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The Silent Rise of the Left-Wing Militia

Program on Extremism

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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Program on Extremism at George Washington University
2000 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

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¹ Cover Photo: Members of the Connecticut and Rhode Island chapters of the John Brown Gun Club pose for a photo. Rhode Island John Brown Gun Club (@rijbgc). "Some old and new friends (pictured)." X, October 16, 2022. <https://x.com/rijbgc/status/1581505297327476736/photo/1>

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Executive Summary

In public discourse, the militia label is seldom applied to groups outside of the traditional right-wing, white, and rural stereotype. Furthermore, the definition of Militia Violent Extremism (MVE), as used by federal law enforcement agencies, presents an indirect and vague understanding of what constitutes a militia organization. As a result, some groups that qualify as militias avoid the attention that the label brings by virtue of their left-wing ideology.

This report attempts to remedy the gap of understanding by examining the largely silent rise of various armed left-wing groups that qualify as militias using four case studies: John Brown Gun Clubs/Redneck Revolt, the Socialist Rifle Association, the Not Fucking Around Coalition, and The Huey P. Newton Gun Club/Guerilla Mainframe/Geronimo Tactical.

The author reviewed and analyzed thousands of open-source photos, videos, court documents, social media pages, manifestos, websites, and other sources. The report's key findings are as follows:

- Left-wing militias are largely ignored, mislabeled, or misrepresented by both public and private entities within the counter-extremism apparatus of the United States.
- The rise of the left-wing militia movement correlates with instances of police brutality in the early 2010s and the 2016 election of Donald J. Trump.
- Left-wing militias have a high level of veteran involvement in their organizations. Furthermore, similar to right-wing militias, these organizations specifically recruit from the active-duty military and veteran populations in the United States.
- Left-wing militia-related violence is primarily isolated, low-frequency, and unsanctioned by their larger chapter or national organizations. However, these militia groups, linked individuals and ideological offshoots routinely espouse rhetoric praising left-wing, anti-government, and anti-fascist extremist attacks in a manner akin to the veneration of infamous attacks in right-wing spaces.
- Left-wing militia groups champion various causes, including anti-fascism, anti-capitalism, and Black nationalism. Located throughout the United

States, these groups collaborate with other militias and organizations in the anti-fascist ideological sphere and possess small arms, tactical equipment, and training commensurate with their right-wing counterparts.

- The left-wing militia movement is highly active on multiple social media platforms, including X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Reddit. Left-wing militias possess large online support bases and benefit from little-to-no content moderation by social media companies.

Introduction

Presently, the field of domestic violent extremism (DVE) research broadly focuses on right-wing groups and movements. Practitioners and academics have good reasons for their interest in the far right, including a wealth of data to justify their focus. A report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) on domestic terrorism in the United States found that between 1994 and 2020, someone identified as right-wing perpetrated 57% of all terrorist plots and attacks.² The focus on far-right actors echoes throughout the 2021 National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism (NSCDT), which states: “Among that wide range of animating ideologies, racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (principally those who promote the superiority of the white race) and militia violent extremists are assessed as presenting the most persistent and lethal threats,” with a vast majority of racially- or ethnically-motivated violent extremism coming from the right.³

This excerpt from the NSCDT is noteworthy not because of its mention of Militia Violent Extremists (MVEs) but rather because of traditional right-wing ideological definitions by militias and MVEs according to law enforcement, members of the intelligence community, private institutions, and government officials. This report shows that the potential threat left wing militia groups pose is dynamic, greater than ever, and growing. Unfortunately, the ideological blinders of current trends seem to have affected the language used in the typology of extremist groups in the United States, leading to an institutionalized ignorance of militia movements outside the familiar right-wing schema.

The lack of discourse on this topic also likely influences how we educate the next generation of counter-extremism professionals. A terrorism studies curriculum that, for example, only covers environmental extremism or the left-wing anarchist movement that represented the first wave of modern global terror poses the risk of leaving students ignorant of current

² Jones, Seth, Catrina Doxsee, and Nicholas Harrington. “The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States.” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. June 17, 2020. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states>.

