

DEAFENING HATE

THE REVIVAL OF RESISTANCE RECORDS

"HATECORE" MUSIC LABEL: COMMERCIALIZING HATE

The music is loud, fast and grating. The lyrics preach hatred, violence and white supremacy. This is "hatecore" – the music of the hate movement – newly revived thanks to the acquisition of the largest hate music record label by one of the nation's most notorious hatemongers. Resistance Records is providing a lucrative new source of revenue for the neo-Nazi National Alliance, which ADL considers the single most dangerous organized hate group in the United States today. William Pierce, the group's leader, is the author of *The Turner Diaries*, a handbook for hate that was read by convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh prior to his April, 1995 bombing attack. The National Alliance stands to reap thousands of dollars from the sale of white supremacist and neo-Nazi music.

Resistance Records, which has had a troubled history, has been revitalized since its purchase last year by William Pierce, leader of the National Alliance. Savvy marketing and the fall 1999 purchase of a Swedish competitor have helped Pierce transform the once-floundering label into the nation's premiere purveyor of "white power" music. Bolstering sales for Resistance Records is an Internet site devoted to the promotion of hatecore music and dissemination of hate literature.

Building a Lucrative Business Selling Hate

Since taking the helm of Resistance Records after wresting control of the company from a former business partner, Pierce has built the label into a lucrative business that boasts a catalogue of some 250 hatecore music titles. His purchase of Nordland Records of Sweden effectively doubled the label's inventory to 80,000 compact discs. In order to accommodate burgeoning record sales, Pierce has constructed a warehouse on the grounds of his National Alliance headquarters in Hillsboro, W.Va. Meanwhile, Resistance Records reportedly is fielding about 50 orders a day. Assuming that rate, the record company could have annual sales of up to \$1 million.

Pierce has also begun marketing the business through the Internet and through the label's music magazine, *Resistance Magazine*. The quarterly publication hawks Resistance CDs and related merchandise and presents album reviews and band interviews. *Resistance Magazine* is edited by Erich Gliebe, the head of the National Alliance in Cleveland and the label's full-time manager and promoter. The Winter 2000 issue, a glossy, 64-page publication, spoke of "building Resistance Records into the musical arm of the Aryan revolution." As such, the magazine included numerous articles on the hate movement, including an interview with Matt Hale, the high profile, 28-year-old leader of the virulently anti-Semitic and racist World Church of the Creator.

LOOKING FOR YOUNG RECRUITS

Like many record labels that cater to teenagers and young adults, Resistance Records has taken to the Internet with a Web site devoted to the promotion and sale of its music. The site, which includes articles from *Resistance Magazine* and a searchable database of artists and album titles, enables users to download and sample music clips. An order form allows users to order music using a credit card. Other features include "Resistance Radio," which offers a continuous stream of "music of the white resistance," and an online music catalogue. Articles posted on the site in recent months have encouraged supporters to spread the word about Resistance Records and to consider sponsoring a hate music concert in their hometowns. The Web site touts Resistance Records as the "Pro-White Alternative."

Hatecore: Music of the "White Resistance"

The brand of hatecore or "white power" music sold by Resistance Records is awash with violent images and epithets aimed at Blacks, Jews, Asians and immigrants. The racist bands are easily recognized by their not-so-subtle monikers – "Aggravated Assault," "Nordic Thunder," "Angry Aryans," "Brutal Attack," "Plunder & Pillage" and "Blue-Eyed Devils" – to name a few. Their music sounds similar to mainstream heavy metal or industrial music, except for the lyrics, which are replete with racist invective and violent images. "*Kill all the niggers and you gas all the Jews, Kill a gypsy and a coloured, too,*" members of the racist skinhead band RaHoWa (short for "racial holy war") sing in "Third Reich."

One of the pioneers of this type of racist neo-Nazi skinhead music was George Burdi, who founded Resistance Records in 1993 after he began selling music out of his home in suburban Windsor, Ontario. Burdi created *Resistance Magazine*, and moved the operation to suburban Detroit, where he built the fledgling record business into the number one distributor of hate music in the United States.

Hatecore music offers the National Alliance a means to bring younger listeners into the hate movement. The music plays on themes of rebellion and chaos. The bands are almost exclusively male. Many band members have shaved heads and wear racist symbols such as swastikas.

Violence often accompanies hatecore concerts, which sometimes include "mosh pits" where dancing quickly breaks down into kicking, punching and body slamming. Such concerts are rarely held in traditional music venues. Often, concerts will take place by invitation only in rural areas.

