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# The Revolutionary Model of Dr William L. Pierce

GEORGE MICHAEL

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This essay explores the revolutionary model propounded by the late Dr William L. Pierce, the founder of the National Alliance. Pierce was keenly aware of the opposition arrayed against his movement and thus outlined a strategy that he saw as viable under current conditions. Although his National Alliance organization was large by American far right standards, it still constituted a relatively small movement. Furthermore, Pierce assumed that the mainstream media were generally hostile to his message. Thus Pierce developed a revolutionary strategy to take these and other factors into account. Although no previous single source fully captured his revolutionary strategy, this essay surveys his previous writings and broadcasts so that his model comes into clearer focus.

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## Introduction

The late founder and leader of the National Alliance, Dr William L. Pierce (1933–2002), was arguably the most influential revolutionary theorist that the American far right ever produced. His novel, *The Turner Diaries*, gained him considerable notoriety and was even thought to have inspired several episodes of right-wing violence including the campaigns of the Order and the Aryan Republican Army, the Oklahoma City bombing, and the London bombing spree of David Copeland.<sup>1</sup> His sequel, *Hunter*, was alleged to have contributed to the popularity of the ‘leaderless resistance’ approach favored by some right-wing advocates of terrorism.

In the fractious milieu of the American far right, Pierce was seen as somewhat of the elder statesman. He was obviously a man of considerable intelligence – he was once employed as part of a research team at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in New Mexico as well as by a Jet Propulsion laboratory in California. He later earned a PhD in physics from the University of Colorado and went on to become a tenured professor at the University of Oregon. However, he soon tired of academe and in 1966 went to work as the editor of *National Socialist World* – a journal published by the late George Lincoln Rockwell’s American Nazi Party. By 1970 Pierce broke with that organization to join the National Youth Alliance under the

tutelage of Willis Carto. The group soon collapsed, but out of its remnants, Pierce created the National Alliance in 1974, an organization that he would continue to lead until his death in 2002. Pierce is best known for his authorship of *The Turner Diaries* – a fictional story often characterized as a ‘blueprint for revolution’.

Despite the often sensationalist images of instigated race war and impending societal collapse evoked in his novels, in practice, Pierce harbored no illusions of a scenario (at least in the near future) in which mobs of disaffected whites would flock to his movement and overthrow the government in a mass revolutionary upheaval. Indeed, Pierce was a keen reader of his times and realized that, at least in the present political and social climate, the overwhelming majority of his targeted audience (white gentiles) would ignore, or worse, be hostile to his message. Therefore, he repeatedly articulated a strategy that would concentrate on reaching out to, what he referred to, as ‘the perceptive minority’.

In recent years both scholars and journalists have given a considerable amount of attention to Dr Pierce. For example, both Brad Whitsel and Renee Brodie have examined the eschatological and metaphysical aspects of Dr Pierce’s contrived theology, ‘cosmotheism’.<sup>2</sup> More recently, Robert Griffin wrote an excellent biography, which focused on the development of Pierce’s *Weltanschauung*.<sup>3</sup> However, there still remains much confusion as to where Pierce stood on the topics of revolution, propaganda and terrorism. What is more, inasmuch as Pierce attained a veritable cult of personality among the transnational racialist right, which highly regarded his authority, it behooves scholars and other interested observers to gain a better understanding of his revolutionary analysis. To do otherwise would be remiss to one of the most significant contributions to radical right revolutionary theory. This essay explores the revolutionary model as propounded by the late Dr Pierce. Although Pierce never really fully articulated his complete strategy in a single source, it is hoped that by gleaning through his novels, selected American Dissident Voices broadcasts,<sup>4</sup> miscellaneous writings, and a video titled ‘America is a Changing Country’ – released by National Vanguard Books (the publishing arm of the National Alliance) not long before his death – that a clearer picture of Pierce’s revolutionary model comes into focus.

However, to do so, requires the reader to develop at least a somewhat phenomenological understanding of Pierce’s worldview. This is not intended as endorsement or excusal, but rather to seek clarity and comprehension. Therefore, this essay first explains the racial dynamics of Pierce’s worldview and how it impinged on his revolutionary model. Second, the significance of the Second World War and its consequences are briefly discussed so that the reader can gain a better understanding of

how Pierce saw that this epic struggle affected the contemporary era for which his revolutionary model was constructed. Third, the central role of the media in his model is explained. The fourth section examines Pierce's critique of contemporary right-wing terrorism. Pierce's organizational strategy is outlined and explained in the fifth section. The sixth section briefly mentions the millennial vision, which Pierce endeavored to create. Finally, the conclusion speculates on the future and significance of Pierce's model.

### **The Racial Dynamics of Pierce's Worldview**

Race dominated the worldview of William Pierce. He defined race in broad terms to include not only the physical definition of race but also more subjective elements as well including culture and spirituality. He viewed the various European-derived peoples as the evolutionary apex of the human species. Counterpoised against them were Jews, whom Pierce saw as a virtual monolithic and cohesive enemy which worked against whites to prevent the latter from fulfilling its racial destiny. Pierce believed that each race traveled on its own evolutionary trajectory. Although various non-white racial groups may in some historical epochs clash with whites, Pierce did not necessarily see them as inevitable enemies. However, Pierce believed that Jews, as a group, constituted an implacable enemy and existential threat to white gentiles. Furthermore, he argued repeatedly that Jews in the post-Second World War era sought to mobilize non-whites in a veritable race war against whites. To make his case, he frequently cited the involvement of various Jewish individuals and groups in areas such as the Civil Rights movement, immigration policy, and hate crime legislation. Inasmuch as Pierce clearly believed that his race was threatened with extinction, he saw his exhortation to revolution as defensive in order to create a society that would secure its survival.<sup>5</sup>

