiratorial excuses of might have been an attempt to cover Tommasi's own embarrassment for breaking rules. Tommasi was a loyal follower of Koehl, even though so many other young revolutionaries and like-minded activists found the neo-Nazi party leader stale and tiresome. Unlike those who abandoned Koehl or were forced out in the late 1960s, Tommasi continued with the NSWPP for years and had appeared content with the NSLF remaining within the NSWPP apparatus.⁷¹ However, Tommasi's dismissal opened a path for the now twenty-two-year-old to take his vision of radical Right youth activism on his own, free from the constraints of adult control and decision making.

Tommasi kept the name of the youth group and continued to headquarter the reorganized NSLF in El Monte, California, away from the watchful eye of former party members on the east coast. He established the organization on March 2, 1974 alongside "forty-three National Socialist revolutionaries" according to NSLF propaganda material. At this meeting, the new NSLF built upon the revolutionary strategies inspired by

⁷⁰ James Mason, *Siege: The Collected Writings of James Mason*, 5th Edition (orig, Denver: Storm Books, 1992), 11.

⁷¹ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 301-302.

Pierce's mentorship years prior and declared that the "strategy of (a) mass movement" was a failure and needed to be abandoned. "The white man has lost!," the NSLF exclaimed in its first major propaganda piece, "Strategy for Revolution." "We are an occupied people, in our own land, who must now develop a totally different outlook on revolution," the pamphlet avowed. Instead of continuing direct action demonstrations designed for recruitment or notoriety, the new NSLF "adopted the revolutionary concept of the "guerrilla underground" to "launch armed assaults" against any perceived enemy to white people and white power.⁷² Revolutionary language and calls for violent uprisings replaced the previously common political strategy for a mass movement that existed since the 1960s. Thus, the new NSLF, under the leadership of a young and perhaps vengeful activist who grew up under the tutelage of the revolutionary-minded William Luther Pierce, sought to attract racist and revolutionary minded white people for a coming "armed struggle" against the government.

Although the 1974 NSLF did not explicitly mention itself as a "youth" or "student" group in published materials, young people remained the primary leaders and members of the NSLF. A newspaper report from the *Los Angeles Free Press* described NSLF combat units young enough to infiltrate the Young Socialist Alliance and the Young Workers Liberation League. Additionally, the NSLF encouraged a youth-oriented "hippie" culture and explained that the violent tactics of the organization were necessary to identify with "the revolutionary youth."⁷³ Young men also made up most of

⁷² National Socialist Liberation Front, "Strategy for Revolution," *Siege*, Third Quarter No. 1, 1974, 4, *National Socialist Liberation Front*, Folder 19, Box 32, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁷³ Jeanne Cordova, "Local Nazis admit to Rosenberg, Socialist bombings," *Los Angeles Free Press*, March 21, 1975, 28, available within Mason, *Siege: The Collected Writings*

Tommasi's inner circle, including sixteen-year-old lieutenant David Rust.⁷⁴ The NSLF might have distanced itself from publicly identifying as a student movement, but youth-centered traditions continued, particularly in the vein of revolutionary organizing under young leadership.

The transition away from overt expressions of youth and student activism and towards a youth philosophy of rejecting the past—while still encouraging young recruitment—instigated a metamorphosis of the radical racist Right into a revolutionary racist Right. The NSLF incorporated youth into a social and political identity that glorified revolution and guerilla-style insurgency. The “Strategy for Revolution” pamphlet that described the NSLF’s goals mentioned recruitment from “those already committed to the National Socialist World View,” but wanted “the best among movement people” who were willing to take up arms, “shed their bourgeois hang-ups,” and willing to hurt their enemy “through force and violence.”⁷⁵ Like the broader trend of radical racist Right organizations in the mid-1970s moving beyond college students, the NSLF did not mention college recruitment in their introductory pamphlet. However, Tommasi and the underground core leadership of the NSLF “combat units” were all young men in their early-twenties. Tommasi, in a later pamphlet, “Building the Revolutionary Party,” clarified that the ideology of armed struggle and “mob violence” came from

of James Mason, 579; Joseph Tommasi, “Building the Revolutionary Party,” available within Mason, *Siege: The Collected Writings of James Mason*, 519.

⁷⁴ “Career of Slain Nazi Leader Started and Ended-by a Bullet-in El Monte,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 21, 1975, 6; Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 303.

⁷⁵ National Socialist Liberation Front, “Strategy for Revolution,” *Siege*, Third Quarter No. 1, 1974, 4, *National Socialist Liberation Front*, Folder 19, Box 32, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

“revolutionary youth,” a group that Tommasi felt earlier leaders within the radical racist Right movement failed to properly embrace.⁷⁶

All those who believed in “armed struggle” against the government were invited to join the new NSLF, but young people were implicitly targeted due to the organization’s tactics that were popular among young people—including the youth-driven social justice and liberation movements associated with the New Left—in the 1970s.⁷⁷ Similar to the early years of George Lincoln Rockwell’s American Nazi Party where youth culture and a young membership drove the organization despite it never overtly identifying as a “youth group,” Tommasi’s NSLF commenced a new chapter in radical racist Right youth activism; youth was desirable as a reformist political identity and overt expressions of membership age was unnecessary.

Tommasi’s NSLF took revolution seriously, perhaps more so than any contemporary radical Right organization outside of Pierce’s National Alliance. Revolution for the NSLF was specifically tied to violent change and not just a word casually presented or used interchangeably with political change. The mass movement philosophies of “revolution” from previous radical racist Right leaders such as George Rockwell, Willis Carto, and Matt Koehl were cast aside for a new—youth inspired—philosophy of militant revolution. Tommasi referenced the System in NSLF materials as

⁷⁶ Joseph Tommasi, “Building the Revolutionary Party,” available within Mason, *Siege: The Collected Writings of James Mason*, 519.

⁷⁷ For further reading on young people and their relationship with revolution in the New Left in the United States, see Robyn C. Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Duke University Press, 2016); Rebecca de Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World: Young People and America’s Long Struggle for Racial Equality* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2011); For reading on the New Left in Europe, see Terence Renaud, *New Lefts: The Making of a Radical Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 2021).

the real enemy to white people, again invoking William Pierce. In the NSLF's "Strategy for Revolution" pamphlet, the System joined "communists" and "right-wing reactionaries" as targets for "armed assaults." Tommasi's System, taken from his mentor Pierce, was a distinct separation from the explicitly referenced "Jew-communists" or Black "menace"—as well as other racial slurs—commonly seen in earlier NSWPP materials.⁷⁸

Notably, NSLF publications, leaflets, and speeches emphasized violence and urban warfare. The first issue of NSLF's newsletter, *Siege*, included an image of rubble from a bombed-out building and a propaganda flier displayed the wreckage of a former Bank of America. Other material, including articles explaining the best form of "armaments" in the "armed guerrilla struggle"—such as shotguns, automatic pistols, semi-automatic assault rifles, and gas masks—all appeared in issues of *Siege*.⁷⁹ Tommasi's "Building the Revolutionary Party" was his most threatening pamphlet and demanded violent carnage instead of political action. "In times of revolution, just wars, and wars of national liberation, we must love the angels of destruction and disorder as opposed to the devils of conservatism and law and order. To hell with all those who block the Revolution with rhetoric," Tommasi echoed. In a direct message to his young recruits, the piece concluded, "Those who can't stand the sight of blood, especially their own, should stay home and pray for those...to DO IT, and pray for victory and not an end to

⁷⁸ "Strategy for Revolution," *Siege*, Third Quarter No. 1, 1974, 4, National Socialist Liberation Front, Folder 19, Box 32, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; For a single example of Rockwell-era ANP uses of "Jew-communists" and Black "menace" see, within *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, Summer Issue 1965 (1965), 6, 8, 44, 50.

⁷⁹ Images available within Mason, *Siege: The Collected Writings of James Mason*, 12, 32, 122.

slaughter.”⁸⁰ There was no ambiguity within NSLF materials that members within the organization believed in and were willing to commit violence—and perhaps mass murder—in their path to revolutionary victory.

In line with the new emphasis on revolutionary violence, firearms were a common imagery in NSLF materials. An M16 rifle appeared at the conclusion of certain pamphlets, such as his “Strategy for Revolution.” Tommasi also centered a handgun in his most famous NSLF material, his 1974 “Political Terror” poster. The black and white recruiting poster for the NSLF included large, bold, text and phrases about warfare. At the top, the flyer read, “THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE FEW OF US STILL WILLING TO GET OUR HANDS DIRTY.” Immediately below were the words “POLITICAL TERROR,” also in bold lettering, hovering over a hand-held revolver with the phrase “It’s the Only Thing They Understand” appearing as if it was firing from the handgun. “Build the National Socialist Revolution through Armed Struggle,” rested underneath the firearm and next to a swastika, before concluding with “National Socialist Liberation Front” at the bottom of the page[1.8].⁸¹

Tommasi did not live to see the violent uprising he spent years orchestrating. Always interested in action, Tommasi and his NSLF members engaged in multiple confrontations with the El Monte, California based members of the NSWPP. A final

⁸⁰ Joseph Tommasi, “Building the Revolutionary Party,” available within Mason, *Siege: The Collected Writings of James Mason*, 519; Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 304.