History of Hatred

As the inheritor of Resistance Records' legacy of hatred, Pierce is seeking to position the National Alliance for the future. He believes hate music – with its racist, anti-Semitic and anti-government messages – can be used simply and effectively to attract troubled youths. His stated goal is to fill the ranks of the National Alliance with a new generation of haters.

Resistance Records may serve as the linchpin of that plan. The label was founded by neo-Nazi skinheads and throughout its history has maintained links to organized hate groups. The label, originally linked to a Canadian chapter of the World Church of the Creator, underwent a succession of ownership changes before it was acquired by the National Alliance.

INTRODUCTION

In 1993, in the suburban Windsor, Ontario, bedroom of a 23-year-old neo-Nazi skinhead¹ named George Burdi,

Resistance Records was born. Initially a fledgling, one-man hate-music distribution operation with a handful of album titles, the small company grew quickly into the number one distributor of skinhead music² in the United States.

In 1997, Resistance Records was temporarily brought to its knees by both an American tax dispute and Canadian prosecution for distributing materials that promote hatred. But in 1998, Willis A. Carto, the anti-Semitic leader of Liberty Lobby, and his partner, Todd Blodgett, acquired the business and revived it. By the next year, however, Resistance changed hands again, this time purchased by William Pierce, founder and head of the anti-Semitic National Alliance and author of 1978's *The Turner Diaries*, the white power revolutionary blueprint thought to have inspired the Oklahoma City bombing.

With Resistance Records forging ahead as arguably the most lucrative hate enterprise in the country, old-school racists are viewing violent skinhead culture in a new light. As hate rock bands merge into the mainstream heavy metal music arena, white supremacist leaders are coming to see the music as the most powerful recruiting tool to hit their movement in decades.

HATE-FOR-PROFIT

Resistance Records was launched in 1993 and officially incorporated in 1994 by [George Burdi](#) and other members of a Canadian chapter of the racist and anti-Semitic World Church of the Creator (WCOTC). Although that chapter is now defunct, the Illinois-based WCOTC has since listed a "contact point" in Ontario on its Web site.

Burdi, also known as George Eric Hawthorne, was born in Toronto in 1970 and became radicalized at age 19. By 21, he was Canadian head of WCOTC. He became a supporter of the Holocaust-denial movement and national socialism. Burdi was also a singer and lyricist for the skinhead rock group RaHoWa, named for WCOTC's acronym for "racial holy war," something the group hopes to hasten. At the time, Burdi was a stern-looking young man who wore a goatee and had a reputation for being temperamental. He believed strongly that music could be an important way to draw new members into the hate movement. "Music alone cannot save our Race, granted," he was quoted as saying. "But our music is precious to us, and highly effective as a recruiting tool." This sentiment would later be echoed by other key players in Resistance Records.

In order to avoid Canada's strict anti-hate propaganda laws, Burdi set up his business offices in nearby Detroit, Michigan, and began doing a brisk business in a variety of hate rock. According to news reports, the

*"Kill all the niggers and
you gas all the jews
Kill a gypsy and a
coloured too
You just killed a kike
Don't it feel right
Goodness gracious, darn
right"*

-- From the hate rock
song "Third Reich" by
RaHoWa"

*"Music alone cannot
save our Race, granted...
But our music is
precious to us, and
highly effective as a
recruiting tool."
-- George Burdi, Founder
of Resistance Records.*

label sold as many as 50,000 CDs in one year, virtually all of them from bands whose music is so racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic that most mainstream music outlets refuse to sell it.

Burdi also launched *Resistance Magazine*, intended as a companion to the music distribution business. A cross between rock-and-roll fan-zine and white supremacist propaganda, the magazine offers reviews of hate rock CDs and band interviews, along with a range of articles such as "Planning a Skinhead Infantry" and "Brutality is Fun: Racist Cop Website Review." Listed on the masthead as George Eric Hawthorne, Burdi initially served as both editor and a contributing writer. Ironically, in early editorials Burdi encouraged readers to become members of the neo-Nazi National Alliance, whose leader would later purchase Resistance Records.

VICIOUS VOCALS

The music sold by Resistance Records comes from skinhead bands with names like Aggravated Assault, Nordic Thunder, Angry Aryans, Brutal Attack, Plunder & Pillage and Blue-Eyed Devils. Their albums have titles such as "Racially Motivated Violence," "Holocaust 2000," "Retribution," "Born to Hate" and "On the Attack." Their songs include "Race Riot," "Third Reich" and "White Revolution."

