

Aryan Nations/Church of Jesus Christ Christian

This document is an archived copy of an older ADL report and may not reflect the most current facts or developments related to its subject matter.

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have not been kind to Aryan Nations, once the country's most well-known neo-Nazi outpost. Bankrupted by a lawsuit from a mother and son who were assaulted by Aryan Nations guards, the group lost its Idaho compound in 2001. Though he continued to serve as Aryan Nations' leader, Richard Butler suffered the effects of age and ill health, and the group splintered into factions in 2002. Butler claimed to be reorganizing Aryan Nations but died in September 2004, leaving the group's future as uncertain as ever.

Quick Profile

Founder and Leader: Richard Butler (1918-2004)

Splinter groups (and leaders): Tabernacle of Phineas Priesthood (Charles Juba, based in Pennsylvania); Church of the Sons of Yahweh (Morris Gullett, based in Louisiana)

Founded: Mid-1970s

Headquarters : Hayden, Idaho

Background: Butler first became involved with the Christian Identity movement after serving in the U.S. Air Force during World War II. He studied under Wesley Swift, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian, until Swift died. Butler then formed Aryan Nations.

Media: Internet, videos, posters, e-mail, chat rooms, online bulletin boards, conferences. Ideology: Christian Identity, white supremacy, neo-Nazi, paramilitary Connections: Aryan Nations has had members in common with several other white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups, including National Alliance, the Ku Klux Klan and The Silent Brotherhood/The Order Recent Developments: Once the most well-known neo-Nazi group in the United States, Aryan Nations has suffered substantially in recent years due to Butler's ill health, and a lawsuit that cost the group its Northern Idaho compound in 2001. Butler agreed to share power with Kreis and Redfeairn later that year, but the arrangement dissolved into internal squabbling. Eventually three groups competed for Aryan Nations' dwindling number of followers. It is unclear how Butler's death in September 2004 will affect the group.



BACKGROUND

Aryan Nations is one of the country's best-known enclaves of anti-Semitism and white nationalism. While founded as a Christian Identity outpost, the organization also incorporates neo-Nazi themes; its founder

and longtime leader, Richard Girnt Butler, openly adulates Hitler. It is no surprise, then, that Aryan Nations has for many years had members in common with several other white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups and that the Aryan Nations compound at Hayden Lake has served as one of the central meeting points and rallying grounds of far-right extremists of all stripes.

Butler (b. 1918), is a World War II veteran who later worked as an engineer for Lockheed in southern California, where he was introduced to Identity teachings by William Potter Gale, a retired colonel (and aide to General Douglas MacArthur in the South Pacific), leader of the paramilitary California Rangers, and a founder of the Posse Comitatus. By the mid-1960s, Butler had fully embraced Identity and served as National Director of the Christian Defense League, an organization founded by the most prominent popularizer of Identity, Wesley Swift. Butler worked under Swift for 10 years until Swift's death in 1971, at which time Butler proclaimed his Church of Jesus Christ Christian to be the direct successor to Swift's ministry. Butler moved the congregation to northern Idaho where it became, in his words, a "Call to the Nations" or Aryan Nations. Its goal, as a subsequent newsletter stated, was to form "a national racial state. We shall have it at whatever price is necessary. Just as our forefathers purchased their freedom in blood so must we....We will have to kill the bastards."



WALKING THE WALK

Several Aryan Nations associates have acted on this call to arms. During the early 1980s, for example, Butler followers joined with members of the neo-Nazi National Alliance and Ku Klux Klan splinter groups to form The Silent Brotherhood, known more widely as The Order, which planned to overthrow the United States government in hopes of establishing an Aryan homeland in the Pacific Northwest. In order to raise funds for this revolution, members of the group went on a crime spree in 1983-1984 that included bank robberies, counterfeiting, bombings, armored car holdups and murder. The counterfeiting operation was based at the Aryan Nations compound.

Ostensibly, The Order's activities came to an end in December 1984, when its founder and leader, Robert J. "Bob" Mathews, died in a fire during a shootout with federal agents on Whidbey Island, Washington, and many of its members were caught and incarcerated. Yet The Order, and to a lesser degree Aryan Nations, has retained a mythic status in the far-right underground. Its legend is now perpetuated across the Internet, inspiring a new generation of would-be white revolutionaries and further reinforcing the Aryan Nations "brand."

IDEOLOGY

The Order's murderous violence does not typify Aryan Nations, but the anti-government and anti-Jewish hatred of Mathews and his colleagues is the lingua franca of Hayden Lake. A statement of beliefs on the Aryan Nations Web site declares: "The Jew is like a destroying virus that attacks our racial body to destroy our Aryan culture and purity of our race. Those of our Race who resist these attacks are called 'chosen and

faithful." Anti-Jewish sentiments are blended with opposition to the American government in an Aryan "Declaration of Independence" that mimics the original:

The history of the present Zionist Occupied Government of the United States of America is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having a direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states; moreover throughout the entire world...We, therefore, the representatives of the Aryan people, in council, appealing to the supreme God of our folk for the rectitude of intentions ... solemnly publish and declare that the Aryan people in America, are, and of rights ought to be, a free and independent nation; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the United States of America, and that all political connection between them and the Federal government thereof, is and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that as a free and independent nation they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to perform all other acts which independent nations may of right do.

The "Declaration" concludes by quoting the so-called "14 Words," coined by David Lane of The Order: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children." The phrase has become a popular battle cry for white supremacists and neo-Nazis.