⁸¹ On the M16, see Joseph Tommasi, “Strategy for Revolution,” available within Mason, *Siege: The Collected Writings of James Mason*, 515-517; On “Political Terror,” see “Political Terror Poster,” National Socialist Liberation Front, Folder 19, Box 32, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; Mason, *Siege: The Collected Writings of James Mason*, 49.

confrontation turned deadly on August 15, 1975. That evening Tommasi and his sixteen-year-old lieutenant in the NSLF, David Rust, drove by the NSWPP headquarters. According to reporting in the *Los Angeles Times*, three NSWPP members were on the front porch, recognized Tommasi, and directed an “obscene gesture” toward him. Furious, Tommasi left his car with a club and stormed into the front yard of the house. One of the NSWPP members, an eighteen-year-old Jerry Keith Jones, threatened to shoot if Tommasi or anyone else came any closer to the house. Unmoved, Tommasi charged up the steps and was then shot and killed by a single bullet to the head.⁸²

The NSLF neared a complete collapse after Tommasi’s death. The sixteen-year-old David Rust tried to continue the NSLF, but to limited success. Rust took over leadership for another year until he was arrested on firearms charges.⁸³ It was apparent that the operation was not the same without Tommasi’s irreplaceable personality and leadership, a continuing trend from the Rockwell American Nazi Party era. Yet, the NSLF did not perish and, more significantly, the specific revolutionary vision continued. Young men interested in the politics of the revolutionary racist Right, including some former members of the NSWPP, reorganized chapters across the United States in order to keep Tommasi’s revolutionary message alive, and to influence other radical Right and extremist Right groups to take up the violent ideology as the principal philosophy of the far-Right. Alongside a continued presence in California, including El Monte and

⁸² “Career of Slain Nazi Leader Started and Ended-by a Bullet-in El Monte,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 21, 1975, 6.

⁸³ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 222.

Panorama City, NSLF units existed in Cincinnati, Ohio; Louisville, Kentucky; and Wilmington, Delaware.⁸⁴

James Mason Grows the Revolution in the 1970s

The continuation of both the NSLF and the revolutionary message was the result of the political vision—and obsessive personality—of James Mason. Mason would lead the NSLF into a new era of White Power in the late 1970s. He had first come to neo-Nazi activity as a teenager when he discovered the American Nazi Party. Mason bounced between every radical racist Right operation he could find; as a member of the American Nazi Party, the National Socialist White People's Party, and specifically their youth division the National Socialist Youth Movement. An armchair historian of white power activism, Mason constantly wrote to neo-Nazi groups for information and often asked for any old materials related to the ANP or the history of neo-Nazi affiliated groups.⁸⁵ Mason joined Pierce's National Youth Alliance around 1971 and remained until he was arrested on a felony assault charge for attacking a fourteen-year-old Black girl with mace at a Dairy Queen in 1974.⁸⁶ After his release from prison a year later, the twenty-five-year-

⁸⁴ Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 222.

⁸⁵ For a complete look at Mason's life in white power affiliated organizations, see Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 193-199. For Mason and old materials, see "James N. Mason to William Luther Pierce," September 15, 1971, Box 27, File 33, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁸⁶ "Man convicted in macing released from jail term," Box 32, File 6, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; "James Mason (as J.N.M.) to William Luther Pierce," October 10, 1974, Box 27, File 33, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

old Mason hoped to reconnect with Joseph Tommasi and join his NSLF, but discovered that Tommasi had recently died. Mason, nonetheless, submitted an application to the NSLF, specifically insisting that the NSLF was the only “genuine” and “viable” organization where “all true National Socialists may work together toward a National Socialist revolution.”⁸⁷

Mason’s immediate influence in the post-Tommasi NSLF saw a specific turn towards a respect for the legacy of the movement’s past—particularly George Lincoln Rockwell—and using the movement’s heritage to influence its future. The NSLF continued to publish pamphlets, flyers, and other forms of literature, now with updated symbols and logos. One flyer included a large image of Rockwell’s face, underneath large and bold text reading “Only Failure is Immoral...,” and quotations from the deceased American Nazi Party leader about violent resistance. “I am a political soldier. I mean to *win*,” the flyer demanded, with Rockwell’s eyes from the image penetrating towards the reader. “I do not hesitate to admit that I would do anything, absolutely *anything*, to ensure the survival and happiness of our White, Western people.”⁸⁸

Far more present in Mason’s NSLF was Rockwell’s original battle cry: White Power. A book catalog sent alongside other NSLF literature listed Rockwell’s 1966 *White Power* on the top right of the page, underneath only Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*. Mason also reincorporated “White Power” into a revolutionary slogan and was often seen

⁸⁷ “James Mason NSLF application,” National Socialist Liberation Front, File 19, Box 32, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁸⁸ “Only Failure is Immoral,” National Socialist Liberation Front, Folder 19, Box 32, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

next to official logos of the NSLF. As early as 1976 or 1977, an M16 rifle was integrated as part of the official NSLF logo. The rifle rested under a swastika with the letters “NSLF” visible just above the image. Mason’s NSLF printed business cards that, above the post office box mailing address, included the message, “White Power Now!” The “White Power Now!” business cards were also printed as stickers in order to easily distribute the organization’s message. The cards and stickers included the address of the Panorama City, California headquarters and Chillicothe, Ohio, Mason’s hometown.⁸⁹

Mason wanted to take up the fight that Tomassi and Duke had started: the establishment of a revolutionary movement for all revolutionary racists. Under a common slogan of “White Power,” Mason wanted a mass alliance and united federation between previously uncooperative neo-Nazi and Ku Klux Klan operations. In the past, this type of unification was not only difficult, it was often openly mocked. George Lincoln Rockwell disparaged the Klan and neo-Confederates as fools and “incapable of appealing to the victims of the Jews in the North,” and the infighting between stubborn personalities like Willis Carto, Matt Kohel, and William Pierce only splintered radical Right organizations into separate siloes of the larger movement.⁹⁰ But by the mid-1970s, radical Right organizing was different because of youth leadership in positions of authority, especially David Duke’s incorporation of multiple white power elements into his KKKK. Mason reached out to Duke’s Klan multiple times between 1974 and 1976 about joining forces.

⁸⁹ National Socialist Liberation Front, “White Power Now! cards and stickers,” Folder 19, Box 32, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁹⁰ George Lincoln Rockwell, *The Rockwell Report*, no. 6 (January 3, 1962), cited within Martin Durham, *White Rage: The extreme right and American politics* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 21, 146n15.

“Rockwell’s conditions for Phase III are just now materializing as prophesized,” Mason wrote to Duke, referring to Rockwell’s belief in a coming revolution that would install a Nazi political party to power in the United States. “The Klan [should] be but a stepping stone upward...to the ultimate [victory of] National Socialism,” Mason wrote, trying to tempt Duke to further expand the Klan. “Do you still see yourself as conducting a kindergarten for future National Socialists? If so, then the minds of political children are in good hands.”⁹¹ Mason believed that a unification between “National Socialists” and Klansmen was possible, and that this “pan-Aryan echelon” just needed a militant opportunity to calcify into a new, far more effective, white power social movement.

White Power Coalitions and Slaughter

Although he was not present at the event, Mason’s hoped-for moment of Klan and neo-Nazi collaboration came in late 1979. David Duke generally tried to avoid a violent image of the Klan, but some Klan chapters were growing more violent.⁹² The North Carolina Klan chapter, under the leadership of neo-Nazi Harold Covington, would engage in the deadliest violence of the era in 1979. Covington had been a teenaged officer within Frank Collin’s NSPA and had worked with Tommasi at the NSWPP, and was now the NSPA’s leader. Having been born in North Carolina, Covington was irritated that the Klan chapter in the state seemed incapable to defend itself against leftist

⁹¹ See “James N. Mason to David Ernest Duke Letter” within David E. Duke 1971-74, 1993, Box 12, File 28, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; Quotation within “James N. Mason to David Ernest Duke,” February 27, 1974, 2, David E. Duke 1971-74, 1993, Box 12, File 28, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

⁹² Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke*, 57, 59, 84-85.

and liberal protestors. Communist Workers Party protestors, alongside Black residents, disrupted its screening of the 1915 film *Birth of a Nation* in the town of China Grove. The disruption, which included the burning of a Confederate flag, infuriated Covington.⁹³

That fall, Covington sent neo-Nazi affiliates to meet up with Klansmen in North Carolina to push back against future left-wing protests. This new alliance, called the United Racist Front, pooled together resources to assault an anti-Klan demonstration in Greensboro, North Carolina. The morning of November 3, a massive caravan of cars carrying thirty-seven Klansmen and NSPA members confronted communist organizers of a “Death to the Klan” march outside of a predominantly-Black public housing neighborhood in Greensboro. “You wanted the Klan, you Communist son-of-a-bitch, well you got the Klan!,” yelled a man from the caravan. The coordinated group of Klansmen and neo-Nazis fired handguns, shotguns, and rifles into the crowd. After the firefight, which lasted just over a minute, five communist marchers—one Black woman and four white men—lay dead in the street alongside ten others who were injured.⁹⁴ Greensboro, a birthplace of the Black student sit-in movement in the civil rights movement in 1960, now became the home of the violent spark that spawned the paramilitary phase of the white power movement.⁹⁵

⁹³ *Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report* (Greensboro, NC: Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2006), 127-138; Shaun Assael and Peter Keating, “The Massacre That Spawned the Alt-Right,” *Politico Magazine*, November 3, 2019, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/11/03/greensboro-massacre-white-nationalism-klan-229873/>.

