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Millenarian Aspects of 'White Supremacist' Movements

Michael Barkun

Since the mid-1980s, press accounts have widely reported the activities of a new variety of radical right-wing groups often characterized as 'white supremacist'. Among groups to which the label has been attached are Aryan Nations, The Order, Posse Comitatus, and The Covenant, Sword and Arm of the Lord. These groups share a belief system made up of five elements: (1) *'Identity' theology*, which asserts that whites of Western European extraction are direct descendants of the Biblical tribes of Israel; (2) a doctrine of *racial superiority*, which places 'Aryans' at the summit of a four-race hierarchy; (3) belief in a world Jewish conspiracy; (4) admiration for *Nazism*, together with acceptance of 'Holocaust revisionism'; and (5) a *millenarian* view of history, emphasizing the imminence of the 'last days'. Such organizations typically draw from this belief system implications directly relevant to the study of violence: (1) the desirability of withdrawing into self-sufficient, often paramilitary, communal groups maintaining minimal contact with outsiders; and/or (2) seeking direct confrontation with political authority in the form of terrorism and guerrilla warfare (for example, The Order's crime wave in 1983-84).

The links between violence and religion are complex, yet we intuitively recognize that violence driven by religious imperatives has the potential for reaching extraordinary levels of intensity. Unlike violence pragmatically calculated to achieve limited and well-defined ends, religiously driven violence often connects its use to a cosmic plan that frees the perpetrator from inhibitions imposed by law or custom. Such human and fallible restraints count for little to the individual convinced that his/her mission has divine sanction.

Nowhere is the religion-violence nexus more evident than in the contemporary movements conventionally labelled 'white supremacist'. The object of wide media attention since the mid-1980s, the focus of a popular film (*Betrayed*), such radical right-wing groups as the Aryan Nations, The Order, Posse Comitatus, The Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord, and numerous Klan organizations have employed both a rhetoric and strategies saturated with violence. Often described as political organizations, many of them pursue political objectives in fulfillment of an elaborate set of religious beliefs. In the discussion that follows, I wish to

lay out the belief system of what for convenience I shall call the 'white supremacist' movement, suggesting as well the manner in which 'white supremacist' behavior expresses underlying religio-political themes.

The movement cannot be analyzed without first confronting its essentially millenarian character. Unlike earlier American right-wing organizations, 'white supremacist' groups constitute a form of armed millennialism, possessed of both an apocalyptic rhetoric and an elaborate paramilitary structure. Because of the dangers these groups pose, we are obliged to take their ideas seriously, regardless of their bizarre or distasteful character. In doing so, it will be helpful if we initially place them within the context of an American millenarian tradition.

I. The Millenarian Context

In a now classic definition, the historian Norman Cohn designated as millenarian any movement that anticipates collective, earthly, imminent, total, supernatural salvation. As anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and political scientists have now amply demonstrated, groups with these characteristics may be found in virtually every part of the globe.¹ For present purposes, however, the millenarian tradition of principal importance is that of Protestantism, brought to America with its early settlers and elaborated over the ensuing centuries.

Building upon the cryptic but apocalyptically-charged biblical books of Daniel and Revelation, English chiliasts and their American heirs anticipated a discontinuous future, dividing ordinary historic time from the miraculous events of the 'end-time'.

By the early 1800s, American millennialism increasingly appeared in two variants, although a number of hybrids tended to soften the differences. The first – *pre-millennialism* – asserted that before the millennium, the literal thousand years of total bliss on earth, Christ would have to return, destroying the old and evil worldly order in the process. An opposing view – *post-millennialism* – asserted that the millennium would come first, brought about by incremental human effort, and only then would the Second Coming take place. Although each millenarian vision contained the same concepts of a thousand years of peace and happiness, and the return of Christ to earth, and each contained a final judgment as the ultimate conclusion to the scenario, the two were significantly different concerning both sequence and emphasis. By placing the Second Coming ahead of the millennium itself, the pre-millennialists emphasized the suddenness of change and the seeming insignificance of human effort. The 'latter days' would come according to some divine timetable. Post-millennialists, by contrast, saw the Second Coming as the capstone of a gradual redemptive process which assigned a major role to social and religious reform.²

Each vision had its attraction. Pre-millennialism tempted the faithful to try to calculate the time of the final consummation by correlating earthly signs with 'rightly interpreted' biblical texts, a temptation that was reinforced by the belief that human life would be forever altered at one stroke. If pre-millennialism made the future wholly dependent on God's will, post-millennialism elevated human will to a virtually comparable level. Post-millennialism celebrated the power of human action. Each, however, was the victim of its virtues. Post-millennialism easily became secularized as its gradualism was assimilated to a broader concept of progress. Pre-millennialism, possessed of a far more melodramatic historical script, was in no danger of being confused with secular ideas but was in danger of succumbing to the temptation of setting dates for the end. The danger of prophetic disconfirmation was nowhere more evident than in the disillusionment of the Millerites, premillennialists who predicted a Second Coming between 21 March 1843 and 21 March 1844.

In part because of this disillusionment, believers in an abruptly achieved millennium sought a way of maintaining the vitality of pre-millennialism while avoiding the embarrassment of disconfirmed dates. The vehicle for this reconciliation was *dispensationalism*, a form of pre-millennialism that emerged in England in the 1830s and 1840s and became dominant in American fundamentalism by the end of the century. It remains today, in several variants, the millenarian orthodoxy for American fundamentalists. Dispensationalism consisted of an elaborate periodization of Biblical and post-Biblical history, the end result of which was to place in the future the fulfillment of a number of prophecies that older forms of pre-millennialism had placed in the past, implying that the world was not nearly so close to the final days as earlier pre-millennialists had thought.³

No less important was the dispensationalists' elaboration of the period immediately before the Second Coming. It was to be preceded by seven years of war, turmoil, and suffering (the Tribulation) that would end only with the battle of Armageddon, when Christ would return to inaugurate the millennium. Dispensationalists argue among themselves whether the saved must share the agonies of the Tribulation, or whether they will be 'raptured', lifted off the earth to be with Christ until his return. Whatever the position of dispensationalists on the Rapture, they are of one mind on the Tribulation, which gives to their visions of the future the character of a prolonged and intensifying battle between good and evil.

Since the late 1940s, dispensationalists have come to the conviction that prophecies are now being more rapidly fulfilled, and that the time of the Tribulation is near, if it has not already begun. Hence, having begun as a reaction against date-setting, dispensationalism has now come perilously close to its own predictions of millennial imminence. So saturated

is fundamentalist discourse with the categories of dispensational pre-millennialism that any movement arising out of a Protestant millenarian background cannot help but be affected by it. As we shall see, this applies specifically to 'white supremacists', who, although estranged from the mainstream of fundamentalism, nonetheless accept much of dispensational pre-millennialism.

