# White Power

## Thomas Meaney

Bring the War Home:
The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America
by Kathleen Belew.
Harvard, 330 pp., £23.95, April 2018, 978 0 674 28607 8

Revolutionaries for the Right: Anti-Communist Internationalism
and Paramilitary Warfare in the Cold War
by Kyle Burke.
North Carolina, 337 pp., £36.50, June 2018, 978 1 469 64073 0

In the spring of 1975, as America's war in Vietnam drew to its grim conclusion, a new magazine targeted readers who did not want it to end. *Soldier of Fortune* was founded by Robert K. Brown, a former Green Beret based in Boulder, Colorado, who made the profitable discovery that his publication could double as an employment agency for mercenaries and a weaponry catalogue. The magazine's classified ads offered an eclectic menu of 'professional adventure'. You could enlist in Portugal's war against anti-colonial guerrillas in Mozambique or sign up for the sultan of Oman's counterinsurgency against the communist Dhofar rebellion. More sedentary readers could buy a 'Free Cambodia' T-shirt, donate to an anti-Sandinista relief fund, support the search for POWs, stock up on Confederate paraphernalia, get a TEC-9 assault pistol, hire a hitman or order dynamite by the truckload.

The popularity of a magazine like this, which at the height of its circulation in the early 1980s had 190,000 subscribers, testifies to the global reach of the paramilitary American right. You could learn more about certain corners of the world from its pages than you could from the *Economist*. *Soldier of Fortune* featured 'participant' despatches from unofficial war zones, interviews with European colonial rogues, and a sense of drama that cast the US as the last bulwark against the communist tide. Confederate 'lost cause' pathos alternated with a buoyant sense of America's chosenness.

Brown himself led death squads in El Salvador and tours with the mujahideen in Afghanistan. By the late 1970s, American mercenaries were advertising their services in Rhodesian phonebooks. Twenty years later, a handful were serving in Croatian nationalist battalions in the Yugoslav wars, with underground American white power organisations promoting wider recruitment – and seeking out and funding East German neo-Nazis. More recently, some 15 American freelancers have joined gonzo-fascist Ukrainian units in the Donbass to fight 'Putin's communists', though others see the Russian president as a knight for the white power cause.

For more than a century, anti-communism was a reliable binding agent on the American right. Disparate factions, from tax protesters and libertarians to fundamentalist Christians, from anti-abortion activists to the Ku Klux Klan and white power terror cells, could share a common enemy. For much of the 20th century, the struggles against communism and black progress were close to indistinguishable. In the late 1930s, local law enforcement waged war on the Alabama Communist Party and the 12,000 black members of the Sharecroppers Union; in the 1970s, right-wing US politicians actively supported white supremacist Rhodesia and South Africa against anti-colonial insurgencies, which were simultaneously demonised as black uprisings bent on white submission and as communist movements in hock to the Soviet Union. When Dylann Roof murdered nine black Christians in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015, he demonstrated the continuing overlap between white power at home and pro-colonial anti-communism abroad: in his profiles online he could be seen proudly displaying Rhodesian military regalia.

For the wider American conservative movement, white power may have been a useful dog off the leash when it came to unofficially fighting far-flung communist insurgencies, but it has also been a liability. Faced with the reality of a multiracial America, the mainstream Republican Party has mostly been wary of making explicit appeals to white identity, much less white power. The dozens of American right-wing paramilitary groups that started appearing in the 1970s and 1980s – from the Aryan Nations and White Aryan Resistance to the Brüder Schweigen and the Phineas Priesthood – have been treated as aberrant outgrowths by Republican lawmakers: it helps that the hardcore white power movement in America has no more than 25,000 active members. But the type of free-market creed that most mainstream conservatives espouse has long been reconcilable with white nativist priorities. The Canadian historian Quinn Slobodian has recently labelled this apparent ideological mongrel 'xenophobic libertarianism', pointing to the fact that the American right has consistently paired the demand for an absolute right to free movement of capital with ever more biologised criteria for the exclusion of people.

