The Base

- The Base is a small militant neo-Nazi organization that emerged mid-2018 and is primarily active in the U.S.
- The group members portray themselves as vigilante soldiers defending the "European race" against a broken "system" that has been infected by Jewish values.
- The Base embraces Hitlerian ideology coupled with a mission to prepare for an impending race war.
- The group espouses nihilistic and accelerationist rhetoric— an ideology embraced by white supremacists who have determined that a societal collapse is both imminent and necessary.
Although the group organizes in the virtual space, their on the ground presence has increased to include alleged criminal activity.

**Overview**

The Base wants to establish a nationwide network of people who believe in the use of violence to overthrow the existing social and political order. The group sees non-white people as enemies of the white race and envisions a coming race war, which will be sparked by “non-European races.”

Members of The Base consider themselves survivalists focused on self-defense and preparing for imminent chaos. The group’s founder, who goes by Norman Spear and Roman Wolf online, was recently revealed by The Guardian to be American-born Rinaldo Nazzaro, who is based in Russia. Nazzaro describes The Base on Lone Wolf Radio as “kind of like a nationalist survivalist LinkedIn type of thing.” In the same interview, Spear acknowledged the limitations of the virtual space, saying, “There has to be more activism that occurs in real life to circumvent the censorship that is occurring online.”

Highlighting the group's move to on the ground activity: In January 2020, authorities arrested seven men believed to be associated with The Base on various murder, vandalism and gun charges.

On January 15, 2020, three Georgia men allegedly tied to The Base were arrested on charges of conspiracy to commit murder and participation in a criminal gang, according to arrest warrants and local reporting. One day later, on January 16, 2020, federal authorities arrested three men alleged to be members of The Base on a variety of gun charges. All three had firearms and were planning to attend a January 20 gun rally in Richmond, according to the F.B.I.

On Friday, January 17, 2020, authorities arrested a man in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, and charged him with conspiracy to violate citizens' rights to use property free from threats or intimidation, according to court records. He is accused of
vandalizing a Racine, Wisconsin, synagogue and is believed to have coordinated efforts with other members of The Base.

Like other accelerationists, The Base encourages the polarization of political parties with the end goal of exacerbating tensions, which in turn will hasten societal collapse. To that end, Spear noted, “In our case, we want to survive, but we hope to also influence the political landscape and be able to use any power vacuum that does emerge to our advantage politically, by trying to assume control over that territory.”

The Base also advocates for some of the most extreme and violent tactics promoted within the white supremacist movement. On September 10, 2018, Norman Spear posted to Twitter “…if you want a *White* society, electoral politics can’t achieve that unless the current System of government is replaced. The current System can’t be replaced peacefully.” The neo-Nazi group disseminates instruction manuals which detail specific tactics used in warfare and urban settings, including sniper attacks. In one post, Spear offered the benefit of an urban setting to shield one’s sniper position, in the trunk of a car, “surrounded by a crowd.”
Despite this, Spear goes to great lengths to distance himself and the organization from any acts of violence. In response to a *Vice* article that discussed some of their private communication of "bombings" and "more destructive" tactics, he offers a disclaimer that it was "essentially shit posting," but he does acknowledge the existence of more radical members within the group. In the Lone Wolf Radio interview, he states, "Some people do fall more on the militant side of things. Some people would hope for an insurgency at the very least."
A similar tactical approach is evident in this Gab post by Base adherent "The Militant Buddhist:" "The electrical grid as well as many other of the system's tenticals [sic] that keep the lemming class fat and happy are extremely weak and easy to target and could even be gotten away with very easily with enough planning and safety precaution."

Spear justifies the group's violent goals this way in a Gab post from June 17, 2018: "It's only terrorism if we lose—If we win, we get statues of us put up in parks."

**Ideology**

The Base maintains an informal membership of adherents, who see themselves as defenders of this existential "European struggle" embracing an "ultra-nationalist" worldview. They value skills that can be honed for a perceived impending race war. Online chats provide users with access to various downloadable manuals that cover topics including guerrilla warfare tactics, gunsmithing literature, survival tactics, military tradecraft and weapons handling. The post also mentions red-pilling, a common extremist shorthand used to describe the process of becoming "aware" of the ostensible realities of the current political and social systems:
Although the focus is on “collective self-defense and survival,” The Base also embraces age-old anti-Semitic conspiracies of Jewish control of society, which, adherents argue, engenders degenerate values and threatens their existence. On July 10, 2018, using a deliberate typographical error referencing Jews to skirt detection in an online search, Spear tweeted the “Majority of White Americans are mentally Jewish so even if all genetic & spiritual Jews expelled USA would still have a Jewish problem—unfixable in time available.”