"Hatecore," as the music is also known, is guitar-driven, rough-edged, angry and loud. Its lyrics are nihilistic and violent and are often screamed instead of sung. The music is filled with much of the same darkness, growling and discord as the more common heavy metal or black metal music often associated with rebellious teens.

But its message of intense, vehement hatred and rage toward all "non-Aryans" is unmistakable and chilling. Aggravated Assault's "It Could Happen to You," for example, is described in the Resistance Records catalog as "relentlessly violent hate rock with a forceful, furious punk edge. This album is not for the weak-hearted. Rough, unpolished, angry!"

The catalog depicts an album titled "Hate," by the band Division S, this way: "A dark wind of misery and pain ... reveals reality untainted by optimism ... heavy guitar-driven metal that forebodes great doom, mammoth emptiness, and apocalyptic finality ... an audio-blitzkrieg on your sanity. The March of Death has come to reign hatred on the weak."

The catalog characterizes other bands' albums as searing, relentless, scorching, grinding, hate-filled and unbelievably aggressive.

Although the bands' attitudes toward all minorities are hostile and strident, they are particularly so toward Jews. Among the song dedications on "It Could Happen to You," Aggravated Assault included "Krystallnacht to the survivors of the so-called holocaust we laugh at you." The Holocaust-denying lyrics to the song "Six Million Lies" by No Remorse speak for themselves:

*"Did six million Jews really die,
or was it just a Zionist lie?"*

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*Torture by the Nazis, where's the proof
Why did they try to cover up the truth?
Scared in case national socialism grew
Organized lies imposed by the Jews."*

UNDER INVESTIGATION

Resistance Records had some early success, but soon butted heads with the law. On the morning of Wednesday, April 9, 1997, while the Michigan State Police were raiding Resistance Records' main offices in a rented Detroit house, the Ontario Provincial Police raided Burdi's home in Windsor, Ontario.

The raids were conducted simultaneously to avoid possible destruction of computer records. From both locations, close to 200,000 CDs and cassettes, records, computers, other merchandise and an extensive subscriber list containing as many as 5,000 names were seized. At the time, Burdi was already in jail serving a one-year sentence for kicking a female anti-racism protestor in the face at a 1993 RaHoWa concert in Ottawa, Canada.

Resistance Records was being investigated on both sides of the border: In the United States, there was an alleged discrepancy regarding proper payment of Michigan state sales tax. In Canada, Burdi and his Resistance Records co-founders, Jason Snow and Joseph Talic, were charged after a nine-month investigation, in September 1997, with willfully promoting hatred and conspiracy to promote hatred, under that country's strict hate crimes laws. (Although Burdi had originally set up shop in Michigan to avoid those laws, they were applied anyway because of his status as a Canadian citizen.)

Sentencing took Burdi out of commission and Resistance Records seemed to have an uncertain future. Publication of *Resistance Magazine* was placed on hold.

NEW OWNER: WILLIS CARTO OF THE LIBERTY LOBBY

In June 1998, Tom Metzger's *White Aryan Resistance Update* first reported that [Willis Carto](#), founder and leader of the right-wing anti-Semitic propaganda group Liberty Lobby, had paid the Michigan tax bill which, in the end, came to only a few hundred dollars, including tax, penalty and interest and acquired Resistance Records.

At first, Resistance kept the new owner's identity under wraps, possibly because Carto was not especially popular with many in the movement. But by the fall of 1998, *Resistance Magazine* subscribers started receiving *The Spotlight*, Liberty Lobby's weekly newspaper, with a cover letter beginning "Dear RESISTANCE Subscriber." It solicited new subscriptions, but also offered six months of *The Spotlight*, to replace the missing issues of *Resistance*. The letter thanked a "generous (but anonymous) *Resistance* subscriber who has made this offer possible." The letter noted that Carto and company could easily identify with Resistance Records' experience, seeing themselves also as victims of a conspiracy to shut them down: "As you know, an illegal raid by authorities motivated by politics closed down the magazine. Hopefully not forever. We here at *The Spotlight* can certainly relate to this type of strong-arm tactic."