Kathleen Belew's *Bring the War Home* and Kyle Burke's *Revolutionaries for the Right* are complementary accounts of the white power movement, with Belew concentrating on white power at home, and Burke on anti-communist co-ordination abroad. Together, they show how the American movement was nurtured by its foreign experiences and how the global anti-communist movement made use of its services. Almost all white supremacists are anti-communist, though far from all American anti-communists were white supremacists.[1] Yet between them, Belew and Burke have illuminated a set of elective affinities between the partisans of white power and the heirs of free-market anti-communism – affinities that continue to produce explosive results.

The Vietnam War fused white power and anti-communism together. Shared wartime experience during World War Two seems to have reduced racism in the ranks – Truman went on to desegregate the military in 1948 – but Vietnam did the opposite. For the first time in any American war, black troops were over-represented in the ranks. Their presence became a galvanising political issue for the civil rights movement, whose activities in turn became a political issue for many serving white soldiers, who came to view black soldiers as unreliable or worse. As US forces evacuated Saigon, the more conservative among them felt that they had lost one war only to return home to lose another: the civil rights movement had put black rights on the national agenda in a way that imperilled the white future. Riots broke out on bases and aboard ships. At Cam Ranh Bay naval base, black servicemen revolted when white soldiers celebrated the death of Martin Luther King by raising the Confederate flag. The US military leadership fumblingly tried to accommodate the growing number of Black Power activists in Vietnam – military bureaucrats started investigating commanders who did not allow black troops to wear Afros and slave bracelets – but many troops returned from the war committed to a struggle between races.

The Vietnam War had a further pernicious effect: it helped make possible the paramilitary expression of racist sentiment. In the first half of the 20th century the American far right had conducted a campaign of violence against blacks and others, especially in the South. But while they could rely on the support of large sections of society for their cause, their main aim was to instil fear rather than to try to realise fantasies of extermination or separatism. The capacity for more directed violence among white power groups that became evident in the 1980s would not have been possible without their Vietnam training and access to weapons stolen from military bases. Faced with an economic recession exacerbated by the war's vast expenditures, many veterans believed they

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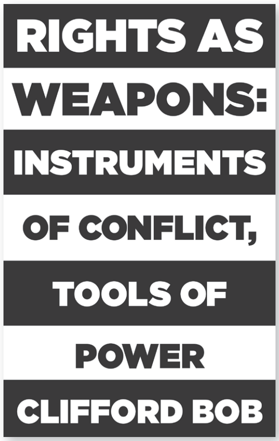
[1] The designations 'white nationalist', 'white separatist' and 'white supremacist' are often conflated – even by proponents of each – but they can refer to different worldviews. A white nationalist demands at a minimum that a nation-state – such as the US or Rhodesia – have as its main purpose the interests of white citizens. In some variations, white nationalism has implicitly genocidal ambitions, but in others, as in South Africa and Rhodesia, non-whites would remain in view, or in separate zones, as inferior citizens. White separatists are typically interested in creating white societies, without much or any state capacity, in new territories. They see themselves as latter-day white settlers. White supremacists believe that the white race is inherently superior to all other races, a supposition often – but not always – shared by white nationalists.



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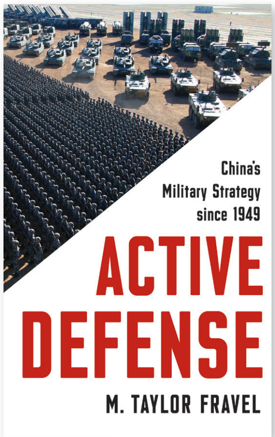

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non-patriarchal capitalism is possible in principle, but that merely hypothetical possibility will not save us now.

**Cinzia Arruzza, Nancy Fraser**
The New School for Social Research, New York

**Tithi Bhattacharya**
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

**Lorna Finlayson** writes: Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya and Nancy Fraser read me as denying the need for feminists to challenge capitalism. In fact, I share their view that 'sexism is deeply entrenched in capitalist society', and that this entrenchment manifests itself not least in the subordination of those forms of labour, such as care work, disproportionately performed by women. I also believe that capitalism is generally bad for humans and for the rest of life on the planet. I therefore oppose it not only as a feminist, but as a human being and living creature.