Rejecting the tradition of American individualism, Pierce tended to see politics through the prism of group dynamics and group competition. He expressed numerous times the hubris of 'individualists' who refused to see the role groups played in history. Furthermore, Pierce believed that some prominent Jewish intellectuals, such as Ayn Rand, deliberately extolled individualism to white gentiles as a way to diminish their ability to compete with Jews.<sup>6</sup> In his estimation America had become an atomized society in which individuals selfishly pursued their self-interests without a sense of responsibility to anything larger than themselves. In social science parlance, one could say Pierce sensed a pervasive anomie in contemporary America. Pierce challenged whites not to think of themselves as mere spectators, but rather as participants in a historical process.

We need to look beyond our bank accounts and our personal hobbies and our immediate circle of friends in order to find purpose. We need to see ourselves set in a larger context. We need to understand how our own lives are important as a part of the world around us: not just the world of here and now, but also the world of the future and the world of the past. We need to see our own lives as a part of the historical process.

When we do this, when we see ourselves in context, then we begin to understand our responsibility, our purpose. We begin to understand what's really important in our lives. We see that we have a responsibility to the people who came before us and made it possible for us to live, the people whose genius and work and sacrifice built our world for us, built our civilization for us, gave us our culture. We have a responsibility to ensure that their toil and sacrifice were not in vain.<sup>7</sup>

According to Pierce, the individual only attains meaning within the context of the group to which he belongs. In his novel *Hunter*, Pierce expressed the notion that whites, unlike other racial and ethnic groups, were not really fully aware of the dynamics of racial competition as one character in the novel explained:

Progress comes when all the competitors in the game struggle for survival, and the most fit wins. Our race isn't struggling. It's lying down and dying. Our job is to wake it up. When it's *trying* to survive, it'll whip all the other races with its hands tied behind its back.<sup>8</sup>

In order to meet this challenge, Pierce exhorted whites to face squarely the danger they faced in a globalized multicultural world. Consistent with this analysis, Pierce saw Jews as a powerful self-interested group, not merely a collection of individuals who happened to share a particular religion. Therefore it was sheer folly to attack only individual Jews as explained by the character William Ryan in *Hunter*:

Now you can convince me that there were lots of German dentists and newsstand operators and university professors who didn't hate Americans and who weren't conspiring against us. They were just ordinary Germans whose hands were full earning a living and raising their families. Some of them may not have agreed with the policies of the government. Is it fair to say that all these Germans were our enemies?

[...] They thought of themselves as members of the German nation, and we were at war with the German nation.

Your Jewish dentist pays his taxes too, with his contributions to the United Jewish Appeal. He may not be in the front lines with the

fellows from B'nai B'rith, but you can bet that he does his part on the home front in lots of little ways. He votes for the politicians who vote for your taxes to be sent to Israel ...

Or maybe your dentist is one of those really rare Jews who doesn't pay a bit of attention to what the B'nai B'rith tells him and doesn't even buy Israel bonds. He still thinks of himself as a member of the Jewish people – the Jewish nation, the Jewish race, whatever you want to call the damned thing – is at war with our people, make no mistake about it.<sup>9</sup>

According to Pierce, the racial struggle between whites and Jews reached its zenith during the Second World War.

### **The Significance of the Second World War and its Consequences**

The Second World War loomed very large in the mind of William Pierce. He viewed this epoch as the most critical watershed in the history of the modern West, the consequences of which are still being felt to this day. Like many other observers, he saw it as an ideological struggle in which democracy triumphed over fascism. This however, according to Pierce, did not redound to the favor of the West, but rather its possible destruction. The war was a defining experience for what has been lionized in popular parlance in recent years as 'the greatest generation'. Furthermore, the victory over fascism came to characterize the American nation in the postwar era and added legitimation to its image as a defender of democratic values in the realm of international relations. However, as Pierce saw it, insofar as Hitler's Third Reich extolled nationalism and racialism, white Americans are now ideologically hamstrung from defending their racial self-interests. According to Pierce, subsequent generations of western men will have to pay for this as they no longer have an ideological basis on which to defend their nations from harmful policies (e.g., massive third world immigration) that will lead to their diminution and ultimate racial extinction. To do otherwise is to repudiate the struggle against fascism and hence the legitimacy of the American mission in the post-war era. For Pierce, the cultural revolution of the 1960s, which so profoundly changed the west, is a natural and direct consequence of the Axis defeat in the Second World War.<sup>10</sup> In his view the rise of the counterculture, which commenced in the 1960s, was no mere spontaneous response to contemporary conditions, but rather a calculated *Kulturkampf* to destroy the underpinnings of Western civilization. As Pierce opined, the anti-war and civil rights movements of this era set the country on a destructive course from which it has yet to recover.<sup>11</sup> The key factor in these

movements, which determined their success, according to Pierce, was the support they received from the mass media.

### **The Centrality of the Media in Pierce's Revolutionary Model**

Perhaps no other strategic factor figured more prominently in Pierce's revolutionary model than that of the media. He repeatedly ascribed great significance to the mass media of news and entertainment in his weekly American Dissident Voices broadcasts. In the media age he saw the media as, well, all powerful. According to Pierce, the media exert enormous influence over the perceptions and the thought processes of their audience. This can range from blatant propaganda to subtle advertising messages, which encourage certain attitudes and lifestyles. What is more, Pierce asserted that politicians and leaders are not immune from the influence of the media either. He contended that although they generally are not as credulous as the masses, they nonetheless fear the power of the media, and as a result, tailor their policies and opinions to conform to popular media messages. To do otherwise would be to risk reprisals such as very negative coverage in the media that could destroy a career.