By October 1998, Resistance Records had relocated to Etiwanda, California, near San Bernardino, under the joint ownership of Carto and his business partner, Todd Blodgett, a former low-level White House staffer in

the Reagan administration. Blodgett finished journalism school in 1983 and then worked for various Republican politicians. By 1995, he had fallen under Carto's influence, handling more business and marketing functions for him as time progressed. He eventually became Carto's partner.

The *Spotlight* and *Resistance Magazine* had vastly different readerships at the time when the change in ownership occurred. *Resistance* focused exclusively on the hate rock scene and its young audience, while *The Spotlight's* average reader was so much older that Blodgett reportedly joked that it was "filled with ads for denture adhesives and incontinence underwear."

The Carto-Blodgett partnership soon hit rough waters. Carto was dealing with financial difficulties stemming from a legal struggle to control his Holocaust-denial propaganda machine, the Institute for Historical Review. He was ultimately forced to declare bankruptcy and relinquish control. After falling out with Blodgett, Carto decided to sell his stake in the company and, by March 1999, Blodgett had found an eager taker in Dr. William Pierce, leader of the National Alliance, one of the most dangerous organized neo-Nazi hate groups in the United States today.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE TAKES CHARGE

William Pierce, like Carto, was searching for ways to rejuvenate the ranks of his organization with the type of fresh young recruits that hate-rock music would help attract. Thus, although he has been quoted as saying he does not enjoy listening to hate rock, a record company that distributes the product was a logical addition to the National Alliance's multimedia collection of newsletters, magazines, Web sites and a weekly radio show. Pierce would later write in *Resistance*, "Our people need what Resistance Records can give them."

By late April 1999, Blodgett and Pierce had reportedly finalized the complicated details of their new partnership over dinner at the University Club in Washington, DC, where Blodgett was a member. Yet that relationship, too, soon hit the skids. After having all of the *Resistance* inventory and business materials transferred to Washington, Blodgett failed to deliver on a promise to have a new issue of *Resistance Magazine* on the streets by June.

Apparently, when the summer passed and Blodgett still had not come through, an angry Pierce seized control of *Resistance* and relocated operations to his National Alliance headquarters outside Hillsboro, West Virginia. Pierce proceeded to humiliate Blodgett at the National Alliance's annual Labor Day retreat and then quickly churned out a Fall 1999 issue before the end of October.

Although this long-awaited but hastily prepared edition met with criticism from some in the movement as "laugh-able" and lacking the substance and quality of its predecessors, the names listed in its masthead were noteworthy: William L. Pierce was now publisher, while contributing writers included Mark Cotterill of the neo-fascist American Friends of the British National Party; Steve Cartwright, a member of both the British National Party and the National Alliance, and Joaquim Peiper, a pseudonym for Steven Barry, founder of the Special Forces Underground, a paramilitary group.

Blodgett soon called it quits and claims he took a financial loss in selling his share of *Resistance* to Pierce. Although Blodgett's allegiances remain unclear, at the moment, he appears to be out of favor with skinheads and is continually slammed by Eric Wolf, a WCOTC activist, who has taken to calling him "Fraud

Blodgett," among other nicknames. Lately, however, Blodgett is rumored to have become active in the white supremacist Council of Conservative Citizens.⁴ He remains an enigmatic figure whose allegiances are shady and unclear. Although he claims to have no formal affiliations with any of these organizations, he appears at the very least to be sympathetic to their cause.

In several interviews since then, Blodgett has insisted that his involvement with Resistance Records and the radical right was "strictly business" and that he regrets having ever been part of that world. He also maintains that when he first became involved with Carto, he was simply an opportunist and had no idea what the man was all about. These attitudes have made him the subject of much criticism from activists like Wolf and Alex Curtis, a California-based white supremacist. They consider Blodgett a disloyal opportunist and profiteer who exploited and betrayed the movement especially Resistance Records for personal gain.

Wolf, who has also gone by the name Eric Fairburn, was said to be "associated" closely with Resistance Records in its early days, through both working for the company and playing rhythm guitar in the band RaHoWa. Although he was not living in the Resistance house in Detroit when the 1997 raid occurred, he was on the scene and spoke to reporters, who described him as wearing black fatigues and sporting an "Aryan" tattoo on his arm. Wolf edits an E-mail newsletter known as *Wolfreign Update*.

REVIVING THE LABEL

In the fall of 1999, Resistance Records purchased a Swedish competitor, Nordland Records, thereby doubling its inventory to include an estimated 250 different titles and nearly 80,000 CDs, and making Resistance the only North American company currently carrying certain CD titles. Pierce is also constructing a warehouse on the grounds of his compound, to store his growing inventory.