What seems to have given rise to the misunderstanding is the passage in which I argued that the analysis of the role of women's 'reproductive' labour in capitalist society by socialist and Marxist feminists of the 1970s does not ground, and probably was not intended to ground, the conclusion that capitalism and gender equality are strongly incompatible, in the way that capitalism is incompatible with the overcoming of class exploitation, for example. In retrospect, I think I dwelled too long on this point, and may have created the impression that I look to the possibility of a non-patriarchal capitalism for salvation. In fact, I agree with Arruzza, Bhattacharya and Fraser that this possibility is at present largely hypothetical. And to the question I raise in the essay, of whether a gender-equal form of capitalism would be worth fighting for, my own answer would in any case be 'No'. My point was that this is the really important question, and not the question of whether capitalism could or could not eventually be purged of patriarchy.

In so far as the view I advanced differs from the one taken by Arruzza, Bhattacharya and Fraser in their book, it is perhaps only in our relative measures of optimism and pessimism about the present and future. I did have some pangs of guilt over my seemingly rather dismissive treatment of the Women's Strikes. I did not mean to indicate that I don't support and participate in them – I do – but merely that I have less confidence than some in their prospects, their cohesiveness and strength; naturally, I hope I am wrong about this.

### Casualties

Didier Fassin states that during the recent protests in France 'dozens of peaceful demonstrators, journalists and medics have lost an eye or had a hand ripped off' (*LRB*, 4 July). While numbers vary considerably between sources, on 28 April *Le Monde* reported an announcement from a collective of those who had suffered serious injuries at the hands of the French police that 22 had lost an eye and five had lost a hand.

**John Krige**
Atlanta, Georgia

### When DDT Was Good

Raymond Clayton rightly states that DDT played a valuable role in controlling insects for several years after the Second World War (Letters, 4 July). But by omitting to mention the main reason it is no longer used, he may inadvertently have fed the myth, still actively propagated by libertarians, that by encouraging a ban on DDT Rachel Carson was guilty of causing immense human suffering and loss of life. The real reason DDT is no longer employed is that its very success and consequent overuse gave rise to DDT-resistance in the insect species it was targeting. This effect was already evident in 1962, when Carson wrote *Silent Spring*, in which she provided detailed evidence of the rapid build-up of resistance not only to DDT, but also to the substitutes developed to overcome it.

**Rory Allen**
York

### The Bloodstains Never Dried

Mike Jay's engaging account of the execution ritual of Colonel Despard includes the claim that he was the last felon convicted of high treason who was 'drawn' to his scaffold on a carriage or sled (*LRB*, 18 July). In fact, 14 years after Despard, the three ringleaders of the Pentrich Rebellion (the so-called 'Derbyshire Rising') were drawn around the prison yard at Derby's Nun Green before mounting the scaffold for execution. Like Despard, the men were spared quartering – an act of 'clemency' by the prince regent – but went through all the other parts of the sentence. Their bodies were decapitated with an axe on an executioner's block which is still held by Derby Museums; contemporaries claimed that the bloodstains never dried on the block but such remains are invisible to the modern eye. Like Despard, the heads of the three men, Jeremiah Brandreth, William Turner and Isaac Ludlam Senior, were displayed to the assembled crowd with the exhortation 'Behold the head of a traitor,' but unlike him they were buried in a common, unmarked grave at St Werburgh's churchyard, which is now lost to view (archaeologists may consider exploring the adjacent multi-storey car park, described as 'the safest in England', as their possible resting place). Like Despard, the three men formed part of E.P. Thompson's 'heroic age of radicalism'. However, perhaps the most telling link between events in 1803 and 1817 is the fact that Brandreth, who went to his doom demonstrating the same sort of inscrutability that characterised Despard's conduct on the scaffold, claimed to have been in the crowd that witnessed Despard's execution.

**Richard Gaunt**
University of Nottingham

### Mistake

Owen Bennett-Jones's piece on Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme in the issue of 18 July cited tweets from what we were too late to recognise was a fake account. Apologies: we should have realised. The opening of the piece has been altered in the version that appears online.

**The Editors**

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would never find ordinary employment, which led some to gravitate toward the fringes of American society both left and right.

John Rambo, for his part, did both. In *First Blood* (1982), Sylvester Stallone's character is a 'half-German, half-Indian' veteran, traumatised by the war, who arrives in a small town to pay his respects to a black comrade killed by exposure to Agent Orange. Mistaken for a hippie grafter, he is hounded by the local police and struggles to find work: 'There [in Vietnam] I flew helicopters, drove tanks, had equipment worth millions. Here I can't even work parking!' But in *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985), Rambo turns right, fighting the Vietnam War all over again single-handed. 'Sir,' he asks, 'do we get to win this time?'

