

Extracts from journal article edited by Sarah Banks, 2021

Extract 1

In order to make sense of these threats, extremist movements develop and disseminate conspiracy theories, such as claims of “white genocide” and “great replacement,” or a “war on Islam,” which are wide-ranging, connected to their wider ideologies, and make claims of existential threats faced by the in-group which require and immediate, and at times violent, response. ~~These~~ ~~is~~ accessible and all-encompassing explanations for how the world works are latched onto by groups and individuals attempting to make sense of crisis while protecting the interests of their in-group. In some cases, identities are built around a shared belief in a conspiracy theory, and on and offline “conspiracy communities” form. In recent years ~~these communities~~ ~~have,~~ ~~at times,~~ ~~sometimes~~ been connected to acts of political violence.¹ Injected into this already febrile political atmosphere is ~~a~~ sense of fear and uncertainty brought on by the ~~Covid~~ ~~COVID-19~~ pandemic, which has fueled many pre-existing conspiracies and caused new ones to emerge or gain popularity as more people go in search of answers.

Social movement scholars, such as Della Porta, ~~tell us~~ ~~explain~~ that these intensified interactions between extremist actors, their opponents, and the state, open ~~the~~ door to an increase of what she describes as “political opportunities for radicalization.”² This refers to the social and political circumstances which either constrain or increase the opportunities for extreme activism among social movements. At present, such opportunities are increasing as ~~we see~~ extremist movements ~~taking~~ ~~take~~ advantage of ~~available~~ resources ~~available~~ to encourage increased participation. Violence is especially likely, according to Della Porta, “in periods of social transformation, when new challengers fight their way into the polity and old polity members refuse to leave.” This is a ~~particularly useful way of understanding~~ ~~useful way to~~ ~~understand~~ the increase in various forms of extreme-right-wing violence in America. White supremacists talk of a “great replacement” of what they view as the dominant white race, which they view as challenged for authority and power by a collection of minorities and powerful elites working against them.

Alongside this conducive political environment is the emergence of a range of technologies ~~which~~ ~~that~~ have benefitted violent non-state actors in unprecedented ways. Over the course of the history of modern terrorism, the emergence of new disruptive technologies has often directly contributed to an increase in terrorist activity and tactical innovation. During earlier waves of terrorism, weapons such as the automatic, handheld, and easily concealed handgun, became a gift for political assassins at the turn of the ~~20th~~ ~~twentieth~~ century, ~~while~~. ~~At the same time~~ dynamite made explosives widely accessible and led to the adoption of bombings as a standard terrorist tactic.³ According to Cronin, we are today in ~~an~~ “the age of lethal empowerment” in which new disruptive technologies are widely accessible and therefore “democratize access to lethal capabilities.”⁴ Technology today offers a range of material opportunities to non-state actors, who use it for purposes such as propaganda dissemination and network creation, as well

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¹ Qanon Pizzagate. Train attacking covid boat PLEASE CLARIFY CITATION

² D. Della Porta, “Radicalization: A Relational Perspective,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21 (2018): 461–74

³ R. Jensen, “Daggers, Rifles and Dynamite: Anarchist Terrorism in Nineteenth Century Europe” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 16:1 (2004): 116–153; B. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006)

⁴ A. Cronin, *Power to the People*, (Oxford: OUP, 2019), 1, 7.

as more tactical purposes; including attack planning, digital infrastructure disruption, drones, and other remote-controlled devices.⁵

Extract 2

While most of these groups, such as the Oath Keepers and ~~3~~ **Three** Percenters, are not specifically involved in terrorism, they are described as “on the edge of violence,” taking part in forms of provocative and inflammatory extreme activism which risk encouraging individual members to take up their own acts of political violence. Thus, while a group like the Oath Keepers does not endorse terrorist attacks by individuals, Jackson explains how they “shift political culture in a way that make [terrorist attacks]...more likely.”⁶

The participation on January 6 of groups like the Oath Keepers and **Three** Percenters, who ~~it was found~~ had made detailed plans to breach the Capitol building and commit attacks, marked a significant escalation in their activities to date.⁷ However, this is not the first act of anti-government extremism against the federal government in recent years, and is likely part of a trend of increased activity among such groups. It ~~may be~~ **is useful** possible, for example, to draw parallels with the involvement of Oath Keepers in the 2014 Bundy standoff and Three Percenters in the October 2020 plot to kidnap the governor of Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer.

