National Alliance

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In decline since the 2002 death of founder William Pierce, the National Alliance has been barely functioning since the spring of 2005 when the group underwent a split in its ranks. Constant infighting directed against the leadership of Erich Gliebe, who took over the Alliance after Pierce died, and Shaun Walker (who had been the chairman of group until his arrest on federal hate crime charges in June 2006) created dissension within the group. In reaction to the turmoil, Gliebe and Walker purged a number of the group's most active members in April 2005. The deposed activists formed a new group, National Vanguard, which won the support of a majority of the organization's local units across the nation. Kevin Strom, who had been associated with the Alliance since the early 1990s, became the head of the National Vanguard. By March 2006, the National Vanguard underwent a split and a new group, the Nationalist Coalition, was formed by the two of the most active Vanguard chapters in Tampa, Florida and Denver, Colorado. By March 2007, the National Vanguard had been dissolved and was replaced by a new incarnation of the group--European Americans United. The National Alliance, for two decades the most formidable presence in the white supremacist world, is severely weakened as a national operation, divided by factions competing for William Pierce's racist and anti-Semitic legacy.
History of the National Alliance

The National Alliance has its roots in the Youth for Wallace campaign, established by Willis Carto, the anti-Semitic founder of Liberty Lobby, in support of the 1968 presidential bid of Alabama Governor George Wallace. After Wallace's defeat, Carto renamed his organization the National Youth Alliance and attempted to recruit college students to his increasingly radical cause. In 1970, William Pierce, who had associations with the American Nazi Party and the National Socialist White People's Party, joined the National Youth Alliance. Run by anti-Semite Willis Carto, the group split into two different factions by 1974. Pierce's wing became known as the National Alliance. In 1985, Pierce relocated the National Alliance from Arlington, Virginia, to a 346-acre farm in Mill Point, West Virginia, from which it still operates.

- **Leader:** Erich Gleiße
- **Founder:** William Pierce (d. 2002)
- **Founded:** 1974
- **Headquarters:** Mill Point, near Hillsboro, West Virginia
- **Background:** After associations with the American Nazi Party and the National Socialist White People's Party, William Pierce joined the National Youth Alliance in 1970. Run by anti-Semite Willis Carto, the group split into two different factions by 1974. Pierce's wing became known as the National Alliance. In 1985, Pierce relocated the National Alliance from Arlington, Virginia, to a 346-acre farm in Mill Point, West Virginia, from which it still operates.
- **Offshoots:** National Vanguard, Nationalist Coalition, European Americans United
- **Media:** Web, radio, fliers, magazines, newsletters, computer games
- **Ideology:** Neo-Nazi, white supremacist
- **Connections:** Although the National Alliance tends to work independently in the United States, it has built strong ties to other white supremacist groups abroad, including the British National Party (BNP) and the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) in Germany.
- **Publications:** *Resistance*, *National Vanguard*, *Free Speech*
- **Businesses:** Resistance Records, National Vanguard Books
been an associate of George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party, left the National Socialist White People's Party, the successor to the ANP, to join the National Youth Alliance. In addition to Pierce, the National Youth Alliance attracted several former ANP activists, and they ultimately led the organization away from Carto's influence.

By 1974, the organization had split into separate factions, and Pierce's wing became known as the National Alliance. Since then, Pierce has run the group and edited its magazine, National Vanguard (originally titled Attack!), as well as an internal newsletter, National Alliance Bulletin (formerly called Action). He is also in charge of the group's "American Dissident Voices" weekly radio address, and controls other businesses associated with the NA: National Vanguard Books, Resistance Records and Cymophane Records.

**Forming the Cosmotheist Church**

In the early years of the National Alliance, Pierce held weekly meetings near Washington, D.C., in an effort to attract people to the organization. At the same time, Pierce was formulating a philosophy that became the basis of what he called "Cosmotheism," a racist religion that stresses the superiority of the white race and the unity of the white race with nature.