'Bring the war home': what began as an anti-war slogan on the American left was appropriated by the extreme right as a proclamation of intent. Louis Beam – one of the major strategists of the paramilitary right and a central figure in Belew's book – was a decorated veteran who had logged more than a thousand hours as a door-gunner on Huey choppers. Back home he promptly joined the Louisiana chapter of the KKK, beginning a career that seamlessly combined white power fanaticism with anti-communism. In 1977, Beam received a grant from the state of Texas to build a simulated Vietnamese rice paddy in swampland near Houston: here, he trained recruits as young as 13 to kill an imaginary enemy. Four years later a promising opportunity presented itself. A number of South Vietnamese refugees had been resettled on the other side of Galveston Bay, and local shrimp farmers didn't want the competition. Beam seized on these fears and gave a speech to a crowd of 250 white farmers. Shortly afterwards a group of them set out and burned two Vietnamese boats, torched crosses on their lawns, and patrolled the bay on a ship equipped with a small cannon and a mannequin hanging from a noose. The campaign of intimidation was ended by the Southern Poverty Law Centre, which won a court order to disband Beam's group and close his training camps.

Crucially, as Belew shows, most American paramilitary groups in the years after Vietnam considered themselves vigilantes. They were taking up the fight themselves because they believed the state was too cowardly or too paralysed to defend itself against Judeo-communist usurpers: the liberal establishment was infiltrated, or naive, or merely weak, unable to contend with a communist agenda that sought to destroy white nativist values and identity. In this conspiracy, blacks often featured as unwitting pawns, but that did not spare them from being targeted. In 1979, nine vehicles carrying Klansmen and neo-Nazis – most of them veterans – drove to the site of a march in Greensboro, North Carolina, where members of the Communist Workers' Party were protesting against the Klan's attempt to sabotage their organising of black textile workers. Five of the protesters were killed in a shoot-out; 12 were wounded. The trial that followed resulted in acquittals for all of the accused, including the local police informants who had guided the assailants to the march.

Then, in 1980, Ronald Reagan arrived. Here was a president who quoted *Rambo*, referred to the Vietnam War as 'the noble cause' and told veterans that they had been 'denied permission to win'. Reagan not only made it clear that he intended to open new fronts in the Cold War, he even appeared to some on the far right to be paying tribute to their tactics. In 1981 a motley group of a dozen mercenaries in Louisiana – Klansmen, neo-Nazis, arms smugglers – were caught by the FBI hatching a hare-brained scheme to topple the government of the Caribbean island of Dominica and restore a puppet dictator through whom they would launder funds to the KKK and prepare a staging ground to conquer Grenada. The press mocked their failure as 'the Bayou of Pigs' (the plan to collaborate with a splinter group of local Rastafarians to take down what was already a right-wing government strained credulity). But as Belew notes, the US invaded Grenada two years later and justified its coup with language remarkably similar to that of the Dominican plotters, who, like Reagan, referred to the island as a 'Soviet-Cuban colony'.

The paramilitary right had a tense but ultimately productive relationship with Reagan. In 1979 the anti-communist Georgia congressman Larry McDonald established the Western Goals Foundation, a privately funded version of the House Un-American Activities Committee, which had been wound up four years earlier. Like HUAC, McDonald's database stored files on thousands of Americans deemed 'subversives', especially those who – it was imagined – might be agitating on behalf of communist movements in Central America. The information the foundation gathered was shared with the FBI and other state agencies, along with the recommendation that the government outsource the work of counter-insurgency to the very same private security firms that were helping to fund the foundation. The increased privatisation of US state violence under the Reagan administration fitted neatly with the president's more general anti-statist rhetoric.

