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TABLE 8.1 Radical Right Groups by Type, Frequency, and Region, 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Region</th>
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| Ku Klux Klan       | 17        | East = 4  
 |                    |           | South = 9    
 |                    |           | Midwest = 2  
 |                    |           | West = 2     | 17         |
| Neo-Nazi           | 19        | East = 0  
 |                    |           | South = 3    
 |                    |           | Midwest = 9  
 |                    |           | West = 7     | 19         |
| Christian Identity | 27        | East = 0  
 |                    |           | South = 4    
 |                    |           | Midwest = 5  
 |                    |           | West = 18    | 27         |

Note: One group, the Liberty Lobby, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is not easily classifiable by this scheme.


The sixty-four groups identified by the ADL in 1988 may be classified in several ways. For one, they appear to belong to three separable species: Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazi, and Christian Identity groups. The KKK organizations, of course, have deep roots in American life, ones dating back to the Reconstruction era. Neo-Nazi organizations and the various groups linked to the Identity religious movement are of far more recent vintage, having emerged in the 1950s and 1970s, respectively.

Table 8.1 records the frequency of each type of group by the region of the country in which it is located. Several observations may be made based on these figures.

First, the most numerous kind of radical right group currently active in the United States is linked to a particular theology, Christian Identity. Second, with a handful of exceptions, there seems to be little organized radical right activity in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. Although the South, not surprisingly, is the center for the various KKK-related groups, it is not the region where the preponderance of radical right organizations are to be found: That honor goes to the West. To the extent that neonazism manifests itself organizationally, it appears to be concentrated in the Midwest (Chicago, Detroit, and Milwaukee in particular) and the West.

The figures displayed in Table 8.1 do not provide a complete picture, however. Some groups do not fit easily into the three categories. There is an extensive network of organizations around the country composed of the cult followers of Lyndon LaRouche, who, until his recent criminal convic-
How many individuals are caught up in organized radical right activity at present? The available estimates are not precise, but they do provide us with at least a rough approximation. In 1988 the ADL believed that there were somewhere between 4,500 and 5,500 KKK members and that the various Neo-Nazi groups had a combined total of from 400 to 450 adherents. But these estimates do not take into consideration either the skinheads or the followers of Christian Identity, the two fastest-growing components of the movement. (The Center for Democratic Renewal reports a figure of 3,500 for the racist, anti-Semitic segment of the skinheads.) Nor do the accounts take into consideration the approximately 1,000 members of Lyndon LaRouche’s organizations. Affiliation with radical right groups is rarely as formalized as, say, membership in the American Medical Association. Observers refer to considerable overlap and turnover. Thus we are probably dealing with a pool of some 10,000 individuals with an unknown but likely much larger number of sympathizers.

There is some evidence concerning the backgrounds of those individuals who lead and publicize the various radical right groups and causes. Based upon biographical accounts the ADL assembled recently for fifty-five prominent radical rightists, the following portrait emerges. We are dealing, first, with a group of males; not one of the individuals identified by the ADL was a woman. Not only are they men, but they are distinctly middle-aged as well; their average age in 1988 was slightly under fifty-two. Most were born in the United States, but a surprisingly high percentage of them (15 percent) were born in Europe. Almost two-thirds of these prominent radical rightists live in small towns. Few of the latter are to be found in the northeastern part of the country; the South is the most common place of residence, followed by the Midwest and West. Most of the leaders seem to hold middle-class jobs as insurance salesmen, real estate agents, high school principals, attorneys, ministers, state legislators, and so on; but a few, such as John R. Harrell, founder of the Christian Patriots Defense League, are independently wealthy. Some, such as Louis Ray Beam, the former grand dragon of the Texas KKK, are serving prison terms for violent crimes they committed in the course of their political careers. Most radical right leaders identified by the ADL are Protestants, though there are several Catholics. And one individual, Harold Von Braunhut, a businessman active in the Aryan Nations movement, was described in a recent Washington Post article as someone of Jewish origin.

If the above commentary provides us with at least some sense of the Radical Right’s leaders, what of its followers? Who are they? Where do they come from? Unfortunately, there is no easily accessible data on the followers of the various radical right organizations. They likely make up a relatively heterogeneous cast of characters. It is possible, nevertheless, to provide sketches of some of the participants’ backgrounds.