Political violence is not a necessary derivative of pre-millennialism. On the one hand, pre-millennialists regard the existing order as irremediably evil and destined for destruction. On the other hand, they ascribe the actual millenarian consummation to divine forces, working according to a preordained timetable. This would appear to preclude the possibility of effective human action. Yet as numerous students of millenarian movements have noted, pre-millennialists are not always passive and fatalistic. Indeed, it appears that their conviction sometimes impells them to action, as though to push the inevitable along at a faster rate. In confronting this paradox, David C. Rapoport notes that millenarians who believe the climax of history is imminent often

find it psychologically impossible to regard their actions as irrelevant, because the consequences of being mistaken are so immediate and momentous. *At the very least*, they will act to secure their own salvation. And once the initial barrier to action has been overcome, it will be only a matter of time before different kinds of action make sense too.⁴

Contemporary American dispensational pre-millennialists have generally eschewed political violence, although those on the 'New Christian Right' such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson have moved aggressively into electoral and legislative politics. In order to see by what a circuitous route pre-millennialism can induce violent political action, we must turn back to the 'white supremacist' movement.

Both journalistic and scholarly treatments of 'white supremacist' groups have been predicated on the belief that they are conventional political phenomena, distinguished primarily by deviant beliefs and a propensity for violence. The desire to assimilate them to familiar political categories is manifested in the labels used to describe them: 'White supremacist' (a term I preserve here largely as a matter of convenience) and 'racist' suggest association with a long post-Civil War tradition of anti-Black organizations, beginning with the early Ku Klux Klan. 'Neo-Nazi' implicitly links the groups not only with the German Nazi Party but with indigenous American Fascist movements that have appeared since the early 1930s. As I shall explain at a later point, neither of these characterizations is false, but both are incomplete in significant respects, for they pointedly ignore the religious foundations of much 'white

supremacism'. Unlike earlier conventionally political analyses, therefore, the discussion that follows treats these as groups in which political behavior arises directly out of religious commitments, and, indeed, are politically dangerous precisely because of their religious commitments.

II. The 'White Supremacist' Constellation

The existence of 'white supremacist' groups came to public attention largely as a result of a string of crimes committed in 1983-84, mostly in the Pacific Northwest. These included bank and armored car robberies that netted over \$4 million, counterfeiting operations, the bombing of a synagogue, and the murder of the Denver radio talk-show host, Alan Berg. These acts were eventually traced to a small, clandestine organization, usually referred to as 'The Order', whose members had in turn earlier been affiliated with two other right-wing organizations, the Aryan Nations and the National Alliance.⁵ The Order's founder, Robert Mathews, was killed in December 1984 in a violent confrontation with law enforcement officers on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound. Subsequently, most of the remaining members were arrested. Eleven pleaded guilty to federal criminal charges in 1985 and were imprisoned. In a separate trial, two others were convicted of the murder of Alan Berg.⁶

The federal government has asserted that the members of The Order were not the only 'white supremacists' involved in criminal activities and that far from merely constituting a violent offshoot of a peaceful movement, they were part of a complex of organizations committed to the overthrow of the United States government. This position was advanced in a subsequent trial at Ft. Smith, Arkansas, in 1988, when 14 leaders of 'white supremacist' groups were tried for seditious conspiracy. They argued that they were merely asserting constitutional rights of free speech and association. Charges against one defendant were dismissed and, on 7 April 1988, the remaining defendants were acquitted. On 24 June 1988, James Wickstrom, 'director of counterinsurgency' for Posse Comitatus, was arrested on charges of possessing silencers and receiving counterfeit currency. He faces indictment for participation in a complex international scheme to arm and finance 'racist warriors' by exchanging counterfeit US currency for foreign currency, which would then be exchanged for valid US funds.⁷ Clearly, then, these organizations have drawn the interests of police and prosecutors out of proportion to their numbers, and their association with violence, both proven and alleged, suggests a claim on the attentions of those outside law enforcement as well.

What, precisely, are these groups? As is so often the case where political sectarians are concerned, the number of groups seems to multiply in

inverse proportion to the number of their members. Like the extreme left, the extreme right has proven to be a hot-house for the growth of small, often only marginally distinguishable groups.

The groups are not only numerous but often have overlapping memberships, that, together with their penchant for secrecy, makes estimates of size uncertain at best. There is some coordination among them but no visible organs for making common policy. One can speak, therefore, more accurately of a 'white supremacist constellation' – a set of ideologically related groups linked by a variety of formal and informal connections. Because they tend to hold certain beliefs in common (an ideology about which I will have more to say below), categorizing them can be extremely difficult. They are often distinguishable primarily by the element of the common belief system that a given organization chooses to emphasize. From this perspective, and bearing in mind that the categories are not mutually exclusive, one can discern four major classes of inter-related organizations:

1. *Klan* organizations that explicitly model themselves upon post-Civil War Southern secret societies. At the moment, there appear to be three major Klan organizations and perhaps a dozen minor groups.
2. '*Christian Identity*' groups, often but not invariably organized as churches committed to the preaching of 'Christian Identity' theology, a set of millenarian beliefs important to the entire movement. The most significant organizations associated with the promulgation of 'Identity' have been the Church of Jesus Christ Christian (Aryan Nations), and The Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord (CSA). The Order was closely tied to this 'Identity' wing.
3. Explicitly *neo-Nazi* groups, with past links to the American Nazi Party and/or close present ties to German neo-Nazis. The National Alliance, led by a former subordinate of George Lincoln Rockwell, is the major representative.
4. *Agrarian protest* movements, predominantly Middle-Western, that blame the plight of farmers on Jewish financial machinations. The Posse Comitatus and the Populist Party are major representatives.⁸

As already noted, size estimates are extremely difficult to make. In addition to the groups' suspicions of outsiders, the extent of overlapping and cooperating memberships seems considerable. Thus, a raid on the armed commune set up by The Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord (CSA) resulted in the capture of Order members who had taken refuge there after their Western crime wave. Additionally, these small

organizations sometimes dissolve quickly, often as a result of major prosecutions. After the 1985 trials, The Order was defunct, almost all of its members dead or in prison. When the CSA community of Zarephath-Horeb was raided by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms in 1985, a series of prosecutions followed that resulted in a 20-year prison sentence for the founder, James Ellison, convicted of the manufacture of automatic weapons and acts of bombing and arson; and, the sale of the organization's compound in southern Missouri.⁹

Nonetheless, some rough estimates of size have been made and indicate the order of magnitude if not the precise number of members. In 1985, it appeared that all groups in the 'white supremacist constellation' held between 2,000 and 5,000 active, committed members, together with sympathizers who numbered anywhere from 14,000 up to 50,000.¹⁰ By this year, prosecutions have apparently significantly reduced these figures.¹¹ Geographically, 'white supremacist' groups have appeared conspicuously in all areas of the country except the Northeast, with notable concentrations in the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Pacific Northwest.

