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## **Liberty Lettuce, Fertilizer Bombs, and the End of Civilization: The American Far-Right's Strange Relationship with Europe**

Jordan K. Matthews

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Liberty Lettuce, Fertilizer Bombs, and the End of Civilization: The American Far-Right's  
Strange Relationship with Europe

by

Jordan Kade Matthews

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Honors College of  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of Honors Requirements

May 2023



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## ABSTRACT

In 2016, the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville came to a violent end. American news outlets were left with scraps of rhetoric to piece together what would become a popular narrative going forward. Their conclusion was that the American far-right is heavily influenced by European ideas of civilization, race, and immigration. European nativist ideology is what inspired the people at Charlottesville as well as the numerous attacks on different racial groups that were carried out in the years to come. This thesis rejects all of that. The American far-right does not and has never had to be influenced by Europe. The issue of American right-wing extremism is one that has very American roots and attempts to pass blame on to Europe only seeks to avoid confronting those roots. As this research shows, the American far-right and Europe have a strange relationship. At points in history, Europe as seen a mythical homeland and the last bastion of Western civilization in desperate need of defending. At other times, American far-right uses Europe's conflicts and crises against them for their own nativist gain. Throughout, America abandons its own sources of ideological inspiration for identical European rhetoric in a quest for legitimacy. More recently, the American far-right and Europe fight hand in hand against the newest threat to civilization: Islam. This thesis intends to examine these dynamics in order to find out why Europe seemingly plays a large role in ideology of the American far-right.

**Keywords:** Alt-Right, far-right, nativism, Western civilization, extremism, immigration

## **DEDICATION**

To Mackenzie, my wonderful girlfriend. Your support means the world to me.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This work would have never been possible without the help and support of many of my professors and advisors at the University of Southern Mississippi, but none more so than Dr. Joseph Peterson. When I was at my lowest, he kept me excited and managed to remind me why I began this research in the first place. There is truly no one else that I would have rather had advising me throughout this process. Thank you for your continued support and patience, Dr. Peterson. Your help has meant more than you know.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ANTIFA	Anti-Fascist
Brexit	“Britain” and “Exit” referring to the United Kingdom withdrawing from the European Union.
CPAC	Conservative Political Action Conference
DC	District of Columbia
ENR	European New Right
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
HUAC	House Un-American Activities Committee
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
PERIL	Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab
US	United States
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two
ZOG	Zionist Occupational Government

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Charlottesville

In 2017, hundreds of white supremacist and neo-Nazi protestors gathered in Charlottesville for the “Unite the Right” rally. The gathering quickly turned violent as they clashed with counter protestors with one participant driving his car through a crowd of people, killing 32-year-old Heather Heyer.<sup>1</sup> As the mob of tiki torch wielding extremists made their way to the University of Virginia, they chanted “Jews will not replace us” and “You will not replace us.”

In the aftermath of this event, news outlets scrambled to find a reason for these events. The result many came up with had to do with a perceived European influence on the American far-right. Many postulated that the source of this rhetoric comes from French writer Renaud Camus’ “Great Replacement Theory.” After the rally, *Vox* published an article titled “‘You will not replace us’: a French philosopher explains the Charlottesville chant” with the subheading being “American white nationalists may not realize it, but the fear of replacement is essential to the work of a controversial French writer named Renaud Camus.”<sup>2</sup> *The New Yorker* published a similar article, but they went as far as to sit down with Camus to ask him what his influence was.<sup>3</sup> Even looking back

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<sup>1</sup> Nicole Sganga, “Charlottesville ‘Unite the Right’ Rally Trial: What to Know,” *CBS News*, August 6, 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/charlottesville-unite-the-right-rally-trial-what-to-know/>.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Wildman, “The ‘Great Replacement,’ the Ideology of White Nationalists Marching in Charlottesville, Explained,” *Vox*, August 15, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/world/2017/8/15/16141456/renaud-camus-the-great-replacement-you-will-not-replace-us-charlottesville-white>.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Chatterton Williams, “The French Origins of ‘You Will Not Replace Us’,” *The New Yorker*, December 4, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/12/04/the-french-origins-of-you-will-not-replace-us>.

on the tragedy with the benefit of hindsight, news outlets like *The Washington Post* still put blame on Camus and the “Great Replacement Theory.”<sup>4</sup>

This is nothing more than trying to make very American issues the fault of European influence in order to wipe the United States’ hands of its own racist and nativist past. It gives far too much credit to the far-right or “Alt-Right” in America and takes away the opportunity to examine what conditions in America led to the events in Charlottesville taking place. Whether intentional or not, it seeks to abnormalize this behavior by passing it off as European rather than facing it as the incredibly American problem that it is.<sup>5</sup> We do not need European theories to explain away the actions of a nation with a political environment that has allowed the KKK to survive for nearly 160 years. The issue therein comes from the fact the “Alt-Right,” and the far-right in the United States in general, are constantly using a manufactured idea of “Europe” as a way to push their own nativist agendas. Naturally, this begs many questions. If this is such an American concept, why would Europe play a role at all? Why do so many on the far-right in America claim to draw inspiration from European nativism when the United States has been extremely anti-immigrant since before it was even a country? Why does “Europe” loom so large in the imagination of American ethnonationalists, whether as a positive or negative example? Is there a certain intellectual respectability that comes with European racial theories that American right-wingers wish to capture? Or do they see Europe as

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<sup>4</sup> Martha M. Hamilton and Aaron Wiener, "The 'Great Replacement Theory' that Inspired Buffalo Bill and Bilbo's White Nationalism," *The Washington Post*, May 15, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2022/05/15/great-replacement-theory-buffalo-bilbo/>.

<sup>5</sup> The argument I am making is similar to that of Dr. Samuel Moyn but with a different political context. For more see Samuel Moyn, "The Trouble with Comparisons," *The New York Review of Books*, May 19, 2020, <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2020/05/19/the-trouble-with-comparisons/>.

already too far gone to be saved in the “defense of Western civilization,” and that that should serve as a warning to the United States? At points in the history of the United States, Europe is the mythical motherland that needs defending, the enemy that is worth exploiting, and the easy scapegoat, all serving to give legitimacy to or explain away the racist rhetoric of the American far-right. This thesis explores these shifting claims.

In chapter one, I examine the use of the “defending Western civilization” trope that is so often used on the far-right. By exploring some of the earliest instances of this trope being used in pre-WWI France to its importation to the United States during the Civil Rights movement, I show how “Western civilization” is used either to show Europe as a last bastion of white, Christian civilization or as a warning sign for the potential future of the United States. Where the first chapter shows Europe as a mythical homeland, chapter two shows how Europe is presented as the enemy when it best suits the agenda of the American far-right. Outlining a history of this toxic relationship, I trace how the 100 percent Americanism movement of WWI, the rise of American fascism in WWII, and McCarthyism of the Cold War all are examples of the far-right using European crises or conflict to push their own nativist ideology. Chapter three establishes that there is a point in which the American far-right has never actually needed Europe. I argue that America has a deeply racist and nativist past that the far-right can draw from rather than utilizing identical European rhetoric. Whether it is drawing from our own apocalyptic fiction novels, our own ideas of replacement, or our own birthrates, the far-right has a wealth of racist and nativist rhetoric to draw from, but using Europe allows them to appear more legitimate and respectable and allows them to seemingly separate themselves from the “racist right.” The epilogue brings all these ideas into the modern

day by examining the alliance of Europe and the United States against a new enemy in Islam. I not only examine instances where right-wing media in the United States falsely or dishonestly reports on “No-Go Zones” in Europe, but I also show further examples of the modern far-right's continued obsession and strange relationship with Europe like Brexit architects creating new policies for education in Mississippi and a United Kingdom bestseller about Muslim immigration causing the death of Europe being sold in my small-town coffee shop.

### **“The Very Specific American Context”**

The European New Right, or ENR, is a far-right political movement that emerged in France in the late 1960s. It is characterized by a focus on nationalism, traditionalism, and the preservation of European cultural and social identity, as well as a rejection of liberalism and multiculturalism. The movement draws heavily from the ideas of the French philosopher Alain de Benoist, who has become its most prominent thinker. While the ENR has had a significant influence on European politics, it is less credited for its role in influencing the “Alt-Right” in the United States. The similarities between the two are difficult to ignore and with both being an acephalous school of thought that is far from “dogmatic, centralized, and homogeneous” as French political scientist Jean-Yves Camus and French historian Nicolas Lebourg put it.<sup>6</sup> One interesting thing they also note is the relationship between the left in France and the ENR. Militant anti-Fascism led to a complete refusal to engage with the ENR under any circumstances.<sup>7</sup> Since then, that effort has changed into those on the left establishing a dialogue with those in the ENR in

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<sup>6</sup> Jean-Yves Camus and Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), 125.

<sup>7</sup> Camus and Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe*, 125.

an attempt to refute them. While harmful and hateful rhetoric should be combatted whenever possible, this allowed the ENR to gain traction in a way that was not possible when they were not being entertained. While there is not a time in the United States' recent history in which the left refused to engage with the far-right, it can be argued that the "Alt-Right" is experiencing a similar push into relevancy and normalization through the popularization of social media and the election of Donald Trump.

While the similarities are clear and the influences the ENR has had on the "Alt-Right" are obvious, there are many on the "Alt-Right" that warn against conflating the two. John Morgan is a popular columnist on the "Alt-Right" for the website *Counter Currents*, and in 2017 he wrote an article titled "Alt Right versus New Right." In this article, Morgan argues that "the Alt-Right is a uniquely American creation" and "is born out of the very specific American context," so the ENR should avoid adopting it as a label.<sup>8</sup> In fact, he argues that the European idea of "all men being created equal" being imported to America is the reason the US is seeing so many "problems" with multiculturalism and diversity. While there is not much to be gained from agreeing with someone on the "Alt-Right," the idea that the "Alt-Right" is uniquely American is a concept that holds some validity. However, as will be elaborated on in further chapters, it is an idea that is not put into practice.