⁹⁴ *Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report* (Greensboro, NC: Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2006); 170-203; Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 55, 63-65.

⁹⁵ For further reading on Greensboro, the sit-in movement, and the civil rights movement, see William Henry Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Christopher

White power activism was never the same after Greensboro. After years of white supremacist and neo-Nazi calls for taking the fight to enemies of white power in the System, coming from both young and adult figures in the movement, the violence in Greensboro initiated a new era of revolutionary possibility. Following the massacre and into a new decade, revolutionary networks continued to combine neo-Nazi and violent antigovernment elements. New white power militia-influenced organizations emerged, such as the white power terrorist groups Aryan Nations and the Order. This new generation of young people were inspired by both the younger leaders in the movement like Duke, Mason, Tommasi, and Collin, as well as the older figureheads like Pierce.⁹⁶ This new birth of white power violence culminated the practices and goals initiated by youth leaders in the revolutionary racist Right.

The new white power coalition could not have come about without the contributions from young people in the radical racist Right during the 1970s. The youth-led-and-operated revolutionary racist Right organizations in the 1970s espoused white nationalist language—including eliminationist and genocidal framings for their enemies—and embraced violent politics that encouraged uncompromising beliefs against their perceived enemies. The shared identity and experience among these young people allowed the white power ideology, initiated by young people in Rockwell's American Nazi Party and resuscitated time and again throughout multiple radical Right

W. Schmidt, *The Sit-Ins: Protest and Legal Change in the Civil Rights Era* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018). For the argument of Greensboro's significance as the catalyst for the white power movement, see Belew, "A Unified Movement," *Bring the War Home*, 55-76; Assael and Keating, "The Massacre That Spawned the Alt-Right."

⁹⁶ For an overview of white power terrorism and militia activities in the white power movement, see Belew, *Bring the War Home*.

organizations, to ultimately move beyond a radical philosophy and form a coalitionary social movement of its own. The white power movement was not organized in a political vacuum, nor was it possible without the revolutionary turn emanating from youth activism and leadership in the radical—and later revolutionary—Right.

The unified coalition around white power political action involved the leadership of young individuals who had all met or worked within the apparatus of George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party: Collin, Tommasi, Duke, and Mason. In a 1980 editorial in his newsmagazine, *Siege*, James Mason said the American Nazi movement was “damned close to starting something.”⁹⁷ The physical operation sputtered after Rockwell's death and overt Nazism—including swastikas and fixated worship of the Third Reich—was too objectionable even in racist networks to generate mass appeal for a sustained movement. Through the 1970s, the original adult leadership was unable to mobilize a mass movement any further. After multiple instances of adult-driven leadership where young people were utilized, but at the expense of independent control, the radical racist Right students and teens in the 1970s took command of the movement and brought it to new levels of violence.

Although multiple young leaders in the radical racist Right were instrumental in the revolutionary expansion of the movement, Collin, Tommasi, Duke, and Mason were key leaders in the success. Notably, these young former allies met within an operation the Federal Bureau of Investigation described as a “shabby, small-time enterprise” and the Anti-Defamation League believed was not “of any consequence on the American scene,

⁹⁷ James Mason, *Siege*, Vol. IX, no. 4 (August 1980), available within James Mason, *Siege*, 5th edition, 158, 161.

except as a nuisance,” and remained united in a determination to improve their political movement.⁹⁸ Despite the appearance of failure from outside observers, a youth lens reveals a greater significance: the coalitionary potential from former youth members turned youth leaders. The pre-existing scaffolding of the National Socialist White People’s Party introduced young people to the radical racist Right and was a nexus for eventual coordination. Within the NSWPP, Tommasi, Duke, and Mason met and allied around white power. The younger individuals that came from Rockwell’s initial movement, captivated by promises to change—and perhaps destroy—the world around them, remained friends and colleagues even after they left to form their own racist or neo-Nazi organizations.

Even though young people left—or were expelled from—radical racist Right organizations and founded groups of their own, they still continued to learn from older mentors. David Duke, as well as Frank Collin and other former members and associates from Rockwell’s Nazi movement, took away successful elements from the operation, then expanded them and rectified deficiencies to serve their vision of a coming white power movement. The time Duke associated with the NSWPP was a small moment in the larger life of the future Klan leader, yet these short but significant years as a member of a Nazi organization influenced his politics, worldview, and future activism more than any other force. Joseph Tommasi’s resurrected National Socialist Liberation Front moved beyond the older and more restrained Matt Koehl but adopted his mentor William Luther

⁹⁸ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “American Nazi Party Monograph,” June, 1965, 41; “George L. Rockwell, U.S. Nazi,” *FACTS: Domestic Report*, Volume 15, Number 2 (October, 1963), 280, available within “American Nazi Party records, 1963-1970,” SC-398, Michael G. Rapp Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Pierce's political ideology. Both Duke and Tommasi recycled language and materials from their idols, but were still capable of making material their own.

The emergence of the revolutionary racist Right was a distinct development in white supremacy activism, and it was driven by young men. The members of the violent revolutionary racist Right in the 1970s shared a similar ideology of destructive revolution and were willing to join together to achieve victory, unlike the previous generation of National Socialists. The desire for violence against the United States itself germinated within youth sectors of neo-Nazi and white supremacist organizations since the late-1960s. Once these youth actors, who grew up within a culture of revolution, found positions of authority and leadership, their methods culminated in a newfound form of political and violent activism of guerilla-style militia violence into the 1980s.

Thus, despite scholarship that contends that a larger white power movement was not present until the 1980s, the young legacies of Rockwell's Nazi movement were already well underway to establish not only a violent social movement, but a coalition across multiple areas of the radical racist Right. Pierce's insistence on revolutionary violence, combined with the youth alliances already in place from the NSWPP, concocted a unique confederation of activists across the spectrum of white power. The promotion of such young people to areas of authority by the end of the 1970s matured into a larger, more violent, and more successful white power social movement.

Epilogue

“We need to raise an army of [young] soldiers...It is our job to create an entire generation, a true movement, a cadre...to take over the government and create a lasting MAGA [Make America Great Again] institutional revolution.” - Nick Fuentes, October 4, 2022.¹

In the early morning hours of April 19th, 1995, twenty-five-year-old Timothy James McVeigh parked a rental truck with a 4,800-pound bomb outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. For at least the past four years, McVeigh was captivated by antigovernment ideologies and believed that liberals in the American government were conspiring to attack conservative patriots. The botched raids by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at Ruby Ridge outside of Naples, Idaho in 1992 and by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) outside of Waco, Texas in 1993 were proof in McVeigh’s mind that the United States federal government could not be trusted. Furthermore, he believed there needed to be retaliation to avenge what he believed were unjust murders by the government against its citizenry in these two events. Along with his accomplice, Terry Lynn Nichols, McVeigh sought out the Federal Building in Oklahoma City as an opportunity to attack and kill as many federal

¹ Nick Fuentes, “America First Livestream,” October 4, 2022, available online via Kyle Mantyla, “Nick Fuentes Vows to Raise Up an ‘Army of Soldiers’ to Take Over Government,” Right Wing Watch, October 6, 2022, <https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/nick-fuentes-vows-to-raise-up-an-army-of-soldiers-to-take-over-government/>.

officers as possible. McVeigh and Nichols' bombing killed 168 people, including 19 children.²

McVeigh was much more than an antigovernment agent. On the morning of his attack, McVeigh carried with him pages from William Luther Pierce's violent fantasy novel, *The Turner Diaries*. The premise of Pierce's novel was not only about assaulting the federal government, but also a White Power fantasy of white revolutionaries overthrowing the United States and initiating a race war that led to the extermination of all non-whites in the country. Disturbingly, the bombing of the FBI's headquarters was a major set piece in the book, and one of the first actions of rebellion by white supremacist insurgents in their assault against "the System" in the United States.³ The novel fused fantasy into reality for McVeigh and was a clear blueprint for his actions in Oklahoma City, a fact that was officially confirmed by federal authorities and watchdog groups after McVeigh's arrest.⁴ Significantly, two decades after *The Turner Diaries* first appeared in serialized form within the *Attack!* newsletter of the National Youth Alliance (NYA), the novel's message of violent white revolution inspired a young person outside the traditional framework of an organized movement to bomb a civilian building within the United States.

² For McVeigh and his relationship to white power terrorism, see Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

³ A National Youth Alliance book review of *The Turner Diaries* described the bombing of the FBI building as one of the stand-out moment of the novel. See, Tyler Bridges, *The Rise of David Duke* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994), 44.

⁴ Jack Nelson, "TERROR IN OKLAHOMA CITY. Book Called 'Blueprint for Revolution' Publications: 'The Turner Diaries' Circulates among Right-Wing Groups. It Depicts a Bombing Strikingly Similar to the Oklahoma City Atrocity." *Los Angeles Times*, Apr 23, 1995, 24.