Resistance does not record or produce music on the premises. Staff simply fill orders sent in by mail or via the company's black-and-white Web site, which features a full catalog, links, sound clips, updates and ordering information. As of early 2000, according to Eric Wolf, orders were generally filled within a week of placement.

The National Alliance is also promoting Resistance Records with a banner ad appearing on its own Web site that begins with an ironic admonition reminiscent of many of the album descriptions: "SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: The lyrics and images promoted by Resistance Records are not for the faint of heart or the excessively genteel."

Pierce recruited Erich Gliebe, who heads the active, well-organized National Alliance unit in Cleveland, Ohio, to serve as full-time manager and promoter for Resistance Records, working from his home there. A former boxer and hatecore concert promoter, Gliebe's job also includes searching for and signing new talent to the Resistance label, as well as editing *Resistance Magazine*.

Resistance Magazine's Winter 2000 issue was published in February to a significantly better reception than the previous one. As a glossy, 64-page publication, Eric Wolf noted, the magazine is already "MILES ahead of 99% of other racial magazines out there." Gliebe is listed as sole editor, while Pierce remains publisher. Gliebe's opening editorial discusses his roots and the importance of "White Power music ... to awakening and mobilizing the White youth of today into a revolutionary force to destroy the system," as well as the idea that "We especially want to strengthen our bonds with fellow White nationalists in Europe." Pierce's

Message from the Publisher, appearing on the opposite page, amplifies this theme, while speaking of the company's overall aim "to make resistance music have a much bigger impact on young people in the future than it has had in the past" and of "building Resistance Records into the musical arm of the Aryan revolution." The magazine's contents include several band interviews, an interview with Matt Hale, 28-year-old leader of World Church of the Creator, an article on "The Fallacy of Leaderless Resistance," and a piece by Pierce titled "Lies, Murder and Jews: The Columbine High School Massacre," discussing alleged "Jewish media spin" surrounding that horrific event.

Financially speaking, the Resistance label appears to be performing modestly well, relative to the dozens of small, independent music labels operating in the United States. Most CDs listed on the Resistance Records Web site are tagged at \$14.88-\$15.88. Resistance spends only a few dollars each to produce and ship the CDs, plus a small fraction in band royalties. Lately, the company has reportedly been receiving about 50 orders per day, with each order averaging about \$70 worth of merchandise. That adds up to more than \$1 million in annual sales. Considering these figures, Resistance Records has the potential to pump substantial monetary muscle into the National Alliance. However, considering its volatile history checkered with constant ownership changes, it remains to be seen what Resistance Records' future holds.

DESTINATION UNKNOWN

The impact of Resistance Records on the right-wing hate movement as a whole particularly with regard to recruiting young members is unclear. While white power groups' membership rolls have generally been flat or declining for the past decade and Ku Klux Klan chapters have been closing, the exceptions have been the National Alliance, whose numbers have more than doubled since 1992, and the fast-growing World Church of the Creator. In this light, it seems clear that for William Pierce, as well as Willis Carto and others, hate rock has become a logical, simple and effective tool to try to lure troubled youths, who might already be receptive to racist, anti-Semitic, anti-government ideologies, into becoming full-fledged members of their organizations.

As hate rock bands subtly infiltrate mainstream youth culture, they capitalize on teen-age rebelliousness and channel it into enmity and fury against "non-Aryans." Pierce has explained, "My aim with resistance music is to give them a rationale for alienation, to help them understand why they're alienated, to help them understand the programs and policies behind these alienating conditions, and to give them a target, a purpose for their anger and rage." Coupled with these organizations' slick and enticing Web sites, hate rock is part of a multimedia approach that packs a powerful and seductive punch. Therein lies the most dangerous threat.

In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare poeticized the romantic notion, "If music be the food of love, play on." Pierce provides a decidedly darker and more menacing view of the purpose of music in furthering the racists' agenda, in his Message from the Publisher in the Fall 1999 issue of *Resistance Magazine*: "Music speaks to us at a deeper level than books or political rhetoric: music speaks directly to the soul. Resistance Records ... will be the music of our people's renewal and rebirth. It will be music of strength and joy for our people. It will be music of defiance and rage against the enemies of our people.... It will be the music of the great, cleansing revolution which is coming. Enjoy it!"

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-- William Pierce