The relative success of the January 6 siege, coming soon after other recent militant mobilizations by the movement, will likely embolden militias to continue pursuing and even escalate their confrontations with the federal government. Considering what past American militia sympathizers have shown themselves capable of—most notoriously Timothy McVeigh’s attack in Oklahoma City, which killed 168 people—the likelihood of another **similar** attack of ~~this type~~ by a lone actor ~~is also increasing~~ **also seems higher**.

White Supremacist Extremists

White supremacist-inspired terrorism is among the oldest forms of right-wing violence in **America**. Today, modern neo-Nazis, who make up a large part of this movement, continue to plot and carry out attacks, and of all right-wing extremists operating in America today are the most likely to commit large-scale attacks on civilians in the near future. According to the ODNI report, white supremacists are of greatest concern due both to their growing international connections and because they are “most likely to conduct mass-casualty attacks against civilians.”⁸

One of the biggest terror attacks in America since 9/11 was ~~carried out~~ **undertaken** by neo-Nazi Wade Michael Page, who killed eight and injured ~~3~~ **three** when he carried out a mass shooting at a Sikh Temple in Wisconsin in August 2012. Page was a member of a famous neo-Nazi rock band ~~and, he~~ was steeped in the ideology of the movement and had socialized within it over a period of ten years.⁹ Among the most recent and deadly white supremacist attacks was the

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⁵ Cronin, *Power to the People* **PAGE NUMBERS?**

⁶ Jackson, *Oath Keepers: Patriotism and the Edge of Violence in a Right-Wing Antigovernment Group*, 121

⁷ Program on Extremism “This is our house”

⁸ Office of ODNI “Domestic Violent Extremism Poses Heightened Threat in 2021.”

⁹ M. Elias, “Sikh Temple Killer Wade Michael Page Radicalized in Army,” *Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report* (November 2012),

shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in October 2018, where white supremacist Robert Bowers killed eleven and injured six. Active on Gab, Bowers was motivated by the “white genocide” conspiracy theory that undergirds much of the white supremacist ideology, and according to court documents, he told a police officer after the attack that Jews were engaged in

Extract 3

Antifa also contains a self-defense and alternative policing component, most commonly seen in their use of the autonomous zone tactic. An autonomous zone is described in one ~~influence~~ ~~influential~~ anarchist texts on the topic as “an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to reform elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State can crush it.”¹⁰ This approach has been energized in recent years as police killings of African Americans have gained national attention and opprobrium. The most significant recent flash point was the police killing of George Floyd in Minnesota in May 2020. ~~In the ensuing popular protests,~~ Antifa activists have ~~been seen to play~~ played a role on the fringes of the ensuing popular protests, in various parts of America. In some cases, they have established autonomous zones which members police, ~~and~~ patrol, ~~while denying~~ and deny access to government authorities, in particular the police. They claim that such zones act as a protection for Americans, in particular ethnic minorities, who are targeted by state violence.¹¹

Antifa’s inherently reactive nature, coupled with the ~~above-documented~~ rise in extreme-right activism, ~~including street protests,~~ suggests that a continuation and increase in Antifa violence should be expected over the coming years. While the recent past may inform us about the shape this will take (further street violence and occupations), similar anarchist groups in Europe have pursued more extreme methods, including terrorist attacks such as letter bombs and shootings.¹² Whether American anarchists ~~such tactics~~ will also be pursue such tactics ~~d-by-American~~ anarchists remains unclear, but they do not fall within the past traditions of the movement in the country.

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<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2012/sikh-temple-killer-wade-michael-page-radicalized-army>

¹⁰ H. Bey, *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (1985), Hermetic Library, https://hermetic.com/bey/taz_cont.

¹¹ SOURCE?

¹² G. Kassimeris, “Greece’s New Generation of Terrorists, Part 2: The Conspiracy of Cells of Fire (CCF),” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35:9 (2012): 634–49 <https://10.1080/1057610X.2012.702670>