White survivalism is of a piece with Aryan Nations' broader Identity beliefs. The group states that God's creation of Adam marked "the placing of the White Race upon this earth. Not all races descend from Adam. Adam is the father of the White Race only....We believe that the true, literal children of the Bible are the twelve tribes of Israel, now scattered throughout the world and now known as the Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, Teutonic, Scandinavian, Celtic peoples." Folding in anti-Semitism, the group goes on to explain that non-Aryans are not merely inferior but must be destroyed:

We believe that there are literal children of Satan in the world today. These children are the descendants of Cain, who was a result of Eve's original sin, her physical seduction by Satan. We know that because of this sin there is a battle and a natural enmity between the children of Satan and the children of The Most High God. We believe that the Cananite Jew is the natural enemy of our Aryan (White) Race. This is attested by Scripture and all secular history.

THE ARYAN HOMESTEAD

Hayden Lake, Idaho an otherwise peaceful community was long considered by many white supremacists to be the "international headquarters of the White race," as Butler dubbed it. To aid in recruitment efforts, build support and strengthen alliances among a range of right-wing extremist groups, Aryan Nations hosted white supremacist summer "festivals," known as the World Congress of Aryan Nations, at its 20-acre northern Idaho compound. Patrolled by a security force of armed guards and dogs, Butler's property provided the dual advantages of being remote from potential intrusions by law enforcement officials, counterdemonstrators or media, while also providing an atmosphere of rugged, unspoiled outdoors commensurate with the survivalist and separatist sensibilities of many visitors.

At the conferences, which have attracted as many as 200 participants, Butler's organization offered paramilitary training in urban terrorism and guerrilla warfare as well as, more generally, a chance for like-minded extremists to address issues of common interest. Butler has referred to his joint efforts with Klansmen and other hate movement figures as an "interrelationship of people with the same beliefs and ideas." In their heyday, the meetings were a sort of country retreat attended by a veritable "who's who" of

prominent and rising extremists; a July 1982 weekend gathering, for example, brought together members of at least 13 Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi and other racist groups. The organization has hosted such mandarins of the far right as Klan leader and leaderless resistance formulator Louis Beam, the influential (now deceased) organizer Robert Miles, Tom Metzger of White Aryan Resistance, Posse Comitatus leader James Wickstrom, Identity ideologue Gordon "Jack" Mohr, Grand Wizard (and later pioneering hate webmaster) Don Black, and representatives from such white supremacist organizations as the National Socialist Party of America and the National States Rights Party.¹ John Trochmann, featured at the 1990 Congress, later became leader of the Militia of Montana, one of the most active anti-government militia groups in the country.

For several years, Aryan Nations also hosted youth activities at its rural headquarters. In the early 1980s, an "Aryan Nations Academy" was established to inculcate the group's philosophy in the minds of local youngsters. In 1982, an informational mailing claimed that the "academy" had 15 full-time students, preschool through grade eight. In addition, youth conferences attracting numerous skinheads were held in April to coincide with Hitler's birthday. Aryan Nations has also hosted white power skinhead bands, including Bound for Glory, Christian Identity Skins and Odin's Law.

Since 1979, Butler's organization has been engaged in active prison outreach as well; it corresponds with inmates and distributes the group's materials to them. In 1983, Beam, Butler's assistant at the time, wrote that "the ever increasing Prison Ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian has begun to be felt throughout the state prison system as a major force." This effort became an important aspect of Butler's agenda during the 1980s, given that many members of The Order and Aryan Nations were serving long prison sentences as a result of several major federal prosecutions between 1985 and 1987.

Late in 1987, Butler announced plans to expand Aryan Nations activities, opening a branch in neighboring Utah and launching a weekly radio broadcast called "The Aryan Nations Hour." When the program was quickly cancelled due to alleged death threats and advertising losses, its Aryan Nations host blamed the "liberal-Marxist-homosexual-Zionist coalition." This alleged coalition could not prevent Butler from opening more than a dozen state offices over the years, however, nor from designating regional "ambassadors" to oversee them.

LEADERSHIP STRUGGLES

During the 1990s, Aryan Nations endured a spate of internal skirmishes, with several of its key members parting company to start new groups. Carl Franklin, former Chief of Staff, left in the summer of 1993 as a result of friction with Butler, who had named Franklin his successor the year before. Wayne Jones, who had served as Security Chief at the compound since the late 1980s, departed with Franklin. Both resigned on the last day of the World Congress, claiming in a letter to their former compatriots that neither had received a paycheck in over two years. They and two other members moved to western Montana to form their own white supremacist group the Church of Jesus Christ Christian of Montana.

Six months after these departures, in January 1994, two more key figures in Butler's inner circle, Charles and Betty Tate, who ran the organization's office and printing operation, left to join their son-in-law, Kirk Lyons, a North Carolina-based lawyer who has called himself an "active sympathizer" with his white supremacist clients. In addition, Floyd Cochran, a one-time Aryan Nations official, quit the group and renounced anti-Semitism and racism.

Disunity among the leadership became even more apparent at the annual congress held at the compound for three days in July 1995. Although attendance approximately 125 (including 25 skinheads, a good turnout) was higher than in prior years, a fistfight broke out when it was alleged that the wife of Staff Leader Tim Bishop was stealing money from the organization. The fracas contributed to Bishop's decision to resign his post and return to Kansas, where he had previously been a Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon.