### **What is the "Alt-Right?"**

The "Alt-Right" has no appointed or agreed upon leader. It has no founding document that lays out what the core beliefs are. In fact, beliefs on issues such as

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<sup>8</sup> John Morgan, "Alt-Right Versus New Right," *Counter-Currents*, February 28, 2017, <https://counter-currents.com/2017/02/alt-right-versus-new-right/>.

economics or national security can differ from person to person or are not accounted for at all. It rejects many of the core tenets of mainstream conservatism in favor of a much more intolerant version, and it even criticizes many conservatives for being too “politically correct.” The fact that it is such a difficult idea to define makes it equally difficult to identify who is on the “Alt-Right” and how they should be combatted exactly.

I am from the same school of thought that Dr. Cynthia Miller-Idriss, professor at American University and head of the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL), displays in her book *Hate in the Homeland*. Since the term “Alt-Right” comes from an attempt at rebranding for the far-right, it will be put in quotations to signify its contested nature.<sup>9</sup> stated differently they will be used mostly interchangeably to broadly describe the extreme right of the political spectrum. Miller-Idriss states that she often refers to “far-right” as, “the ‘best bad term’ we have available” and I completely agree. For the purposes of this writing, where specificity is required, it will be provided, but “Alt-Right” and “far-right” should be understood as referring to mostly the same people.

What the “Alt-Right” *is* would be best described as an ideology rather than a group of people. The only true uniting characteristic of the “Alt-Right” is the issue of race. While terms like “white supremacist” or “white nationalist” are often conflated with the “Alt-Right,” many followers would prefer the term “white separatist.” Since one of the only core beliefs of the “Alt-Right” would be their desire for a white ethnostate, they would argue that they do not believe that one race is superior to another but rather that

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<sup>9</sup> Cynthia Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland: The New Global Far Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 18.

the races should be separated. However, as most things go on the “Alt-Right,” this is not uniform and there’s debate on how this idea would shape out. Whether it would work like the Jim Crow South or Apartheid South Africa, if states like Montana were dedicated to only white people, or if non-white people were shipped to another country is a contested and seriously debated issue among “Alt-Right” circles.

Living primarily online in chat rooms and fringe forums, the “Alt-Right” does not have physical headquarters and infrequently meets in public settings. Unlike white supremacist groups like “Patriot Front” who opt to don masks to hide their identities as they march through the streets of Washington DC, the “Alt-Right” chooses to hide behind anonymous social media profiles.<sup>10</sup> Occasionally, prominent members of the “Alt-Right” will hold conferences often hosted by organizations like American Renaissance, a white-nationalist and “race-realist” group. Those conferences, however, are usually only frequented by those who have nothing to lose by being associated with the “Alt-Right.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ellie Silverman, "White supremacist group Patriot Front marched in D.C. Here's what you need to know," *Washington Post*, December 6, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/12/06/white-supremacist-dc-march-patriot-front/>.

<sup>11</sup> George Hawley, *"What is the Alt-Right?" in Making Sense of the Alt-Right* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 19.

## CHAPTER II: CIVILIZATION

### Deep Connections

In 2017, Richard Spencer, figurehead and coiner of the term “Alt-Right,” gave a speech at Auburn University. In this speech, he made the usual claims that he was simply a free speech activist on a mission. This is the usual jumping off point that gets these reactionaries and, self-proclaimed, white supremacists through the doors of schools. Spencer hid his rhetoric behind a disguise of free speech advocacy in order to smuggle in his (usually racist) ideology. In this instance, Spencer took a less than subtle approach to advocating for the supremacy and defense of the West. Despite being born in Boston, Spencer constantly referred to himself as a European-American and urged the white students in the auditorium to remember that they have “deep connections with Rome and Athens and Byzantium.”<sup>12</sup> For Spencer, the “West” is just an idea rather than a place that needs defending. While utilizing the textbook fascist technique of creating a mythical past to look back on, Spencer created a way to connect these college students in Alabama to whitewashed images of ancient Romans and Greeks.<sup>13</sup> This, of course, is an image that is purposely exclusionary to any person of color. In fact, Spencer constantly referred to identity and claimed that “Black identity comes so natural” and that “Alt-Right is about identity.”<sup>14</sup> He posed his argument in a way that made black identity automatic and white identity tied to an organization or idea. Naturally, this creates an “us versus them” relationship in which the “us” is white, European, and Western and the “them” is

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<sup>12</sup> Richard Spencer, "Richard Spencer's Full Speech at Auburn University," YouTube video, 41:33, posted on April 19, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jgyT67fP6k>

<sup>13</sup> Jason Stanley, *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them* (New York: Random House, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> Spencer, "Richard Spencer's Full Speech at Auburn University."

whatever is challenging that worldview at the time. In this speech, he floated between identifying numerous enemies, from multiculturalism and diversity to ANTIFA to people who are transgender. For modern civilizationalists on the far right like Richard Spencer, the issue that will lead to the downfall of the West is constantly rotating while the core idea of the West being under attack remains the same.

Spencer presented an idea about the “West” being either a place or an idea that is in decline, needs defending, or should invoke a sense of racial pride. This is a very common trope used by the far-right. Today, the idea of a common “Western civilization” is primarily used in America to connect the United States to Europe as either allied as the final defense in the fight against barbarism, or as a cautionary tale to show how liberal ideology has destroyed Europe and left America to fend for itself. With that in mind, it is no surprise that the “defending Western civilization” trope itself has a long European history before coming to America.

This chapter explores the concept of "defending Western civilization" that has been present for centuries. Despite changes in enemies and allies, the core idea has remained to preserve “the West” at all costs. However, the idea of "the West" is a social construct that is constantly evolving to suit the needs of the far-right. It is an arbitrary and exclusionary concept that has been manufactured to maintain a connection between America and Europe. Before examining the trope itself, it is important to know what people even mean when they refer to “Western civilization.”

### **What is Western Civilization?**

The debate on what constitutes Western civilization has been a long and fiercely contested one. There are those who portray the West as a bastion of democracy and

human rights, while on the other side, the far-right has sought to frame the definition of the West in a more exclusionary and nativist light. In either case, it is a historical myth that attempts to portray Europe and America as the unique inheritors of the legacy of the Greeks and Romans. For many years, this far-right has used the trope of "defending Western civilization" as a rallying cry to justify their extremist views and policies. From politicians to pundits and activists, this trope has been used to frame political debates and fuel nativist and nationalist ambitions. At the core of the far-right's argument is the idea that the West should be a unified entity, bounded by shared values, traditions, and customs. This definition of the West is often exclusionary, as it seeks to draw a sharp distinction between "us" and "them". By focusing on the perceived differences between the West and the outside world, the far-right has sought to create a narrative of fear and mistrust, arguing that any deviation from their definition of Western civilization will lead to the erosion of its values. The far-right's notion of Western civilization is often framed as an opposition to multiculturalism and immigration, with a particular emphasis on the perceived threat from Muslim communities and countries. They often argue that the influx of people from different cultural backgrounds is leading to the dilution of the West's traditional values and customs and that this will lead to a decline in its overall strength and influence. From this perspective, the far-right claims that the only way to "defend Western civilization" is to close the borders and limit immigration.

Before deciding to close borders, they must first come to a consensus on where those borders actually are. As obvious as it may seem, the debate around what "Western civilization" actually means and what countries get to be included has been discussed for decades. Historian Dr. Lawrence Briken argued that the idea of "the West" is not a solid

idea, especially in education. In the United States, the creation of a Western Civilizations course brought heavy debates about what should ultimately be taught. Birken described that many different textbooks categorized Western civilization in very different ways. For example, the American historian R.R. Palmer in his book *History of the Modern World* described the West as developing outward from the Greeks in the Mediterranean before breaking off after the fall of the Roman Empire, but British historian Frank Roy Willis described the West as strictly any civilization that was formed in Europe and carried to other parts of the World.<sup>15</sup> While Palmer argued for a linear progression from the Greeks to the modern day, Willis argued for a more ambivalent progression that may or may not include Rome or Greece at all. More historians would eventually weigh in on what Western civilization should mean, but the vast majority argued for some form of delineation between Europe and the Islamic world and Byzantium.<sup>16</sup> For this discrimination to be viable, one would have to argue that the civilizations of the Islamic world and Byzantium developed separately from the rest of Europe. Birken writes:

“It is of course possible to explicitly endorse the idea that the West begins with Greece, and simultaneously to reject the notion that Byzantium and Islam are heirs to the classical world, thus preserving the thesis of a linear development of Western civilization from Greece to Rome, from Rome to the Middle Ages and the Modern World. But this would involve a distortion of history of such magnitude as to be acceptable to no reputable scholar.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Lawrence Birken, "What Is Western Civilization?," *The History Teacher* 25, no. 4 (August 1992): 451-461.

<sup>16</sup> Birken, "What Is Western Civilization?," 451-461.

<sup>17</sup> Birken, "What Is Western Civilization?," 451-461.