There is no way to confirm that McVeigh was a member of Pierce's National Alliance (NA)—the rebranded name of his National Youth Alliance—nor any convincing evidence that McVeigh was in direct contact with Pierce. McVeigh was likely at least familiar with the NA, however, either as the organization behind *The Turner Diaries* or just through its reputation as a white power operation. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported that there were as many as seven phone calls from McVeigh to a NA-owned number in the lead-up to the bombing. Pierce made statements to his biographer, Robert S. Griffin, that he never had any contact with McVeigh, and insisted the number went to an answering machine in Arizona that only played pre-recorded messages. Pierce also disavowed a report that there might have been a phone call as long as forty-five minutes between McVeigh and someone at the NA two weeks before the attack.⁵ But Pierce did not fully denounce the bomber. Instead, Pierce commended McVeigh as a “soldier” and said that the 168 deaths were defensible under the pretense of collateral damage in a race war. “If one is waging a war against the government, civilians are going to be killed,” Pierce said in 1998. “[If] you are trying to save our whole race...then a bombing of the Oklahoma City sort is morally justified.”⁶

A direct association between McVeigh and a white power organization is unnecessary to see the links between his violent actions and the white supremacist organizations of the 1960s and 1970s. The Oklahoma City bombing and McVeigh's reliance on movement literature, instead of official organizational membership, to inspire

⁵ Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 214; Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce* (1st Books Library, 2001), 170-171.

⁶ Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds*, 171.

and plan his terrorism is indicative of the evolution of white power activism towards vast networks of people interested in—or even familiar with—the revolutionary racist Right. Since the 1980s, many within the revolutionary racist Right—and the larger apparatus of the white power movement—adopted a tactic of “leaderless resistance” to engage in violent assaults against the government or their perceived enemies of white people.⁷ While radical Right memberships still existed, all a young person like McVeigh needed were the ideas made readily available in texts like *The Turner Diaries*. McVeigh was enamored with the book, according to people who knew him. He carried copies with him to gun shows and frequently offered to sell the book to anyone interested.⁸ McVeigh’s appreciation for *The Turner Diaries* was, thus, less about an angry young man upset at the government, or a “lone-wolf” activist taking matters into his own hands, and instead a direct reflection of the influence Pierce’s call to arms—and revolutionary development within a White Power identity—still had on young people beyond visible organized membership.

Young people read and absorbed hate literature associated with the revolutionary racist Right long after its initial publication in the 1970s. Pierce’s emphasis on violent revolution within NYA materials and its youth-led offshoots shepherded a wave of extremist anti-government militia activities in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

⁷ The popularization of the concept of “leaderless resistance” is typically attributed to neo-Nazi and Klan leader Louis Beam in a 1983 essay, later revised in 1992. See, Louis Beam, “Leaderless Resistance,” *The Seditonist*, issue 12 (February 1992); Ed. Jeffrey Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power: A Sourcebook on the Radical Racist Right*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 173-186; Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 107, 109, 111-112.

⁸ Kenneth S. Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 51, 192; Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds*, 9.

After a decade of calls to violently overthrow the United States government, talk gave way to action as large numbers of militia-themed groups and individuals—some taking up the philosophy of “leaderless resistance”—exploded in the 1980s. Over the next two decades, members of Pierce’s National Alliance engaged in militia and domestic terrorist activities against the State, designed to fulfill the organization’s vision of a white nationalist utopia. Pierce’s activism and writings inspired militia organizations like Robert Mathews’ The Order—named specifically after the fictional terrorist group in Pierce’s *The Turner Diaries*. The Order’s most prominent incident of domestic terror involved the assassination of radio talk show host Alan Berg in 1984 before Mathews was killed in a shootout with federal agents later that year.⁹ Consequently, the broader white power movement owes its ideological lifeblood to violent materials that continued to inspire and mobilize young people to take up arms—figuratively and literally—against “the System” and other defined enemies of white power.

The push for youth activism continued past the white power movement’s embrace of militia activism in the 1980s. The former youth activists in the revolutionary racist Right, at least for those that survived, took on new roles as teachers and mentors who ushered in a new generation of youth activists. The ideology of youth revolution continued long past their own biological classification of youth had expired as the recruitment and training of young people into white power politics remained constant. Many of these former youth activists, such as David Duke or Don Black, were the first to introduce young people to new elements of recruitment: the internet. The popularization

⁹ For a detailed overview of the Order, see Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 233-235. On the Order in relation to the larger revolutionary wing of the white power movement, see Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 104-134.

of the internet in the 1990s further contributed to recruitment and violent radicalization for the revolutionary racist Right among young people and students. Don Black founded the internet website Stormfront in 1995, the first significant internet forum devoted to white power politics. At its height in the 1990s and early 2000s, Stormfront was the go-to location on the internet for white power materials and featured writings from—among others—Black’s Klan ally Duke and their former mentor, William Luther Pierce.¹⁰ As an internet message board, Stormfront was also a recruitment tool for white power. It targeted young people with grievances against society and offered a place for online community. In 2014, a study from the Southern Poverty Law Center concluded that Stormfront mobilized young people to commit hate crimes: over 100 murders between 2009 and 2014 were connected to Stormfront users.¹¹

The white power movement has evolved in ways figures like George Lincoln Rockwell perhaps dreamed about, but likely could not have imagined would come to be. The anonymity, vastness, and general accessibility of the internet transformed youth recruitment and activism in the revolutionary Right. The internet made possible the widespread availability of hate literature and access to white power communities previously only accessible with mailing lists or membership fees. This expansion of white power recruitment and access to information demands that scholars and policy makers acknowledge the seriousness of white power activists and the continued role that young people play as new generations are enthralled by violent fantasies.

¹⁰ Stephen E. Atkins, *Encyclopedia of Right-Wing Extremism in Modern American History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 113.

¹¹ Heidi Beirich, “White Homicide Worldwide,” Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report, (Summer 2014).

It might be tempting to write off white power followers and mass killers in the modern alt Right as a small fringe, but this dissertation emphasizes their continuing importance. Not only are there historical continuities of radical racist Right recruitment from the past and into the present, but young people's paths from political activist to vengeful revolutionary could be chillingly short under the correct conditions. The Young Americans for Freedom, for example, was founded to advocate for individual liberty and organize young people electorally to the conservative movement. Yet its messaging—as well as other conservative messaging—plus its appeal to youth contributed to radicalization of a new generation. Although the young conservatives of YAF were never as explicitly racist as operations in the radical racist Right, the YAF still introduced a new generation to coded-racist politics that defended a white supremacist status-quo with language of “freedom” and “liberty.” Some organizations only needed the presence of enough of a mainstream conservative identity to ensnare young people into extremism. Willis Carto's initial use of George Wallace, and then later open campaigns for “right power” to combat American liberalism, all teased radical racist Right positions while maintaining enough of a veil of conservative respectability to avoid legitimate criticism of the National Youth Alliance as a hate organization. These positions helped bridge the gap between radical-leaning conservatives and an eventual embrace of white power positions.

Antisemitism was the distinguishing element that separated the conservative Right from the radical racist Right. It was what moved young activists from mere racist resentment to the belief that society's institutions were colluding to disempower white people. It was parallel to the skepticism toward liberal institutions held by young

members of the Left during the counterculture era, but antisemitism uniquely captured and weaponized white grievance politics against a specific, often racialized, enemy. Evidenced in young people that moved between YAF and the American Nazi Party or National Youth Alliance, antisemitism was the difference between young white men holding conservative political leaders like Barry Goldwater in high esteem versus regarding him as a Jewish “sell-out.”¹² Young people frustrated with racial or cultural anxieties, and anger over any political failures—perceived or otherwise—from movement conservatism, turned toward conspiracy theories of Jewish assaults against “Western” values as comforting solutions to their political questions. By the 1970s, initiated in part by William Luther Pierce, antisemitism evolved into a more palatable—and weaponizable—term of “the System,” recruiting more bodies into the radical racist Right beyond overt swastikas or explicit mentions of Jewish criminality. This youth-centered recruitment tool is still present in the twenty-first century in coded phrases like “globalist” or “deep-state.”¹³

In many instances, the FBI and hate-watch organizations in the 1960s and 1970s dismissed groups like the American Nazi Party, the National Socialist Party of America, and the National Socialist White People’s Party as “annoying” and too small to be a serious threat. Generally, this was correct. Financial issues—particularly in the case of Rockwell’s American Nazi Party or Willis Carto’s National Youth Alliance—kept radical racist Right activism contained to a small number of passionate members. Recruitment and sustaining an organization could only go as far as a pocketbook, and many of these

¹² A Former Conservative, “Why Conservatism Can’t Stop the Black Revolution,” *The Stormtrooper*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (July-August 1963), 18-21.

¹³ Ben Zimmer, “The Origins of the ‘Globalist’ Slur,” *The Atlantic*, March 14, 2018.

groups had limited reach as a result. But size does not equal threat. Elaine Frantz Parsons' examination of the nineteenth century Ku Klux Klan in *Ku-Klux: The Birth of the Klan During Reconstruction* argues that even the *idea* of the Klan was powerful enough for recruitment and mass terror. The Klan's terrorism, she argued, was built around sensationalism, and the broadcasting of stories of racial violence in newspapers throughout the North contributed to the psychological terror experienced by communities in the South. Thus, while actual numbers of Klan membership might have been low, the fear of a Klan attack was enough to make the threat of the Klan very much real for Black communities.¹⁴ This analysis is equally effective to understand the severity of danger from the neo-Nazi and other radical racist Right groups in the twentieth century, which were a legitimate terror against Black, immigrant, Jewish, and other non-white Americans.