In December 1995, with Butler's wife having died from cancer and the aging leader's own health in decline, the question of selecting a successor became increasingly relevant. For a time, it was believed that Beam, the militant strategist who had been touted in the past as Butler's heir apparent, might step in. Former Texas Grand Dragon of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1970s, Beam also served as Aryan Nations Ambassador-at-Large and purchased property on the northern Idaho panhandle not far from Hayden Lake. At the 1993 Congress, Beam was one of the main speakers, telling his enthusiastic audience: "The old period is over and a new period is going to begin....I'm here to tell you that if we can't have this country, as far as I'm concerned, no one gets it." Beam delivered another well-received address at the 1995 Congress, and he appeared to have bolstered his standing as the most likely successor to Butler. However, after failing to attend the 1996 gathering, Beam unexpectedly fell out of favor with movement radicals, allegedly for toning down his anti-Semitism, and was dropped from consideration.

For a time in 1997, Aryan Nations' Ohio chapter one of the 18 "state offices" the organization claims to have across the country seemed to be positioning itself as a possible new headquarters upon Butler's demise. Members held rallies and pursued fundraising in several Ohio cities as well as distributing anti-black and anti-Semitic fliers; they especially targeted local rabbis and synagogues throughout northern Kentucky and southwestern Ohio. However, the chapter suffered a setback in September 1997 when its state leader, Harold Ray Redfeairn, was sentenced to six months in prison for carrying a concealed weapon. Later in 1997, after leading some of the group's few hundred followers in its annual march through the streets of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Butler named as his successor Neuman Britton, a longtime member and chaplain of Butler's church known for his fiery oratory. Based in Escondido, California, Britton was the organization's California State Leader and had regularly attended Aryan Nations events in Idaho, Tennessee, Pennsylvania and California. He had spoken at a number of extremist gatherings across the country and, together with his wife, addressed the 1996 Congress. As it turned out, the septuagenarian Britton was outlived by the octogenarian Butler; Britton passed away in August 2001 without ever having served as leader.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In the past, Butler has managed to raise funds for Aryan Nations activities by encouraging congregants to make offerings and pay membership fees, in addition to selling flags and tapes of his sermons. Supporters are also required to tithe 10 percent of their incomes. The group's financial prospects changed dramatically in 1998, however, when Carl E. Story and R. Vincent Bertollini, acquaintances of Butler who had become wealthy in the field of computer technology, donated a significant sum to the group. Both recent transplants from California's Silicon Valley to Sandpoint, Idaho, they founded and lead the 11th Hour Remnant Messenger, an Identity ministry that shares the apocalyptic racism of Aryan Nations. The two men have underwritten several expensive propaganda efforts, including the distribution of a videotaped interview with Butler that was reportedly sent to 9,000 residents of northern Idaho.

Story and Bertollini's largesse aside, the past three years have been difficult for the organization. On August 10, 1998, the group received significantly negative publicity when a 37-year-old former Aryan Nations guard named Buford Furrow shot and wounded three young boys, a teenage girl and a receptionist at the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles. Furrow, who had a history of mental illness and trouble with the law, fired more than 70 rounds from a submachine gun, fled from the crime scene and later shot and killed a Filipino-American postal worker, Joseph Iletto. After evading authorities for nearly 24 hours, Furrow surrendered to the FBI in Las Vegas. He declared that his murder spree was intended as "a wake-up call to America to kill Jews" and that he had killed Iletto because the man was nonwhite and worked for the federal government.



Aryan Nations members at Hayden Lake, Idaho in 1995. Buford Furrow (second from right), at the time an Aryan Nations guard, killed one person and wounded five others in a 1998 shooting spree in Los Angeles.

Two years later, in September 2000, Aryan Nations' security force made national headlines again when a jury awarded \$6.3 million to Victoria and Jason Keenan, a mother and son (represented by the Southern Poverty Law Center) who had been assaulted, chased and shot at by Aryan Nations guards after briefly stopping their car on a road in front of the compound two years before. The jury found Aryan Nations and Butler guilty of negligence in the selection, training and supervision of the security guards. The judgment bankrupted Butler and his group, and the 20-acre Aryan Nations compound and the Aryan Nations name were legally handed over to the Keenans: Butler renamed his organization the Aryan National Alliance. Patrons Bertollini and Story purchased a new home for the Identity pastor in nearby Hayden, Idaho, where he vowed to continue his activities, including propaganda distribution and posting to the Web site.

As the bankruptcy sale of the compound and the Aryan Nations name approached, some of Butler's followers began defecting to a newly-established Christian Identity church, the Church of True Israel, based in Noxon, Montana. Headed by a "council of prelates" instead of a single leader, the Church was founded in 1996 by five men, all of whom were once tied to Aryan Nations. During the summer 1995 Aryan World Congress, the *Spokane Spokesman-Review* reported, a faction of state Aryan leaders attempted unsuccessfully to wrest power away from Butler; soon afterward, two of the failed mutineers, John Burke and Charles Mangels, left Aryan Nations and founded the new church. Like its predecessor it preaches white supremacy, but it has distanced itself from Butler's glorification of Nazism. Although precise connections cannot be drawn, several of Butler's close supporters are rumored to have ties to True Israel.

LOOKING FORWARD

In January 2001, with Aryan Nations still operational but its future still in question, Butler named as the group's Acting Staff Leader and Youth Activities Coordinator 21-year-old Shawn Winkler, who already held permits for three marches for the upcoming year, in Sandpoint, Rathdrum and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. A new telephone hotline was also announced, along with a new webmaster, Pastor August Kreis III, who has also run a Web site for another Identity group, the Posse Comitatus. Based in Pennsylvania, Kreis serves as Ambassador to the seven states in Aryan Nations' northeast region. Butler also defiantly declared that the

organization was reverting to its original name, Church of Jesus Christ Christian/Aryan Nations a decision whose legality, or seriousness, is uncertain.