Kyle Burke provides a guide to this dark underground territory of the Cold War. Just as the civil rights movement spanned the globe, so too did the reaction against it. In some regions it was the reaction that proved more enduring. Burke devotes space to the largely neglected World Anti-Communist League, founded in Taiwan in 1966. The league was remarkable for its fusion of Eastern and Western anti-communist funding and expertise. The US branch was organised by a gay ex-socialist from Brooklyn, Marvin Liebman, who had converted to anti-communism after reading Elinor Lipper's Gulag memoir. Having recruited the US congressman Donald Judd and the Catholic priest Daniel Lyons, Liebman travelled to Taipei and helped draft the league's agenda; at the league's 1974 conference William F. Buckley gave the keynote address. And then there was John Singlaub, a retired general and another of the league's main organisers, who thought the US government had fumbled the urban counter-insurgency against the Black Panthers and other radical groups, and that lessons should be learned from the admirable ruthlessness with which Latin American and East Asian authoritarians had crushed their leftist opponents.

In its early years the league stirred with impossible ambitions, such as winning back China for the Kuomintang. By the early 1970s, however, it had narrowed its focus. League affiliates in Chile and Argentina were considered to have helped score major successes – including Pinochet's coup and the Dirty War. But as Burke shows, the league and its offshoots' activities gradually became too radical for most of its American members: too many of those involved, such as the Ukrainian nationalist Yaroslav Stetsko, openly flaunted their fascist pedigrees, while groups such as Tecos in Mexico, which had once been recruited by the Nazis to fight on the US-Mexico border, waged an open campaign of terror against Castro-inspired rebels that included bombings, assassinations and kidnappings, all barely countered by the Mexican security forces.

One of the league's main purposes was to serve as a headhunting and staffing agency for anti-communist operations. Liebman and Singlaub – whom Reagan commended for giving him 'more material for my speeches than anybody else' – became middlemen for right-wing networks that channelled millions of dollars from respectable sources (the beer magnate Joseph Coors was a major donor) to anti-communist causes and counter-insurgency operations around the world. Their largesse was spread wide. Liebman founded the Friends of Rhodesian Independence, which led tours for US government officials and professors, while Singlaub helped fund arms shipments to groups like the Contras in Nicaragua. Special interests sometimes clashed. In Angola, Chevron managed to forge an oil exploration agreement with the communist MPLA guerrillas, just as Singlaub and others – including a young consultant called Paul Manafort – successfully lobbied to get the Reagan administration to back their client, Jonas Savimbi. That the US government would hinder American companies from operating in South Africa, an anti-communist ally, but allow them to work with a communist regime in Angola outraged Singlaub and his colleagues. They soon called for a boycott of Chevron and encouraged Savimbi to attack the company's Angolan properties.

In Rhodesia, the interests of American white power internationalism and American anti-communism dramatically converged. In 1965, Ian Smith's white supremacist regime unilaterally declared Rhodesian independence from Britain, emboldened by support from across the US political establishment, from Dean Acheson to Bob Dole. When Reagan, as a presidential candidate, began flirting with the idea of backing white Rhodesians against Robert Mugabe's growing insurgency, several hundred American mercenaries were already fighting there. Congressional attempts to establish the exact number – let alone stop them – made little progress. Not-so-covert action in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) continued even after Mugabe came to power in 1980. As late as 1999, three Americans from a right-wing church in Indiana were arrested at Harare airport while apparently engaged in a plot to assassinate Mugabe. (His paranoia wasn't always unjustified.)

One lingering puzzle in the history of the paramilitary American right is why, in the early 1980s, a small but significant part of the movement began to rebel against the US state itself. During Reagan's first term a few thousand members of the KKK and various ersatz militias started down a path that would eventually lead to serious clashes with federal authorities. In 1984, the white nationalist Robert Jay Mathews founded Brüder Schweigen, also known as The Order, a group that sought to bring down the US government. After robbing a series of banks to secure funds for the cause, Mathews was killed in a shoot-out with federal agents on Whidbey Island in Washington State, though his co-conspirators were acquitted of sedition by an all-white jury. Even if we grant Belew's point that members of the American right had periodically risen up against the US government, Reagan's election was in part an expression – and a vindication – of an explicitly anti-government creed. So why did elements of the paramilitary right turn against the government during his first term?

Part of the answer seems to be that Reagan was simply too little, too late. The most extreme wing of the radical right was already strongly critical of his appointments, especially of 'internationalists' such as George H.W. Bush, James Baker and Caspar Weinberger. Weinberger was one of the few figures in the administration to show concern about white extremism. Reagan only made matters worse by allying himself with Jewish neoconservatives, who his far-right critics believed controlled the 'Zionist Occupation Government'. The spectre of the ZOG had emerged in mid-1970s American neo-Nazi literature, which updated the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* for a new generation. It was a case of badly dashed expectations: Reagan was surrounding himself with neoconservatives who purported to share the paramilitaries' anti-communist passion while secretly they were scheming to divert American power to their own cabalistic hyper-capitalism. By elevating the identity-erasing power of the purely rational marketplace they were really instituting a form of communism under a different name.