III. 'White Supremacist' Groups and American Fascism

A natural tendency is to try to understand the significance of such groups by assimilating them to similar organizations in the past. Indeed, the use of such labels as 'white supremacist' and 'neo-Nazi' attest to this search for continuity, the one linking contemporary groups with previous waves of Klan activity, the other with the so-called 'homegrown Fascists' of the 1930s and 1940s, as well as the American Nazi Party in the 1960s. These analogies are not without foundation, for common motifs, as well as personal connections, do link past and present organizations, but attempting to press the resemblances often results in a seriously distorted view, and in particular obscures the connection between religious and political beliefs.

The similarities to earlier Klan movements are clear. The three prior waves of Klan activity – during Reconstruction, from 1915 through the 1920s, and from the 1950s through the 1970s – were predicated upon a belief in the racial superiority of whites over non-whites. The Klan of the 1920s, with its anti-alien bias, was also strongly anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic. The rural base of the Klan, initially in the South and later in the Midwest and elsewhere, opened it to paranoid fears of urban-centered conspiracies.

Nonetheless, the earlier Klan movements, while anticipating elements in present-day 'white supremacist' activities (the obsessive concern for race purity, secrecy, and so forth), were also significantly different. They

saw little need to develop elaborate rationalizations for their vision of racial dominance. Their concern for ritual appears almost a surrogate for ideology, resembling in this respect the ritualistic but ideologically primitive secret societies that developed among nineteenth-century European peasant populations.¹² Far from developing a special millenarian religiosity, Klan members identified themselves closely with the small-town Protestant milieu in which they were raised. Rather than seeking some 'new order', they sought only a return to the old in a 'politics of nostalgia'. The numerous Klan groups that presently function as parts of the 'white supremacist constellation' claim descent from these predecessors but in fact have increasingly absorbed precisely the ideological elements their forebears lacked, including a millennially-tinged 'Identity' theology utterly foreign to American Protestantism.

A stronger case may perhaps be made for ties to the 'Fascist' movements of the inter-war period, in part because a number of leaders of current 'white supremacist' groups served apprenticeships with such earlier figures as William Dudley Pelley, Gerald Winrod, and especially Gerald L.K. Smith.¹³ Their emphasis on Jewish conspiracy finds disturbing contemporary echoes, as does a rhetoric that sometimes points to an imminent Armageddon.¹⁴ In contrast to the virulent anti-Catholicism of traditional American nativism, the movements of the 1930s suggest that it came to be superseded by anti-Semitism in the vocabulary of right-wing groups.¹⁵ The penchant for paramilitary organization – the 'Khaki Shirts', the 'Silver Shirt Legion', the 'Black Legion' – seem to prefigure the armed survivalist encampments of the 1970s and 1980s, as does the admiration for the Nazis and the implacable hostility towards the federal government. The 'Silver Shirt' leader, William Dudley Pelley, anticipated the current combination of religious and occult beliefs in his own quirky fusion of millenarianism with spiritualism.¹⁶

But, again, these anticipations are suggestive of the present without being identical to it. Contemporary right-wing organizations do indeed contain past associates of Winrod, Smith, Pelley, and Rockwell, but despite these linkages to the past, the differences seem more important than the similarities. In the first place, the 'American Fascism' of the 1930s and 1940s indulged in a rhetoric of violence but rarely committed violent acts. The strut and trappings of military action took the place of the action itself. The contemporary movements are rather different, for their involvement in acts of violence is in many cases beyond dispute. They not only favor the violent overthrow of the government, they appear to believe that it is actually possible. A central text of the movement, the novel *The Turner Diaries*, pseudonymously authored by William Pierce, the leader of the National Alliance, purports to offer a blueprint for the overthrow of the national government by a small and dedicated cadre of

terrorists and guerrillas.¹⁷ The resemblance between the activities of The Order and the early chapters of *The Turner Diaries* suggests that the latter served as the inspiration for the former.¹⁸

If indeed such groups show a preference for 'the propaganda of the deed', it is not for lack of ideas themselves. Their predecessor movements cared little for ideology. Core beliefs were few and simple, representing the articulation of social and economic resentments. There was little attempt to rationalize political goals in terms of an all-embracing worldview. Or – perhaps more accurately – the worldview of earlier organizations was shared with nonmembers in the communities from which they came, the folk beliefs of small-town Protestant America over which a special set of emphases was superimposed. There was little need to fully articulate a worldview that already permeated the milieu in which they lived. The groups with which we are concerned do not build upon pre-existing values and beliefs. There is not nearly the same sense as in the past that they somehow grow organically out of a particular cultural soil, as did the Klan of the 1920s or Gerald Winrod's politicized fundamentalism. Instead, the ideological break with prevailing American beliefs is dramatic and therefore requires the articulation of a worldview that in the past was generally left unsaid.

The 'white supremacist constellation' advances a worldview that is complex, all-embracing, and culturally deviant. It is occasionally buttressed by the kind of pseudoscholarship Richard Hofstadter associated with 'the paranoid political style'.¹⁹ This worldview consists of elements each of which may be found prior to its appearance among 'white supremacists', but that have hitherto not appeared in the same combination, and it is precisely the combination that gives to this belief system, which I will call 'the white supremacist synthesis', its singular character.

The 'white supremacist synthesis' is a millenarian belief system made up of five interrelated elements. Let me first enumerate these elements, then examine each in detail, and finally suggest something of their interrelationships and political implications. The elements are:

1. *'Identity' theology*, the belief that persons of northern and western European origin are direct biological descendants of the 'Lost Tribes' of Israel.
2. *Racial superiority*, a hierarchy with white 'Aryans' at the top, Blacks and Asians below, and Jews at the bottom.
3. *A world Jewish conspiracy* that, since the creation of the white race, has sought to destroy it.
4. The model of *Nazism* as the appropriate political vehicle for securing racial purity.