In a letter reporting these changes to followers, Butler wrote: "The loss of Home, Church, personal possessions and automobiles didn't hurt so much as the loss of those who claimed to be friends and comrades in the struggle to awake our people to the terrible fate they and their posterity face....The Legal profession, courts, big business and media are united in the proposition that the White homogeneous population of North Idaho be mongrelized."

In September 2001, the group's ongoing leadership issue appeared to be resolved when it announced that Butler had chosen Ohio's Ray Redfeairn as his successor. The selection suggests that the group will remain militant and possibly volatile: Redfeairn has a substantial record of criminal activity, beginning long before his 1997 conviction on weapons charges. In 1979, he shot a police officer several times during a traffic stop, then pleaded guilty by reason of insanity (psychologists described him as a paranoid schizophrenic during the trial) and spent four years in a mental hospital. In 1985, he pleaded guilty to attempted aggravated murder for the shooting and to charges of aggravated robbery for an incident that occurred prior to the shooting. He was released from prison in 1991. The former Klansman has also been convicted for aggravated menacing, disorderly conduct, and at least three times for alcohol-related driving violations. He has also been arrested for allegedly threatening to kill his mother, although she later retracted the charges.

Along with the promotion of Redfeairn, Butler shuffled the titles of two other top lieutenants, naming August Kreis "Director of Information" and Shawn Winkler "Director of Aryan Nation Youth Corps" [sic]. And while Butler will remain the "rock and spiritual leader of Aryan Nations," according to the group, it also announced plans to establish an "office and church grounds" in Ulysses, Pennsylvania, where Kreis rents several acres of land.

¹In April 1987, a grand jury in Ft. Smith, Arkansas, returned indictments charging Butler, Beam, Miles, and 11 others, including several members of The Order, with participating in a seditious conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government. In April 1988, a jury found the defendants not guilty (the charges against one defendant had already been dismissed).

Report Updates (2002-2009)

BREAKUP OF ARYAN NATIONS LEADS TO FORMATION OF SUCCESSOR GROUPS

July 17, 2002

Two white supremacists fleeing from the disintegrating neo-Nazi organization Aryan Nations have announced the formation of a new group called "Church of the Sons of Yahweh," headquartered in Ohio. Harold "Ray" Redfeairn, of Dayton, Ohio, briefly the leader of Aryan Nations, and Morris Gulett, an associate of Redfeairn now living in Louisiana, head the group, which supports "racial segregation and white racial supremacy." What is perhaps most disturbing is that both the remnant Aryan Nations and the new Church of the Sons of Yahweh have adopted the concept of a violent class of white "warriors for God" called the Phineas Priesthood. Thus factional infighting may lead to an increased risk of violence or even terrorism.

A "Nation" in Decline

Aryan Nations was once the most infamous neo-Nazi group in the United States, but it has fallen upon hard times recently, due to the declining health of 84-year-old founder Richard Butler and to a successful lawsuit launched against the group by the Southern Poverty Law Center on behalf of victims of an assault by Aryan Nations security guards. Butler lost his Northern Idaho compound in 2001, but some of his followers had been leaving the sinking ship of Aryan Nations even earlier, joining other racist groups or starting their own. To salvage what was left of Aryan Nations, Butler agreed to turn over the reins of power to a triumvirate that included his assistant Shaun Winkler, Pennsylvania white supremacist August Kreis, and Redfeairn.

The "new and improved" Aryan Nations did not last long before internal squabbling brought it down. Its various personalities began by accusing each other of misdeeds; eventually, they mutually expelled each other. When the dust settled, three Aryan Nations factions emerged: 1) the remnant Aryan Nations headquartered in northern Idaho and led by the ailing Richard Butler and Shaun Winkler; 2) the "renegade" Aryan Nations headquartered in Pennsylvania and led by August Kreis and Charles Juba; and 3) the new Church of the Sons of Yahweh headquartered in Ohio and led by Ray Redfeairn Morris Gulett (the latter in Louisiana).

The Church of the Sons of Yahweh may be the most disturbing of the various factions. Few Aryan Nations members could be considered "moderate," but Redfeairn and Gulett certainly number among the most radical. Both are men with violent criminal pasts. Redfeairn tried to kill a Dayton police officer during a traffic stop in 1979, shooting the officer three times (the officer survived). That earned Redfeairn a stay in prison until 1991. Once out, Redfeairn continued to get in trouble with the law, earning convictions on DUI charges, aggravated menacing, and disorderly conduct. His extreme beliefs hardened as well: he dabbled with the Klan, then joined Aryan Nations. Redfeairn emerged as its Ohio leader in 1997, establishing his headquarters in an old Klan hall building in New Vienna and making his debut with a surprise visit to the trial of white supremacist bank robber Peter Langan in Columbus. Redfeairn's tenure as Ohio Aryan Nations head was brief; by October 1997 he was sentenced to six months in prison after pleading guilty to carrying a concealed knife and brass knuckles. After his release, Redfeairn moved around, at times staying with Richard Butler on his Hayden Lake, Idaho, compound. As Butler's health failed, Redfeairn positioned himself to be the neo-Nazi's successor.

Morris Gulett followed faithfully in Redfeairn's footsteps, beginning as a disciple in his mentor's gang of Ohio Aryans. In March 1997, Gulett was arrested for ramming a Dayton police department cruiser with his van. He was charged with two counts of felonious assault on a police officer (the second count was due to a separate incident with a park ranger). Gulett faced up to twenty years in jail, but a plea bargain allowed him to serve only about a year in prison. After his release, he eventually ended up in Louisiana, where he became that state's Aryan Nations leader upon the accession of Redfeairn to power.