Furthermore, according to Pierce, the media are not politically neutral in that they only seek to maximize 'the bottom line'. Rather they deliberately work for the destruction of whites in all nations of the West and the United States in particular. To make his point, National Vanguard Books has long published an essay entitled 'Who Rules America', which asserts that the mass media of news and entertainment are disproportionately owned and managed by Jews.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, it is asserted that Jews, as a group, are generally hostile to whites and seek to marginalize them, eventually to extinction, but not through gulags or concentration camps. Allegedly more subtle mechanisms are being employed such as, *inter alia*, encouraging homosexuality, birth control, miscegenation, and non-white immigration.<sup>13</sup>

Why would whites willingly comply with such a putatively diabolical plan against their own interests? According to Pierce, the vast majority of whites – roughly 95 to 98 per cent – are not independent thinkers and will go along with just about anything as long as they perceive it as popular and fashionable. Ironically, Pierce often spoke derisively of 'average' white Americans as he often referred to them as 'couch potatoes', 'ball game fans', 'Sally soccer moms', 'Joe six packs', and 'lemmings'. To Pierce, most white Americans are biologically inclined to conform and obey authority, regardless of what form it may take. This, he argued, developed as part of the evolutionary process and enabled the western man to work together in common endeavors and build complex societies. However, Pierce warned that this predisposition to conform also entailed perils. If

opportunistic leaders, who did not have the interests of their subjects at heart, rose to the helm, the people were disinclined to resist as long as they thought that others would follow as well. Pierce stressed this theme time and again to which he referred it as the lemming factor:

In deciding what to believe, the lemming is interested only in what the other lemmings believe – or in what he thinks they believe. It doesn't do any good at all to try to change a lemming's opinion by showing him factual evidence or by appealing to his ideals. The only way to change a lemming's opinion is to trick him into believing that all of the other lemmings have changed their opinions.<sup>14</sup>

As Pierce saw it, the mass media were used to 'morally disarm' the white population from mounting any effective resistance by inculcating them with a profound sense of guilt and self-doubt through efforts such as Holocaust education programs, emphasizing white racism in the news, and promoting the multiculturalism paradigm, which is often very critical of the West. Moreover, as Pierce saw it, these media also foisted frivolous diversions – ballgames, MTV, escapist movies – upon the masses to keep them in a state of torpidity and apathetic to important issues. Pierce believed that it was futile to try to influence such people as long as 'aliens' maintained an iron grip on the major media. In a sense, Pierce's analysis was not unlike a Marxian critique, which holds that the masses (whites for Pierce, the proletariat for Marx) suffered mentally from 'false consciousness' i.e., they identify with the group interests of their exploiters and oppressors (a coalition of hostile non-whites and liberals led by Jews for Pierce, the capitalist or bourgeois class for Marx). According to Pierce, this false consciousness or 'moral disarmament' as he put it, was instilled by the news and entertainment industry.

### **Pierce's Critique of Contemporary Right-Wing Terrorism**

The reckless image of him that his detractors depicted notwithstanding, Pierce approached the issues of terrorism and revolution in a sober and calculated manner. Although it may be fair to assume that he felt little remorse about right-wing terrorism motivated in part by his writing, he maintained a clear and realistic view of the subject and believed that the societal conditions conducive to such activity had not yet arrived. Commenting on Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombing, Pierce explained.

If one is waging a war against the government, civilians are going to be killed. But you have to look at the bigger picture...Under a

circumstance like that, if it were part of a war, then a bombing of the Oklahoma City sort is morally justified. But if you are going to engage in a war you have to meet certain requirements. One of them is you have to have a plausible strategy, a plan that can be reasonably argued will get you what you want to achieve. If McVeigh was throwing a single punch to send a message, then its moral justification is debatable. You might well say that this was an overly expensive message in that case.<sup>15</sup>

Pierce often spoke disparagingly about several 'lone wolf' right-wing terrorists. Although he may have agreed with them on the basis of ideology and shared goals, he remarked that their efforts were usually at best ineffectual and at worst counterproductive.

Knowledge and discipline, those are the keys to our survival as a people: knowledge of what is really happening in the world and why, and the self-discipline to deal collectively and effectively with the very real threats to the future of our people, rather than expressing our frustration in foolish and undisciplined acts of premature violence. And if our knowledge leads us to anger, to rage of the sort that I felt while living in Washington and of the sort that Benjamin Smith [On the July Fourth weekend of 1999, Benjamin Smith, a former member of the World Church of the Creator who had recently resigned from the organization, embarked on a shooting spree in Illinois and Indiana that left two dead and several injured] presumably felt while attending the very Politically Correct University of Indiana, let us direct that rage not at the random Black or Asian on the street, but rather at the evil creatures who planned the government policies which are putting more and more Blacks and Asians on our streets, policies which are leading America into becoming a non-white country in the next few decades.<sup>16</sup>

[...] Again, if you are angry at America's internal enemies, do not indulge yourself with a foolish, premature, and ineffective act of violence. Control yourself. Don't break laws. Don't even talk about breaking laws. In America today many people are serving long prison terms for simply talking about committing illegal acts without having actually done anything. They are prosecuted under the government's conspiracy laws.