5. A *millenarian* view of history that emphasizes the imminence of the 'latter days'.

IV. The 'White Supremacist Synthesis'

This mixture of religious and secular elements has been drawn from a variety of sources, including European racial theory, political anti-Semitism, and Protestant millennialism. Limits of space make it impossible to do more than sketch these origins and the equally fascinating question of how the beliefs were transmitted to those who presently employ them. The emphasis here will consequently be on describing this complex of beliefs, leaving to another time the issue of how they came to be combined in this fashion. A major link appears to have been the *Dearborn Independent*, purchased by Henry Ford in 1919 and openly anti-Semitic by the following year. The *Independent* popularized the conspiracy theory contained in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* through a series, *The International Jew*. More to the point, the *Independent's* editor, William Cameron, apparently shared many of the religious commitments associated with 'Identity' beliefs.²⁰ Tantalizing as this link may be, it begs the question insofar as it leaves unresolved the problem of why the connection between anti-Semitism and 'Identity' beliefs, established almost 70 years ago, became prominent in American anti-Semitism only within the last few decades. As I suggest later on, the catalyst may have been the recently intensified climate of millenarian expectation and speculation associated with the rise of fundamentalism.

'Identity' Theology

If any belief may be taken to be both central to and characteristic of contemporary 'white supremacy', it is 'Identity' theology. 'Identity' theology is also the most obscure of the five elements and therefore the least well understood. For these reasons, I will explore it first and at somewhat greater length than the others.

'Identity' theology was the creation of the 'British-Israel' movement (sometimes referred to as 'Anglo-Israelism'). Although it had precursors in the early nineteenth century, 'British Israelism' as an organized movement was a product of Victorian England. While developing a distinctive set of beliefs, it considered them compatible with both the Anglican and Non-Conforming churches, whose members could be 'British Israelites' without separating from their original religious affiliations. The principal claim of 'British Israelism' was that the ten northern tribes of Biblical Israel had not been 'lost' to history but had migrated northwestwards, eventually reaching Europe. This conjecture, advanced as a certainty by 'Anglo-Israelites', was based upon elaborate though highly questionable

interpretations of archaeological and linguistic evidence, as well as by assertions that the history of European peoples fulfilled Biblical prophecies. 'British Israelism', never monolithic, was divided between purists who identified only Anglo-Saxon peoples with the early Israelites and so-called 'Teutonists' who extended the identity to Germanic peoples as well. The religious significance of this revisionist history should be obvious: it allowed the British (or other western Europeans) to claim not only direct Israelite ancestry but to claim as well that Biblical prophecies would be fulfilled directly through them. They were not merely the metaphorical 'new Israel', as the church had long asserted, but the literal, biological Israel.²¹

It required only a little adaptation to transfer 'Identity' theology to America. Indeed, the early 'British-Israel' writers had recognized that America would logically have to have a salvationist role, given its cultural and demographic connections with England. 'Though separated from us now, as predicted, their destiny is evidently identical with ours; and the future of the Anglo-Saxon race is, clearly and unmistakably, the ultimate dominion of the world, under Christ their King in the Millennium.'²² The Americanization of 'British Israelism' was most completely accomplished by a non-'white supremacist', Herbert W. Armstrong, whose Worldwide Church of God advances a 'British Israelism' in which the United States has the leading role in the fulfillment of eschatological prophecies.²³

In light of the use 'white supremacists' have made of 'British Israelism's' 'Identity' theology, it is important to bear two points in mind about the original version. First, 'British Israelism' was highly supportive, rather than subversive, of the political status quo. Second, it was no more tinged with anti-Semitism than was evangelical Protestantism generally. As to its original political orientation, it proved to be one of unalloyed support for British imperialism, for if, after all, the British people actually *were* Israel, then their political success was God's will rather than simply good fortune or the advantage of the stronger. As one writer put it, the role of Britain was nothing less than 'to carry Jacob's blessing to all the families of the earth, and to prepare the way for the Second Coming of the Lord'.²⁴ Among the majority of 'Identity' believers who were not 'Teutonists', Germany had no comparable role, precisely the anti-German stance one would have expected of patriotic Englishmen during the heyday of Anglo-German rivalry. Indeed, they went so far as to suggest that the Germans might actually be descended not from Israelites but from 'the Assyrian conquerors of Israel'.²⁵

'British Israelism' was not conspicuously racist, which is only to say that it was no more but also no less infused with concepts of race superiority than English society generally. It was taken for granted that non-white peoples had inferior mental capacities, and that whites possessed the right to rule over them.²⁶ 'British Israelites' writing in the 1930s carried forward

the antipathy toward Germany to the extent of asserting that 'there is no Aryan race', and that Germans are racially mixed 'in spite of the wish of the late German Emperor and of Herr Hitler . . .'.²⁷

As far as Jews were concerned, 'British Israelites' were willing to concede that they too were Israelites, although it was claimed that they had been cursed by God for rejecting and crucifying Christ. In time, and in accordance with the millennial script, they would be returned to Palestine, there to embrace Christianity in the Last Days.²⁸ In the meantime, it was entirely appropriate for Britain to protect them so that they could act out their eschatological role, just as the divine plan required Britain to seize Palestine from the Turks.²⁹

This necessarily brief summary of 'Identity' theology as it developed in 'British Israelism' should be sufficient to suggest that substantial modifications were required before it could serve 'white supremacist' purposes. In the first place, it was desirable from their standpoint to utilize the 'Teutonic' variant, the better to justify their admiration for the Nazis and to accentuate the division between white and non-white peoples. As the Aryan Nations puts it: 'we believe that the true, literal children of the Bible are the 12 [sic] tribes of Israel which are now scattered throughout the world and are known as the Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, Scandinavian, Teutonic people of this earth'.³⁰ Who is and is not included can become complex, as it does in the hands of William Potter Gale, head of the Ministry of Christ Church, and the founder of the paramilitary California Rangers. It was Gale who in 1963 introduced 'Identity' theology to Richard Girt Butler, who would go on to head the Aryan Nations and the Church of Jesus Christ Christian.³¹ Gale argues that each Biblical tribe fathered a specific European people: Dan became Denmark, Issachar became Finland, Simeon became Spain, Zebulun became France, and so on. Joseph divided into Ephraim, which became England, and Manasseh, which became the United States.³² This type of parallelism is common in 'British-Israel' thought, but becomes particularly important in a 'white supremacist' context, where descendants and non-descendants correspond to good and evil forces. America, of course, is given a pre-eminent role, exceeding even the rosiest promises of 'British Israelites'. Not only has the United States benefited from Israelite descent, the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution (although only through the tenth amendment) were directly given by God.³³

'British Israelites' were fond of saying that 'all Jews are Israelites, but not all Israelites are Jews', a position clearly unacceptable to 'white supremacists', for whom it has been necessary not simply to bestow the status of 'Israelite' on 'Aryans', but to take it away from Jews. This has been accomplished by adding to the eccentricities of 'British Israelism' an even stranger set of racial theories.