In 1985, Pierce relocated the National Alliance from Arlington, Virginia, to a 346-acre farm in Mill Point, West Virginia, which he bought for $95,000 in cash; he called his new compound the Cosmotheist Community Church. (There has been some speculation over the years that at least some of the money used for the purchase came from the proceeds of bank and armored-car robberies committed by The Order, a white supremacist terrorist gang that included National Alliance members and whose aims were drawn from Pierce's novel, The Turner Diaries.) Pierce's formation of the church may have been a last-ditch effort on his part to avoid paying taxes; he had tried, years earlier, to acquire tax-exempt status for the National Alliance itself by claiming that the organization was educational. The Internal Revenue Service denied the application in 1978; he appealed, but an appellate court upheld the I.R.S.'s decision. As it happened, the Cosmotheist
Church did receive federal, state and local tax-exempt status, although it lost its state exemptions in 1986 for all but 60 acres and any buildings used exclusively for "religious purposes."

Membership and Methodology

Since 1998, the National Alliance has grown from about 1,000 members to over 1,500 members. NA members may join official local "units," headed by "unit coordinators"; become part of smaller "proto-units"; or remain independent. As of December 2001, the NA had more than 35 cells from coast to coast, and there has been evidence of NA activity in about 30 states across the country.

Members of NA cells generally meet privately each month to discuss the group's ideology, upcoming events, NA literature distribution and other activities that will create publicity and attract more members to the group. Twice each year, Pierce selects about 50 NA members with "leadership potential" to attend a national leadership conference at the organization's rural headquarters.

While other extremist hate groups appeal to a narrower range of followers, the NA's membership varies widely in terms of class and age. Some of the group's followers are young racist skinheads, while others are middle-aged, upper-middle-class men or couples. Moreover, Pierce has boasted that there are several judges and professors within the organization's ranks.

National Alliance leaders are known for their energetic recruiting and are continually in search of innovative ways to advance their white supremacist message. To attract new followers, NA leaders and members have used billboards, hung organizational banners in prominent locations, rented booths at gun shows, posted their propaganda materials on public property and distributed NA literature in suburban neighborhoods and on college campuses. (A popular item distributed by the NA on high school and college campuses has been The Saga of ...White Will!!, a racist, anti-Semitic comic book that encourages students to join the fight for "nationalism and racial and ethnic self-determination everywhere.")
In North Carolina, one NA member even runs a stock car bearing the NA Web site address during races every week.

William Pierce tightly controls the NA's message by requiring adherents to obtain his permission before they speak publicly or create new propaganda materials. Pierce's strict enforcement of these rules has helped the National Alliance conduct its activities with little of the internal politics and strife that have sapped the strength of other hate organizations. His leadership abilities, commitment and intelligence are the primary source of the group's current strength and influence. Under his guidance, it has developed one of the strongest "brands" in the extremist world.

**The National Alliance's Ideology**

Fundamental to the National Alliance's doctrine is the belief that "our world is hierarchical" and that the Aryan race is endowed by nature with superior qualities. The group laments that "nature" is currently unable to take its course, because "the sickness of 'multiculturalism'...is destroying America, Britain and every other Aryan nation in which it is being promoted."

The group's racist vision extends to its views on government. It decries "the growth of mass democracy," including "the enfranchisement of women and of non-whites," and favors a government that will "reverse the racially devolutionary course of the last few millennia and keep it reversed." NA activists are also eager to erase the social progress made by women in the last century and believe that "feminism is a threat to our race." As opposed to some extremist groups that try to work within the political realm to achieve their goals, the NA generally foregoes participation in the political process (an exception being some NA members who became involved with the Reform Party during the 2000 presidential race.)

Essential to the group's vision of the future is the creation of "White Living Space," an area that incorporates all of Europe, "the temperate zones of the Americas," Australia, and the southern tip of Africa, which is to be purged of all nonwhites. The group also calls for the creation of a "strong, centralized government" that is
"wholly committed to the service of [the white] race and subject to no non-Aryan influence." These ideals of authoritarianism and lebensraum reflect the degree to which the NA's ideology has incorporated National Socialism, as does the group's adherence to biological determinism, hierarchical organization, rhetoric that emphasizes will and sacrifice, and support for "a long-term eugenics program involving at least the entire populations of Europe and America."

NA members believe that people can control their destiny within the laws of nature, and they spurn religious doctrine involving divine transcendence - including Christianity, in whose churches most of its members were raised. "We are obliged...to oppose the Christian churches and to speak out against their doctrines," the group's handbook states. "It is not an Aryan religion...like the other Semitic religions [it] is irredeemably primitive."