³ “National Strategy for Countering Domestic Extremism.” *The White House, National Security Council*. June 2021: 6. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/National-Strategy-for-Countering-Domestic-Terrorism.pdf>.

developments in the militant left. While useful as a historical background, this trend results in an imperfect picture of the extremist landscape and emerging ideological streams such as anti-fascism.

This report, therefore, intends to serve as an initial investigation and primer on the definition of left-wing militias in the United States, including what caused the militia model to take hold in the left, describing venerated individuals in the left-wing militia space, and concrete examples of their rise and influence in the homeland.

Defining a Militia

The word “militia” has a vastly different meaning depending on the level of government, agency, or context in which it is used. Classically speaking, the U.S. Code defines a militia as

all able-bodied males at least 17 years of age and, except as provided in Section 313 of Title 32, under 45 years of age who are, or who have made a declaration of intention to become, citizens of the United States and of female citizens of the United States who are members of the National Guard.⁴

Tied to the legislative branch’s powers in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution and intended for the defense of the United States during armed conflict, this definition does not accurately describe how MVEs organize or wholly satisfy standards of group classification due to their unprivileged status. Similarly, the U.S. criminal code does not legally define a militia for DVE prosecution or enforcement purposes. Furthermore, the contemporary taboo against legislating on DVE-related issues amid concerns about protecting the constitutionally guaranteed rights of expression, assembly, and firearm ownership makes it unlikely that Congress will remedy this gap in the near-term. Without an organizational definition provided by the federal legislature to determine what qualifies as an unsanctioned, private militia group in the United States, one must instead use the proxy of DVE identification through agencies investigating such cases.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) define DVE as “an individual based and operating primarily within the

⁴ *Militia: Composition and Classes*, 10 U.S. Code (2016), ch. 12 § 246.

territorial jurisdiction of the United States who seeks to further their ideological goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence.”⁵ This definition is significant since the Constitution prohibits federal law enforcement agencies from prosecuting someone solely for possessing a violent or dangerous ideology. Thus, they must focus on an individual’s crimes or steps taken to imminently commit a crime, leading to a definition that emphasizes the individual and their illegal activities over an organizational understanding.

With this constraint, the FBI and DHS similarly do not provide an organizational definition of a militia group in the context of DVE. Instead, they take the ideological approach, defining MVE to mean

the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence in furtherance of an anti-government or anti-authority violent extremist ideology in response to perceived abuses of power by the government, especially in regard to suspected infringements on gun rights; excessive use of force by law enforcement; or bureaucratic incompetence in attending to critical tasks.⁶

Theoretically, this definition is politically neutral, focusing on perceived grievances found in both right- and left-wing spaces. However, MVE organizational identification in practice is almost synonymous with the far-right due to numerous factors, including their publicity, infamous incidents and standoffs, and the likelihood that an MVE attacker or plotter is ideologically right-wing. This trend stands in contrast to the low levels of violence common among left-wing militia members, thereby allowing left-wing militia organizations to exist in the shadows. For example, the FBI’s website on Militia Extremism provides examples solely of right-wing militia activity and ideology.⁷ Similarly, the Southern Poverty Law Center’s (SPLC) list of extremist groups in their militia movement category only includes right-wing groups such as the Oath Keepers or the United Constitutional Patriots.⁸

⁵ “Domestic Terrorism: Definitions, Terminology, and Methodology.” *Federal Bureau of Investigation*. November 2020: 2. <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/fbi-dhs-domestic-terrorism-definitions-terminology-methodology.pdf/view>.

⁶ Federal Bureau of Investigation and US Department of Homeland Security. *Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism*. Federal Bureau of Investigation, May 2021: 5. <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/fbi-dhs-domestic-terrorism-strategic-report.pdf>.

⁷ “Domestic Extremism: Focus on Militia Extremism.” *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, September 22, 2011. <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/domestic-terrorism-focus-on-militia-extremism>.

⁸ “Extremist Files: Groups.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Accessed June 21, 2024. https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/groups?f%5B0%5D=field_ideology%3A16880.