So from the vantage point of white power, the Reagan 'revolution' was anything but. 'We spent fifty years trying to elect a conservative and what have we got?' Robert Weems, a former KKK chaplain, asked at a rally of paramilitaries in 1984. The Reagan administration, Weems declared, doesn't 'take on the international bankers and the Federal Reserve; they think that's part of our glorious capitalist heritage . . . They don't take on the Zionists at all because they are the Chosen and our Number One ally in the Middle East . . . [and they won't] take any stand for the white race and its preservation either.' The extremism of Weems's anti-capitalism marks the point where antisemitic white power and the wider anti-communist movement parted ways on questions of principle. But this should not lead us to dismiss the wide areas of common cause between white power fellow-travellers – whom Belew estimates at around 450,000 Americans – and today's most prominent inheritors of the anti-communist tradition: free-market internationalists, or 'globalists', as their enemies call them. The current US president's appeal to white nativists – the manna raining daily from Twitter – is in this sense hardly contradicted by the fact that he surrounds himself with veterans of Wall Street.

How, then, could white nationalism further its aims in the post-Vietnam era? One possible avenue was through the democratic system. In 1984, the racialist lobbyist Willis Carto founded the Populist Party, which bundled together ideas of racial purity, anti-Jewish conspiracy thinking and concerns about the money supply – in particular any kind of inflationary monetary policy that might benefit the wrong kind of poor people. The party appeared on ballot papers in 14 states, yet Carto's efforts amounted to little more than a publicity vehicle for figures such as the Klansman David Duke and Green Beret vigilante Bo Gritz. In a bout of white power infighting, the neo-Nazi factions of the white power movement hounded Carto as a swindler of right-wing funds, and a 'swarthy' man of questionable racial make-up.

The second seriously considered option was what became known as the Northwest Territorial Imperative, the aim being to consolidate the white race in the already very white Pacific Northwest, where an 'Aryan homeland' would be established. The 'imperative' appears today merely like an extreme form of gerrymandering. After years of infighting and lost lawsuits, its latter-day incarnation is the Northwest Front, which operates an innocuous-looking website that displays real-estate advice for white patriots and sells the Front's tricolour flags: 'The sky is the blue, and the land is the green. The white is for the people in between.'[2]

There was, however, a third option for white power activists, originating with Louis Beam and William Pierce, a.k.a. Andrew Macdonald, the movement's bard. Together they concocted the most influential and enduring of the white power projects. In *Essays of a Klansman*, published in 1983, Beam advocated an all-out race war. The civil rights battles, he argued, had already been lost. But the best response was not to make a bid for a return to segregation: that was far too moderate an ambition. What was called for instead was white national liberation of the entire US mainland. The real culprit was 'communist-inspired racial mixing' and the real enemies were the 'white racial traitors' who had allowed it to happen. Beam wanted

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[2] The main and most effective strategy against white power movements has been the Southern Poverty Law Centre's strategy of bankrupting them with lawsuits.

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to redirect the energies of white power against those elements of the federal government which he believed had betrayed its original constitutional mandate to protect the white race.

Beam's most inspired innovation was his blueprint for 'leaderless resistance', a model of guerrilla warfare, borrowed from communist and anti-colonial partisans, in which small cells operate in concert but without knowing the leaders of the other cells, removing any chance of their informing on one another. The move away from bands of local vigilante groups to anonymous, spread-out terror cells marked a major shift in the white power movement – reflecting an understanding that it was no longer operating merely in local contexts. Beam himself, Belew stresses, was an early and ardent adopter of the internet, making use of codeword-accessible message boards, pen pal programs and online advertising to spread the word of white power.