While Pierce and other NA figures dehumanize both blacks and Jews, depicting them as threats to "Aryan culture" and "racial purity," Jews are considered a far greater and more urgent menace to white survival. In his essay "Who Rules America?" Pierce writes, "The Jewish control of the American mass media is the single most important fact of life, not just in America, but in the world today. There is nothing--plague, famine, economic collapse, even nuclear war--more dangerous to the future of our people."

**The Turner Diaries: Inspiring Violence**

Since assuming stewardship of the National Alliance, William Pierce has gained renown in far-right circles throughout the world as the author of *The Turner Diaries*, a novel written under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald. The book calls for the violent overthrow of the federal government and the systematic killing of Jews and nonwhites in order to establish an "Aryan" society. The Turner Diaries is thought to be the inspiration behind the nation's worst domestic terrorist act: Timothy McVeigh's bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, which resulted in the deaths of 168 people. It is also the inspiration behind the crime spree in the early 1980s perpetrated by a white supremacist gang called The Order, led by Robert Mathews (the inner circle of resistance fighters in the Diaries was
named The Order). The Order's crimes included murders, robberies, counterfeiting and the bombing of a synagogue. Mathews, who was killed in a confrontation with federal officers, was a Pacific Northwest representative of the National Alliance, and other founders of this terrorist gang also traced their roots to the group.

More recently, members of a white supremacist gang calling itself the Aryan Republican Army committed 22 bank robberies and bombings across the Midwest between 1992 and 1996 using tactics reminiscent of The Order. The Turner Diaries was required reading for the group.

The Turner Diaries and the activities of The Order have also been cited as a role model for an alleged conspiracy by a group of white supremacists in East St. Louis, Illinois, who called themselves The New Order. In March 1998, federal authorities arrested three men in the group who allegedly planned to bomb the offices of the Anti-Defamation League in New York, the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles.

It has also been reported that The Turner Diaries was a great influence on David Copeland, a British neo-Nazi who set off bombs in ethnic neighborhoods and a gay bar in London, killing three people in April 2000.

Criminal Acts Connected to NA Members

On April 23, 1997, Todd Vanbiber, a National Alliance member from Winter Park, Florida, injured himself while trying to assemble a pipe bomb at a rented storage unit. In a search of Vanbiber's storage unit, law enforcement officials found explosive devices, several weapons, ammunition, bomb-making manuals, Nazi memorabilia and NA materials.

Vanbiber told authorities that on the night he was injured, he was putting final touches on 14 bombs that he and other accomplices, including Tampa NA member Brian Pickett, intended to plant on major highways in the Orlando area. The bombs were meant to create chaos and confusion while Vanbiber and his cohorts robbed two nearby banks.
Though the gang’s alleged plot failed, Vanbiber and Pickett had successfully robbed two banks in Tampa and one in Danbury, Connecticut, the year before. Driving home from Connecticut following a successful heist, Vanbiber and Pickett allegedly visited Pierce at his West Virginia compound, donating $1,000 each to the National Alliance and purchasing $700 worth of literature.

More recently, in October 2000, NA member Steven McFadden was arrested in Queens, New York, after a search of his apartment by police turned up an arsenal of weapons, including swords, revolvers, pistols and shotguns. About six months earlier, police had arrested another man in Queens, Michael Sagginario, for violating his parole, after discovering a cache of guns and a National Alliance handbook in his home. Sagginario had been arrested previously, in the early 1990s, for the illegal use of explosives.

In June 2001, another NA member, Eric Hanson, was killed in a shootout after resisting the Illinois State Police’s attempt to arrest him on weapons charges. Hanson, who in 1999 had been convicted for physically threatening an interracial couple and for possessing illegal weapons in two separate cases, seriously wounded one of the officers who tried to arrest him.

**NA Propaganda Linked to Racist Incidents**

The NA has attempted to attract members among United States Army personnel at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina. A member of the elite 82nd Airborne Division, Robert Hunt, reportedly worked as an NA recruiter while stationed at Fort Bragg. In April 1995, according to the group, Hunt rented a billboard outside the base and used it to post an NA advertisement and local phone number.