You know, some people who are angry at the government actually applaud acts such as Buford Furrow's shooting up the Jewish community center in Los Angeles. They believe that other people will do similar things, independently, and the government won't know how to deal with it. I mean, if many angry men, who don't even know

one another, all do their shootings and bombings independently and unpredictably, what can the government do to stop them?

Listen, don't kid yourself! The government is perfectly capable of countering illegal violence with illegal violence, and if there's one thing the government is good at its violence....

The monster [US government] is at war against America, against our people, against our freedom, against our traditions, against our children's future, and it is a war to the death. So far the monster is winning that war. If we want to change that, if we want to begin winning instead of losing, then we must fight the monster with intelligence and self-discipline, not with childish daydreams of victory through drive-by shootings.<sup>17</sup>

Pierce is often associated with the notion of leaderless authorship for his authorship of *Hunter* – a fictional story in which the protagonist, Oscar Yeager, embarks alone on a killing spree against interracial couples, politicians and Jews. Furthermore, Pierce dedicated the book to Joseph Paul Franklin – a former neo-Nazi and convicted serial killer responsible for the deaths of approximately 20 people.<sup>18</sup> Finally, it is worth noting that Jeffrey Kaplan, a leading authority on the subject of the American far right, argues that during the period from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, Pierce cultivated a following of young reckless neo-Nazis who put into practice lone-wolf terrorism.<sup>19</sup>

However, there is very little documentary evidence to suggest that Pierce believed in the viability of sporadic acts of reckless violence, at least for most of his political career.<sup>20</sup> Despite the popular assertion that his novel served as a paradigm of the leaderless resistance approach, Pierce claims that propagandizing and not a call for terrorism, was the intention of the book as he conveyed to the author in an interview:

GM: Is *Hunter* meant to be read as an advocacy of the leaderless resistance approach?

WP: No it's not. In the first place when I wrote the book, I might have heard the term leaderless resistance, but it's nowhere mentioned in the book, and I certainly was not advocating that. The big difference between *Hunter* and *The Turner Diaries* is that I hope I learned something from the reaction to *The Turner Diaries* ... I came to understand it. I mean, fiction, drama, generally is powerful because the reader or the viewer puts himself into the position inside the skin, inside the head of the protagonist if he can identify with the protagonist. Then he not only experiences vicariously the action as it's taking place but he observes the world through the eyes of the protagonist. He hears the

thoughts of the protagonist. You know you have a lot of long monologues both in the *Turner Diaries* and in *Hunter*.

[...] you see the *Turner Diaries* had no character development. Earl Turner sprang full-blown into the world in the beginning of the story and he didn't change throughout the whole novel. So I said, 'Jesus, this could be a teaching experience because what I'll do is I'll have the protagonist learn as he goes along, change his ideas. I'm going to have the protagonist start off as a typical idiot conservative who can see the niggers but cannot see the Jews, because the Jews are much less visible ... He didn't understand the influence that the Jews had ... So he learns as he goes. And the idea is that maybe the reader of the book will learn as he goes too by identifying with Oscar Yeager ...'

But no, it's hardly an advocacy of leaderless resistance. I mean, Oscar Yeager was a lone wolf when he started but he changed fairly early in the book and came to the conclusion that was no way to get things done. It was therapeutic for him. He was doing this for selfish reasons. But if you really wanted to have an effect it would have to be in an organizational context and that's completely contrary to the leaderless resistance thesis.<sup>21</sup>

All of that said, Pierce held little hope of creating the type of world he wanted to build through conventional democratic measures. As he once put it, 'It's not likely we'll emerge from this mess in a peaceful, lovey-dovey way.'<sup>22</sup> Pierce believed in a gradual approach to terrorism with a preparatory stage which emphasized propaganda and organization.

### **The Organizational Strategy**

Much of the cogency of Pierce's propaganda lies in his analysis of the revolutionary right's predicament. He is very cognizant of the opposition arrayed against his movement. He offers no pie-in-the-sky solutions for his followers. Instead he emphasizes building a revolutionary infrastructure in which he can disseminate his message to more people. He has no illusions of successfully confronting 'the system' at this particular point in his struggle. He does, however, look for opportunities to spread his message and expand his following.

The National Alliance's Membership Handbook explains the organizational structure. Inasmuch as the National Alliance rejects democracy as an 'organizational principle on both practical and theoretical grounds', it is not surprising that it is hierarchically organized with the Office of the Chairman (the position held by the late Dr Pierce and currently by Eric Glibe) at the apex of the Alliance. The Chairman is part of the

National Office, which includes numerous departments including publications, catalog sales, radio and TV, membership coordination, business operations, records, and physical facilities. Just below the National Office are the various regional offices, which are composed of numerous local units. Finally, individual members can be attached to local units or simply be affiliated with the national organization without any connection to local units.<sup>23</sup> According to Pierce, 'the structure of the National Alliance was developed with the intention of providing tactical flexibility and the ability to resist both external attack and internal subversion during a long period of struggle'.<sup>24</sup> Despite the seemingly autocratic leadership style, Pierce commented that the structure of the National Alliance is 'not a hierarchy of privilege; it is a hierarchy of service'.<sup>25</sup> Just how much the National Alliance in reality corresponded to the organizational model as described in the National Alliance Membership Handbook is open to question. In Pierce's own words, the National Alliance struggled to survive for much of its history, and for many years could not attract a sizable membership. Presumably near the end of Pierce's career, the National Alliance developed more characteristics of a fully functioning organization and its opponents began to take it more seriously.<sup>26</sup>