Furthermore, ignoring racist and white supremacist activism due to membership size or notoriety has dangerous consequences in the twenty-first century. The internet transformed youth and organizational recruitment in the revolutionary Right. In 2023, white supremacist videos, livestreams, or podcasts are a successful tool of white power youth recruitment and reach millions more than a *Stormtrooper* subscription ever achieved. The role of the internet can take a financially decimated operation and give it new life and visibility to millions, far beyond what the movement was initially capable of recruiting. Official membership numbers no longer matter for the pervasiveness of white

¹⁴ Elaine Frantz Parsons, *Ku-Klux: The Birth of the Klan During Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

power activism; it only requires internet access and the knowledge of white power internet forums.

In 2023, Nick Fuentes is a radical Right internet personality and perhaps the best current example of a white power identity first claimed by George Rockwell. Born in 1998, Fuentes is the face of white power youth activism in the twenty-first century and mobilizes a community of white teenagers and young adults through the internet, embracing jokes and “trolling” as an element of his political identity. Fuentes’ community includes racist, misogynist, antisemitic, and antidemocratic “trolls” called the Groyper Army.¹⁵ Fuentes embraces this role as a neo-Nazi humorist, echoing the tactics initiated by Rockwell nearly forty years before Fuentes was born. He shares Holocaust-denial jokes, slurs towards women and non-white minorities, and other disparaging hate messages on his internet platforms. Like Rockwell, the young Fuentes says that he uses humor as a cover against criticism. “Irony is so important for giving a lot of cover and plausible deniability for our views,” Fuentes said in a 2020 video, specifically referencing Holocaust-denial.¹⁶

Although Fuentes is banned from most social media platforms, he livestreams his thoughts each day on the platform Rumble. “I’m a genius. I’m a free thinker and I’m a funny guy who brings joy to millions and inspires the youth,” Fuentes said in January 2023 shortly after he was banned once again from Twitter for spreading hate speech,

¹⁵ “Nick Fuentes,” Extremist Profile, Southern Poverty Law Center,

<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/nick-fuentes>.

¹⁶ Fuentes is not alone in the modern continuation of Rockwell’s racist jokes and is joined by extremist groups like the Proud Boys. Tom Dreisbach, “How Extremists Weaponize Irony To Spread Hate,” National Public Radio, April 26, 2021,

<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/26/990274685/how-extremists-weaponize-irony-to-spread-hate>.

specifically for neo-Nazi jokes and other white power arguments. “In any sane society, a guy like me would be recruited to be a part of the solution. Instead, I am treated like a terrorist.”¹⁷ The “solution,” according to the twenty-four-year-old, involves mass deportation of racial and religious minorities from the United States and the establishment of a Christian-fascist authoritarian state.

In November 2022, Fuentes traveled to Palm Beach, Florida to have dinner with the former president of the United States, Donald Trump. The combination of Fuentes’ radical racist Right beliefs with legitimate political movements is part of his larger goal of bringing white power ideology to a larger audience, an echo of Rockwell’s own political goals. “My goal is to redpill as many teenagers and twenty-somethings as possible,” Fuentes said in a June 2023 livestream, referencing a sequence from the 1999 science fiction film, *The Matrix*, where Keanu Reeves’ main character takes a red pill to become aware of the *real* reality hidden behind daily life. Here, Fuentes’ use of “red pill” aligns with others in the conspiratorial Right who use the term in reference to an “awakening” from liberal narratives to be a “free-thinker,” a misogynistic rejection of feminism for its perceived assault on men’s rights, embracing antisemitic views of global politics, or a combination of these beliefs.¹⁸ The twenty-four-year-old’s goals involve a massive recruitment campaign to eventually lead to political control. “A fraction of [these young people] are going to get into politics. And then in ten years there’s gonna be 1,000 or 2,000 or 10,000 people in American politics at a high level of influence...and they are

¹⁷ Nick Fuentes, “America First Livestream,” January 26, 2023.

¹⁸ For a deeper examination of “redpilled” and other terms in online culture, see Whitney Phillips and Ryan M. Milner, *The Ambivalent Internet: Mischief, Oddity, and Antagonism Online* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2017).

gonna believe the things I say” Fuentes promised with a smirk during a May 2023 video. “And so one becomes *many*,” he concluded. “And a guy who is outside of the system for saying these things is now, by proxy, inside the system everywhere.”¹⁹

Fuentes brings out a final element of “youth” seen in white power, as well as other social movements. “Youth,” broadly defined, is not just about biology but is about generational revival and the continuation of power. David Duke’s Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, for example, was able to embrace this youth identity in the ways Duke repurposed cartoons, images, and entire movement tactics from Rockwell’s ANP or Pierce’s NYA. Into the twenty-first century, white power leaders continue to distribute and modify materials and tactics first used by radical racist Right leaders in the twentieth century, regenerating for a new generation. In this case, youth in white power activism learn from mentors or the previous generation and repurpose racist or antisemitic materials for their own uses. Material lives on and, poetically, remains fresh—and young.

The continuation of the white power movement into the twenty-first century cannot be fully explained without an analysis of youth within the historical radical racist Right. The embrace of youth culture within Rockwell’s ANP became the humor and gaslighting that are still part of the white power movement. The evolution of the radical racist Right towards the revolutionary racist Right was due to William Pierce’s interpretation of white power activism away from an electoral module of social movement organizing, and his empowerment of young people to take up the message of

¹⁹ Nick Fuentes, “America First Livestream,” May 27, 2023, available online via Kyle Mantyla, “Fascism First: Nick Fuentes and The Spread of Authoritarian Political Ideology On MAGA’s Right Flank,” Right Wing Watch, June 7, 2023, <https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/fascism-first-nick-fuentes-and-the-spread-of-authoritarian-political-ideology-on-magas-right-flank/>.

revolutionary violence. The continued expansion of young people within the radical racist Right gave way to a cohort of young people interested in moving away from the past and embracing new styles of coalitionary violence. The revolutionary racist Right they created is still present—and perhaps thriving—today, and should give researchers political activists pause to any assumptions that racism is only one generation away from dying off.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. LIST OF FIGURES

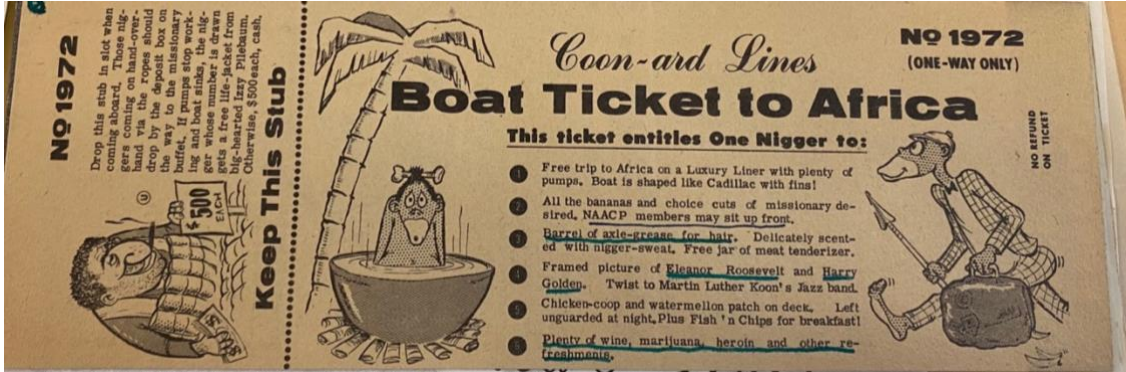


Figure 1.1: "Coon-ard Lines Boat Ticket to Africa," American Nazi Party records, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

JEW COMMIES TREMBLE... NIGGER CRIMINALS QUAKE IN FEAR... LIBERALS HEAD FOR THE HILLS...

HERE COMES

WHITEMAN

TWICE AS FAST AS THE SPEED OF LIGHT... MORE POWERFUL THAN ATOMIC ENERGY... SMART AS A WHIP... ARCH ENEMY OF JEW-COMMUNIST TRAITORS AND ALL RACE-MIXERS!

A STORMTROOPER MAGAZINE SPECIAL



...WHITEMAN FIGHTS AN INTERPLANETARY DUEL WITH A DIABOLICAL FIEND...

THE JEW
FROM
OUTER SPACE
WHITEMAN ALSO BATTLES
SUPERCOON!

ART WORK & STORY
by
JOHN PATLER

IN THE CITY OF ARLINGTON, MILKMAN LEW COR DELIVERS MILK TO HIS CUSTOMERS. SUDDENLY, A LOUD SHOUT INTERRUPTS HIS WORK...



THE SECRET WORDS ARE SPOKEN...



A BOLT OF LIGHTNING...



AND LEW COR IS TRANSFORMED INTO WHITEMAN!



Figure 1.2: John Patler, "Whiteman," *The Stormtrooper*, Spring Issue, 1966, 50-51.