## **Henry Massis and The Trope of “Defense”**

The idea that “the West” is in decline or under attack has cropped up in moments of violence or crisis, such as after World War I, after World War II, or during the rise of anticolonial movements against Europe. One of the first to express this idea was the French cultural pessimist Henri Massis. Prior to World War I, Massis was a prominent French conservative. Massis gained prominence as a cultural critic through his co-authorship of two studies examining the “New Sorbonne” and the “Generation of 1912” alongside prominent French sociologist Albert de Tarde. Massis was in open opposition to the older generation as he felt their decadence would eventually lead to the downfall of France. His views were ultimately seen as a reaction against the forces of modernity and progressivism, which were gaining ground in the lead up to WWI. By 1919, Massis’ post-war writings shifted away from rhetoric about the fall of French civilization and turned his sights on the West as a whole. This shift also brought along a new enemy. For Massis, the issue was no longer “cosmopolitan, skeptical, and lethargic elders” that would lead to the downfall of French society, but rather international Communism that posed a threat to Western Civilization as a whole. Historian Dr. Paul Mazgaj says that for centuries, Russia and Germany were seen as the front line for the West in defense against Asiatic peoples, and once that line “broke” Massis saw it as the writing on the wall for the West. Massis believed that the Russian Revolution was threatening because he saw it not as anti-bourgeois but as anti-West. In Germany, Massis noted the new influence that

Chinese philosophy and Asian authors allegedly had on the bitter post-WWI youth and saw this as another sign of Western decline.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the interwar period in Europe, Massis slowly developed his ideology eventually culminating in 1927 with his release of “La Defense de l’Occident”, which further elaborated upon his views on the importance of defending Western Civilization. In it, Massis argued that the West no longer wanted to assert dominance over the Asiatic peoples. In turn, Massis claimed that the people of Asia no longer saw the West as dominant when he said, “From Calcutta to Shanghai, from the Mongolian steppes to the plains of Anatolia, the whole of Asia is stirred... The supremacy of which Europe has been accustomed... is no longer recognized by the Asiatic peoples.” The release of “La Defense de l’Occident” would catapult Massis to the front of the debate regarding the “decline of the West,” and would spread internationally with American publications picking it up in 1928 after an English translation was made available. Massis would have a lasting impact on conservative thought. Even if future generations of conservatives may not be familiar with Massis, the discourse he helped cultivate about “defending the West” against supposed barbarians from Asia will be unavoidable.<sup>19</sup>

Other prominent European pessimists emerged around the time of Massis. Oswald Spengler, like Massis, began developing his argument for the decline of the West during WWI in his book “The Decline of the West” written in 1918 before publishing volume two in 1922. In it, he argued that civilization had essentially run its course and that

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Mazgaj, "Defending the West: The Cultural and Generational Politics of Henri Massis," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 17, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 103-123.

<sup>19</sup> Mazgaj, "Defending the West," 103-123.

humanity was living in the “winter” of civilization.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the book, Spengler argued that a lack of spiritual values and creativity combined with the rise of materialism has led to the decline and eventual fall of the West, resulting in future civilizations taking their place.

In the aftermath of WWII, Arnold Toynbee emerged as a more optimistic alternative to Spengler and Massis. While Toynbee did argue, like Spengler, that the core issue the West was experiencing was materialism and a lack of spirituality, he argued that it was not too late to save it.<sup>21</sup> He expressed concern over the newfound atomic power being wielded by the United States and the Soviet Union, believing that atomic war will lead to the end of humanity as we know it.<sup>22</sup>

A clear theme of civilizational rhetoric becoming more prevalent in times of high stress about the future is present with each of these examples. Moments of immense crisis led people like Massis, Spengler, and Toynbee into preservation mode as they tried to understand how their world had gotten to the point where WWI and WWII were possibilities. As we will come to see, this sentiment was adopted by the United States soon after WWII.

### ***The National Review and Western Civilization in the United States***

In the United States, the idea of “defending Western civilization” became prevalent in moments of conservative anxiety. Decolonization after WWII combined with

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<sup>20</sup> Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 61.

<sup>21</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948).

<sup>22</sup> Salo W. Baron, review of *Civilization on Trial*, by Arnold J. Toynbee, *Political Science Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (Mar., 1949): 110-113.

the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s led to many on the right expecting the worst for their way of life. William F. Buckley Jr. was one of these people.

Buckley founded the *National Review*, an American far-right magazine, in 1955. In the publication's early years, it was used as an outlet for conservative intellectuals to criticize the Civil Rights movement and promote segregationist ideologies. While taking a strict stance in defense of segregation and white supremacy, the *National Review* still tried to stake out a more respectable intellectual space and sometimes criticized segregationists for not using their power in a supposedly responsible way. In 1957, Buckley published an editorial comparing white southerners to the British in Kenya as a response to President Eisenhower's efforts to protect voting rights of African Americans in the previous year. In it, Buckley argues that white southerners are as justified in denying voting rights to African Americans as the British were in putting down the Mau-Mau Rebellion. Buckley saw the global efforts to decolonize and the fight for civil rights undertaken by African Americans as a large, interconnected movement that was a danger to the West. As historian Dr. Jesse Curtis points out, connecting two events like the British fighting against the Land and Freedom Army in Kenya, known in the West as the Mau-Mau rebellion, to the denial of voting rights in Southern states "only made sense if one assumed that decolonization and the civil rights movement were component parts of a broader threat to Western civilization."<sup>23</sup>

Buckley's views on the global efforts of black liberation are not dissimilar from those of the Domino Theory that orientated the United States during the Cold War.

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<sup>23</sup> Jesse Curtis, "Will the Jungle Take Over?" *National Review* and the Defense of Western Civilization in the Era of Civil Rights and African Decolonization," *Journal of American Studies* 50, no. 3 (2019): 641-660.

Buckley felt he could see the fall of the West as more and more countries fought colonization in the same way some argued Vietnam falling to Communism would have a butterfly effect leading to the fall of the United States. With the beginning of the Vietnam War and the *National Review* gaining popularity at the same time, it is easy to see where the “defense of Western Civilization” rhetoric came from and why it had a strong foothold in the American right. The *National Review*’s efforts to warn Americans about the impending doom of their society and culture were only amplified with the Congo Crisis in 1960. In much the same way the Vietnam War was a microcosm for all the issues of the Cold War, Buckley saw the Congo Crisis as one for the fall of Western civilization. During this time, the *National Review* inched closer and closer to the racist right that it wanted to distance itself from by publishing articles claiming the Congo was “one of the most primitive regions in Africa,” and by praising Belgium for its colonizing work there. Buckley and the *National Review* doubled down as the Congo became a Cold War issue in the United States by publishing detailed accounts of violence against white people in an attempt to spark some kind of “civilizational panic.” The *National Review*’s reporting of violence against white people, whether unsubstantiated or not, can easily be compared to their reporting of the Sharpeville Massacre, in which police in South Africa opened fire on a crowd of protestors, killing 69 of them. Buckley argued it was a necessary act because, as Curtis states, “For Buckley, white violence was in defense of civilization; black violence was primitive.”<sup>24</sup>

Buckley and other social commentators on the right treated the Congo gaining independence from Belgium as the first domino being tipped in the downfall of Western

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<sup>24</sup> Curtis, “Will the Jungle Take Over?”

civilization. Afterwards, they would speak less carefully about Black Africans and African Americans, even going so far as to host open discussions about scientific racism. This was not the point in which the *National Review* embraced the “racist right” that they wanted to distance themselves from, but rather the point they began saying what they had been wanting to say the entire time. For Buckley, civilization itself was on the line and it was time to abandon what little respectability there was left and fight tooth and nail. He began hosting open discussions about the “Negro problem” in not only the United States but the West as a whole. Buckley entertained more scientific racists claiming there was a biological reason that black people commit more crimes and score lower on standardized tests. As racial tensions in America rose in the aftermath of riots brought on by instances of police brutality, Buckley took the side of the police when stating that “the last defense [of civilization] must rest in the rude but disciplined hands of men with nightsticks and guns.” In this instance, Buckley takes the same stance as he did in the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre, but this time, he opts not to feign distress by saying it is “barbaric but necessary.” In 1965 Buckley would compare Los Angeles to the Congo after a series of riots break out following President Johnson signing into law the Voting Rights Act. He would then spend the rest of the sixties reporting on white violence against black people like the Freedom Riders buses being set on fire or the bombings of black churches with the same lack of humanity as Sharpeville and police brutality.

While the overall view on race on the right shifted in the '70s from an overtly and strictly reactionary form of racism to a more subtle version, Curtis argues that scholars underestimate how much the rhetoric tying together race and civilization survived to the modern day. Buckley and his ideas about defending Western civilization, in fact, laid

important groundwork for white supremacists to cultivate a new form of the “respectable right” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that the *National Review* was meant to be in the 1950s. This form is known today as the “Alt-Right” and is instrumental in the spread of civilizational rhetoric and panic.

### **Artificial Civilization**

The trope of “defending Western civilization” is a very old one. However, it is important to understand that it has not changed much since the time of Massis. While enemies and allies change, the goal of civilizationalists will either be to make sure the last flame of “the West” does not burn out or, for some in the United States, begin writing the eulogy for the last bastion of civilization. No matter if they believe the West needs defending or it is already dead, it is completely manufactured. “The West” is a social construct: arbitrary, purposefully exclusionary, and constantly changing to meet the needs of the far-right. “The West,” in American eyes, is nothing more than an attempt to stay connected to Europe in some meaningful capacity. If clinging to Western civilization is the American far-right's attempt to stay European, the next chapter will show the contradictory nature of this relationship as “Europe” is also constantly criticized or dismissed to push nativist ideology at home.

## CHAPTER III: CRISIS

### An American Problem

Nativist thought has existed in the United States since it was still a colony of Great Britain. In 1751, Benjamin Franklin stated, when referring to German immigrants in Pennsylvania, “Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion?”<sup>25</sup> Not long after gaining independence, the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1798 were passed and allowed for the expulsion of aliens on political grounds. This did not last long, however, as Americans rejected the idea, and the United States became more heavily settled and industrialized off the back of unfettered immigration. This was until 1882 when the first significant law that restricted immigration to the United States on the bases of race or ethnicity, the Chinese Exclusion Act, was passed.<sup>26</sup>

The Chinese Exclusion Act was a product of the anti-Chinese sentiment that had been growing in the United States for decades. Many Americans believed that the Chinese were taking jobs away from American workers and were a threat to American culture and values. The Act was initially intended to be a temporary measure, but it was extended and expanded several times, eventually becoming permanent in 1902. The Act had significant consequences for Chinese Americans and for the broader history of American nativism. It prevented Chinese Americans from bringing their families to the

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<sup>25</sup> Franklin, Benjamin. "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc." 1751.

<sup>26</sup> Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 58.