Instead of relying on the white masses, Pierce hinged his revolutionary hopes on a small cadre of 'independent thinkers'. He sought to discourage the stereotypical disgruntled right-wingers from his organization and instead reportedly focused on recruiting educated and productive people with resources and authority. Ideally, Pierce hoped to attract college professors, engineers, doctors, police officers, and other professionals to the National Alliance. Pierce knew very well that building a revolutionary movement would be no small task considering the opposition arrayed against him and the general unreceptiveness of his targeted audience. This required a substantial amount of preparatory work. The first priority was to communicate effectively with as many people as possible. Towards that end, Pierce sought to develop his own parallel – albeit more modest – media through the production of leaflets, magazines, books, CDs, music, radio broadcasts, and internet websites. Through these media, Pierce believed that he could reach the 'perceptive few' that – in his estimation – compose one to two per cent of the white population. Only by reaching more people would the National Alliance be able to develop a critical mass necessary to consider bolder propagandistic and revolutionary action.

Pierce determined that the best approach was to reach out to those segments of the population occupying what is often referred to in the current vernacular as 'middle management' that would be suggestible or receptive to his message. This required formulating 'self-evidently viable' alternatives to the policies of the current US government:

Policymakers are a bit more intelligent and substantially better endowed with self-discipline than the rank and file, but they are not notably more courageous or less superstitious. In fact they are more often terrified by the thought of being unfashionable than are their organizational inferiors, because they have more to lose. This means that our alternative must be one which already has been pounded into their consciousness – and the consciousness of the rank and file as well – until they are sufficiently familiar with it that they can at least be persuaded that it could become the new fashion.<sup>27</sup>

Adequate compensation, Pierce argued, was vitally necessary to induce policymakers to switch sides on important issues. As he saw it, competitors to the *status quo* must convince policymakers that they could improve their personal positions in the long run by supporting a new policy which happens to be unfashionable at the moment. However, inducements – or carrots – must be followed with a credible stick. In that sense it was important to convince policymakers that the danger to themselves was greater in sticking to the old fashions than the danger in switching to the new.

To Pierce, crucial to success was the application of leverage. Interestingly, he viewed Jewish group strategies as exemplifying this organizational approach.

The organizational strategy has been an appropriate one for the Jews, and it is equally appropriate for any group whose members constitute only a small minority of the population they want to persuade, and so need the advantage of leverage in order to accomplish their task.<sup>28</sup>

Pierce saw a high leverage strategy as the most viable approach for a movement that comprised only small numbers. Inasmuch as Pierce's following constituted a very small minority of the population he argued for a strategy of leverage as the most viable approach for gaining influence and achieving the Alliance's goals:

Whether one is dealing with a formal, highly centralized structure or a very loose and informal organization, the goal is leverage. Instead of focusing all of his efforts on persuading the rank and file to change their policies, the good strategist may direct a portion of his effort toward the established policymakers.<sup>29</sup>

According to Pierce, most people are not rational, nor do they function as free-thinking individuals. Rather, he argued that most people function more as members of a group or as elements in a social milieu than as individuals. Consequently, Pierce believed that his organization must deal

with people in a group or organizational context in order to be effective on a large scale. Pierce reasoned that there were basically two approaches towards this end. The first was to attempt to persuade the great masses of people directly through communication of his message. The second was to seek to persuade the elites who occupied the echelons of influence in various institutions. To Pierce, the two approaches were not really mutually exclusive; rather the key to effectiveness was to know how much emphasis to place on each approach as Pierce explained:

Which is the better way for changing the government's policy apparatus from a force for evil into a force for good: to attempt to make each policeman individually do that which is contrary to his nature by rebelling against his appointed supervisors – or to change the interests and loyalties of a relative handful of superiors?

The answers depend on the details. If the history department heads, journal editors and police chiefs are Jews, and the rank-and-file professors and cops are mostly our people, then only the first approach has any merit. This is the case with most of the mass media, for example, where there is no chance at all of changing the interests of the fashion-setters. Fortunately, among professors and cops the people at the top are far more open to persuasion. Even where substantial headway can be made at the top of a group, however, it remains necessary to saturate those at the bottom with our message: if professors discover one fine morning that it has become permissible for them to sing a new tune in class, they must at least be familiar with the new lyrics.<sup>30</sup>

At the then present time, Pierce favored the development of a tight-knit propaganda-utilizing cadre. This approach was perhaps the most feasible in the current environment in which the far right's activities are closely monitored by law enforcement authorities<sup>31</sup> (and the various non-governmental organizations with which they work closely).<sup>32</sup>

To Pierce, virtually all contemporary institutions were thoroughly corrupt with no hope of redemption. Pierce believed that although these institutions were corrupt, they still contained decent individuals who would be receptive to his message, which leads to another organizational priority. Reaching, educating and inspiring these insiders was the centerpiece of Pierce's revolutionary model. To Pierce, in an age in which the stupefied masses were hopelessly misled by the influence of the media, it was unfeasible to seek to organize them into a revolutionary howling mob. Instead of concentrating on solely storming the Bastille, Pierce thought it more viable to recruit insiders who are already part of the machinery and have access to the levers of power. When the proper revolutionary

conditions had arrived, they could then throw open the gates to their ideological compatriots on the outside. Furthermore, Pierce believed that as conditions in the world changed, leaders and other persons of influence would change their calculations and act accordingly. However, in order for them to act in accordance with a strategy favored by Pierce, it was necessary to communicate his message:

Even now we are reaching a small but significant portion of white America. We aren't reaching the couch potatoes, of course; television is required for that. But, with your support, we are beginning to make a small difference in the thinking of independent-minded Americans. The leadership stratum is becoming aware that the feelings and thoughts we represent must be taken into account. As we keep on pushing, keep on reaching more and more Americans with our message, we will force at least some of America's non-Jewish leaders to begin making new calculations about what is in their best interests. And let us remember that that is all that matters to them: their own interests. They collaborate with the Jews now, but they will turn against the Jews without a moment's hesitation when they have been convinced that collaboration is no longer in their best interests. Understanding that certainly gives us encouragement to persevere.<sup>33</sup>

### **The Millenarian Vision of Cosmotheism**

Much has been made about Pierce's novel *The Turner Diaries*. It is frequently referred to as a 'blueprint for revolution', and the 'bible of the racialist right'.<sup>34</sup> Despite these characterizations, there is really little practical advice for would-be revolutionaries that can be gleaned from the book. Rather, it is more expressive of Pierce's chiliastic worldview in which millennial themes feature prominently. The apocalyptic scenario depicted in *The Turner Diaries* has a redemptive quality in that those characteristics of the contemporary world Pierce deigned corrupt, decadent and corrosive, are cleansed through great upheaval and destruction. Consistent with Roger Griffin's 'palingenetic myth' (i.e., process of death and rebirth) as the core essence of fascism,<sup>35</sup> Pierce posited that the old order must be destroyed and rebuilt from the ground up. The great struggle and tribulation endured by the 'Organization' (the term used to refer to the white racialist revolutionary movement in the book) ultimately purifies and strengthens the surviving remnants of the white population so that they can build a new civilization. However, unlike previous European-derived civilizations, the civilization of the 'New Era' will consciously and willfully seek an evolutionary path that will enable it to reach divinity. Although some of his critics have questioned

the sincerity of Pierce's commitment to spirituality, a fair reading of his material would indicate otherwise. Pierce occasionally invoked the 'Faustian spirit' as the guiding ethos of the 'western man'. Furthermore, he frequently argued that the malaise of western civilization was principally neither political nor economic, but rather spiritual in nature.

### Conclusion and the Future

On one of the days shortly before his death on 23 July 2002, Pierce chose Eric Gliebe, the manager of Resistance Records (a branch of the National Alliance that sells 'white power' music CDs primarily to a skinhead market), as his successor to the National Alliance. His choice of leadership may indicate the direction toward which he wanted to take the organization. The 39-year-old Gliebe, a former boxer who fought under the moniker 'the Aryan Barbarian', has given high priority to recruiting teenagers into the organization through the promotion of 'white power' music.<sup>36</sup> Capitalizing on the provocative style and lyrics in this genre of music, Pierce sought to channel the anger of disaffected white youths into his brand of political activism. Furthermore, this enterprise has proven to be very profitable (by far right standards) as it was estimated that it took in approximately one million dollars in annual sales.<sup>37</sup> Like his ideological mentor, Hitler, Pierce concentrated on recruiting young members as he saw in them the future of his movement.

Although the current 'war on terror' has had a chilling effect on some far right activists as they fear the government's campaign against international terrorism could turn inward against domestic dissidents as well, the events surrounding 9/11 seem to have emboldened the National Alliance. In recent months the National Alliance has demonstrated a penchant for street activism, which has included several National Alliance demonstrations at the Israeli embassy in Washington DC to protest against American and Israeli policies in the Middle East and nationwide distribution of literature to coincide with Jewish holidays and September 11.<sup>38</sup> These efforts may indicate a desire to reach out to a larger audience than the segments to which the organization has traditionally appealed. In the final years of his life, Pierce occasionally offered veiled praise for Islamic terrorists such as Osama bin Laden and increasingly spoke admirably of Palestinian suicide bombers who were 'paying a terrible price' to liberate their land. The notoriety stemming from these activities has earned the National Alliance the recognition as the most formidable entity of the revolutionary racist right. However, this reputation has come with a cost as law enforcement authorities and non-governmental organizations, such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center, have sought to stymie the organization.<sup>39</sup> Despite this opposition, the

National Alliance continues to attract recruits and publicity. Although the National Alliance has never really broken out of the far right ghetto and attained influence in mainstream politics and society, by far right standards the organization is significant with an estimated membership of 1500–2000 at the time of Pierce's death. Furthermore, many people in the far right regularly listen to the American Dissident Voices radio program.<sup>40</sup> Finally, the widespread availability of the world wide web has made the propaganda of Pierce and the National Alliance accessible to potential sympathizers around the world. As a result, potential revolutionaries from different orientations can draw inspiration from Pierce. Only the future can tell if Pierce's vision will ever be realized. Although the contemporary far right in America is generally weak and loosely organized, Pierce formulated arguably the most feasible revolutionary strategy that the movement had ever produced. If the multicultural paradigm in America should falter, then conditions more conducive to revolution could manifest in the future. Although deceased, it is likely that Pierce will long continue to inspire right-wing extremists from beyond the grave. As such, his legacy could have a significant effect on domestic terrorism well into this century.