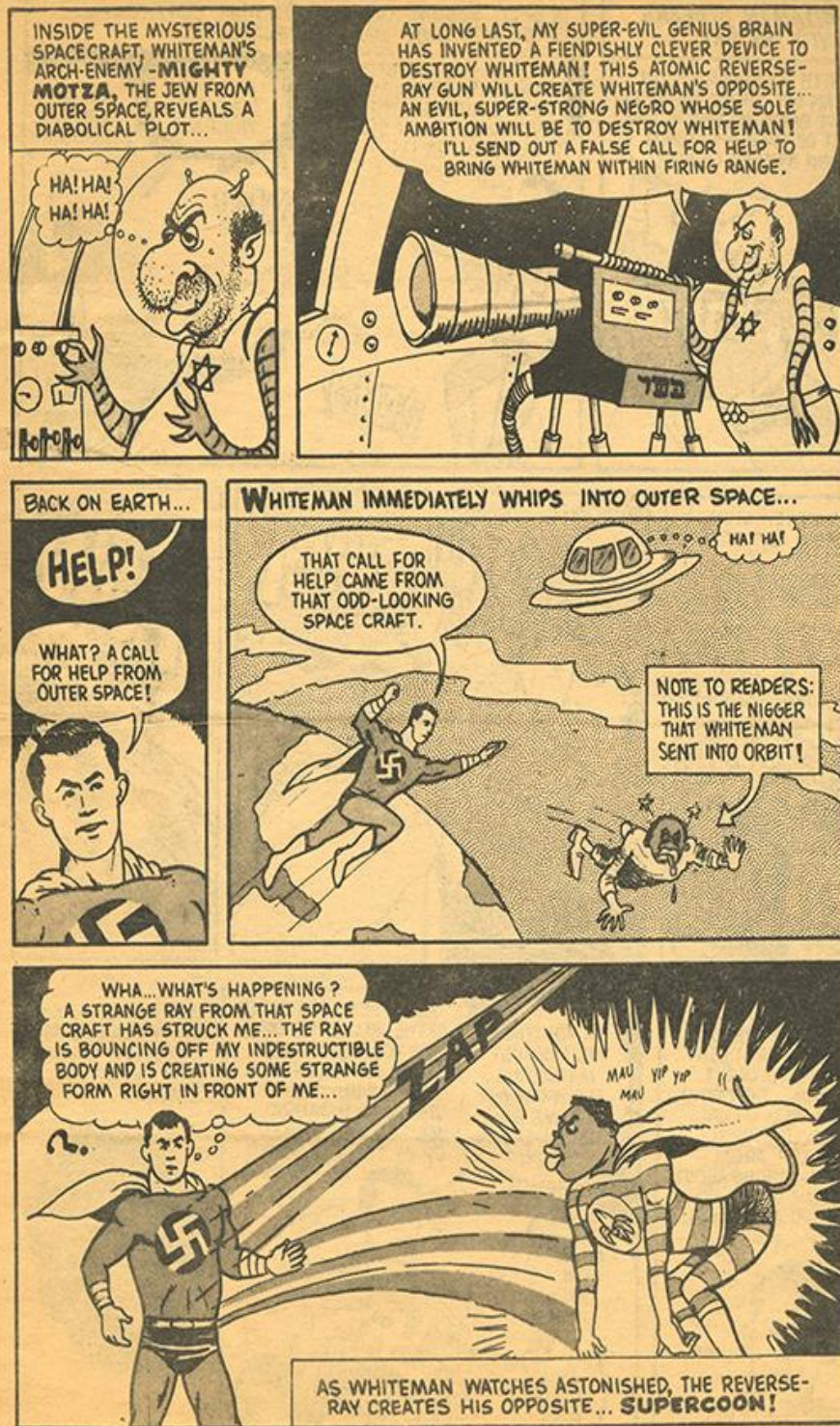


Figure 1.3: John Patler, "Whiteman," *The Stormtrooper*, Spring Issue, 1966, 53.

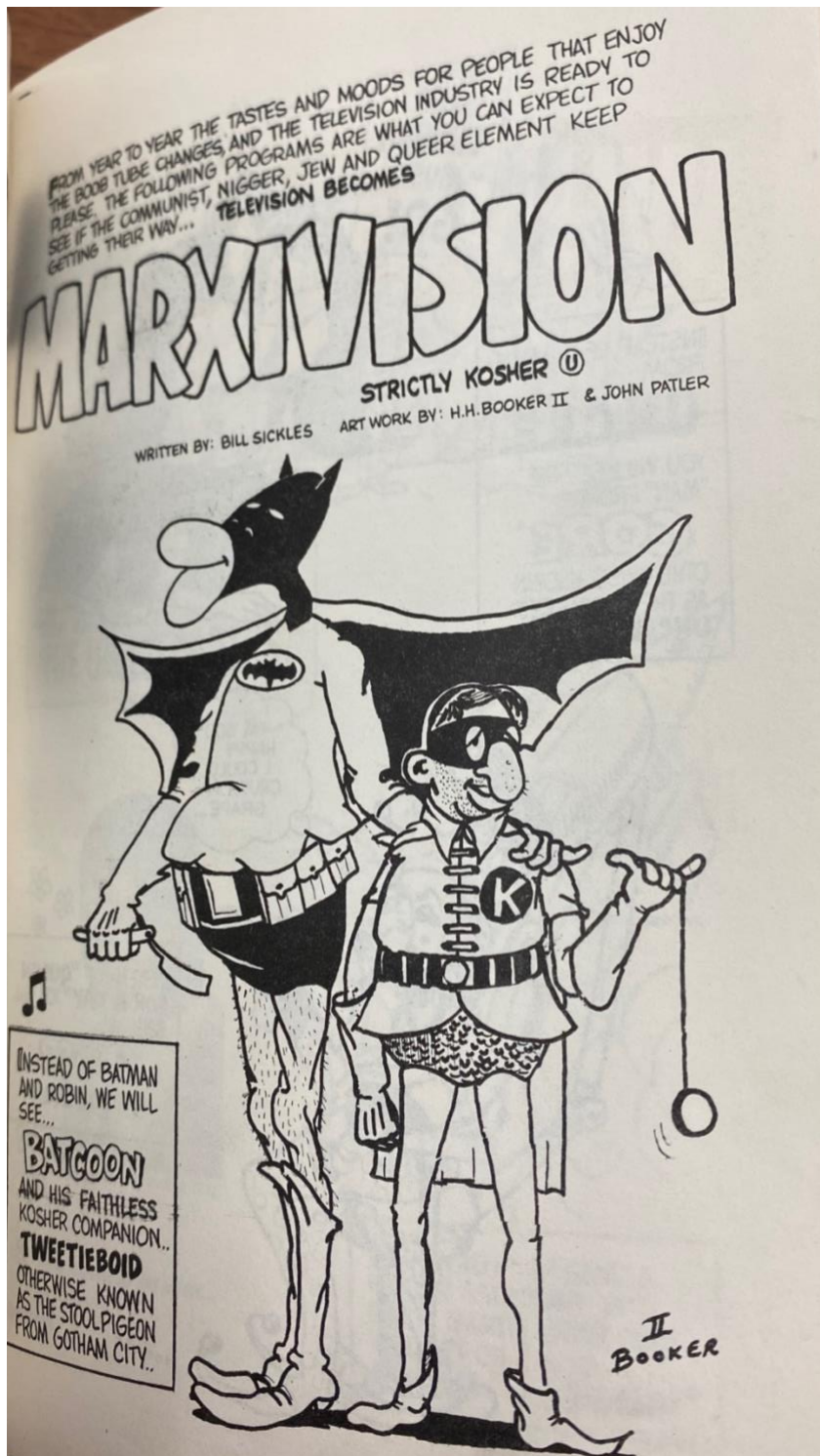


Figure 1.4: John Patler, "Marxivision: Strictly Kosher," *The Stormtrooper Magazine*, November 1966, 21.

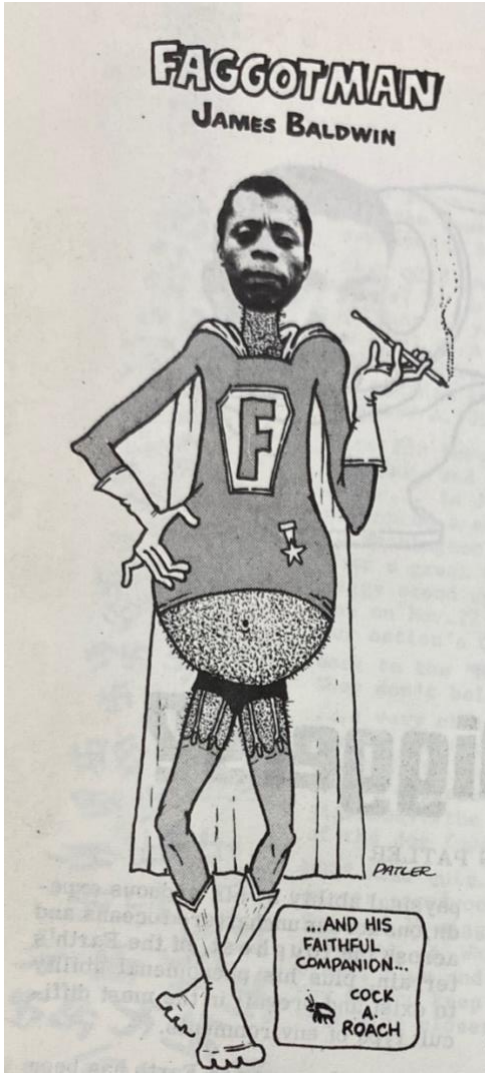


Figure 1.5: John Patler, "Faggotman: James Baldwin," *The Stormtrooper*, Spring 1966, 10.