Racialism

It is no surprise that movements of this kind insist on the inequality of races. Unlike other racist groups that base their position on the allegedly inferior abilities of non-whites, 'white supremacists' have introduced a much more elaborate conception based upon quasi-biblical ideas concerning the origins of races. Their position may best be understood in the context of the eighteenth-century debate on racial origins between 'monogenists' and 'polygenists'. Monogenists, taking as their starting point the Biblical account of the creation and progeny of Adam, assumed that all races could claim common descent from him. Differences developed – again according to the Biblical account – only with the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japhet, from each of whom different racial groups sprang. Polygenists, by contrast, were willing only to trace the origin of whites to Adam, positing separate creation for non-white groups. While this position comforted those in need of a belief in the inherent superiority of whites, its obvious problem lay in its implicit conflict with religious orthodoxy, since on the face of it Adam stood as the progenitor of all humankind.³⁴

The 'white supremacist synthesis' seeks to resolve this conflict between the polygenist theory of racial origins and the Biblical account. Richard Girtt Butler's mentor, William Potter Gale, posits a convoluted racial theory that simultaneously utilizes Bishop Ussher's literalist chronology of the Bible and scientific evidence about human origins. The former convinces him that God created Adam 7,400 years ago, while the latter persuades him that human beings of some kind were present on earth over a million years ago. Those whose bones scientists have discovered are therefore the 'Asiatics and Negroes [created] long BEFORE the advent of Adam and Eve'.³⁵ The scientific evidence is convenient not only because, when combined with the traditionalist dating of Adam's creation, it seems to separate white from non-white origins. It also allows Gale to claim that during the million-plus years that separate the creation of non-whites from whites, the non-whites were unable to create a civilization. Adam and the white race began 7,400 years ago, he claims, and 'civilization' in 5,500 B.C. (that is, at the same time). Ergo: civilization becomes a white creation.

Gale is not, however, satisfied merely to date the appearance of the races. It is equally important that he knows *where* Adam and the white race were created, that is, the location of the Garden of Eden. This was a staple question for medieval geographers, of course, and it retained enough force in the Renaissance to fascinate Columbus.³⁶ Gale pursues this ancient objective by trying to tease meanings from the cryptic clues in the account of Genesis. Unlike Columbus, who was tempted to place the

Garden in the western hemisphere, Gale puts it in central Asia: 'Only the Pamir Plateau', he writes, '... answers to the geographical conditions described in Genesis ...'.³⁷ An Asian Eden has the advantage of associating whites with a primeval race of 'Aryans': 'the cradle of the Adamic or Aryan race [lies] in these mysterious mountains ...'.³⁸

For all Gale's Biblicism, the irony here is that the obsession with a fair-skinned Central Asian 'Aryan' race was primarily a concern of nineteenth and early twentieth-century European occultists, including many theosophists, from whom it seeped into the thinking of such Nazi ideologues as Alfred Rosenberg.³⁹ To the Aryan Nations, led by Gale's protege Richard Butler, 'The Bible is the family history of the White Race only'.⁴⁰

The white lineage thus traced becomes for 'white supremacists' a mandate for political control. 'The purpose of our embodiment', writes Gale, 'is to bring Christ's Kingdom (GOVERNMENT) to this earth'.⁴¹ In this context, God's injunction to Adam to have dominion over the earth has a quite untraditional meaning, for instead of being taken to refer to control over fish, birds, and animals, it means to the 'white supremacists' that 'God's intended purpose was that His racial kinsmen were to be in charge of this earth', although through 'deception' the white race has been tricked out of its birthright of supremacy.⁴² This gives a peculiar edge to the quest for political power, combining divine sanction with the resentment of the disinherited. As The Covenant, Sword and Arm of the Lord put it: 'We believe that God is raising up a remnant out of the nations, giving them the Spirit of Sonship, to grow them into perfection, to be manifested as mature Sons of God, who walk in his image upon this earth, and who will rule and reign upon earth as his Elect.'⁴³ In short, 'white supremacist' racial theory is based upon belief in a kind of cosmic swindle, in which the birthright of the 'Aryan' race has been taken from it, so that where it should exercise total domination over its racial inferiors, it must acquiesce in their parity or even dominance. Little wonder, then, that 'white supremacists' have an obsessive concern to explain the deception and wreak vengeance on the putative deceivers, who in their cosmology are invariably Jews.

The 'Jewish Conspiracy'

While social and theological anti-Semitism have deep roots in the West, political anti-Semitism is much more recent, having made its appearance in Europe only at the end of the nineteenth century. Its central text, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, was forged in France in the late 1890s at the height of the Dreyfus Affair, transmitted to Russia, and then diffused internationally.⁴⁴ Comparable ideas appear to have been floating about in America at around the same time, often on the fringes of Populism, but no

document of comparable influence appeared here until *The International Jew* in the 1920s.⁴⁵ Whether as relatively inarticulate folk-beliefs or as carefully crafted forgeries, *fin-de-siècle* anti-Semitism centered upon the idea of a vast, unimaginably cunning cabal, 'a secret Jewish government which through a world-wide network of camouflaged agencies and organizations, controls political parties and governments, the press and public opinion, banks and economic development', all directed, so the conspiratorialists insist, toward the aim of Jewish world rule.⁴⁶ The appeal of such a view was sometimes considerable, particularly in situations where large numbers of people felt themselves vulnerable to an economic system they neither understood nor controlled, and where the movements of national public opinion often appeared as mysterious as those of the banking system and the stock market.

Political anti-Semitism thus retailed the conspiracy theory to publics anxious to account for otherwise mysterious forces of harm and influence. By identifying these forces with Jews, the purveyors of the conspiracy theory were secularizing the medieval Christian tradition that the Jews were in league with the Devil, who they were alleged to worship and serve.⁴⁷ If the nineteenth-century theory of a world Jewish conspiracy secularized this traditional view of the demonic Jew, then the 'white supremacist synthesis' reverses this tendency: it has taken the conspiracy theory of European political anti-Semitism and, in a sense, 'redemonized' it.