Unholy Warriors

One of the most disturbing features to accompany the disintegration of Aryan Nations has been the conscious reintroduction of "Phineas Priest" concepts by several of the factions. Aryan Nations is a Christian Identity group; Christian Identity is a racist and anti-Semitic religious sect whose members believe that white people are the descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel, that Jews are descended from Satan, and that blacks and other non-white races are soulless "mud peoples." One of the most radical

Christian Identity theorists is Richard Kelly Hoskins, who in 1990 invented the notion of the "Phineas Priest," built around the concept of the biblical Phinehas, who used a spear to slay an Israelite and a Midianite who had lain together. Phineas Priests believe themselves modern day Phinehases, with a self-appointed mission to strike out in the most violent and ruthless way against race mixers, abortionists, homosexuals, Jews, and other perceived enemies.

The Phineas Priesthood does not exist as an organization or formal group, but a number of individual extremists have identified themselves as Phineas Priests, often as a way to justify criminal acts they committed earlier. One chilling example of a group of extremists who openly operated as a Phineas Priest cell, though, are the "Spokane Bank Bandits" who terrorized eastern Washington in 1995-96. These heavily armed terrorists bombed an abortion clinic and a newspaper office in Spokane as diversions for bank robberies designed to get money for their cause. They left messages behind identifying themselves as Phineas Priests. Three of them were arrested following a failed robbery attempt in Portland, Oregon, in October 1996; a fourth was caught soon after (it is thought that perhaps as many as four more members remain unapprehended). Three—Robert Berry, Charles Barbee, and Verne Jay Merrel—were sentenced to life in prison without parole, and the fourth, Brian Ratigan, to 55 years in jail.

The Phineas Priest concept lost popularity in the late 1990s, but references to Phineas Priests and Phineas Priest activity once more became common among Aryan Nations members in early 2002. Some of the references were chilling. In April 2002, for example, Pennsylvania Aryan Nations leader and Kreis disciple Joshua Caleb Sutter praised Palestinian suicide bombers who killed Israeli civilians, predicted America would also soon see such bombers, and expressed hope that "Phineas Priests and Priestesses" would awake to join Islamic extremists in executing vengeance. On the Pennsylvania Aryan Nations Web site, Sutter proclaimed that the "Phineas Priesthood is alive and well in this state and we will be coming soon to a church near you!" To a newspaper reporter he identified himself as a Phineas Priest. Soon the August Kreis's Aryan Nations Web site began openly recruiting people to become Phineas Priests with a page that prominently displayed images of Osama bin Laden and a suicide bomber.

Future Violence?

The factional fighting between first Butler on one hand and Kreis and Redfeairn on the other, then between Kreis and Redfeairn themselves, has resulted in a competition for the support of Aryan Nation's dwindling membership. Redfeairn in particular has traveled around the country from California to Georgia, to meet with members of Aryan Nations chapters as well as other extremist groups to drum up support for himself. When extremist groups engage in such competitions for membership, they frequently try to adopt stances more radical than those adopted by their opponents; thus Kreis and Redfeairn may be engaging in a war to "outradical" each other. As soon as Redfeairn and Gulett established a Web site for their own new group, the Church of the Sons of Yahweh, they too committed themselves to the concept of the Phineas Priesthood, by choosing as the group's symbol the image of the Phineas Priesthood—the letter "P" with a line through it (to represent the spear of Phinehas).

Redfeairn and Gulett may or may not win over Butler or Kreis supporters, but the more disturbing possibility is that all of this infighting may serve to radicalize both factions and inspire adherents of either faction actually to commit crimes in the name of the "Phineas Priesthood" rather than simply fantasizing about them. Already, Redfeairn and Gulett have announced a radio broadcast on the subject of "The Holocaust: Does Yahweh demand genocide?" This is billed as a "hard hitting Jew exposing sermon," in which Redfeairn asks, "Does God demand the total annihilation of a particular people?" Meanwhile, the

Aryan Nations faction headed by Kreis and Juba has openly proclaimed on its Web site that "We are not a non-violent organization" and announced its support for "any and all efforts that disrupt the system and lead to system breakdown." These violent words may lead to violent action in the future.

The Disintegration of Aryan Nations

- Church of Jesus Christ Christian/Aryan Nations. Headquartered: Hayden Lake, Idaho. Prominent leaders: Richard Butler (ID), Shaun Winkler (ID), Don Campbell (MN), Jeremy Hinkle/Dan Hinkle (MD), Mike McQueeney (WI). Claims contacts in: ID, CA, MN, MD, NH, LA, TX, NC, PA, SC, Germany.
- Church of Jesus Christ Christian/Aryan Nations. Headquartered: Ulysses, Pennsylvania. Prominent leaders: August Kreis (PA), Charles Juba (PA), Joshua Caleb Sutter (PA). Claims contacts in: PA, NY, Russia.
- Church of the Sons of Yahweh. Headquartered: Dayton, Ohio. Prominent leaders: Ray Redfeairn (OH), Morris Gulett (LA). Claims contacts in: OH, LA.
- Church of True Israel. The first splinter group from Aryan Nations. It broke off in 1996 (but did not become active until later). In 1998, the Spokane Statesman Review spotted Charles Mangels wearing a Phineas Priest belt buckle. Prominent leaders: Charles Mangels (MT), James Dillavou (IA), John Miller (MT), Ed Dosh (MT), Stanley McCollum (AL), John Burke (ID). Headquartered: Originally Noxon, Montana, then Couer d'Alene, Idaho. Claims contacts in: ID, MT, IA.