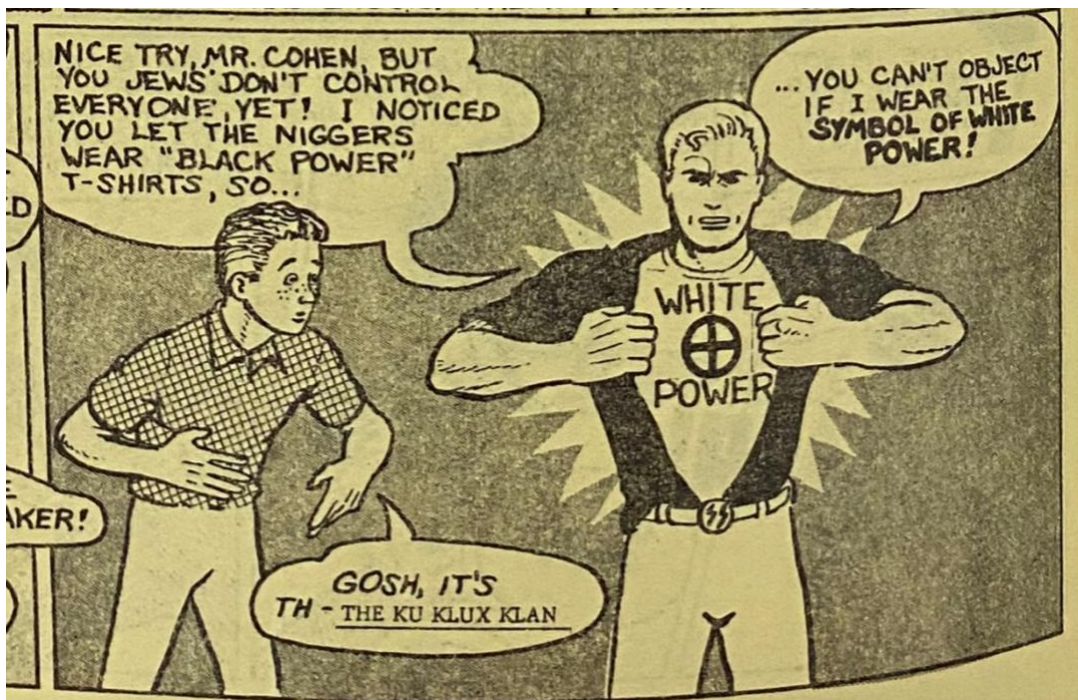
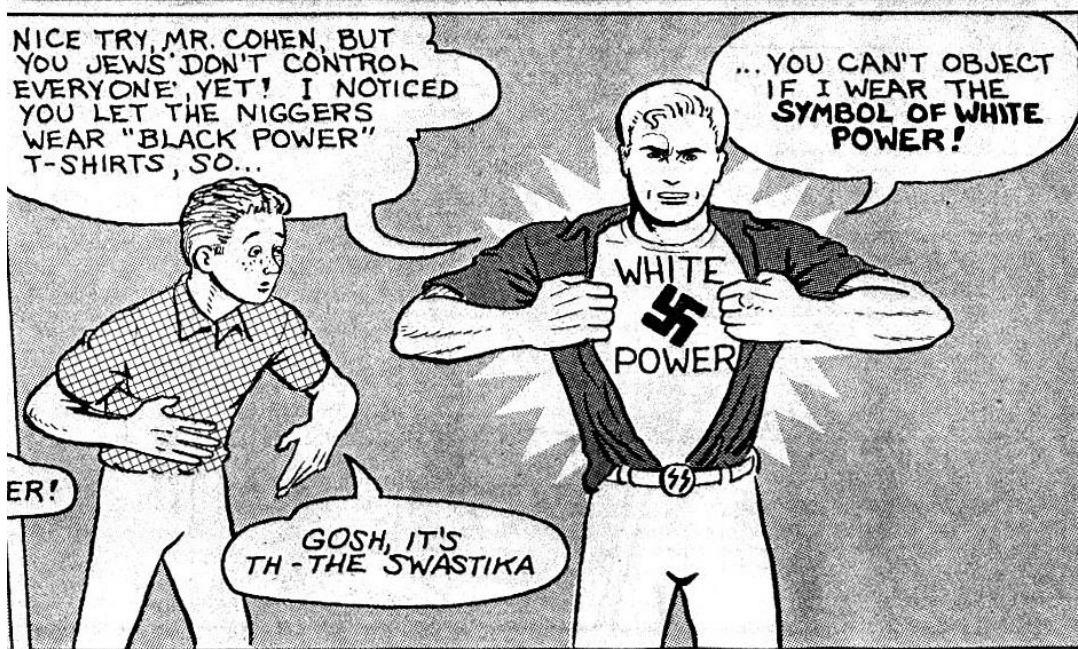


Figure 1.7: (Top) Dennis Nix, "White Power Comes to Midvale," 1973, National Youth Alliance; (Bottom) Dennis Nix (redacted), "White Power Comes to Midvale," approx. 1975, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

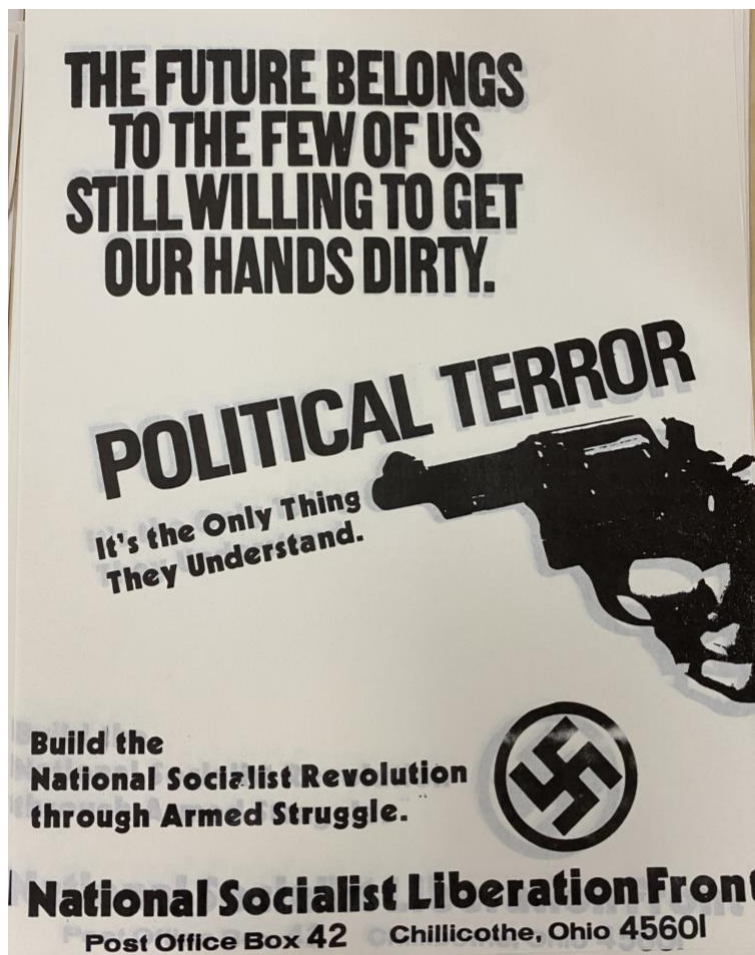
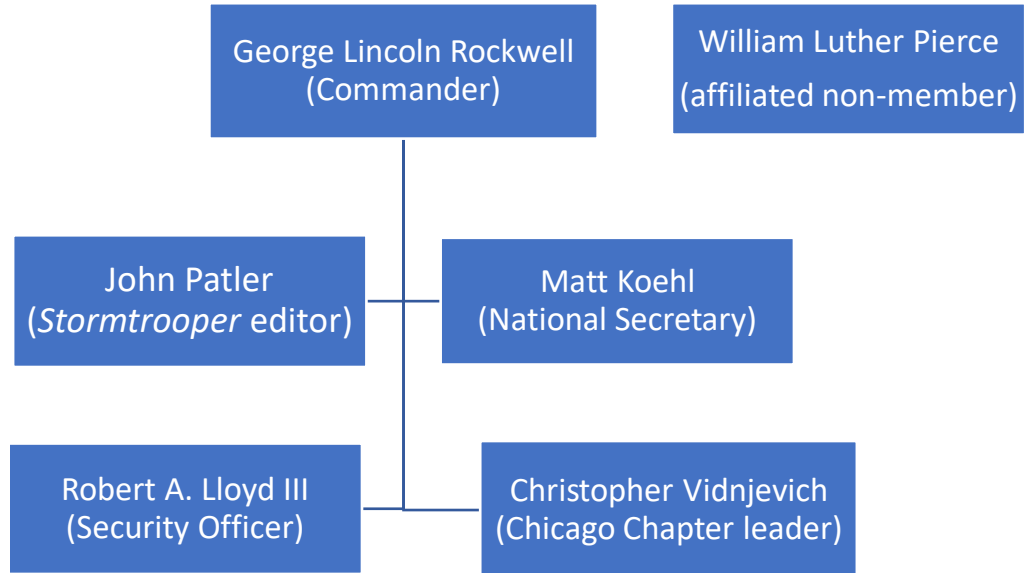