Moreover, groups and individuals can, and often do, exist in multiple, simultaneous streams of extremism, further obscuring a left-wing militia's typology. As such, organizations such as Redneck Revolt and John Brown Gun Clubs frequently escape the "militia" label in favor of terms such as "militant gun clubs," "far-left extremists," or "anarchist violent extremism (AVE)," despite their identity, conduct, and missions aligning with the FBI/DHS definition of MVE. Similarly, attacks that should also fall into the MVE category, such as Willem Van Spronsen's 2019 firebombing, are not correctly attributed, as exhibited in the 2021 Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism report by the FBI and DHS that categorized his attack as "AGAAVE [Anti-Government/Anti-Authority Violent Extremism], specifically AVE" despite his demonstrated membership and involvement in a left-wing militia organization.⁹

In her seminal book on the U.S. militia movement, Amy Cooter provides a sharpened framework for identifying a militia organization, explaining that militias "prioritize the Second Amendment right to bear arms and exercise it joyfully at every opportunity" and that members "believe militias are civic-minded organizations whose fundamental goal is protecting not only themselves but also their broader communities and their nation from threats against the American way of life."¹⁰ Using a combination of Cooter's work and the federal definition of MVE as the lens through which one analyzes militias, it is clear that many armed left-wing groups qualify as such, just as the Michigan Militia or the Ill%ers do.

Left-wing militias such as those below position themselves as anti-government and anti-authority through a diverse set of ideologies. Using their heroes and martyrs, they too believe they stand against a tyrannical government that perpetuates violence against their constituency, either directly, in the case of police brutality, or via tacit support of right-wing groups who they reason are deliberately ignored (or facilitated) by law enforcement. Left-wing militias employ threats of violence, both overt and implied, in a variety of ways through actions such as armed protests and counter-protests, social media posts showcasing membership size or tactical training, or organizational rhetoric. Finally, similar to their right-wing counterparts, left-wing militias

⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism.

¹⁰ Cooter, Amy. *Nostalgia, Nationalism, and the U.S. Militia Movement*. New York: Routledge, 2024: 20.

centralize their movements around armed resistance through the construction of community defense networks and brazen displays of their Second Amendment rights in American cities, towns, and streets.

With this in mind, one can define a left-wing militia as an **ideologically left-of-center organization with a Second Amendment nexus that exhibits the following attributes:**

1. **Organization** in structure, events, training, meetings, demonstrations, or standardized operating procedures;
2. **Uniformity** in ideology, insignia, clothing, or dress;
3. **Hierarchy** in leadership or control of the organization or its propaganda;
4. **Constituency** in a defined group or ideology they aim to protect, and
5. **Identity** in legends, heroes, myths, and martyrs.

This distinction has numerous practical applications. For example, the U.S. Army released updated guidance that allows commanders to impose disciplinary action, including separation from military service, for participation in extremist groups or displaying extremist symbols both on and off duty.¹¹ Correctly identifying these groups as militias would therefore assist the government in its efforts to combat all types of extremism in the armed forces. An organizational understanding of militias also strengthens prosecutions of individuals who hold security clearances for making false statements to the government on their national security questionnaires regarding their affiliation with groups “dedicated to the use of violence or force to overthrow the United States Government.”¹² Finally, an organizational definition allows states with anti-militia statutes to counter illegal militia activity more effectively in their locality.

The Call to Arms

This analysis found the rise of armed left-wing groups correlates with two phenomena over the last fifteen years. Chronologically speaking, the first

¹¹ Beynon, Steve. “Soldiers Now Face Punishment for Sharing, Liking Extremist Content on Social Media Under New Army Policy.” *Military.com Network*, June 26, 2024. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/06/26/soldiers-now-face-punishment-sharing-liking-extremist-content-social-media-under-new-army-policy.html>.

¹² “Questionnaire for National Security Positions.” US Office of Personnel Management. 2010: 118. https://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/sf86-non508.pdf.

precipitant that coincided with the rise of left-wing militias was police brutality. High-profile events such as the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and Philando Castile, among others, all served to stoke fear that citizens could not trust law enforcement for their security concerns, or worse, may have to defend themselves against an attack by police or right-wing extremists. In the words of Huey P. Newton Gun Club co-founder Charles Goodson, “My thoughts was, we got to have something militant, to kind of say if you don’t deal with these picketers, protesters, we got to have some militancy to kind of support another option.”¹³ The wave of Black Americans killed by police officers additionally reignited broader discourse on topics such as class inequality, race relations, and the fear of authoritarianism taking hold in the U.S. government.