The Base’s ideology is fundamentally anti-Semitic. In a 2018 tweet, referencing the common white supremacist belief that the U.S. government is controlled by Jews, Spear stated his mission is to “prepare for the armed struggle against ‘Z0G’ [sic] [Zionist Occupied Government] and to liberate “our people from Z0G [sic] oppression.”

Clearly illustrating their hatred of Jews, a June 23, 2019, Telegram propaganda video, allegedly created by The Base, shows a lone individual firing a gun.
repeatedly at a target marked with the Star of David.

Their hatred is not just theoretical. In fact, in November 2019, federal authorities arrested 18-year-old Brooklawn New Jersey native Richard Tobin, after Tobin allegedly stated that he orchestrated a multi-state vandalism dubbed “Operation Kristallnacht.” This is a reference to the 1938 Nazi pogrom in Germany, which sparked a targeted effort to damage Jewish property throughout Germany and resulted in the death of nearly 100 Jews. According to officials, Tobin admitted to having ties to The Base, and to having helped coordinate the September 2019 targeting of two synagogues in Hancock, Michigan, and Racine, Wisconsin, with anti-Semitic graffiti, including swastikas, other Nazi imagery and The Base logo.

To address the state of disrepair of “the system,” they advocate for direct action, especially in the form of violence, to create chaos, ignite a race war and force societal collapse to achieve “total Aryan victory.” The group articulates a sense of both urgency and impatience. On August 18, 2018, Spear tweeted, “The most deadly manifestation of our pathological wishful thinking is in the quasi-religious belief in System Collapse [sic]. It's like waiting for the Second Coming—And as we wait, we continue dying until there won't be a single White person alive to witness it.” Spear underscores the inevitability of violence, saying of his leadership role: “I'll be the lightening [sic] rod but you need to pay me back in blood (preferably not your own)."
These nihilistic beliefs are rooted in accelerationism—a concept that fuels the most extreme ideologues within the white supremacist movement, who argue that a full-scale societal collapse is both imminent and necessary.

As part of their vision of a violent takeover, The Base keeps a range of “domestic enemies” in their crosshairs. This includes more traditional white supremacist targets such as Jews, LGBTQ+ and immigrants but also the media, mainstream conservatives and even other white supremacists, such as members of the alt right, whose tactics they consider toothless, among others.

**Recruitment and Growth**
The Base claims an international operation, with cells and activity worldwide, notably in Connecticut, Georgia, Los Angeles, Massachusetts, Michigan, Milwaukee, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Minnesota, as well as international locations including Australia, Canada and South Africa. As of January 2020, most of their on-the-ground activity has occurred in the U.S. and Canada.

The Base actively recruits members with fliers, propaganda videos and in online posts. In one promotional clip a narrator outlines the type of adherent The Base is looking for: “Membership is limited to nationalists of European descent who understand and accept that the current system cannot be reformed, that societal collapse is seemingly inevitable and, certainly, desirable. With this understanding in mind, we strive to not only survive the ever-accelerating anarchy, but to thrive in it so as to eventually rise from the ashes of Western civilization and impose order from chaos, as our sense of loyalty to blood and soil compels us.” (April 9, 2019, Bitchute).

The Base, in their membership application, includes targeted questions, actively seeking those with “science & engineering training,” as well as “military experience.”
On February 23, 2019, Norman Spear tweeted: “Why do we ask applicants about military experience? The Base is a survivalism & self-defense network—Two skills that are acquired through military training.”

Acknowledging the limitations to fully disconnect from a society they abhor, on July 6, 2018, Norman Spear advised adherents to live dual lives as “right wing
sleeper cells," stating, "You don't necessarily need to quit your job or live off-grid to fight the System—in fact your day job is actually the perfect cover—use it. "Normie" by day, urban guerilla fighter by night. Learn, train, act—and don't get caught—always have a cover story and practice solid OPSEC [operational security].