To 'white supremacists', Jews are the children of the Devil. 'We believe', the Aryan Nations assert, 'that there are literal children of Satan in the world today'.⁴⁸ If this, too, smacks of the occult, it receives the appropriate overlay of Biblical interpretation, for 'original sin' becomes nothing less than the sexual seduction of Eve by Satan.⁴⁹ The offspring of this liaison was the soon-to-be-cursed Cain, from whom Jews are deemed to descend. Where the original 'British Israelites' made themselves Israelites but raised no substantial question about the link between Jews and Israelites of the Bible, the 'white supremacists' complete the inversion: not only are all white 'Aryans' really Israelites, but Jews have no connection whatever with Israelites. Far from it, they are the biological offspring of Satan. William Potter Gale embroiders the notion further by suggesting that prior to the seduction in the Garden of Eden, Satan had also had sexual relations with older races, that is, with African and Asian peoples. He can thus explain the existence of Jews who do not 'look Jewish', while emphasizing the global nature of the threat.⁵⁰

The Role of Nazism

Given their fondness for the Bible and their insistence that Jesus was an 'Aryan', the 'white supremacists' manage to ignore the anti-Christian

character of Nazi doctrine and policy. Instead, they appropriate the Nazi view of history as a battle between Jews and 'Aryans'. 'White supremacist' rhetoric, particularly where Jews are concerned, might be lifted directly from Nazi propaganda: 'The Jew is . . . the cancer invading the Aryan body politic to break down and destroy the dross [sic] from Aryan culture and racial purity . . .'.⁵¹

The underlying sympathy for Nazi anti-Semitism has led 'white supremacists' to links with German neo-Nazis, who have sometimes been present at the International Congress of Aryan Nations, held periodically at the Aryan Nations' compound in Hayden Lake, Idaho. It has also led to acceptance of the so-called 'revisionist' view of the Holocaust, which claims that the charge of Nazi genocide has no historical basis and is a Jewish fabrication to further some devious purpose.⁵² Nazism, therefore, is advanced as a kind of prototype of the polity 'white supremacists' will establish, in which lower orders will be either dominated or exterminated, depending upon their place in the racial hierarchy.

Millennialism

All of these strands – the 'Identity' theology, the racialism, the belief in a world Jewish conspiracy, and the admiration for Nazism – come together in the 'white supremacists' millenarian view of history. For this is in fact a millenarian vision, however strange and mixed its components.

The writings of 'British Israelism' had already made clear that acceptance of 'Identity' – the belief that some Europeans were identical to the 'Ten Lost Tribes' – was perfectly compatible with millennialism. In particular, many 'British Israelites' saw it as integrally related to the pre-millennialist position, in which the thousand-year Kingdom of God would not begin until the return of Christ to earth. Pre-millennialism and 'Identity' theology came together in the belief that as yet unfulfilled Biblical prophecies should be re-examined in light of the history of the newly discovered English, European or American Israel. Thus, the history and politics of England, or Europe, or America (depending upon one's version of 'Identity') became evidence of the fulfillment of prophecy 'in these "latter days"'.⁵³

The 'latter days', according to many 'British Israelites', would not be pleasant. There would be wars and turmoil ('the great tribulation'), during which Russia would invade Palestine in preparation for Armageddon. Towards the end of this period of tumult, the saved will be 'raptured', to rise to meet Christ in the air just prior to his return.⁵⁴ Like such popular contemporary religious writers as Hal Lindsey, 'British Israelites', too, were much indebted to the dispensationalist version of pre-millennialism. While 'British Israelism' never sought to enforce an orthodoxy on such points as the Second Coming or the Rapture,⁵⁵ the

presence of strong dispensational elements in 'British-Israel' writing suggests both its pervasiveness and its compatibility with 'Identity' theology.

Many of these same concepts reappear in the version of 'Identity' promulgated by 'white supremacists'. They, too, anticipate an imminent end to history, accompanied by the physical Second Coming promised by pre-millennialism. The Christ they expect, however, will be non-Jewish, white and 'Aryan'. And, like some 'British Israelites', they assume the saved will have to live through all or most of the Tribulation, hunkering down as social order collapses about them in the seven years between the beginning of the Tribulation and the Second Coming. As 'post-Tribulationists', they do not count on an early Rapture to free the saved from earthly conflict. The Arizona 'Identity' preacher, the late Sheldon Emry, did not mince words with the faithful:

The nominal Christians and nominal Patriots really have no vision to sustain them in the great trials to come. This is especially true of all those who believe the false 'rapture' doctrine. The Kingdom-Identity Truth does not just tell you that you will remain on earth during this last battle, it gives you instruction, hope and strength as you join in and are used of God in that battle.⁵⁶

If 'white supremacist' doctrine differs at all from post-Tribulationist pre-millennialism, it is in its strong dualism. Its aberrant Christianity sometimes verges on Manicheanism in the juxtaposition of positive and negative forces, which, as the Aryan Nations puts it, requires 'a battle . . . between the children of darkness (today known as Jews) and the children of light (God), the Aryan race, the true Israel of the Bible'. The 'day of reckoning' between good and evil will not simply usher in the traditional millennium of saintly rule, but will be the final realization of the 'white supremacists'' revenge fantasies: 'The usurper will be thrown out by the terrible might of Yahweh's people as they return to their roots and their special destiny', in the final undoing of the cosmic deception that began with Satan's seduction of Eve in the Garden.⁵⁷

V. Conclusion

The belief system just outlined provides a far more sweeping basis for anti-Semitism than was true even of traditional Christianity, which fastened upon charges of Jewish rejection and deicide. It is more sweeping, too, than most of the political anti-Semitism that has festered since the 1890s, and which concentrated on allegations of Jewish disloyalty, cunning, and lust for power and gold. Political anti-Semitism had *detheologized* hatred of the Jew, so that the hatred could be packaged as a secular political

program. The 'white supremacists' *retheologize* it, grafting it onto a new set of religious roots.

Its millenarian ideology, compounded of such oddly assorted elements, nonetheless possesses attributes that help to explain its attraction to adherents as well as its dangers: it is non-falsifiable; of cosmic relevance; directed towards imminently unfolding events; claiming to be the revelation of a hidden truth; and, requiring particular political strategies. Let us examine each of these attributes in turn.

The non-falsifiability of the 'white supremacist synthesis' flows from its conspiratorialism, for it is in the nature of conspiracy theories that they defy empirical testing.⁵⁸ When seemingly contradictory evidence appears, the very existence of that evidence invalidates it, since its existence is taken as proof of how diabolically clever the conspiracy is; planting disinformation to confound those who would expose it. Hence there is no information that might convince a believer that his or her beliefs are invalid. Since the conspiracy is believed to be at once unscrupulous and powerful, it is deemed to be both willing and able to engage in a perpetual campaign of deceit and misrepresentation. Since, according to the Aryan Nations, 'our race has been deceived into rejecting this divine order' since the time of Adam and Eve,⁵⁹ no present deception is deemed to be too outlandish to be credible.