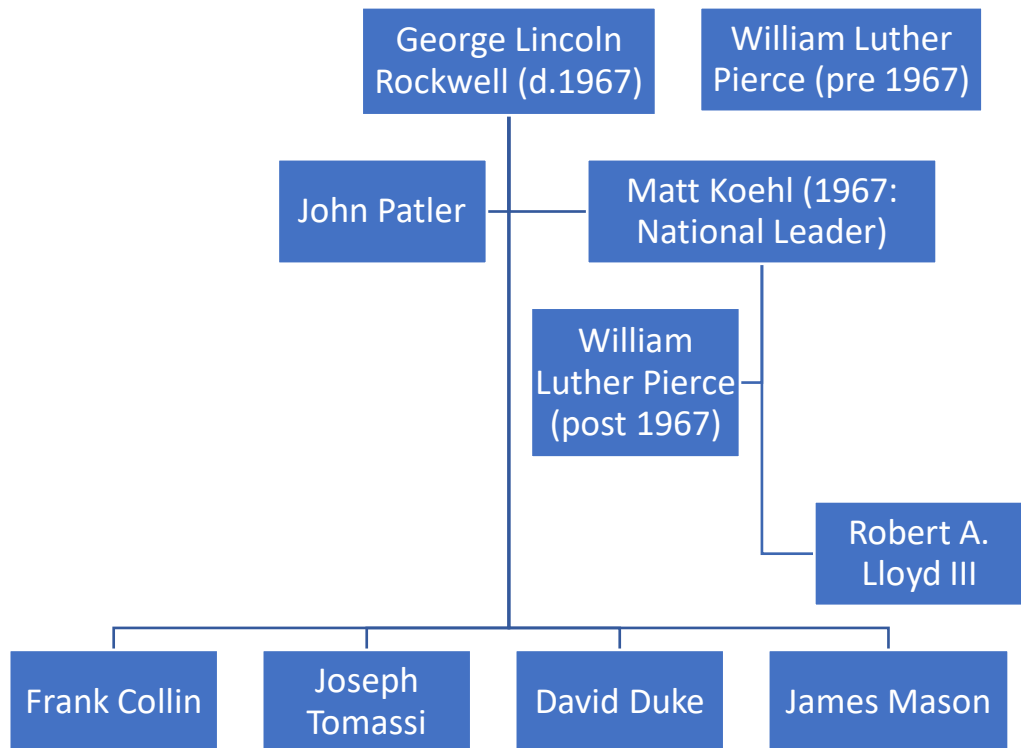
Figure 1.8: National Socialist Liberation Front, "Political Terror Poster," Box 32, File 19, Papers of James N. Mason, RH WL MS 41, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas

APPENDIX 2. GENEALOGY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY RACIST RIGHT,
SELECTED CHARACTERS

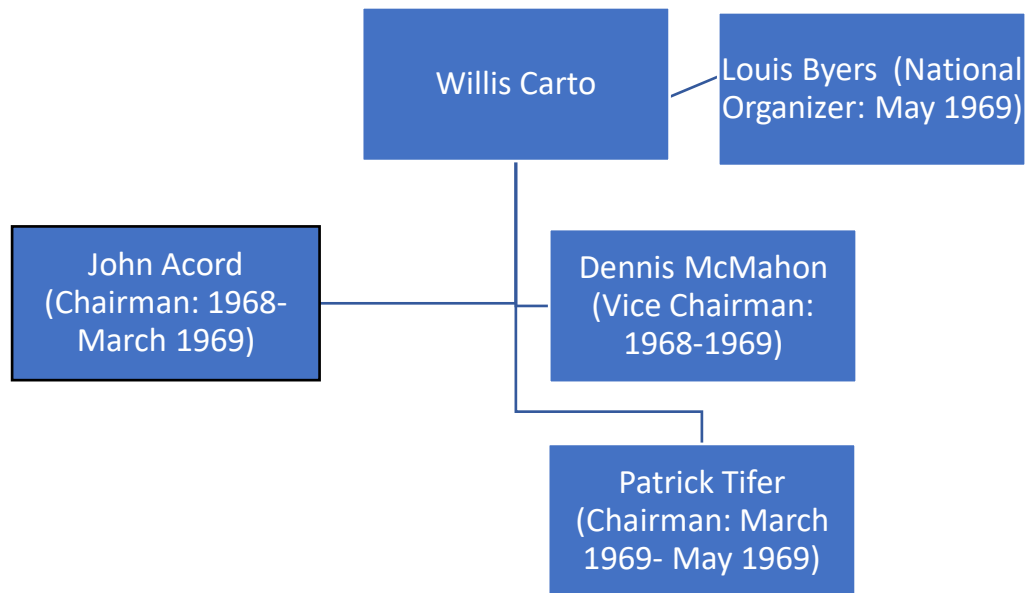
The American Nazi Party (ANP)



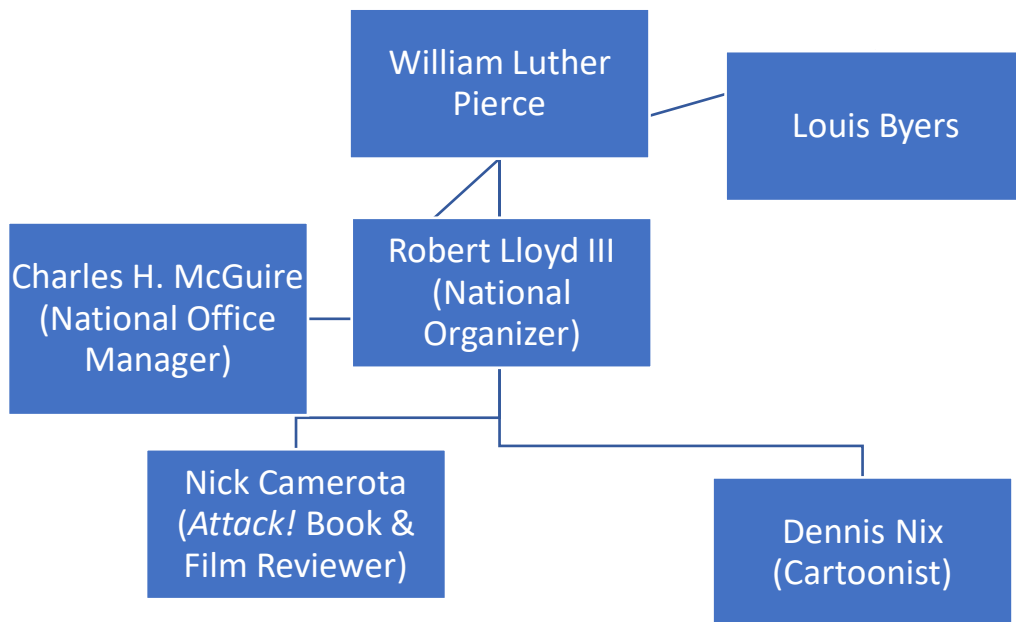
The National Socialist White People's Party (NSWPP)



Youth for Wallace; Willis Carto's National Youth Alliance (NYA)



William Luther Pierce's National Youth Alliance (NYA)



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Karl Allen collection, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

Michael G. Rapp Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

American Nazi Party records, 1963-1970, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Pamphlet Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society Library, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

Government Documents

American Nazi Party, Federal Bureau of Investigation File

American Nazi Party Monograph, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Liberty Lobby-Willis Carto, Federal Bureau of Investigation File

National Alliance, Federal Bureau of Investigation File

National Youth Alliance, Federal Bureau of Investigation File

Pierce, William L., Federal Bureau of Investigation File

Tommasi, Joseph C., Federal Bureau of Investigation File

Periodicals and Pamphlets

Action

Attack!

The Crusader

The Daily Reveille

The Exterminator

The Liberator

Liberty Letter

National Review

National Socialist World

National Youth Alliance News

The New Guard

The New Order

The Racialist

Rockwell Report

The Seditonist

Statecraft

The Stormtrooper Magazine/The Stormtrooper

The Young Wolves

UCLA Daily Bruin

National Newspapers and Newsmagazines

The Atlantic

Free Lance-Star

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New York Times

Philadelphia Tribune

Shreveport Times

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VITA

AUSTIN C. ZINKLE

M.A., History, University of Kentucky, 2017

B.A., History, Auburn University, 2015

Professional Positions

Lecturer; Instructor of Record, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, 2020-2023

Book Review Editor, *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky, August 2018- July 2020.

Teaching Assistant, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, 2015-2021

Honors and Awards

Kirwin-Elliott Award for Excellence in History

Bryan Dissertation Fellowship

Mary Wilma Hargreaves Memorial Fellowship

George Herring Graduate Fellowship

Publications

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