If Beam was known as the 'general' of the white power movement, Pierce – who had taught physics at Oregon State – was the 'strategist'. In 1978 he published *The Turner Diaries*, a novel that went on to sell half a million copies. The book purports to be the diary of a bygone racist revolutionary who helped to overthrow the US government; the civil war begins when Congress passes the 'Cohen Act', banning the use of all firearms. But a small patriotic 'organisation' eventually prevails against this tyranny. Blacks in the South are bombed into oblivion with nuclear weapons, the Jews experience another Holocaust and women become a servant class. The US dollar is abolished, the calendar is set back to zero and the federal government goes down in flames when a biplane with a sixty-kiloton warhead flies into the Pentagon.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 presented more favourable conditions for Beam and Pierce's fantasies to be put into action. Their views were now echoed in mainstream culture. Pat Robertson's best-selling *The New World Order* (1991) claimed to unveil a vast Jewish-capitalist conspiracy, while Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's pseudoscience blockbuster, *The Bell Curve* (1994), laboured to justify America's racial hierarchy. In 1989, Beam had already put the question to his brethren: 'Now that the threat of communist takeover in the United States is non-existent, who will be the enemy we all agree to hate?' Highly publicised stand-offs in the 1990s seemed to confirm that his faction had been right to double down on the federal government as their enemy.[3] At Ruby Ridge, Idaho in 1992, the Vietnam veteran Randy Weaver and his family exchanged fire with federal forces; Weaver's wife and son were killed in paradigmatic displays of white martyrdom. During the Waco siege of 1993, federal agents stormed the compound of the Branch Davidian religious sect and 76 people were killed. Despite the sect's lack of connection to the white power movement, the siege became a rallying cause for paramilitary groups that feared state overreach.

One television viewer galvanised by the Waco raid was Timothy McVeigh, then 24 years old. A Gulf War veteran who had seen sustained combat and been exposed in training to the same cyanocarbon tear gas used by ATF agents at Waco, McVeigh was an ideal candidate for Beam's 'leaderless resistance'. In 1995, after he bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City – until 9/11 the deadliest terrorist attack in US history – he was tried as a 'lone wolf' killer, despite his connections with wider paramilitary networks, such as the Michigan Militia and the 'Viper' militia of Arizona, and his stash of white power literature (he was a steady consumer of right-wing 'zines'). In his case, the tactics of leaderless resistance paid off. Instead of hunting down the co-conspirators and publicising the networks, information and material that McVeigh had relied on, the media in general presented him as an isolated psychopath.

But McVeigh should interest us perhaps more for the person he became in prison. By the time of his execution, in 2001, he had begun to sound like a contributor to *Counterpunch*. Here he was, cogently, in 1998:

> If Saddam is such a demon, and people are calling for war crimes charges and trials against him and his nation, why do we not hear the same cry for blood directed at those responsible for even greater amounts of 'mass destruction' – like those responsible and involved in dropping bombs on [Iraqi] cities. The truth is, the US has set the standard when it comes to the stockpiling and use of weapons of mass destruction.

The connections between American violence abroad and American violence at home seemed self-evident to McVeigh, but for the majority of Americans even to hint at such connections remains taboo.

Donald Trump has been the most significant beneficiary of the hypocrisy of American foreign policy as described by McVeigh. Before the last presidential election, no other candidate, Bernie Sanders included, was so savage in his reckoning of America's recent foreign ventures. 'A complete waste,' he called the country's longest war. 'Our troops are being killed by the Afghanis we train and we waste billions there.' Nor has any other president in recent memory capitalised more on the humiliation of those who fight in, or traditionally support, America's wars. Winning for the president pertains to more than trade. Whatever the ultimate fortunes of the combined forces of American reaction, the 'leaderless resistance' is likely to continue. It has rarely been clearer that those who cheer on American interventions abroad should be prepared for more ferocious nativist terror at home. □

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[3] It has been argued by many that, since the end of the Cold War, there has been a need – both on the part of the US state and on that of white nationalists – for a new enemy to replace communism. Islam is often proffered as the replacement in both cases, but it has never come close to filling the space left behind by communism. Some nativist terror groups do take Muslims as their primary target. The Council on Islamic-American Relations estimates that nine mosques are targeted each month in the US. Other attractive substitutes have included people on the southern border, as well as China. The last pages of *The Turner Diaries* describe a race war in the Urals, where the Chinese, like the Turks before them, attempt to conquer the West, and this time are only stopped by 'chemical, biological and radiological means, on an enormous scale'.