From Virtual Community to Action on the Ground

The Base has a significant virtual presence, migrating from Twitter, to Gab, to Matrix and most recently Telegram, while also using white supremacist forums like Fascist Forge to recruit and radicalize. However, a concerted effort is made to bridge their activism from online spaces to the physical world. A Gab account associated with The Base, Volkskrieger 🪓🪓, encourages others to join the cause with action: "Having boots-on-the-ground is an essential part of our doctrine, as the fight for our people's survival will not be won on the meaningless spaces of the internet, but in the real world, where a man's actions truly matter. If you are
constantly wondering why, in this sick world, won't someone do something, then consider this; the path to victory over this rotten system begins with action...We face the greatest struggle our people have ever known. It is a long, hard, up-hill battle..."

The groups’ presence is documented nationwide with leafleting campaigns spreading propaganda, “training camps,” as well as alleged acts of anti-Semitic vandalism linked to the group, proving further radicalization.

Influences

The Base’s ideology is fashioned from a range of extremist influences. Although they outwardly promote survivalist and preparedness themes, The Base sees its actions as an extension of the Nazi genocide. At their core is a foundation steeped in Hitlerian ideology and National Socialism. On June 10, 2018, Spear tweeted “Fuhrer, you were only the beginning. We will finish what you started. It’s not over yet—we carry the torch.”
The Base supports the establishment of a white ethno-state in the U.S., where whites can live separate from other races, as envisioned by Harold Covington, a longtime fringe figure in the neo-Nazi movement, and by members of the Northwest Front. In September 2018 Spear appeared on the white supremacist podcast The Roper Report saying, “Harold Covington was a huge inspiration on me and on my revolutionary thinking.”

Norman Spear

Führer, you were only the beginning. We will finish what you started. It's not over yet—We carry the torch.
m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxIln_...
In an “after collapse scenario” the notion of “assumption of territories in Northwest” is held out as an ideal.

On April 29, 2018, Nazzaro tweeted drone footage of Republic, Washington, taken from a YouTube advertisement posted by the Ferry County Business Resource and Learning Center, with the caption, “FM 5-33 Terrain analysis… an integral part of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield.” The “battlefield” reference highlights Nazzaro’s focus on an impending race war.

Nazzaro appears to be taking steps to make his Northwest enclave a reality: Reporting by the Guardian revealed that in December of 2018, Nazzaro purchased
three 10-acre parcels of adjacent undeveloped land in Ferry County for a total of $33,000, under the name Base Global LLC.

The Base draws further inspiration from a variety of sources united only by a common embrace of violence and advocacy of war against perceived enemies. While “The Base” means “Al-Qaeda” in Arabic, the group claims their name “refers to a base camp in the sense of mountaineering...,” in line with their survivalist ideology. It is worth noting, however, that the group appears to admire and closely observe Islamist extremist tactics and activity. In June 2018, Norman Spear tweeted, “al-Qaida [sic] used its international network and propaganda to rally fighters around one flag united in their conviction and self-sacrifice.” However, Spear has also told an interviewer, “Cooperating with people outside our ideological circles and racial circles has inherent risk. As far as The Base is concerned, we don’t have cooperation with groups like that, nor do we ever plan to.”

Similarly, the group references the Irish Republican Army, a designated terrorist group, as a model of success, and praises the guerrilla tactics of Argentinian Marxist revolutionary Che Guevara.

Recent Activity

**October 28, 2021:** Members of The Base: Patrik Jordan Mathews, a Canadian citizen, and Brian Lemley Jr. were sentenced on October 28, 2021 in Greenbelt, Maryland for planning to attack a pro-gun rally in Richmond, Virginia in January 2020. Both individuals pleaded guilty to gun charges, including illegally transporting a firearm, as well as obstruction charges for destroying cell phone evidence. Judge Theodore Chuang applied a “terrorism enhancement” to lengthen their sentences, asserting that the pair intended to engage in terrorist activity, citing planned attacks on lawmakers and the disruption of governmental functioning. Lemley Jr. and Mathews were each sentenced to 9 years in federal prison. Both individuals have a history of military service; Patrik Jordon Mathews...
is a member of the Canadian Armed Forces reserves, and Lemley Jr. is an Iraq war veteran.

**February 26, 2021:** Richard Tobin pleaded guilty to "conspiring with members of a white supremacist hate group to threaten and intimidate African Americans and Jewish Americans by vandalizing minority-owned properties throughout the country in September 2019," according to the Department of Justice. Tobin, a member of The Base according to statements and documents filed in court, coordinated efforts online in September 2019 encouraging followers to destroy and vandalize property belonging to Black and Jewish people, referring to the event as “Kristallnacht” -- a 1938 attack in Nazi Germany during which Nazis murdered Jews and destroyed their property, places of worship and schools.