## NOTES

1. Statements by McVeigh seem to indicate that *The Turner Diaries* may have been determinative in his choice of target and his decision to carry out the attack. See Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing* (New York: Regan Books 2001) p.304. For more on the Order see Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood* (New York: Signet 1990). For more on the Aryan Republican Army see Mark S. Hamm, *In Bad Company: America's Terrorist Underground* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press 2001). For more on David Copeland see Graeme McLagan and Nick Lowles *Mr. Evil* (London: John Blake Publishing Ltd. 2000).
2. See Brad Whitsel, 'Aryan Visions for the Future in the West Virginia Mountains', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7/4 (1995) pp.117–39 and Brad Whitsel, 'The Turner Diaries and Cosmotheism: William Pierce's Theology of Revolution', *Nova Religio* 7/2 (April 1998), <http://www.sevenbridgepress.com/nova.whitsel.html>. Renee Brodie, 'The Aryan New Era: Apocalyptic Realizations in *The Turner Diaries*', *Journal of American Culture* 21/3 (1998) pp.13–22.
3. Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce* (Bloomington, IN: 1st Books 2001).
4. The American Dissident Voices program was launched by National Alliance Kevin Alfred Strom in 1992. The ADV broadcasts are released on a weekly basis. Originally they were broadcast via short-wave radio and selected radio stations. However, in the late 1990s they were made available on the National Alliance's website. A typical broadcast is about 25 minutes in length. Strom left the program in 1997 and Dr Pierce took over responsibility. Through this medium, Pierce really came into his own as a far right propagandist as his program developed a large following among the far right. Usually he began each program with some current event as a launching point to get 'behind the scenes' of the news to uncover alleged machinations of Jewish power. Upon Pierce's death, Kevin Alfred Strom resumed control of American Dissident Voices.

5. Pierce was not alone in this assessment. The well-known conservative pundit, Patrick Buchanan, marshaled demographic data in his book *The Death of the West* to illustrate the same point. See Patrick Buchanan, *Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization*. (New York: St. Martin's Press 2002). Furthermore, demographic projections predicting the reduction of whites to minority status by the year 2050 are generally held to be reliable by both mainstream and non-mainstream commentators alike. Where they differ is on the normative implications of this development. Multiculturalists and liberals generally applaud it. Neo-conservatives generally argue that it is inconsequential as long as the current economic and political system is maintained. So-called paleo-conservatives and extremists tend to see it as amounting to cultural displacement at best and racial and ethnic genocide at worst.
6. Kevin MacDonald makes a similar argument with regard to the so-called Frankfur School. He argues that Jewish members of this clique sought to 'pathologize' Gentile group affinities and by doing so, decrease the likelihood of collectivist anti-Semitic mass movements. See Kevin MacDonald, *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (Westport, CT: Praeger 1998), pp.165–70.
7. William Pierce, 'The Big Picture: A Bare-Boned Outline of our Present Predicament' *American Dissident Voices* II/6 (June 1996).
8. Andrew Macdonald, (pseudonym for William Pierce) *Hunter* (Hillsboro, WV: National Vanguard Books 1978) p.40.
9. *Ibid.* pp.72–3.
10. For more on Pierce's views on the Second World War see 'America Since World War II', *American Dissident Voices* (7 Nov. 1992).
11. For more on Pierce's views on the Second World War see Griffin (note 3) pp.51–2.
12. Research Staff of National Vanguard Books, *Who Rules America* (Hillsboro, WV: National Vanguard Books 2000).
13. An academic from California State University, Kevin MacDonald, published a three-volume series on the subject of Jewish–Gentile relations in which he came to very similar conclusions. Essentially, MacDonald argues that through history, Jews have adopted an 'evolutionary strategy' that is at cross-purposes with the group interests of white Gentile hosts. Consequently, as he sees it, anti-Semitism is reactive and serves as a group-oriented defense mechanism against displacement in the realm of resource competition. Interestingly, like Pierce, he discerns a *Kulturkampf* in which Jews allegedly seek to best their Gentile rivals in the sphere of ideas. However, unlike Pierce, MacDonald's analysis is dispassionate and lacks stridency. Not surprisingly, MacDonald's scholarship has gained him high stature in the milieu of the far right. His trilogy includes: *A People That Shall Dwell Alone: Judaism as a Group Evolutionary Strategy* (Westport, CT: Praeger 1994); *Separation and its Discontents: Toward an Evolutionary Theory of Anti-Semitism* (Westport, CT: Praeger 1994); *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (Westport, CT: Praeger 1998).
14. William Pierce, 'Those Who Care', *American Dissident Voices* (6 Jan. 2001).
15. Griffin (note 3) p.165.
16. William Pierce, 'Knowledge and Discipline' *American Dissident Voices* V/7 (July 1999).
17. William Pierce, 'Killing Little Children' *American Dissident Voices* V/9 (Sept. 1999).
18. Franklin was once a member of the National Socialist white People's Party (the successor to the original American Nazi Party) – the same organization of which Pierce was also a member. Jeffrey Kaplan asserts that Pierce surely knew Franklin. Jeffrey Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power: A Sourcebook on the Radical Right* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press 2000) p.247.
19. For example, Kaplan identifies Joseph Tommasi, James Mason and Joseph Paul Franklin. According to Kaplan, Pierce inspired Tommasi to create the National Socialist Liberation Front (LSF) – a small neo-Nazi sect that stylistically patterned itself on the model of far left underground groups that were active during that period (e.g., the Weather Underground and the Symbionese Liberation Army). A very small underground core of the group carried out