ARYAN NATIONS PLANS ANNUAL WORLD CONGRESS AND PARADE IN IDAHO

July 13, 2004

Three of the most active Christian Identity groups in the U.S. are planning three separate events in Montana and Idaho on the weekend of July 16-18, 2004. Collectively, these events are expected to gather most of the major Christian Identity figures from around the country. Christian Identity is a racist and anti-Semitic religious sect that figures prominently in right-wing extremist groups and movements in the U.S.

America's Promise Ministries and Aryan Nations will host their annual events in Idaho, while the Church of True Israel (CTI), an offshoot of Aryan Nations, will hold its gathering in Montana. All three events seek to bring together dozens of like minded Christian Identity adherents, most of whom consider non-whites to be subhuman and Jews to be the offspring of Satan. Other well known white supremacists are also scheduled to attend the events.

The neo-Nazi Aryan Nations, based in Hayden, Idaho, plans to hold its annual World Congress at the Kahnderosa Campgrounds in Cataldo, Idaho, and to parade in downtown Coeur d'Alene. In addition to Aryan Nations' leader Richard Butler scheduled speakers include neo-Nazis Tom Metzger of White Aryan Resistance and Billy Roper of White Revolution. Ken Greg of the Tennessee's Knights of Yahweh is also scheduled to address the gathering.

Meanwhile, CTI, a splinter group from Aryan Nations started in the 1990s, is planning its own event, dubbed "The Gathering," in St. Regis, Montana. The event, hosted by one of the group's leaders, James Dillavou, will feature speakers and Identity leaders from over half a dozen states, including Mark Downey of Kinsmen Redeemer Ministries in Tacoma, Washington; Morris Gullett of Louisiana's Church of the Sons of YHVH; V.S. Herrell of Tennessee's Christian Separatist Church Society; Don Campbell of Minnesota's

Covenant Church of Yahweh; and Rachel Pendergraft and Thom Robb of the Arkansas-based Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. According to CTI, the Militia of Montana will also attend.

Pastor Dave Barley, who heads America's Promise Ministries based in Sandpoint, Idaho, plans to host the third event. Among the anticipated speakers at Barley's annual summer conference are Ron Oja, Doug Evers and Ernestine Young of Idaho's Church of the Covenant; and Warwick Potts and James Bruggeman of North Carolina's Stone Kingdom Ministries.

Though small in numbers, Christian Identity influences virtually all white supremacist and extreme anti-government movements and is practiced by some of the most notorious bigots of the radical right. Several Identity events held in the U.S. in 2004 had 300-500 attendees.

40 MEMBERS OF ARYAN NATIONS PARADE THROUGH IDAHO TOWN

July 19, 2004

Most of the prominent Christian Identity leaders from around the United States traveled to the Pacific Northwest for white supremacist events held on the weekend of July 16-18, 2004. Christian Identity is a racist and anti-Semitic religious sect.

The most visible event was the three-day Aryan World Congress gathering hosted by Aryan Nations in the Northern Idaho town of Coeur d'Alene. The Congress was attended by approximately 50 white supremacists, including racist group leaders such as Billy Roper of White Revolution and Thomas Metzger of White Aryan Resistance.

From the back of a pickup truck, ailing neo-Nazi leader Richard Butler led a racist parade through Coeur d'Alene. About 40 white supremacists accompanied him, while others cheered and gave Nazi salutes as onlookers. Most bystanders, however, were there to oppose the Aryan Nations event.

The second weekend event, "The Gathering," took place in Western Montana and was organized by The Church of True Israel, and offshoot of Aryan Nations. This event drew only some 30 participants rather than the 200 expected by its organizers. One possible reason for the low attendance was that the owner of the property on which the meeting was to take place withdrew his offer after the event drew attention from law enforcement and the media. Church of True Israel organizers scrambled to find another venue for their meeting, which ended up taking place in a remote unimproved campground outside of St. Regis, Montana.

NEO-NAZI ICON, RICHARD BUTLER, IS DEAD

September 9, 2004

Richard Butler, the 86-year-old head of Aryan Nations, once the most infamous neo-Nazi group in the country, died on September 8, 2004. Butler, who outlived several designated successors, led the group for over three decades from his base in Hayden, Idaho, a menacing armed compound. However, in recent years, his ailing health and the loss of the compound due to a lawsuit had diminished the group's numbers and influence. Despite the waning influence of the group, individual members continued to be involved in a number of serious crimes.

Butler, a one-time engineer, began his involvement in the white supremacist movement after World War II when he embraced racist and anti-Semitic Christian Identity beliefs and started attending meetings of Wesley Swift's Christian Defense League. In 1971, when Swift died, Butler declared himself Swift's successor. He soon took Swift's Church of Jesus Christ Christian to Northern Idaho, renaming it Aryan Nations. The group's yearly congresses at its headquarters in Hayden attracted a wide range of racists over the years—from Klan members to skinheads to neo-Nazis.

At these congresses, which were attended by as many as 200 participants, Butler offered paramilitary training and guerilla warfare, and provided a haven for like-minded extremists to discuss their vision for an all-white nation. Butler himself urged racists to settle in the Pacific Northwest, and many did. In addition to these gatherings, Butler reached out to white supremacists in prison and tried to recruit young people through an "Aryan Nations Academy," which he established in the early 1980s.