United States, and it made it difficult for Chinese Americans to travel outside the United States and return. The Act also encouraged discrimination and violence against Chinese Americans, who were seen as unwanted outsiders. It was part of a broader pattern of nativist sentiment in the United States, which was driven by fears of the "other" and a desire to preserve American culture and values. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, nativist sentiment led to the enactment of other laws that restricted immigration based on race and nationality, including the Immigration Act of 1917 and the National Origins Act of 1924. The Act was finally repealed in 1943, as a result of U.S. efforts to build an alliance with China during World War II. However, the Act remains a dark chapter in American history and a reminder of the dangers of nativism and discrimination.<sup>27</sup>

This is all to say that nativism has a deep-rooted history in American society, predating its formation as a nation. Nativism was not born out of conflict in Europe and fear over it spilling into American society. It existed and was a major problem in American society since before it was a country. Americans did not need to learn their nativism from the example of European racism, or from a shared Euro-American defense of "Western Civilization." American nativism was homegrown from the beginning. However, this chapter shows how nativists in America stoked fears surrounding crises in Europe to push their own nativist agenda. In these moments of European crisis, Europe was presented as the enemy rather than the mythical homeland as in chapter one.

### **America for Americans**

Prior to WWI, German immigrants were seen by many as one of, if not, the best immigrant group in the United States. They had climbed their way out of the working

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<sup>27</sup> Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 56-90

class to become businessmen, clerks, and some highly skilled workers. Germans were considered some of the most reputable and easily assimilable people in the United States, even beating out the British in some professional opinions. This is all to say that it may come as a shock to see what historian John Higham described as “the most spectacular reversal of judgement in the history of American nativism.”<sup>28</sup>

As WWI broke out in Europe, the United States held its neutral stance while members of Euro-American immigrant groups supported their native countries. This would lead the American public to turn on their once favorite immigrant group as German Americans rallied against US involvement in the war. As the US began shipping supplies to its allies in Europe, German Americans launched a campaign to embargo the exportation of all war supplies. While they argued that this was the only way to remain truly neutral in the conflict, American citizens saw it as an attempt to undermine the nation in the interest of assisting Germany. Shortly after in May of 1915, German U-Boats attacked vessels carrying United States citizens, including the Lusitania. The 128 Americans killed in the attack turned national opinion from general distrust to complete outrage. To many Americans, German Americans were getting orders directly from Berlin with rumors and conspiracy theories spreading of rejoicing over American deaths in the U-Boat attacks and even a potential German American invasion of Canada.<sup>29</sup>

Since German Americans went from one of the most reputable groups to one of the most untrusted in just over a decade, there was an ambiguity as to why American’s distrusted them so much. John Higham argued that it was less a direct attack on German

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<sup>28</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 196.

<sup>29</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 197.

Americans, but rather they were a placeholder for the general category of “hyphenated Americans.”<sup>30</sup> Fears surrounding migrant nationalism had existed in America for a long time, but WWI brought a new wave of nativism towards these “hyphenates.”<sup>31</sup> President Theodore Roosevelt was one of the most prominent champions of the anti-hyphen movement. Adopting the motto “America for Americans” he saw immigrants who held on to their origin as un-American and as people who “spiritually remain foreigners in whole or in part.”<sup>32</sup> In an address given to the Knights of Columbus in 1915, Roosevelt states, “There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism. When I refer to hyphenated Americans, I do not refer to naturalized Americans. Some of the very best Americans I have ever known were naturalized Americans, Americans born abroad. But a hyphenated American is not an American at all.”<sup>33</sup> To Roosevelt, it did not matter if a person was naturalized or assimilated, they could never be considered American or welcomed in the country unless they dropped their origin. Even those German Americans who fought in the Civil War and WWI would not be considered unless they dropped their native country from their identity.

Alongside the crusade against hyphens, the preparedness movement developed from demands to increase national security. They rose alongside each other because both focused on an internal enemy that was weakening the country from within. This was, of course, an easier sell for those on the far-right than it was to explain how forces fighting

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<sup>30</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 198.

<sup>31</sup> Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 171.

<sup>32</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 199.

<sup>33</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, “Americanism,” speech delivered to the Knights of Columbus, New York City, October 12, 1915.

in Europe directly posed a threat to American citizens.<sup>34</sup> These ideas would continue to loom over the United States until the election of Woodrow Wilson and the subsequent entrance into WWI where they would be transformed into the idea of “100 percent Americanism.”<sup>35</sup>

100 percent Americanism is best described as the ideas of the anti-hyphen and preparedness movements expanded to a full-scale ideology. It demanded complete conformity and national loyalty without having to be federally mandated.<sup>36</sup> The “100 percenters” used public opinion to push their nativist agenda, and the German population living in the United States bore the brunt of this agenda. Conspiracies began spreading more wildly than in the pre-war years of German American uprising or terrorist attacks. It was a widely held belief that German American Red Cross workers were putting glass in food and medical supplies or even poisoning soldiers, despite a lack of evidence. President Wilson even had to make an official statement denying that he had been shot by a German spy.<sup>37</sup>

All of this manufactured outrage at the behest of the 100 percenters on the right led to a widespread destruction of German culture in America. Schools stopped teaching German, towns or even people with German sounding names got them changed, and even sauerkraut became known as “liberty cabbage” in an attempt to destroy every last vestige of German culture in the United States. Eventually, name changes became not enough, and calls for violence became commonplace. Mobs would destroy German books or

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<sup>34</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 199.

<sup>35</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 204.

<sup>36</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 204-205.

<sup>37</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 207-208.

instruments or force German Americans to kiss the flag. Public floggings and tar-and-featherings took place with even Theodore Roosevelt suggesting shooting or hanging any German American deemed disloyal. The peak of this rampant violence on behalf of 100 percent Americanism came in April of 1918 when a German immigrant was murdered by a mob of miners in Illinois.<sup>38</sup> Higham summarizes the sentiment of 100 percenters perfectly when he states, “In large measure these acts of repression and reprisal by private groups and local communities reflected the 100 percenter’s conviction that the federal government was timid and even criminally negligent in dealing with traitors. Popular indignation was rising against a nerveless government hampered by inadequate authority or paralyzed by respect for law.”<sup>39</sup> Nothing other than violence and harassment on behalf of 100 percenters could scare conformity and loyalty into a group of people who were considered the most assimilable groups only a decade earlier.

### **American Fascism**

Throughout the prewar period and during World War II, far-right groups in the United States continued to exploit European crises to advance their nativist agendas. They saw the anxieties surrounding war as an opportunity to promote their isolationist and anti-immigrant views, with some even turning to fascism or shades of hyper-conservatism.

One of the most prominent far-right groups during this time was the America First Committee. The organization was founded in 1940 with the goal of keeping the US out of the war and limiting immigration. The group argued that the US should focus on its own

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<sup>38</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 209.

<sup>39</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 209.

problems and not get involved in foreign affairs, echoing similar sentiments from the earlier 100 percent Americanism movement. The organization quickly became a breeding ground for hyper-conservative extremism with a number of domestic fascists taking prominent roles in the group. The committee became known for its anti-Semitic views, and many of its members, most notably the renowned aviator Charles Lindbergh, believed that Jewish people had conspired with the Roosevelt administration to insure American entry into the war. Roosevelt described him and other similar spokesmen as “unwitting aids of the agents of Nazism” and more or less let the movement fizzle as the December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 attacks on the Pearl Harbor naval base gave them little argument against American entry.<sup>40</sup>

Another far-right group that found some success during this time was the Silver Legion of America or the "Silver Shirts." The organization was founded in 1933 by playwright and longtime admirer of Adolph Hitler William Dudley Pelly. Historian Dr. Kevin Harty described Pelly's political ideology as “a hodgepodge...of anti-Communism, anti-Semitism, racism, extreme patriotism, and isolationism.”<sup>41</sup> Of course, this mixture of ideologies came through in the actions of his organization. The Silver Legion was an attempt to spread the same hyper-nationalistic fascism that was spreading across Europe to the United States. The Silver Legion used the uncertain times and social strife that came with the inevitability of War in Europe to grow the organization from a few hundred members to 15,000 only a year later.<sup>42</sup> The group wore Nazisque silver

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<sup>40</sup> John Huntington, *Far-Right Vanguard: The Radical Roots of Modern Conservatism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), 69-70.

<sup>41</sup> Kevin J. Harty, "William Dudley Pelley, An American Nazi in King Arthur's Court," *Arthuriana* 26, no. 2 (2016): 64-85.

<sup>42</sup> Huntington, *Far-Right Vanguard*, 48.

uniforms and held rallies and marches promoting isolationism and anti-immigrant sentiment, particularly against Jews.

Much like the Silver Legion, The German American Bund was a far-right organization that became active in the US during the lead-up to World War II. One of the key differences between the two groups is that rather than just getting inspiration from the Nazi party, the Bund acted as if it was the Nazi party in the United States. The group was led by a naturalized German born citizen named Fritz Kuhn and was made up of German immigrants and their descendants that held pro-Nazi views.<sup>43</sup> The Bund even established a youth organization similar to the Hitler Youth in Germany where members learned how to speak German, how to salute the Nazi flag, and how to sing Nazi songs.<sup>44</sup> Through an investigation by the US government, it was discovered that the organization even sent members to Germany to receive training. The Bund reached a peak number of members of around 6,500, but it was instrumental in coordinating other fascist groups in the United States like the Silver Legion.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the efforts of these far-right groups, their views were met with resistance from both the government and the public. Martin Dies Jr. was a United States congressman from Texas who served from 1931 to 1945 and is best known for his role as the chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee or HUAC. Although it began as a committee to hunt subversive communists, the obsession over communism fell to the wayside as fascist groups like the Bund and the Silver Legion caught the eye of the

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<sup>43</sup> Huntington, *Far-Right Vanguard*, 48.

<sup>44</sup> Leland V. Bell, "The Failure of Nazism in America: The German American Bund, 1936-1941," *Political Science Quarterly* 85, no. 4 (Dec., 1970): 585-599, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2147597>.

<sup>45</sup> Huntington, *Far-Right Vanguard*, 48.