The magnitude of deception seems reasonable to believers in part because of what they believe to be at stake – nothing less than the fate of the world. This is no mere conflict of interest, as political anti-Semitism sometimes alleged, but the most important struggle in world history. Small wonder, then, that 'white supremacists' impute such deviousness to their adversary.

Onto the elements of 'Identity' theology and a Jewish conspiracy, 'white supremacists' have superimposed the millennial timetable favored by dispensationalists. The prophetic 'clock' has begun to run, we are approaching 'the latter days', at the verge of the Tribulation itself. Hence the battle against the Jews, this struggle of cosmic import, is about to enter its final phase.

And, of course, no one knows this but the 'white supremacists', who see themselves as possessors of a hidden truth. This confers both a sense of chosenness and a sense of isolation. The chosenness offers psychic benefits, while at the same time it reinforces the process by which 'white supremacists' seek to appropriate Jewish theological claims for themselves. While chosenness allows 'white supremacists' to think of themselves as God's spiritual elite, at the same time it isolates them from all those who are either unaware of their 'truth' or reject it. This extends to the vast majority of their fellow whites and nominal co-religionists. They must explain why, if their interpretation of the Bible is correct, only they

have been able to discover it and have thus far failed to persuade other Christians. Their explanation is that other Christians have been incorrectly taught through ignorance or malice. 'Why do [Christian clergymen] not preach the Gospel that Jesus is said to preach – the Gospel of the Kingdom?' asks William Potter Gale.⁶⁰ Because, he answers, 'the theologians have missed the boat'.⁶¹ They have not understood, because of intellectual failings and inaccurate translations. Others are not so sure that only inadvertence is involved. The late Wesley Swift, whose congregation Richard Girnt Butler attended before forming his own church,⁶² saw a conspiracy of liberal clerics: 'The Anti-Christ in the pulpit have one objective, and that is to paralyze the people by obstructing their vision and not proclaiming the Oracle of The Almighty.'⁶³

More recently, this sense of a hidden truth has alienated 'white supremacists' from the most politically and theologically conservative elements of American Protestantism, for 'white supremacists' are implacably hostile toward fundamentalists in general and the New Christian Right in particular. Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and other 'televangelists' have been conspicuous for their steadfast support of Israel, whose survival as a Jewish state is essential for their own dispensationalist scenario of the 'latter days'. Nor do they accept the 'white supremacists'' 'Identity' theology or their position on race. As a result they have been bitterly attacked by 'white supremacists', nowhere more so than in the writings of 'Jack' Mohr, an anti-Semitic publicist and paramilitary organizer, who ties America's problems to its support of Israel. Nothing enrages Mohr and other 'white supremacists' quite so much as evidence of Jewish-Christian cooperation: '... you fundamentalist preachers have given your people the idea that the Jews worship the same God we Christians do, even when they deny His Son Any preacher who bids God speed to one who denies Jesus Christ, becomes one with him'.⁶⁴

Despite the bitter hostility from 'white supremacists' fundamentalists have on another level unintentionally increased receptivity to the 'white supremacist synthesis'. Through their mastery of modern communications, fundamentalists have blanketed America with a chiliastic message. Through cable television, mass-market paperbacks, and audio tapes, their millenarian sensibility has been transmitted to a national audience. Expectations of an imminent Tribulation, climaxing in Armageddon and the Second Coming, are no longer the esoteric doctrines of small sectarian groups, but have become prominent aspects of American religiosity. Exploiting this apocalyptic ethos, 'white supremacists' present in a distorted version a scenario recognizable to anyone familiar with the dramatic symbolic universe of dispensational pre-millennialism.

The belief that one possesses a secret truth of transcendent significance provides the link between ideas and action, for such a belief, reinforced by the expectation of imminent millennial change, can scarcely be held in isolation from behavior. Advocacy alone seems insufficient to the scope and immediacy of the task, and as a result, 'white supremacists' tend to follow their ideas out to logical political consequences, even when those consequences involve violence. Unlike other dispensational pre-millennialists, who believe in millenarian immediacy but continue to support the status quo and lead lives not readily distinguishable from those of non-believers,⁶⁵ 'white supremacists' possess an ideology much more likely to be translated into immediate and radical action.

'White supremacists' believe the United States is in the grip of 'ZOG', their acronym for 'Zionist Occupation Government'. Hence, from a political standpoint, the country has been corrupted beyond hope of reform. From their point of view, therefore, reform is impossible; it is hopeless to work within the system.⁶⁶ While the New Christian Right has moved with enthusiasm into the political arena to lobby for legislation, to back candidates and even field them, the 'white supremacists' perceive the political process as closed. In contrast, another and obviously quite different kind of post-Tribulationist pre-millenarian, Pat Robertson, entered the political arena with gusto. Having foresworn conventional methods of achieving political change, 'white supremacists' have opted for two distinguishable but related strategies, physical separation from the society and terrorism and guerrilla warfare.

Physical separation has been a common and sometimes honored strategy for those that perceive themselves to be radically different from the society around them, employed by groups as diverse as the Shakers, Mormons, and Amish. Millennialists have withdrawn into communal groups for two reasons: They have sometimes done so in response to failed millenarian predictions. As Leon Festinger has argued,⁶⁷ disconfirmed predictions can stimulate a group to further activity. This may include proselytizing, as he suggests, or it may involve the elaboration of a distinctive communal way of life, where cherished beliefs are reinforced and social intimacy provides substitute gratifications for the millennium that did not arrive. Alternatively, however, millennialists may withdraw before the predicted transformation as a way for the virtuous to separate themselves from a condemned and corrupted world.

'White supremacists', in their fortified bunkers and compounds, belong to the second group. In such redoubts as the Aryan Nations compound at Hayden Lake, Idaho, the now disbanded CSA settlement of Zarephath-Horeb on the Missouri-Arkansas border, and countless more obscure communities, 'white supremacists' have attempted to organize to survive the rigors promised by their millenarian reading of events. They have,

however, joined religious justifications for communal withdrawal with a secular political strategy.

The religious justification for their withdrawal arises out of their post-Tribulationist orientation.⁶⁸ The Tribulation will be a time of chaos and violence, a point agreed upon by virtually all dispensationalists regardless of their other religious and political differences. Effective government may break down for a time, and, conversely, the Anti-Christ will impose his tyrannical rule. War will surely be part of this period. It is not unusual for post-Tribulationists to counsel organized measures to ensure survival. This general fear of the Tribulation is increased for 'white supremacists', for whom Anti-Christ is virtually by definition a Jew, and whose conceptions of social chaos run to visions of race warfare. These considerations suggest an overlap between the siege mentality of 'white supremacists' and the phenomenon of 'survivalism'.