Several months later, in December 1995, a black couple was gunned down nearby in what prosecutors called a racially motivated killing. James Burmeister and Malcolm Wright, members of the 82nd Airborne, were convicted of the murders and sentenced to life in prison. Burmeister and Wright were active neo-Nazi skinheads and reportedly read National Alliance propaganda.
Another racial incident that can be linked to National Alliance propaganda occurred in April 1996, in Jackson, Mississippi. Police say Larry Wayne Shoemake piled a small arsenal of weapons into an abandoned restaurant in a predominantly black neighborhood and, from this hideout, began shooting wildly onto the street, killing one man and injuring seven others. Shoemake ultimately took his own life as well.

In a police search of Shoemake's home, authorities found Nazi material as well as literature from the National Alliance. According to his ex-wife, Shoemake first encountered NA propaganda in the mid-1980s, when he borrowed The Turner Diaries from a friend, and he was not the same after reading Pierce's novel. "It was like an eye-opener to him," she said. Shoemake had also begun subscribing to Pierce's monthly publications.

Pierce's follow-up to the Diaries, called Hunter, has also become popular among white supremacists. It tells the story of a racist serial killer who tries to cleanse America of its "sickness" by murdering interracial couples, eventually "working his way up" to assassinating Jews.

**White Power Music Connection**

In 1999, William Pierce and the National Alliance developed a new means of communicating with possible young recruits. In April of that year he purchased Resistance Records, a music company that features white power bands playing a mix of folk, rock, Oi and heavy metal music, with fierce lyrics directed against Jews and other minorities. Resistance was originally founded in 1993 by neo-Nazi skinheads from Canada who operated the company out of Detroit in order to avoid Canada's strict anti-hate propaganda laws. In addition to selling CDs, the company published Resistance magazine, which featured articles on the white power music scene. American and Canadian authorities investigating tax evasion charges and violations of Canada's anti-hate propaganda laws raided Resistance in 1997; the company was temporarily put out of business until it was purchased in 1998 by Pierce's old nemesis, Willis Carto, and Carto's business partner, Todd Blodgett, a
former low-level staffer in the Reagan administration. Pierce and Blodgett later worked out the deal that led to Pierce's taking control of Resistance.

In the fall of 1999, Pierce also purchased Nordland Records, a Swedish white power music company, and folded it into Resistance Records, in effect doubling the company's inventory. In addition to selling CDs, Pierce relaunched Resistance magazine, which had ceased production since the raid on the company.

Pierce appointed Erich Gliebe, who heads the NA unit in Cleveland, Ohio, to manage and promote Resistance Records. In the Winter 2000 issue of Resistance, Gliebe discussed the effectiveness of white power music in "awakening and mobilizing the White Youth of today into a revolutionary force to destroy the system." In addition to Gliebe, other NA members have taken an active role in producing the magazine.

In the magazine's Spring 2000 issue, Pierce expressed his hope that "resistance music" will influence young people who are not yet politically motivated. He said, "Before the Alliance can educate people, it needs to get their attention; it needs to point them in the right direction. Resistance music can do that."

**Hendrik Möbus**

During 2000, Pierce enhanced his ability to penetrate the neo-Nazi youth culture in the United States and abroad by making business deals with a young German neo-Nazi, Hendrik Möbus.

In 1993, Möbus, then 17, and two other members of his band Absurd were convicted of killing a 14-year-old boy in the former East Germany. Möbus was released from prison after serving just over 5 years. While incarcerated, he promoted a genre of music known as National Socialist Black Metal or NSBM, which combines neo-Nazi ideology, neo-paganism, and anti-Christian and anti-Semitic rhetoric with a heavy-metal sound.

Once out of prison, Möbus continued to produce and promote NSBM music, and was active in neo-Nazi groups. In July 1999, he violated probation by giving a
Nazi salute and, shortly thereafter, was ordered to finish his sentence for making demeaning and mocking statements about his murder victim (both actions are illegal in Germany). In December 1999, Möbus fled to the United States and, in August 2000, was arrested by United States marshals near the National Alliance headquarters in West Virginia, where he had been staying with Pierce. During Möbus’s incarceration in the United States, he became a cause célèbre for the National Alliance, which raised money for his defense and held rallies – joined by members of other extremist groups – to demand that the United States government grant him political asylum.