American Government. Beginning with the German American Bund and the Silver Legion, the committee conducted numerous investigations into both American citizens and immigrants suspected of being involved with fascism and/or Nazi activities. Dies even managed to prosecute Pelley, causing a drop in Silver Legion membership of nearly 10,000.<sup>46</sup>

Fascist and fascist adjacent ultra-conservatism rose alongside each other in the United States by using the uncertainty of WWII to push nativist agendas. They spread conspiracies about subversive immigrants and used what historian John Huntington described as “ideological alchemy” to turn any non-conservative ideology into a shade of communism in an attempt to discredit it.<sup>47</sup> They utilized preparedness movement tactics from World War I to argue for American isolationism and to hunt for communist sympathizers. After Germany began their *blitzkrieg* campaign and only a few days after Hitler invaded France, Senator Robert A. Taft from Ohio argued, “There is a good deal more danger of the infiltration of totalitarian ideas from the New Deal circle in Washington than there will ever be from any activities of the communists or the Nazi bund.”<sup>48</sup> Sentiments like the one Robert Taft showed in this quote show the fact that even though most Americans put their faith in the Roosevelt administration, the temptation of fascism was always within reach. With membership in groups like the Silver Legion, the German American Bund, and to an extent the America First Committee growing into the tens of thousands, it shows that the far-right was able to capitalize on the war crisis in Europe to push their own hyper-conservative agendas.

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<sup>46</sup> Huntington, *Far-Right Vanguard*, 55.

<sup>47</sup> Huntington, *Far-Right Vanguard*, 49.

<sup>48</sup> Huntington, *Far-Right Vanguard*, 61.

## McCarthyism and Cold War Nativism

The Cold War era, which lasted from the late 1940s to the early 1990s, was marked by a global struggle for power and influence between the United States and the Soviet Union. During this time, the US government and its allies struggled against the rise of global communism, both at home and abroad. Using this struggle, far-right groups capitalized on the American public's fear of communism to push their nativist ideology. They used strategies from the 100 percent Americanism and preparedness movements to make the public conflate foreigners with communism and communism with the destruction of the United States.

One of the most prominent examples of this was the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy and his anti-communist witch hunts in the 1950s. Picking up where Senator Dies left off, McCarthy shifted the National focus away from internal fascism, choosing instead to investigate anyone with suspected communist ties of being a threat to national security.<sup>49</sup> Everyone from civil rights leaders to Hollywood actors was placed in McCarthy's political crosshairs as the right-wing in America struggled to regain some form of control in the wake of WWII. In many ways, these tactics were reminiscent of the "100 percent Americanism" movement during World War I as both sought to root out any supposed un-American activities and beliefs. Both periods were marked by a wave of xenophobia and paranoia and saw the demonization of those who were deemed "un-American." While sharing similarities with the WWI period, McCarthyism was born out of deepened anxieties around the end of WWII. After the last half-century of violence and unrest, the American people were desperate for a sense of national and personal

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<sup>49</sup> Huntington, *Far-Right Vanguard*, 78.

safety.<sup>50</sup> Dr. Irving Louis Horowitz states, “We tend to think of ‘isms’ in substantive, world historical, and ideological terms. But McCarthyism divides rather than unites informed opinion. This is so much so that we find members of various groups—Democrats and Republicans, statist and libertarians, nationalists and regionalists, labor leaders and managerial moguls, Jews and Christians— all strongly aligned either with or against the Wisconsin Senator.”<sup>51</sup> The American people were willing to push party allegiances, class divisions, and even religious differences to the side if it meant destroying communism and protecting American freedom. This even led liberals to align with those on the right so as to not be grouped in with those farther left of them.

Of course, the fear of communist infiltration allowed the United States to balk at the idea of creating any specific policies to handle immigrants from communist countries. Even with foreign policy indicating that the United States should bear most of the weight when it came to resettling refugees, conservative opposition made it difficult by arguing that “refugees were Communists, job-takers, and other undesirables.”<sup>52</sup> Eventually the Displaced Persons Act was put in place in 1949. It admitted 202,000 European refugees, out of an estimated 8 million from Austria, Germany, and Italy alone, over two years and defined “displaced person” as one who entered Austria, Germany, or Italy before December 22, 1945. This has been criticized as a way of rendering 100,000 Jewish people who entered displaced camps in 1946 and 1947 ineligible for admission. The law was further criticized as antisemitic by requiring 30 percent of admissions to be

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<sup>50</sup> Irving Louis Horowitz, "Culture, Politics, and McCarthyism," *The Independent Review* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 101-110.

<sup>51</sup> Horowitz, "Culture, Politics, and McCarthyism."

<sup>52</sup> Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 236.

agricultural workers which Jews were primarily not. However, President Truman reluctantly signed the act even though he did believe it discriminated against Jews and he disagreed with the quota system.<sup>53</sup> This small victory for nativists would lay the groundwork for the passing of further discriminatory legislature like the McCarran-Walter which further discriminated on the bases of nationality and race and continued the practice of national origin quotas.<sup>54</sup>

The Cold War era was marked by a continuation of the tactics used by far-right groups during WWI and WWII with the added fear of internal communist subversion. McCarthyism led the American public to new extremes in carrying out witch hunts on suspected communists. The United States government was at the behest of these hunters as, unlike in previous eras, they passed legislation to help fight against these communist boogymen. This era in American history permanently altered how Americans view politics. To this day, there are very few political issues that Americans will not default to looking at through the binary lens of the Cold War.

### **A Toxic Relationship**

It is clear to see that while today American nativists often depict “Europe” as a source of inspiration or an ally in the defense of “the West,” American nativists have also been willing to throw Europe under the bus in order to push their agendas. The presentation of Europe as the enemy shows the interesting dynamic it has with the American far-right. Europe is still the motherland, but maybe it was too far gone to be worth defending anymore during the period from WWI to the Cold War. Maybe

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<sup>53</sup> Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 236.

<sup>54</sup> Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 237.

progressive or liberal ideology made it where the US should cut ties before their conservative utopia is corrupted. It is truly interesting to see how, during this time, the American far-right seems to be in two with part of it holding on to the idea that Europe is the defender of the West while the other part thinks it should cut its losses, move on, and have nothing to do with it. Nativism is as American of a concept as it gets and did not need European, “respectable” racial theorists to help cultivate that. In fact, the next chapter will show how America’s rhetoric around race and immigration developed parallel to Europe, and how Europe did not need to factor in at all.

## CHAPTER IV: RHETORIC

### Separating from the “Racist Right”

The modern far-right in America relies heavily on Europe for many things. In chapter two, Europe is portrayed as both an enemy that the American homeland needs to be defended from and as a source of formative rhetoric for almost every far-right ideology in the United States. However, it is important to recognize that there are numerous examples where far-right American rhetoric could have laid the groundwork instead.

Within the far-right in America, including the "Alt-Right" and other mainstream forms, Europe is used to legitimize extremist views and to distance themselves from the so-called "racist right." In chapter one, the discussion revolves around Henry Massis, William Buckley Jr., and Richard Spencer, all of whom sought to establish a version of the far right that was deemed acceptable. Massis developed a Pan-European language centered around the themes of decline and renewal, aligning with his anti-democratic, nationalist ideology. This not only granted him respectability but also made his ideas fashionable, with the trope of "the decline of Western Civilization" still resonating within right-wing circles today.

Buckley, on the other hand, created The National Review to distinguish himself from the "racist right" of mid-1900s America. His aim was to provide a platform for other "intellectuals" to share their work. Richard Spencer, a modern figure, embodies elements of both Massis and Buckley. He played a crucial role in rebranding the far-right in the United States as the "Alt-Right." Through the use of the internet, he successfully mainstreamed his extreme right-wing ideology.

One prominent tool employed by Spencer and other figures on the "respectable right" is Europe. This chapter argues that the modern far-right in America heavily relies on the narrative of European influence to create a sense of respectability. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this reliance on European rhetoric is a construct. There exist homegrown American sources of the same nativist ideas, highlighting the complex dynamics and origins of nativism within American society.

### **The Holy City**

The discourse surrounding the book *The Camp of the Saints* is a perfect illustration of the dynamic in which the American far right claims to draw inspiration from Europe, rather than its own historical roots. *The Camp of the Saints* is a French novel by Jean Raspail written in 1973 before being translated into English in 1975. It is based on the story of the Apocalypse of John as it was written in the book of Revelations of hordes sacking the holy city.<sup>55</sup> In *The Camp of the Saints*, the holy city is an unnamed town on the French coast that is ransacked by a flotilla of less-than-human refugees. Raspail tells a tale of millions of “monsters” from Africa, India, and Asia invading the French mainland by sea and proceeding to rape and murder mindlessly while France’s leaders stand by thanks to their liberal guilt and incompetence.<sup>56</sup> Although a work of fiction, Raspail notes in the preface that the book is to be taken literally and it is inspired by population projections when he says, “I had wanted to write a lengthy preface to explain my position and show that this is no wild-eyed dream; that even if the specific

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<sup>55</sup> Chelsea Stieber, "Camp of the Saints," *Africa is a Country*, March 17, 2019, <https://africasacountry.com/2019/03/camp-of-the-saints>.

<sup>56</sup> Daniel Denvir, *All-American Nativism: How the Bipartisan War on Immigrants Explains Politics as we Know it*. (London: Verso, 2020) 161.

action, symbolic as it is, may seem farfetched, the fact remains that we are inevitably heading for something of the sort. We need only glance at the awesome population figures predicted for the year 2000, i.e., twenty-eight years from now: seven billion people, only nine hundred million of whom will be white.”<sup>57</sup> Author and professor of French studies at the Catholic University of America Dr. Chelsea Stieber describes the premise of the book as “shocking” but “one that has been rebranded, reframed, shined up, and sanded down but never really changed in the fifty odd years since his novel came out.”<sup>58</sup>

The book is beloved by many on the far right and is constantly used as an argument against immigration. Former chief strategist to then President Donald Trump and instrumental figure in the passing of the “Muslim Ban” in 2017 Steve Bannon constantly sang its praises. In October of 2015, Bannon argued for the “Muslim Ban” by describing immigration issues in Europe as “a Camp of the Saints-type of invasion” Later in 2016, he doubled down on his assessment of the state of immigration by describing it as “a global issue” and a “kind of global Camp of the Saints.”<sup>59</sup> Former senior White House advisor Stephen Miller also expressed his admiration of the book while he was working as an aide to Senator Jeff Sessions. In a leaked email from 2015, he suggested to far right news source *Breitbart* that they should write about the book and its similarities to today.<sup>60</sup> Both Bannon and Miller’s promotion of the book came at a time when it was

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<sup>57</sup> Jean Raspail, *The Camp of the Saints* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975), 4.