- sporadic acts of violence in 1974–75. After Tommasi's murder at the hands of a rival member, Mason went on to lead the group and become one of the far right's most strident advocates of leaderless resistance. See for example, James Mason, *Siege* (Denver: Storm Books 1992).
20. Kaplan argues that Pierce was in effect 'a cheerleader from the sidelines' who used 'hopeless campaigns of revolutionary violence while he himself [remained] at a safe remove'. Kaplan (note 18) pp.247–8. While I would concede that Pierce may have at one time considered the leaderless resistance approach, the documentary evidence suggests to me that he did not take it seriously for most of his career. In the July 2000 interview when I asked Pierce about James Mason and the National Socialist Liberation, he scoffed, and dismissed Mason, noting that the latter was a devoted admirer of Charles Manson.
  21. Interview with Dr William Pierce, 12 July 2000 in George Michael, *Confronting Right Wing Extremism and Terrorism in the USA* (London: Routledge 2003) pp.117–18.
  22. David Segal, 'The Pied Piper of Racism', *The Washington Post*, (12 Jan. 2000).
  23. National Alliance, *National Alliance Handbook*, (Hillsboro, WV: National Vanguard Books 1993) pp.12–15.
  24. *Ibid.* p.14.
  25. *Ibid.* pp.14–15.
  26. In 1998 the Anti-Defamation League released a report that warned of the growing influence of the National Alliance calling it the 'largest and most active neo-Nazi organization in the nation'. The ADL attributed the National Alliance's strength to several factors: 'its skillful embrace of technology, its willingness to cooperate with other extremists, its energetic recruitment and other promotional activities, and its vicious, but deceptively intellectualized propaganda'. Anti-Defamation League, *Explosion of Hate: The Growing Danger of the National Alliance* (New York: ADL 1998). In the last few years of his life, Pierce claimed that his organization had experienced substantial growth in members, financing and influence. In an interview that I conducted with him in July 2000, he told me he had several full-time staff members at his national office and that the organization had even developed some 'redundancy' whereby numerous personnel could perform multiple tasks such as internet and computer operations.
  27. William Pierce, 'The Organizational Strategy' *National Vanguard Magazine*, 114 (Nov.–Dec. 1994).
  28. *Ibid.*
  29. *Ibid.*
  30. *Ibid.*
  31. Brad Whitsel, 'The Turner Diaries and Cosmotheism: William Pierce's Theology of Revolution', *Nova Religio* 1/2 (April 1998).
  32. Michael (note 21).
  33. William Pierce, 'Capitalism and Equality', *American Dissident Voices* VI.2 (Feb. 2000).
  34. This is how the FBI characterized the book. See the FBI Internal Memorandum, File Number 100–487473–50, 23 Jan. 1987 and FBI Internal Memorandum, File Number: 100–487473–67, 10 Sept. 1987. Robert Burnham, the FBI's section chief for domestic terrorism, remarked on the connection of the book to acts and potential acts of terrorism. According to Burnham, FBI field offices have received numerous calls from local police departments reporting that they found terrorist materials such as guns and bomb making materials in addition to copies of *The Turner Diaries*. 'Domestic terrorism: the FBI view', *MSBC* (30 May 2000), <http://www.msnbc.com/news/272286.asp>.
  35. Roger Griffin originally outlined his definition of fascism as the embodiment of an ultra-nationalist paligenetic myth in Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (New York: Routledge 1993). He later buttressed his theory using the paligenetic myth as the leitmotif of an anthology of essays, which he edited, with contributions from both fascists and observers of fascism. See Roger Griffin, *Fascism, Oxford Readers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995).
  36. Anti-Defamation League, 'Eric Glibe: "The Aryan Barbarian"', <http://www.adl.org/learn/extus/glibe.asp>, (5 Aug. 2002).
  37. Anti-Defamation League, 'Deafening Hate: The Revival of Resistance Records' <http://www.adl.org/resistance%20records/summary.html> (downloaded 7 June 2000).

38. For more on the National Alliance demonstrations at the Israeli embassy see H. J. Brief, 'White Supremacist Rally draws Protestors', *The Washington Times* (12 May 2000); Lengel, 'Neo-Nazis, Foes, Clash At Israeli Embassy', *The Washington Post* (12 May 2002) p.A19; and ADL, 'Neo-Nazis Rally in Nation's Capital' (26 Aug. 2002). [http://www.adl.org/Learn/news/Neo\\_Nazis\\_Rally.asp](http://www.adl.org/Learn/news/Neo_Nazis_Rally.asp). At the first demonstration in November 2001, the National Alliance released a list of 18 demands to the Israeli government, which sounded like anti-imperialist pronouncements of traditional left wing groups. The demands included *inter alia*: 'Stop using American military aid to commit unlawful acts of terrorism, murder, and genocide against Palestinians'; 'Obey UN Resolution 242'; 'Obey UN Resolution 194'; 'Allow true freedom of speech and assembly for all people in Israel'; and 'Turn Ariel Sharon, the "Butcher of Beirut", over to the World Court'. For a complete list of the demands see <http://natall.com/demands/index.html>. For more on the leafleting campaign see Anti-Defamation League, 'Hate Literature Blitz Planned By Neo-Nazi Groups To Coincide With Jewish Holidays and 9/11' [http://www.adl.org/PresRele?AUS\\_12/4148\\_12.asp](http://www.adl.org/PresRele?AUS_12/4148_12.asp), (27 Aug. 2002).
39. Declassified FBI documents reveal that the agency has kept close tabs on the National Alliance almost from its inception. Pierce and the National Alliance were the targets of an SPLC lawsuit in the mid-1990s. As mentioned earlier, the ADL has sought to raise public awareness of the threat it sees stemming from the National Alliance through its widely promoted report *Explosion of Hate* (note 26).
40. According to a statement Pierce made in 1999, his website receives on average 8,500 hits per day. Greg Barrett, 'National Alliance grows quickly', *Detroit News* (16 July 1999), <http://detnews.com /1999/ nation/9907/16/07160113htm>. Not long after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Pierce claimed that downloads of his ADV program doubled.