On December 30, 1988, three teenagers belonging to a skinhead gang were arrested in Reno, Nevada, and accused of having shot a young black man to death; there was no motive other than their hatred of his race. Although their court-appointed attorneys did not wish me to interview their clients, some biographical information was obtained as the result of a conversation with a police detective involved in the case. The two boys (aged eighteen and seventeen) and one girl (aged seventeen) charged with the murder were described as having similar backgrounds. All three had dropped out of high school, left home, and moved from one community to another before coming to Reno. There they had a succession of menial jobs, most of them in fast-food restaurants. All three described themselves as “white working-class youth,” but only the oldest boy was able to articulate coherent political views. Evidently acquired as a result of his involvement with the White Aryan Resistance (WAR), a Neo-Nazi group active in the Los Angeles area, these views emphasized a sense of loss and displacement. The United States been stolen from its rightful owners by Jews, blacks, and immigrants—groups that had no right to be in the country, much less seize control of it. Accused of murdering a perfect stranger, the three youths nevertheless felt themselves to be aggrieved and defenseless victims of injustice rather than perpetrators of violence.

The University of Michigan psychologist Raphael Ezekiel recently conducted a series of extended interviews with members of a Detroit-area Neo-Nazi group. These encounters occurred in the run-down, white, working-class neighborhood in which most of his subjects had grown up. The overwhelmingly male group of Neo-Nazis were young (half under twenty) and had been raised in fatherless households by mothers who held such full-time jobs as waitresses and beauticians. Most of his subjects had left school by the tenth grade; few were able to find work or express much optimism about their future prospects. They came to the group with deep feelings of racial hatred toward blacks and romanticized conceptions of nazism, the latter acquired from old films they had seen on television. The impact of group membership was to rationalize and refine these feelings as well as provide a means by which the members could express them.

Not all radical right activists are as youthful as the ones described above. Several years ago in Phoenix the FBI arrested eight members of the Arizona Patriots, a white supremacist band, and accused them of planning to rob an armored car and use the proceeds to finance the establishment of a paramilitary training camp. The suspects’ average age was nearly forty.

Middle-age was also a characteristic of the members of the Order/Silent Brotherhood, several of whom were convicted for Alan Berg’s murder. The average age of those eventually arrested and charged with violations of the
ganized and systematic effort to tap the discontent was mounted in 1984 by the Populist party, a creature of the Liberty Lobby. Emphasizing the plight of the farmer and the U.S. government’s refusal to alleviate it—all the while providing financial support to Israel, the Populists waged a presidential campaign on behalf of the Reverend Bob Richards. Richards, a former Olympic athlete, managed to win 10,882 votes (out of more than 11 million cast) in six farm-belt states.49

But by all odds the most elaborate and sophisticated effort of this kind was undertaken by the LaRouche organization. In addition to his 1980 and 1984 presidential campaigns, ones aided by federal matching funds as well as a complex credit card fraud, LaRouche formed the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC) as a vehicle to field candidates in Democratic primaries all over the country. Between 1982 and 1988, LaRouche-backed candidates contested close to 4,000 Democratic primaries and general elections in over thirty states. During these years his NDPC candidates received over 4 million votes. The most publicity accrued by LaRouche candidates was in Illinois, where two of them won Democratic primary nominations for state treasurer and lieutenant governor.50 For the most part, though, the candidates achieved their successes when they ran unopposed in districts that were normally Republican and where serious Democratic challengers were, consequently, hard to recruit. No NDPC candidate was ultimately elected to any office higher than that of school board member.

Still, 4 million votes are not to be made light of. Evidence from the Illinois results suggests the LaRouche candidates did best among blue-collar workers living in communities where crime and unemployment were widespread and in areas where farming was an important activity.51

It was rare for either LaRouche or his candidates to unveil full-blown versions of the cult’s ideology (which involves a theory according to which a global Anglo-Jewish conspiracy exists to weaken Western society, in the face of Soviet subversion, and makes possible its control by international bankers, drug merchants, and Zionists). Instead, they offered relatively specific proposals to deal with concrete problems, for example, repealing environmental protection laws as a way to save jobs in manufacturing.