<sup>58</sup> Stieber, “Camp of the Saints.”

<sup>59</sup> Paul Blumenthal and JM Rieger. “This Stunningly Racist French Novel Is How Steve Bannon Explains The World.” *HuffPost*, 4 March 2017.

<sup>60</sup> Michael Edison Hayden, “Stephen Miller’s Affinity for White Nationalism Revealed in Leaked Emails,” *Hatewatch, Southern Poverty Law Center*, 12 Nov. 2019, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2019/11/12/stephen-millers-affinity-white-nationalism-revealed-leaked-emails#link>.

rather obscure and only really talked about in neo-Nazi and white supremacist circles. Of course, it is understandable to worry about why two people that worked so closely with Donald Trump are making their arguments for more strict immigration restrictions based on a French, dystopian, fiction novel from the 70s. An alternative question may be, “Why that book?”

The United States has its own racist, dystopian, fiction novel from the 70s that contains the same themes as *The Camp of the Saints* but with an American context. *The Turner Diaries* is a novel first published in 1978 by American Nazi Party member William Luther Pierce under the pseudonym “Andrew Macdonald.” It chronicles two years of a race war known as the “Great Revolution” told from the perspective of Earl Turner, a member of a band of militant neo-Nazis known as The Organization. The Organization is tasked with taking down the Jewish-run allegory for the United States government known as The System. The crime The System committed that pushed the nation to Civil War is discriminating against white Americans by enacting policies like gun control, affirmative action, loose immigration restriction, and simply putting non-white people, namely Jewish and Black people, in charge of Schools and Government agencies like the FBI. The book coalesces with a series of terrorist attacks such as using a fertilizer bomb to attack the FBI headquarters and the offices of liberal media outlets like *The Washington Post*, launching a mortar attack on the US capitol building, and shooting down an airplane full of vacationing Jewish dignitaries heading to Tel Aviv.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Terence Ball and Richard Dagger, "Inside The Turner Diaries: Neo-Nazi Scripture," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30, no. 4 (1997): 717-718, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/420398>.

*The Turner Diaries* has been called the “Bible of the racist right” and has been used as a blueprint for many radical, right-wing terror attacks. Most notoriously, Timothy McVeigh, the terrorist responsible for the Oklahoma City Bombing, used instructions found in the book to construct the fertilizer bomb that took the lives of 168 in 1995.<sup>62</sup> The book has also inspired the creation of extremist groups like The Order, which takes its name directly from Earl Turner’s band of terrorists. One member of the group, David Lane, died in prison in 2007 while serving a life sentence for the 1984 assassination of Jewish radio host Alan Berg.

The similarities between *The Camp of the Saints* and *The Turner Diaries* are easy to see. They are both stories of a fictional future that shows the downfall of white civilization at the hands of the liberal ideology of equality. Both books lay out, in great detail, how multiculturalism will lead to societal collapse in one way or another. The difference lies in how these ideas are presented. Raspail, while not at all subtle, is more nuanced and relies on metaphor and biblical allegories to describe the end of a predominantly white, French society as he knew it. Pierce, on the other hand, is almost anti-subtlety and nuance as he takes a literal, almost action movie-like, approach to the fall of the United States. In the short list of differences the novels have, the company that they keep is a major one. When looking at the books side by side, it is clear to see why people like Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller would rather cite the one used by armchair sociologists instead of the one used by right-wing terrorists. Surely Bannon and Miller can relate more with Earl Turner’s fight against liberal brainwashing, but adopting the

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<sup>62</sup> Stuart A. Wright, *Patriots, Politics, and the Oklahoma City Bombing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 186.

more Euro-centric example allows them to appear as though they are separating themselves from the David Lanes and Timothy McVeighs of the world. This concept lies at the heart of the “respectable right” ideology. Separation from the “racist right” gives them the appearance of more credibility and respectability, even if their arguments are not ideologically dissimilar from neo-Nazis and terrorists.

## **Replacement**

The idea of “replacement” is a core principle of modern far-right ideology. French writer and critic Renaud Camus is credited with what is known today as “The Great Replacement Theory” which informs far-right thought today. Camus gained notoriety with the publication of his book *Tricks* in 1979, in which Camus tells the stories of gay, sexual encounters he has had, and he quickly became a cheerleader for the gay community.<sup>63</sup> Today, he is more known as the torch bearer for this idea of “replacement.” In 2011, he published an essay titled “Le Grand Remplacement” in which he describes how he believes white Europeans are being actively and purposefully replaced by people from Africa and the Middle East. If this idea sounds familiar, it is because Camus also, reportedly, drew inspiration from *The Camp of the Saints*. His original idea focused mostly on high Muslim birthrates and did not blame Jewish people; however, the idea was adopted by white supremacists in America who already blamed non-white immigration on Jews, so now it is associated with antisemitism.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Todd Shepard, *Sex, France, and Arab Men, 1962-1979*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 126.

<sup>64</sup> ADL, “The Great Replacement Explainer,” *Anti-Defamation League*, accessed April 14, 2023, <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/great-replacement-explainer>.

“The Great Replacement Theory” became such a dominating factor in far-right ideology because it is easy to understand and easy to adapt to many situations. Even if it is not being directly referenced, the idea of “replacement” permeates American political discourse. In response to protests of the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police, Senator Matt Gaetz tweeted to his millions of followers in 2020, “There is an attempted cultural genocide going on in America right now,” and included a clip of him on Fox News discussing how “the left wants us to be ashamed of America so they can replace America.”<sup>65</sup> One of the most prominent abusers of this theory is Fox News host Tucker Carlson. Carlson makes frequent references to “demographic changes” and those on the left wanting to “import” voters so that they never lose another election.<sup>66</sup> The Anti-Defamation League called for his deplatforming and noted that he has made reference to Democrats replacing voters in over 400 episodes of his talk show *Tucker Carlson Tonight*; a show which, as of February of 2023, is the highest rated cable news show in the country with nearly 3.5 million viewers.<sup>67</sup>

Unfortunately, these are not just words. Multiple acts of terrorism have been inspired by these ideas. In 2019, a man entered a Walmart in El Paso, Texas and murdered 23 people. In a manifesto posted minutes before the shooting, he wrote about “Mexican invaders” being the target of his attack, echoing the same rhetoric that Tucker Carlson has used many times.<sup>68</sup> Also in 2018, The Tree of Life Synagogue shooting in

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<sup>65</sup> Rep. Matt Gaetz, Twitter post, July 12, 2020, 10:28 p.m., <https://twitter.com/RepMattGaetz/status/1282320656500174848>.

<sup>66</sup> New York Times, “How Tucker Carlson Became the Voice of the Republican Party,” *New York Times*, April 30, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/04/30/us/tucker-carlson-tonight.html?chapter=3>.

<sup>67</sup> Mark Joyella, “With 3.5 Million Viewers, Tucker Carlson Has The Week’s Highest-Rated Cable News Show,” *Forbes*, February 14, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markjoyella/2023/02/14/with-35-million-viewers-tucker-carlson-has-the-weeks-highest-rated-cable-news-show/?sh=340171227f52>.

<sup>68</sup> Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland*, 32.

Pittsburg, Pennsylvania saw a man commit the deadliest antisemitic attack in the history of the United States, killing 11 people while shouting “All Jews must die.” Upon being apprehended by the police, the shooter explained that he committed the act because Jewish people were “committing genocide against his people,” a sentiment further expressed in a number of hateful online posts.<sup>69</sup> In 2022, a gunman traveled to Buffalo, New York and murdered 10 Black people at a supermarket. His manifesto also had themes of “replacement.”<sup>70</sup>

With a significant number of terror attacks being inspired by “the Great Replacement Theory,” it is becoming more difficult for people on the far-right to use it without being associated with them. That is why people like Tucker Carlson mask it as “demographic change” even though it is essentially the same argument. However, just like American nativists claim *The Camp of Saints* even though their ideas are already contained in the less respectable *Turner Diaries*, so Renaud Camus’ ideas of “replacement” have long existed in American sources of inspiration.

After the soldiers began returning home from the Vietnam War, they were upset and held feelings of distrust in the government due to their perceived mismanagement of the war on behalf of the US Government. This betrayal resulted in the unlikely alliance between the likes of the KKK and neo-Nazi groups resulting in the birth of the White Power movement. Prior to the Vietnam War, both groups saw themselves on the side of

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<sup>69</sup> Alex Amend, "Analyzing the Terrorist's Social Media Manifesto: The Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooter's Posts on Gab," *Hatewatch, Southern Poverty Law Center*, October 28, 2018, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/10/28/analyzing-terrorists-social-media-manifesto-pittsburgh-synagogue-shooters-posts-gab>.

<sup>70</sup> Vanessa Hudson, "The Great Replacement Theory and its Connection to the Buffalo Shooting," *University Wire*, June 14, 2022, <https://www.questia.com/newspaper/1P4-2739294839/the-great-replacement-theory-and-its-connection-to>.

the state and as doing unsanctioned, vigilante work on its behalf. However, the KKK saw neo-Nazis as enemies due to WWII. With the creation of the White Power movement, however, both groups fought alongside each other against the “Jewish Zionist Occupational Government” that “conspired to destroy the white race through abortion, interracial marriage, birth control, and immigration.”<sup>71</sup> Kathleen Belew, author of *Bring the War Home*, states, “White power activists claimed that the Zionist Occupational Government (ZOG) wanted to abort white babies, admit immigrants, allow people of color to have unlimited children on the government’s welfare dime, allow black men to rape white women, and encourage interracial marriages—all of this, they said, to destroy the white race.”<sup>72</sup> This also comes off the back of a significant shift in immigration. Before the war, there were roughly only 10,000 people of Vietnamese origin living in America, but in 1980 there were nearly 245,000 before jumping to 1.2 million in 1990.<sup>73</sup> These veterans are seeing what Carlson would call “demographic change” and using that to craft the same replacement rhetoric nearly 40 years before Camus wrote his essay. It cannot be stressed enough that this also was not an insignificant or small group making these claims. The entire White Power movement was created using this rhetoric. Many of the people at Charlottesville wearing white hoods and holding swastika banners could trace their ideology’s history back to this era of American history.