A number of extremists, inspired by Butler's teachings, committed violent acts over the years. Among the most notorious crimes were the string of armored car robberies and murders carried out by members of The Order in the early 1980s and the shooting spree at a Los Angeles Jewish daycare center by one-time Aryan Nations member Buford Furrow in 1999.

Just in the past several years, seven different Aryan Nations members (many with previous convictions) have been arrested for alleged crimes ranging from weapons charges to hate crimes; four such arrests occurred in April-May 2004 alone, including an alleged firebombing of a synagogue in Oklahoma City in April 2004.

In the 1990s, Aryan Nations began to experience problems. Contention within the organization caused some members to leave to form their own groups. The organization also took a big hit in 1998 when a mother and son, Victoria and Jason Keenan, filed a lawsuit against the group after being assaulted by Aryan Nations guards when they stopped their car near the Aryan Nations compound. In September 2000, a jury found Butler and his group guilty of negligence in the selection, training and supervision of the guards, and the Keenans were awarded 6.3 million dollars. Butler was forced to declare bankruptcy and lost his compound in Hayden.

Over the next few years, Butler's health continued to deteriorate, and without a home base, his group began to lose both members and influence. Infighting in the group also led to the formation of various factions. At one time, three different factions vied for hegemony of Aryan Nations. In 2001, Butler named Ray Redfeairn as his successor. Redfeairn, however, left the group that year and formed his own faction, only to return in 2002. Redfeairn died in 2003 before he could take the reins.

In the last two years of his life, Butler remained a revered figure in the extremist world and was a featured speaker at a number of white supremacist gatherings around the country. Despite serious health problems, he even ran for mayor in Hayden in 2003. He continued to hold Aryan Nations congresses in a public park in Idaho but the 2004 event only attracted about 40 followers. The future of Butler's group remains uncertain. But the legacy that Butler left—helping to create a generation's worth of extreme racists and anti-Semites determined to follow in his footsteps—is unfortunate.

NEO-NAZI ARRESTED FOR VIOLENT E-MAIL THREATS

September 28, 2004

A self-proclaimed Neo-Nazi and leader of Aryan Nations in Reno, Nevada, was arrested and charged with mailing e-mail threats to Jews, government officials, law enforcement officers, media and others in Nevada and California.

Steven Holten, 40, was arrested September 22, 2004, on a federal charge of transmitting a threat by interstate commerce. In his email, Holten allegedly threatened that Aryan Nations of Reno would take "terrorist actions" against people and groups on its "most wanted list" that would be "gruesome and something that has never been seen in Reno and San Francisco."

During a search of Holten's apartment, police found a recently acquired handgun and a laptop computer, which he allegedly used to e-mail the threats.

Reno Police Lt. Ron Donnelly called Holten a "hate-monger" and indicated that he had been in the Reno area for 18 months, trying to recruit members to Aryan Nations, an anti-Semitic and racist neo-Nazi organization. Acting Police Chief Jim Weston said that police received information indicating Holten was seeking to recruit members in Reno-area restaurants and businesses.

Holten's neck is tattooed with an SS lightning bolt, a symbol frequently seen in neo-Nazi tattoos and graffiti. In an interview with the Spokane, Washington *Spokesman-Review* earlier this month, Holten said that during an Aryan Nations march in Idaho in July, the late Aryan Nations leader Richard Butler signed his Aryan flag "For Victory."

Holten was being held without bail in the Washoe County Jail.

ARYAN NATIONS AFTER BUTLER'S DEATH: STRUGGLE OVER LEADERSHIP

March 28, 2005

2004 was an arduous year for Richard Butler's Church of Jesus Christ Christian/Aryan Nations. In September, the 86-year-old Butler died after a long period of poor health. In the ensuing struggle for authority over the fragmented and depleted organization – which began while Butler was still ailing – two leading contenders for the Aryan Nations legacy emerged: a breakaway group based in Sebring, Florida, (previously based in Pennsylvania and then briefly in Kansas City, Kansas) and a collection of Butler loyalists based in Alabama.

Until early March 2005, the Aryan Nations splinter faction had been led by Charles Juba in Ulysses, Pennsylvania, who moved the headquarters to Kansas City for unknown reasons. Shortly after relocation, Juba announced his resignation as both leader and member of the organization, naming August Kreis as his successor. In addition Jay Faber was appointed "Assistant Chaplain" and a man using the alias Wulfran Hall was named "High Counsel." Juba offered no clear reason for stepping down.

This contingent of Aryan Nations, now led by Kreis, has been aided in its campaign to secure the allegiance of remaining members by Posse Comitatus leader James Wickstrom. Recently named "World Chaplain" for Kreis's group, Wickstrom suggested in October that Butler had chosen Juba as his successor:

“Aryan Nations future [sic] has been secured by the foresight of Pastor Richard G. Butler, the diligent work of Pastor August Kreis III, National Director Charles John Juba, and the officers who are subordinate to them. Under no circumstances from this day forward should there be any confusion as to who leads Aryan Nations.”

Wickstrom's message – which proved premature – was quickly countered by the Butler faithful.

“August Kreis and the [faction then in Pennsylvania] have no affiliation with the Church of Jesus Christ Christian/Aryan Nation,” a message on Butler's old Web site announced. “In fact there exists no reason for the bogus [Aryan Nations] to exist other than to siphon off support of the true organization.”

At the same time as it was denouncing Juba and Wickstrom as frauds, Butler's contingent moved its headquarters from Hayden, Idaho, where Butler had maintained Aryan Nations' hub for 30 years, to a post office box in Lincoln, Alabama, held by Clark Patterson of nearby Talladega.