'Survivalism' is much discussed but largely unstudied. It refers to the belief that life must be organized around the need of individuals, families, or other groups to survive catastrophes so severe that they will imperil the functioning of social institutions. These catastrophes might include anything from nuclear war to massive earthquakes. It should be clear that one might, for whatever reasons, be a survivalist without having any affiliation with or sympathy for 'white supremacist' organizations, just as one might be a pre-millennialist yet be hostile to the 'white supremacist' cause. Nonetheless, a high proportion of 'white supremacists' appear to be survivalists, in the belief that only the attainment of maximum self-sufficiency can protect them from the future breakdown of ordered social life. Their penchant for paramilitary exercises and organization is part of the same concern, for they foresee a future in which, as an embattled minority, they will have to defend themselves in an environment where law and order has broken down.

Yet, in one respect, the desire for physical separation has political roots independent of the desire to survive future calamities. 'White supremacists' speak frequently of communal settlements as the seeds of an eventual independent 'Aryan' nation in the Pacific Northwest. This 'territorial sanctuary', with a 'provisional government', is to cover Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming and Montana.⁶⁹

However, for some 'white supremacists' the option of physical separation, whether in communal settlements or as territorial secession, has been unpalatable. Equally opposed to any involvement with the existing political system, these intransigents have been less concerned with surviving the Tribulation than with bringing down 'ZOG' as quickly as possible and advancing their genocidal political program. This segment of the movement, epitomized by The Order, believes in the necessity and practicality of a violent overthrow of the government, presumably so that

an 'Aryan' state might be declared prior to the Tribulation. Indeed, in some of the most extreme formulations, proponents of guerrilla warfare urge seizure of American nuclear weapons so that they can be used to destroy Israel.⁷⁰

There is an obvious conflict between the quietism implied by communal settlements and the melodramatic fascination with crime, terrorism, and nuclear weapons. If not fully resolvable, the contradiction can nonetheless be explored on several levels. In the first place, the concept of settlements as nuclei for an eventual 'Aryan' state constitutes a bizarre and psychologically telling mirror-image of the Jewish settlement process in Israel. There is no indication that this model has been consciously adopted, but at an unconscious level it may represent a further effort to appropriate Jewish claims and motifs, just as 'Identity' theology seeks to appropriate the rubric of 'chosen people'. Second, the combination of Tribulation-oriented withdrawal and a campaign directed at 'Aryan' self-determination may represent an attempt to bridge different constituencies, the one receptive to religious appeals, the other oriented towards concrete political action. Third, the combination may express a phenomenon predicted by Timothy Weber in 1983: the movement of dispensationalists toward increasingly imminent and precise predictions of the end-time.⁷¹ To the extent that 'white supremacists', together with mainstream dispensationalists, may have been drawn into a dynamic of ever-nearer millennial events, they may also be drawn into the paradox of action directed to produce an already predetermined outcome. Fourth, many 'white supremacists' believe that there exists what might be termed a technology of insurgency, that is, a body of ideas, doctrines, and practices to allow small groups of well-trained and armed combatants to bring down an apparently powerful and stable government. Already well developed on the revolutionary Left, this technique-oriented point of view may have entered 'white supremacist' circles through Vietnam veterans, although it has also been cultivated by paramilitary groups claiming to train for resistance against a future Soviet occupation of the United States. However unrealistic such beliefs, they obviously would be particularly attractive to groups that, like these, have been unable to attract a mass following. Their danger lies, of course, in the encouragement they provide for violent risk-taking.

Finally, the attractiveness of nuclear weapons as a kind of chiliastic 'lever' requires special attention. Although there is no evidence that 'white supremacist' groups have taken any steps toward securing access to nuclear weapons, the presence of the theme in *The Turner Diaries*, a book virtually canonical for the movement, demands that the idea be taken seriously. On the one hand, the activation of a nuclear attack appears to be the antithesis of the dispensationalist posture of watchful waiting. On the

other hand, nuclear weapons possess a special eschatological significance, differentiating them from all other weaponry. By seeming to incorporate cosmic energy, and by possessing the ability to destroy organized human life on earth, they have in appearance (if not in doctrine) transferred world-destroying capabilities from the hands of the deity to the hands of human beings.⁷² Hence the temptation to utilize them in a millenarian scenario, for by so doing, the millenarian stands in God's place as the arbiter of human destiny.

In short, although its numbers are small, this is a movement that bears watching, for in its commitment to the use of violence and in the breadth and eccentricity of its beliefs it suggests previously uncharted but dangerous directions in which American millennialism might move.

NOTES

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54. Aldersmith, 'The Second Advent of Christ', in Hanan and Aldersmith, *British-Israel Truth*, pp.223–32.
55. Aldersmith, 'The Second Advent of Christ', in Hanan and Aldersmith, *British-Israel Truth*, p.233.
56. Quoted in Zeskind, *The 'Christian Identity' Movement*, p.37.
57. 'This is Aryan Nations'.
58. Barkun, *Disaster and the Millennium*, p.152.
59. 'This is Aryan Nations'.
60. Gale, *Identity*, p.2 (emphasis in original).
61. Gale, *Identity*, p.3.
62. 'The "Identity Churches"'
63. Quoted in Zeskind, *The 'Christian Identity' Movement*, p.24.
64. Quoted in Zeskind, *The 'Christian Identity' Movement*, p.27.
65. A.G. Mojtabei, *Blessed Assurance: At Home with the Bomb in Amarillo, Texas* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), Part III.
66. An exception is the effort by Posse Comitatus and other agrarian protest groups to induce farmers to file legal proceedings for the purpose of harassing public officials and relieving farmers of debt burdens, *Extremism on the Right*, p.45. James Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: The Rise of the Survivalist Right* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1987), pp.116–20.
67. Leon Festinger, et al., *When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group That Predicted the Destruction of the World* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966).
68. Zeskind, *The 'Christian Identity' Movement*, p.20.
69. Bennett, *The Party of Fear*, p.350. Simon Winchester, 'Hayden Lake', *Present Tense* 14 (May–June 1987), 6–10.
70. The theme of a nuclear attack on Israel appears in *The Turner Diaries*. Allen D. Sapp, 'A Philosophy of Terrorism and Expressed in *The Turner Diaries*' (Center for Criminal Justice Research, Central Missouri State University, 1986).
71. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, p.242.

72. Michael Barkun, 'The Language of Apocalypse: Premillennialists and Nuclear War', in Marshall W. Fishwick and Ray B. Browne (eds.), *The God Pumpers: Religion in the Electronic Age* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), pp.159-73. Ira Chernus, 'Mythologies of Nuclear War', *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50 (1982), 255-73.