Much like with the side-by-side comparison of *The Camp of the Saints* and *The Turner Diaries*, the reason politicians and pundits adopt Camus rather than Vietnam

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<sup>71</sup> Denvir, *All-American Nativism*, 149.

<sup>72</sup> Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), 158.

<sup>73</sup> Roger Daniels, *Coming to America (Second Edition): A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002), 368.

Veterans goes back to separating from the “racist right.” While it is more difficult to divorce these two sources of inspiration from each other because they are so similar and responsible for horrible actions, at least Camus carries a sense of respectability with his name that the KKK and neo-Nazis do not. In fact, it is a good thing that it is becoming more difficult to be considered “respectable” when regurgitating replacement ideology. It means that, as a society, we are seeing both forms of the rhetoric for what it is, indistinguishable from one another and completely abhorrent.

### **Securing the Future**

The fear of declining birthrates is the key to most of the rhetoric of the far-right. Getting “out babied” by non-white races is how white populations are getting replaced according to “the Great Replacement Theory.” However, as shown previously, it is less what is said, but how it is said. One example of this idea comes from “The Heidelberg Manifesto.” While it is not a necessarily famous document, it displays the same sentiment in the same style that many on the “respectable right” do.

In the 1960s, Germany experienced a sharp decline in national fertility which culminated in the 1970s as death rates surpassed birth rates. Immigration numbers would counteract this population decline as many people immigrated from places like southern France, Turkey, and other parts of the Mediterranean to work and ride the post-war economic boom. This combination of low German birth rates and high immigration numbers led to an increase of foreigners per capita by the mid to late 70s. In turn, this sparked “an exceptionally strong negative reaction to this novel demographic element in

the German national experience.”<sup>74</sup> This sentiment is best displayed in a document known as “The Heidelberg Manifesto.”

“The Heidelberg Manifesto” is the result of 15 different authors coming together to express concerns over the influx of immigration in Germany. These concerns were not those of a few fringe extremists, but those of different prominent German scholars and professors from all over the country. The authors are also not alone in their grievances. In fact, the vast conservative consensus at the time was that too many immigrants were working jobs in Germany. The authors describe the situation in Germany as an “infiltration.” However, it is not just an infiltration of Germany’s borders, but “of our language, our culture, and our national characteristics.” To the authors of this paper, the government is to blame for the increase in immigration as it is “connected with uncontrolled economic growth.” However, what’s more important than economic growth to the authors is “the preservation of the German people and its spiritual identity on the basis of our Western, Christian heritage.” In fact, the authors explicitly state, “The integration of large masses of non-German foreigners and the preservation of our nation... cannot be achieved simultaneously.” The idea of preserving German culture is a repeating theme in this paper. On the surface, it seems the concerns held by the authors only revolve around retaining their culture, but it is apparent that race plays a significant role in their motivations for writing this. For example, they continue with the concept of “preserving” a little later in the paper, but this time it is to preserve the German people’s identity. This identity of a “German people” is also the obligation of the federal

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<sup>74</sup> Eileen Hennessy. “The Heidelberg Manifesto: A German Reaction to Immigration.” *Population and Development Review* 8, No. 3 (September 1982): 636-637.

government to protect, they say, but how can the government do this if a portion of that population “becomes ethnically foreign?”<sup>75</sup>

The idea that retention of culture is intrinsically linked to high birth rates is one that is very present in American society as well. While most arguments take either a scientific or cultural approach, there is an alternative that is strictly racial and, like the other alternatives, was born out of American circumstances.

David Lane was a white supremacist and neo-Nazi activist who rose to prominence in the United States during the 1980s. He was a key figure in the white nationalist movement and co-founded several groups, including The Order, a violent group that takes its name from Pierce’s *The Turner Diaries* and was responsible for a string of armed robberies.<sup>76</sup> Lane was also a prominent member of the Aryan Nations, a white supremacist organization based in Idaho, and was a close associate of Robert Jay Mathews, the founder of The Order. Lane was known for his radical beliefs, including his belief in a white-only nation and his anti-Semitic views. He was convicted of multiple crimes, including racketeering and conspiracy, and spent much of his life in prison. Lane eventually died in prison in 2007 while serving a life sentence for the murder of Alan Berg, a Jewish radio host.

David Lane reached almost folk hero status on the far right when he expressed what would become the most popular white supremacist slogan and dog whistle. While serving his life sentence, Lane would frequently write articles for white supremacist and extremist journals. It was one of these articles, titled “14 Words,” where he expressed his

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<sup>75</sup> Hennessy, “The Heidelberg Manifesto,” 636-637.

<sup>76</sup> “10 Members of The Order Convicted: Neo-Nazis Guilty of Racketeering, Armored-Car Robberies,” *Los Angeles Times Archives*, December 31, 1985.

views on birthrates and the future of whiteness. The 14 Words are, “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children.” There is an obvious argument that Lane is trying to make. He thinks that white people are becoming a thing of the past, and it is something that actively needs saving. This is evident in future writings as Lane moves towards actions rather than just thoughts.<sup>77</sup> He writes in an article titled “Strategy” that white people need to move to a remote country and begin reproducing to take over the local government; the irony being that he feels this same thing is happening in America with non-white invaders. Irony aside, this shows that Lane does think a lack of white births, or at least “pure” white births, will lead to a future where white people are either a minority or non-existent in the United States.

While it may appear that the “14 Words” and the “Heidelberg Manifesto” argue two different points, one of the preservation of race and one culture, it is clear that both are talking about race. However, the Heidelberg approach to cultural racism is prevalent in American society. The argument tends to take the form of “color blindness.” Being politically “color blind” allows a person to reject the concept of race and, in turn, deny the existence of racism. This not only disallows the opportunity for an open and healthy discussion of the implications of race, but it opens avenues for alternative forms of discrimination, likely cultural. With every other American alternative to identical European rhetoric, the discrepancy lies in who wields it. Often, politicians and pundits walk a line between the two. Primarily in reference to Mexican immigration and “anchor babies” being able to tie an undocumented family to the United States.<sup>78</sup> The fear is

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<sup>77</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “David Lane,” *Extremist Files*, accessed April 14, 2023, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/david-lane>.

<sup>78</sup> Denvir, *All-American Nativism*, 213.

expressed as changing voting demographics rather than racial ones, but, as shown with fears of “replacement,” that fear is very prevalent. Even if it is not as explicitly stated with 14 words.

### **Origin Matters**

The argument for the arbitrary nature of the origin of rhetoric is understandable. Why should it matter where ideas come from? Should it not just matter that we understand what the ideas are? While this is partly true, it is important to understand these ideas and forms of rhetoric so they can be combatted where possible. Completely ignoring the origin avoids the root of the problem. It is easy to write far-right activity in the United States as a product of European schools of thought because look at where they primarily adopt their rhetoric from. However, that buries the identical rhetoric born out of American circumstances and does not allow us to grapple with our own racist past, present, and potential future. These are very American issues that wear a European disguise. It is so incredibly important to understand that the side that an increasing number of young people in the United States see as “respectable,” uses identical beliefs to those who, more often than not, are the culprit in domestic terror attacks. Identifying that this is a purposeful strategy on behalf of those wanting to mainstream terroristic ideas is the first and most important step in combatting radicalization.

## CHAPTER V: EPILOGUE

### A New Clash

From the perspective of American nativists, “Europe” is an ambivalent symbol: sometimes the clear enemy and the antithesis of American values; other times, the apparent and more “respectable” source of these American ethno-nationalists’ racial theories. In every case, Europe is the white man’s homeland. It is worth defending or it has already fallen. Europe is the West, and when it falls, so may the United States. It has not been until recently that the United States and Europe have been completely unified against a common enemy. Samuel Huntington posited in a now infamous article titled “Clash of Civilizations,” that after the collapse of the Soviet Union saw an end to the Cold War, the new clash would be a unified West versus Islam. He believed that Islam’s refusal to accept Western views on democracy and liberalism would result in the next Cold War-like conflict.<sup>79</sup> While this clash did not play out exactly as Huntington expected, it is clear to see that Islam has become the new ideological bogeyman. So much so that the perceived threat of Islam has forced two sides that have either bickered like brothers or admired one another from a distance for decades finally join together against an enemy that is, at best, over exaggerated in its level of danger. Nowhere has “Europe” loomed larger in the American nativist imagination—as both an ally and as a cautionary tale—than in recent debates about the Syrian refugee crisis.

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<sup>79</sup> Ahmed M. Abozaid, "'Clash of Civilizations' at Twenty-Five: Reappraising Huntington's Legacy: View from the Arab World," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 11, no. 4 (December 2018): 135-158, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48599809>

## **“No-Go Zones”**

The Syrian Civil War began in 2011 and has since led to the displacement of millions of Syrian citizens, better known as the Syrian refugee crisis. It is one of the worst humanitarian disasters of modern times with millions of refugees seeking asylum in neighboring countries and many making the dangerous trip across the Mediterranean to get to Europe. In England, the refugee crisis played massively in the 2020 Brexit decision with a poll showing that 22% of people who favored staying would change their minds if the crisis worsened.<sup>80</sup> In 2017, a University of London study found that xenophobia played a large role in the successful Leave vote in 2016.<sup>81</sup> While the Syrian refugee crisis did not cause Brexit as it had been in the works for years prior, the influx of immigrants was the tipping point for many. These anxieties were adopted by the United States. In 2017, *The New York Times* reported about fears being stoked by far-right media in the United States. Usually, the argument against an increase in immigrants is national security or economic concerns, but with far-right news media like Breitbart and Info Wars reporting Muslim immigrants spreading disease and committing rapes, those became prominent concerns. Of course, Muslim immigrants were also accused of being extremists with a number of far-right news outlets reporting of either ISIS or Al Qaeda terrorists coming into America disguised as Muslim refugees.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Martin Greenwood and Elsa Holm, "Did the Syrian Revolution cause Brexit? A look into the xenophobia behind the vote," *Global Social Challenges*, April 26, 2021, <https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/global-social-challenges/2021/04/26/did-the-syrian-revolution-cause-brexit-a-look-into-the-xenophobia-behind-the-vote/>.