The voice of the LaRouche organization was not limited to campaign activity on behalf of its candidates. In addition, it mounted publicity campaigns to promote the Strategic Defense Initiative, nuclear energy, as well as an end to U.S. support for Israel. It also sought to stimulate public support for ex-Nazi rocket scientists facing deportation. Using the last word in “dirty tricks,” it tried to discredit 1988 presidential candidate Michael Dukakis and former secretary of state Henry Kissinger by disseminating rumors they were, respectively, mentally ill and homosexual. Perhaps the LaRouche or-

American radical right political activity is not confined to Americans or limited to the United States. There are international linkages to be considered. Aryan Nations holds an annual world congress at its Idaho compound at which individuals from like-minded groups in Canada and Great Britain have been in attendance. Some years ago when the World Anti-Communist League held a conference in Washington, it brought together delegates representing the Liberty Lobby with representatives of the Neo-Fascist Italian Social Movement.53 But as is true for the domestic situation, so too in this case, the LaRouche organization seems to have developed the most extensive international network. There are LaRouche-affiliated groups in Latin America; in particular, there are LaRouche labor parties in Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, and a rather misnamed LaRouche Club of Life in Colombia. There is also a European Labor party headquartered in Wiesbaden, Germany, that achieved some notoriety as the result of its ties to retired, high-ranking Bundeswehr officers.54 It remains to be seen, however, whether or not these various international initiatives represent anything more than handfuls of multinational crackpots from isolated fringe groups talking to each other from time to time.

VIOLENCE

Data are available concerning the frequency of racist and anti-Semitic violence in the United States. For instance, the National Council of Churches issued a statement recently in which it reported that between 1980 and 1986 there were 121 murders, 302 assaults, and over 300 cross burnings carried out for racial motives. The statement went on to say that these figures reflected a dramatic resurgence of antiblack violence during the 1980s.55 Likewise, the ADL’s annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents for 1990 showed an 18 percent rise in their occurrence over the previous year (see Table 8.3). The ADL interpreted these figures to mean that an almost decade-long trend of decline in anti-Semitic violence had been reversed.

Various explanations have been offered to account for these developments. The ones probably mentioned most frequently in the press belong in the realm of atmospherics. The Reagan administration’s hostility toward affirmative action and welfare state programs, the Bitburg incident, the Pollard spy case, and Israeli behavior in the Middle East have all been blamed for stimulating or facilitating a racist and anti-Semitic backlash.

No matter the immediate cause(s), it is hard to say how much of this violence is the direct result of radical right groups and of individuals inspired


35. But see D. Baker, “A. K. Chesterton, the Strasser Brothers and the Politics of the National Front,” in *Patterns of Prejudice*, (no. 19, 1985) pp. 23–33.


CHAPTER 8


CONCLUSION

1. Always much closer to the Catholic conservatism of the People's party than to the Nazis, Waldheim seems to have committed two chief offenses—his shameless wartime careerism under the Third Reich and his nimble cover-up of this wartime record since—rather than specific and demonstrable crimes. See also Hans-Georg Heinrich and Slawomir Wiatr, Political Culture in Vienna and Warsaw (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991) pp. 66–71.

2. Blas Piñar had once been a member of Youth for Catholic Action and, from the Falangist Fuerza Nueva, soon spun off a student group called the Guerrilla Fighters for Christ the King. There were other groups as well, with names like Youth Front and Adolph Hitler Sixth Commando of the New Order. See José Mana Bernáldez, Ruptura o Reforma? (Barcelona: Plaza & Janes, 1984). The FN sported blue shirts and red berets, like the old Falange.


6. The Republikaner tend to belong to the generation born between about 1945 and 1965, whereas skinheads and soccer hooligans are usually younger and the real ex-Nazis considerably older. See also Markus Wallenborn in Neues Deutschland, March 4, 1991, on the foundation of Republikaner organizations in East Berlin. West Berlin had been a location of their early electoral triumphs in West Germany, and they began recruitment among the receptive East Germans as soon as the Wall came down.

7. A dramatic increase of unconventional political participation, including violence, was observed during the 1980s in West Berlin and West Germany as well, but it was neither as abrupt nor of quite the magnitude of the East German right-wing violence. The worst incident to date was a massive skinhead attack on residences for former foreign students from “fraternal socialist countries” such as Hungary or Czechoslovakia on trains. Identified from their pass-