In his "American Dissident Voices" broadcast of September 9, 2000, Pierce claimed that he and Möbus had met to help Pierce "establish new outlets in Europe for [Pierce's] records" and to discuss "the role of music in our overall effort." In June 2000, through Möbus's help, Pierce purchased a stake in Cymophane Records, an NSBM music company.

These forays into the resistance or "hatecore" music business are part of a well-considered attempt to advance Pierce's agenda in the United States and in Europe -- and they are also potentially lucrative. Pierce and the National Alliance stand to make millions of dollars as the white power music industry grows in Europe and the United States. Pierce's foray into white power music also signals his desire to further strengthen his ties between "racial nationalists" in the United States and Europe.

**Ties to Other Extremists**

Pierce's interest in building ties to white nationalists abroad extends beyond neo-Nazi youths. Over the years, he has built close ties between the National Alliance and the British National Party, a racist, anti-minority, neo-Fascist party in Great Britain, and with the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) -- the German National Democratic Party -- an ultra right-wing nationalist party in Germany. (After a series of violently racist and anti-Semitic incidents in Germany in 2000, authorities there have proposed banning the NPD, which attracts a large neo-Nazi following.) Pierce has made a number of trips to Germany in the last few
years to attend NPD events and has also invited NPD members to his headquarters in West Virginia.

The same week Pierce spoke to the NPD congress in Germany, he also attended an international conference of white nationalists in Thessaloniki, Greece, which reportedly included racist leaders from Greece, Portugal, Romania, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Austria and South Africa. Moreover, Pierce's interest in building ties with the far right abroad goes beyond visits and exchanges of information: the group has attracted members from Great Britain, Holland, France, Germany, Scandanavia, South Africa, Russia, the Czech Republic and Canada. The group also works with other extremist organizations in the United States.

In 2000, NA members attended and participated in events with members of David Duke's racist outfit NOFEAR (National Organization for European American Rights), recently renamed EURO, the European-American Unity and Rights Organization; the Council of Conservative Citizens; and the neo-Nazi American Friends of the British National Party. Recently, Resistance magazine featured an interview with Matt Hale, leader of the World Church of the Creator, as well as an article written by Hale.

In addition, National Alliance units have sponsored rallies featuring ex-Klan leader and NOFEAR founder David Duke, and speeches by David Irving, the British Holocaust denier.

Means of Communication

Pierce clearly wants to reach out to every segment of the white population both in Europe and the United States, and he has the means to do so. The National Alliance maintains a technically sophisticated hate site on the Web. Regularly updated, the site effectively uses Internet radio via the NA's weekly half-hour "American Dissident Voices" broadcasts, which appear online on the day they are broadcast; they are then archived on the site for several months.
The NA's site also includes policy statements that elaborate on Pierce's views; articles from its publications; and its National Vanguard catalog, offering books, videotapes and cassettes. A relatively new feature allows visitors to print out and photocopy as many copies of NA leaflets as they choose.

Additionally, in an effort to disseminate Pierce's propaganda beyond English-speaking audiences in the United States, texts of selected ADV broadcasts and NA publications are now also available in Swedish, German, Portuguese, French, Dutch and Russian on the site. There are also links to extremist organizations in Great Britain and Germany and to a site that promotes a pro-Serbian nationalist agenda.

Pierce has been quick to understand the potential power of new technologies as they emerge and to take aggressive steps to incorporate these technologies into the NA's propaganda arsenal. In an interview in Barbarian, a NSBM zine, Pierce said, "Our goal now is to build ourselves into the most effective educational instrument that we can for reaching and educating and inspiring our people. We want to be able to express our message through every medium which we can use effectively and communicate on a continuing basis with all of our people."

**A Growing Threat**

The National Alliance's dramatic growth is significant because it comes at a time when other neo-Nazi organizations, as well as groups like the Ku Klux Klan, are becoming weaker and more fragmented. Moreover, the NA does not appear to be siphoning members from these declining groups but actually recruiting a fresh cast of educated, middle-class bigots and young, alienated racists. These new followers appear to be attracted to the National Alliance's dedicated membership, its commanding presence on the Internet, its powerful leadership and its reputation and history, all of which distinguish the organization from other hate groups.