<sup>81</sup> Greenwood and Holm, "Did the Syrian Revolution cause Brexit? A look into the xenophobia behind the vote."

<sup>82</sup> Caitlin Dickerson, "Anxiety About Muslim Refugees Is Stoked Online by the Far-Right Media," *New York Times*, Late Edition (East Coast), January 29, 2017.

One of the most prominent and egregious examples of the far-right in the United States exploiting the crisis and adopting European fears about Muslim immigrants comes from Fox News reports of “No-Go Zones” in France and England. In the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attacks in 2015 that saw two French Muslim terrorists take the lives of 17 people, Fox News reported that certain neighborhoods in Paris as well as the entire city of Birmingham, England were off limits to non-Muslims. This was intended as cautionary evidence of how Muslim immigrants bring unacceptable levels of Islamization and refusal to integrate. In response, news outlets in France sent reporters to these neighborhoods and, rather humorously, made a mock travel guide for different bars and restaurants in the areas.<sup>83</sup> And in England, the prime minister at the time David Cameron responded, “When I heard this, frankly, I choked on my porridge, and I thought it must be April Fools' Day. This guy’s clearly a complete idiot.”<sup>84</sup> That “idiot” being US terror “expert” Steve Emerson. Fox News issued retractions of these claims, but several pundits echoed them, and Paris filed a lawsuit against the news network.

One news source that did not shy away from reporting on “no-go zones” was the *National Review*. The 2017 Westminster attack saw Khalid Masood drive his car through a crowd of pedestrians, injuring more than 50 and killing four before fatally stabbing a police officer. In its aftermath, the *National Review* reported that Islam was to be entirely to blame for his action, despite also reporting that Masood had a violent history before converting to Islam. *National Review* also states that Masood lived in Birmingham which,

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<sup>83</sup> Zack Beauchamp, "Fox News informs surprised Parisians they've been conquered by Muslims" *Vox*, January 16, 2015, <https://www.vox.com/2015/1/16/7553975/fox-no-go-zones>.

<sup>84</sup> David A. Graham, "Why the Muslim 'No-Go-Zone' Myth Won't Die," *The Atlantic*, January 20, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/01/why-the-muslim-no-go-zone-myth-wont-die/384561/>.

like Fox News had reported back in 2015, was “a city increasingly enveloped by sharia enclaves that, to varying degrees, have become “no-go zones” for non-Muslims and agents of the state, including police.”<sup>85</sup> Between Emerson’s first comments about “no-go zones” and the 2017 Westminster attack, the *National Review* reported on multiple cases of “no-go zones” being a complete and undeniable fact, despite evidence on the contrary. They report instances of Rotherham and Birmingham in the UK being riddled with rape and human trafficking and blame it on lack of police presence due to the “no-go” nature of the cities.<sup>86</sup> Again, all while possessing little evidence in their favor. The most self-revealing article, however, is one titled “Why Does the Left Continue to Insist that Islamic Terrorism Has Nothing to Do with Islam?” In this article, they continue to present Islam as an inherently violent religion while writing off any terrorist attack performed by Christians in the US as not the work of “real Christians.” In fact, the *National Review* thinks any who tries to research “Christian terrorism” is “probably a Jackass to begin with.”<sup>87</sup> The inability to give Islam the same benefit of the doubt that they give Christianity shows exactly where the bias lies and is the root of this new, so called, “clash.” Religious extremism is a problem no matter what the circumstances are, but to the *National Review*, Christian extremists do not understand what it means to be Christian, while Islamic extremism is fundamental to being Islamic.

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<sup>85</sup> Andrew C. McCarthy, "Islam and the Jihad in London," *National Review*, March 25, 2017, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/03/westminster-attack-khalid-masood-islamic-europe-mosques-no-go-zones/>.

<sup>86</sup> Daniel Pipes, "The Question of No-Go Zones in Europe," *National Review*, January 22, 2015, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2015/01/question-no-go-zones-europe-daniel-pipes/>.

<sup>87</sup> Jonah Goldberg, "Why Does the Left Continue to Insist that Islamic Terrorism Has Nothing to Do with Islam?," *National Review*, November 21, 2015, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2015/11/hillary-clinton-islam-comments-terrorism/>.

Every one of these claims all have little to no legs to stand on. Disease has been a tool of nativists for centuries with seemingly every nativist movement claiming immigrants spread disease. In America, nativists since the early 1700s have been claiming immigrants bring everything from disease to bad weather.<sup>88</sup> As for immigrants sneaking into the country to commit acts of terrorism, there is no evidence of this idea being a genuine concern in any way. Since 9/11, the estimated number of immigrants who were deemed extremists is between 3 and 12 out of over 800,000. Even with this increased fear of Muslim immigrants being terrorists being brought on by the attacks on 9/11, even those attackers had lawfully entered the country with visas.<sup>89</sup> In fact, no foreigner who has committed an act of terrorism or has been arrested under suspicion has been found to have crossed the border illegally.<sup>90</sup> Additionally, white supremacists and far-right extremists are more likely to commit terrorist attacks in the United States, even causing Congress to pass the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act of 2019.<sup>91</sup> Yet still, many on the far-right claim that immigrants have an increased likelihood of being terrorists. Most notably in 2018, a caravan of asylum seekers from Central America was heading to the US border, and countless far-right sources, even the president at the time Donald Trump, claimed it had been infiltrated by terrorists saying.<sup>92</sup> Lastly, the claims of rape are mostly unsubstantiated. *The New York Times* article reports on a story where the crime in question was committed by someone whose immigrant status had not been

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<sup>88</sup> Norman L. Friedman, "Nativism," *Phylon* (1960-) 28, no. 4 (1967): 408–415, <https://doi.org/10.2307/274292>.

<sup>89</sup> Denvir, *All-American Nativism*, 111.

<sup>90</sup> Denvir, *All-American Nativism*, 117.

<sup>91</sup> Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act of 2019, H.R. 1931, 116th Cong. (2019).

<sup>92</sup> Linda Qiu, "Trump's Evidence-Free Claims About the Migrant Caravan," *The New York Times*, October 22, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/22/us/politics/migrant-caravan-fact-check.html>.

reported. As is this case throughout history, rape is used more as a metaphor than an actual action. Nativists on the far-right will use the imagery of rape as an allegory for an immigrant invasion. Historian Todd Shepard describes a similar situation in 1970s France where reports of rape by Arab men were widespread. Foreigners made up a small percentage of the population, but they were very disproportionately implicated in crimes and accused of sexual crimes. In most cases, Shepard argues, the goal of these reports was exclusively to demonize and humiliate the presumed aggressor (typically Arab men) rather than to protect the victim. In fact, it had the opposite effect, and these false claims made it more difficult for women to combat the actual reality of sexual violence.<sup>93</sup>

Why do this? Why report such easily verifiable lies? It is the same reason that the nativist right-wing has conjured up conspiracy theories since before WWI. They have deep rooted xenophobic views and want to work as hard as possible to make those views mainstream and normalized. In the same way that German immigrants were conflated with agents of the nation of Germany during the World Wars and that leftists and European immigrants were conflated with communists during the Cold War, far-right nativists want the uninformed to conflate Muslim immigrants and immigrants in general with disease, rape, and radical extremism. The utilization of Europe is the other side of the coin. They draw on these crises as a way of saying “If it happened to them, why would it not happen to us?” If Europe, the proverbial or literal homeland and last bastion of Western civilization for many on the far-right, can fall to Islamic “invasion,” then the United States will not fare much longer either. Whether or not they truly believe these anti-Islamic discourses is not important because they are getting people to listen to,

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<sup>93</sup> Shepard, *Sex, France, and Arab Men, 1962-1979*, 226-249.

mainstream, and normalize their rhetoric. Once more people are listening and the rhetoric is mainstreamed, then it is easier to get people on board, even with some of the most vitriolic rhetoric. More people onboard, of course, means more people to vote for them and the easier it is to take control of power. It is crucial that we recognize this pattern. The demonization of an idea or group of people for political gain is a problem that exists throughout the history of the United States, and it is one that should not, and cannot, be blamed on Europe.

Today, this fascination with Europe persists. The emergence of a new "global new right" has formed networks connecting American conservatives to far-right leaders in Europe. Staunch nationalist and far-right Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban hosted many prominent American conservatives in Budapest before taking the stage at CPAC in Dallas in 2022.<sup>94</sup> Even stranger, former Mississippi governor Phil Bryant attended a lobbying event for Brexit before bringing a co-founder of Vote Leave to Mississippi to, of all things, help develop an "anti-critical race theory" policy in 2021.<sup>95</sup> The obsession with Europe extends beyond just political connections, with books like *Sunday Times* bestseller *The Strange Death of Europe* by Douglas Murray, which argues that Europe is in a crisis due to Muslim immigration and a low birthrates, being sold in my local coffee shop.<sup>96</sup> However, this fixation with Europe as a bastion of Western civilization, a source of respectable nativism, or the last line of defense against "Islam" serves only to distract

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<sup>94</sup> "Why Is the American Right Obsessed with Viktor Orbán?" *The Economist*, August 4, 2022, accessed August 4, 2022, <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2022/08/04/why-is-the-american-right-obsessed-with-viktor-orban>.

<sup>95</sup> Leah Willingham, "Brexit Leader to Head Mississippi Public Policy Center," *Jackson Free Press*, January 22, 2021, <https://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2021/jan/22/brexit-leader-head-mississippi-public-policy-cente/#h181367-p8>.

<sup>96</sup> Douglas Murray, "Europe signs its own death warrant," *The Times*, April 30, 2017, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/europe-signs-its-own-death-warrant-xpg36lnxl>.

from the deeply entrenched racism that is a uniquely American problem. By exoticizing and romanticizing the issue, nativists avoid confronting the reality of racism in the US and fail to acknowledge that their beliefs have more in common with the KKK than with Renaud Camus.

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