**February 23, 2021:** Justen Watkins, an alleged leader of The Base, was charged with drug possession for an incident that allegedly took place around October 29, 2020. This follows Watkins’ 2019 arrest by federal and state authorities, alongside group member Alfred Gorman, on multiple felony charges, including gang membership and “using computers to commit a felony.” According to authorities, Watkins attempted to purchase land in Michigan for training members of The Base and eventually for the purposes of developing a white ethnostate. Gorman allegedly filmed firearms trainings to be used for propaganda and recruitment. In February 2021, Vice News obtained and published a series of disturbing photos which were allegedly posted on Watkins’ private Instagram account before his arrest in October 2020. One of the disturbing images, described by Vice News, was a post that read “9mm spinal taps...solid cure to Judaism” with the image of a handgun and a flag with a swastika.

**February 23, 2021:** Former member of The Base Michael John Helterbrand, in prison awaiting a criminal trial for his alleged role in an attempted murder plot along with other Base members, was charged as a member of the criminal street gang Ghostface Gangsters, in the serious assault of another inmate. Helterbrand and six other members of the gang are accused of stabbing, sexually assaulting...
and burning another inmate. According to media reports, Helterbrand said he took part in the attack to increase his standing within the Ghostface Gangster criminal group. In Helterbrand’s mugshot, a tattoo on his forehead which reads “Paleface” is visible, giving additional credence to claims of his involvement with the Ghostface Gangsters.

**February 17, 2021:** The Department of Homeland Security confirmed that Rinaldo Nazzaro worked for DHS from 2004 to 2006, which gives substance to rumors by detractors that he was in fact a government agent.

**February 3, 2021:** The Canadian Government designated The Base a terrorist entity according to Canada’s Anti-Terrorism Act.

**December 2020:** After founder Rinaldo Nazzaro was doxxed and a series of criminal cases were filed against members of The Base, Nazzaro resurfaced in December 2020 on Telegram and in a series of videos on Periscope and BitChute. He also began recruiting for a new project, separate from The Base, called Project Omega. With this new initiative, Nazzaro apparently seeks to connect likeminded people in the U.S. who are interested in engaging in paramilitary training together. This information was shared on now deleted Telegram Channels, one using his old moniker “Norman Spear” and the other entitled “Project Omega.” Nazzaro has also published videos to platforms Periscope and BitChute where he sought to debunk media “myths” about himself and The Base, and to deny allegations that The Base was a honeypot, or that he was a federal agent.

**January 17, 2020:** Authorities arrested Yousef Barasneh in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, and charged him with conspiracy to violate citizens’ rights to use property free from threats or intimidation, according to court records. He is accused of vandalizing a Racine, Wisconsin, synagogue and is believed to have coordinated efforts with other members of The Base.

**January 16, 2020:** Federal authorities in Maryland arrested three men. Patrik Jordan Mathews, Brian Mark Lemley Jr. and William Garfield Bilbrough, believed
to be linked to The Base. According to the F.B.I, the men, who were charged with various federal crimes, had weapons and discussed attending a January 20, 2020 gun rally in Richmond.

**January 15, 2020:** Authorities arrested three Georgia men allegedly tied to The Base -- Luke Austin Lane, Michael John Helterbrand and Jacob Kaderli -- on charges of conspiracy to commit murder and participation in a criminal gang, according to arrest warrants and local reporting.

**November 17, 2019:** Propaganda associated with The Base was reported in the Roosevelt historic neighborhood in downtown Phoenix. The materials read, “Save your race join The Base.”

**November 13, 2019:** Federal authorities arrested alleged The Base member Richard Tobin for his role in orchestrating vandalism at two synagogues on two consecutive days in late September 2019.

**November 9, 2019:** The Base took credit for the recent leafleting around Boston University.

**November 7, 2019:** The Base claimed to have posted propaganda at the Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Metro Park, in Austin, Texas. The materials read, “Save your race join The Base.”

**November 6, 2019:** The New England cell of The Base boasted about leafleting in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

**August 24, 2019:** Alleged Canadian head of The Base, Patrik Matthews reportedly fled his home after being exposed by Winnipeg Free press reporter Ryan Thorpe as a member of the neo-Nazi group.

**August 2019:** Recruitment fliers for The Base were found throughout Winnipeg, including St. James, Exchange District, Osborne Village, North End and outside
September 3, 2018: The Base allegedly held a real-world “camping trip” to practice “bushcraft.” The photo below was posted immediately following the weekend, depicting four individuals disguised with hoodies and masks.