According to Patterson, also known as "Brother Laslo," a four-person leadership would succeed Butler. While Patterson still has not formally named the leaders, the most influential figures in the group include Jonathan Williams of Atlanta, the new director of communications; Rick Spring of Little Rock, Arkansas, Butler's head of security; and Patterson himself.

While neither bloc recognizes the other's legitimacy, both continue to threaten persons of different races and religions as well as the government. Steve Holten, the Nevada leader for the Butler remnant, was arrested in October 2004 for threats he made against employees of the *Reno Gazette-Journal* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* and several state government officials. In his threats, Holten stated, "Our violent terrorist actions will be a shock to the citizens of Reno and San Francisco. It will be gruesome, and something that has never been seen ever." He added: "We of Aryan Nations are angry, and we hate and we kill." Holten pleaded guilty November 29 and faces a maximum of 5 years and a \$250,000 fine.

August Kreis was similarly extreme, stating in November 2004: "It is time that our race, and all the races, awake to the fact that is the jEw WORLDWIDE that must DIE and not a jEw left alive before we have peace on earth. THIS is the TRUTH that we must bring to ALL the races before an end can be brought to Hatred on this planet" [capitalization and grammar in original].

The rivalry between the groups and their threatening language indicate that while their compound has been dismantled and figurehead has died, Aryan Nations' members continue to pose a risk to society and law enforcement.

2004: Aryan Nations' record of violence

Aryan Nations members were involved in several serious crimes during 2004. The perpetrators included:

- Sean Gillespie, who called himself a corporal in the organization, was indicted on charges that he firebombed a synagogue in Oklahoma City.
- Steve Holten, Nevada contact for the group, pleaded guilty to making death threats to state officials in Reno and San Francisco.

- Zachary Beck, who in 2003 shared a ticket with Richard Butler in Hayden, Idaho, city elections, was arrested after he allegedly fired at police during a stand-off in Longview, Washington.
- Karl Gharst, former "staff leader" of Aryan Nations, was arrested in Kootenai County, Idaho, after he allegedly made death threats against a social worker he said had kidnapped his daughter.

A WEAKENED ARYAN NATIONS SPINS OFF MAN FACTIONS

January 16, 2009

Nearly five years after the death of founder Richard Butler in 2004, there is a scattered grassroots effort around the country to revive Aryan Nations, once the country's most active and influential neo-Nazi group. Aryan Nations lost its standing when the group disbanded into various factions after the loss of its compound in a lawsuit and Butler's subsequent illness and death.

Today, there are at least seven factions or offshoots of Aryan Nations, all with relatively small or Web-based memberships. Some emphasize Butler's neo-Nazi ideology while others have focused more on his adherence to the racist and anti-Semitic religious sect called Christian Identity.

There are numerous individuals who identify themselves as members of the group or use the group's symbology without having real ties to any of the current factions—a trend that shows the continuing power of "Aryan Nations" as a racist brand.

In addition to various factions of Aryan Nations, there are numerous individuals who identify themselves as members of the group or use the group's symbology without having real ties to any of the current factions—a trend that shows the continuing power of "Aryan Nations" as a racist brand.

A number of individuals and factions associated with the original Aryan Nations group have tried to reclaim its legacy, without much success.

- Clark "Brother Laslo" Patterson and Jonathan Williams, associated with the faction that Butler headed before he died, moved the group to Alabama in 2004 and renamed it the Aryan Nations/ United Church of Yahweh (UCOY). In 2007, UCOY decided to drop the Aryan Nations part of the name and also rid the church of explicit Nazi imagery. In October 2008, Williams suddenly left the church, which is now headed by Patterson.
- August Kreis, currently based in South Carolina and one of the leaders of an Aryan Nations faction that emerged in 2002, has chapters or contact points in South Carolina, Ohio, Arkansas and California. In 2007, Kreis released a statement on his site promoting the idea of "leaderless resistance," in which a group has no one leader and anyone who supports the goals and ideology of the group can be a member. Kreis may have turned to this concept because he has been unable to attract a significant following or gain much respect in the movement.



United Church of Yaweh Website
"Brother Laslo" Patterson now leads an Aryan Nations faction based in Alabama.



August Kreis, based in South Carolina, is the leader of an Aryan Nations faction that was formed in 2002.



Jay Faber leads an Aryan Nations offshoot called Aryan Nations Revival, which claims to be headquartered in Texas.

- Jay Faber, who had originally been associated with Kreis's faction, now leads a separate faction, Aryan Nations Revival, which claims to be headquartered in Texas and have five other chapters in New York, New Jersey, Arkansas, Georgia, and Missouri.
- The Church of the Sons of Yahweh/Legion of Saints, another faction of Aryan Nations that formed in 2002, was originally led by Morris Gulett (currently in prison on bank robbery and weapons charges) and the deceased Ray Redfeairn. Butler had officially appointed Redfeairn as his successor in September 2001 but Redfeairn subsequently stepped down from that position a few months later and formed his own faction. He died in 2003. Currently, the group has not much more than a Web presence but lists an address in Calhoun, Louisiana.
- Michael Lombard and Jerald O'Brien lead a small Aryan Nations faction based in Couer dAlene, Idaho.
- Church of the True Israel, a small group that distanced itself from Butler and his neo-Nazi ideology in the late 1990s, still exists in Hayden, Idaho.
- Lawrence Michael Craden, a Missouri prisoner, leads a group called the Aryan Nations Prison Ministry, which has members based in Missouri, Texas, Florida, Georgia, and California prisons.