The second precipitant for the growth and expansion of the left-wing militia model into the mainstream was the election and administration of former President Donald Trump. In the eyes of many people who later joined a left-wing militia, the first tenure of President Trump emboldened white supremacists and exacerbated socioeconomic class divides, which necessitated the active protection of minority populations, thereby driving a population generally supporting gun control to arm themselves and organize with like-minded individuals. The election also electrified adherents to anti-fascism, which can be broadly defined (as it exists in the United States) as a left-wing ideological stream centered around fighting the rise of perceived fascist movements of the U.S. authoritarian right that are deemed antithetical to left-wing causes. In a November 2016 article posted to the Redneck Revolt website just before the election, the author stated

We can only assume that even if Trump wins, his supporters could reach a fevered pitch and celebratory violence could well be within the realm of possibility... Our goals then are twofold: To build massive community defense networks where working class whites aid in the militant defense of marginalized communities, and to at the same time build a white working class movement that is actively fighting the spread of White Supremacist ideologies in our communities.¹⁴

¹³ Street Reportin W/ Yafeuh Balogun (@yafeuhbaloguntheorganizer7205). “Yafeuh Balogun talks about Why The Huey P. Newton Gun Club Was Started.” YouTube, November 15, 2023: 5:57 to 6:20, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=154kkaaCkzQ>.

¹⁴ “A Call To Arms: Resisting Increased White Supremacist Violence.” Redneck Revolt. November 2, 2016. <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/single-post/2016/11/02/a-call-to-arms-resisting-increased-white-supremacist-violence>.

This growth of left-wing militias mirrors other indicators of firearm ownership proliferation in spaces outside of a traditionally White, right-wing, and male-dominated sphere. In the last few decades, organizations such as the National African American Gun Association,¹⁵ Pink Pistols (an LGBT gun group),¹⁶ and the Latino Rifle Association¹⁷ exploded in membership and influence. Additionally, record numbers of Black people and women bought firearms in the last decade—a significant increase that coincided with the coronavirus pandemic and the 2020 George Floyd protests.¹⁸

The cases below are examples of left-wing militia organizations that appeared and flourished in the last two decades. While this list is not exhaustive, it aims to provide a cross-section of the state of the modern left-wing militia movement, explore the various ideological forms it takes, and analyze its propensities towards violence and other metrics through a deliberate review of selected cases.

John Brown Gun Clubs/Redneck Revolt

Background & Ideology

John Brown Gun Clubs (JBGCs) trace their roots to the first chapter founded in Kansas in the early 2000s.¹⁹ JBGC is an anti-police, anti-capitalist, anti-fascist, and ideologically broad left-wing militia network dedicated to building resilient communities of people through armed resistance, education, and training. According to the Wisconsin chapter's website, their mission is to

empower the proletariat to resist terrorization by reactionary forces through the advocacy of arming and organizing these communities and conducting community defense efforts...empower the proletariat by establishing mutual aid programs meant to address insufficient, inefficient, and conditional government aid, allowing communities to

¹⁵ "Welcome to the National African American Gun Association." *National African American Gun Association*. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://naaga.co/>.

¹⁶ "The Pink Pistols." *The Pink Pistols*. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://www.pinkpistols.org/>.

¹⁷ "Latino Rifle Association." *Latino Rifle Association*. Accessed June 21, 2024. <http://latinorifleassociation.org/>.

¹⁸ Aning, Agya K. "A New Face of American Gun Ownership." *The Trace*, February 28, 2022. <https://www.thetrace.org/2022/02/black-women-gun-clubs-naaga-shooting-range-training/>.

¹⁹ Crosbie, Jack. "Anti-Fascist. Armed to the Teeth." *Rolling Stone*, May 18, 2023. <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/john-brown-gun-club-armed-anti-fascist-1234733200/>.

more sufficiently, efficiently, and unconditionally provide for themselves, discarding the concept of “conditional victimhood,” especially during times of crisis...[and] empower the proletariat by uniting them against the bourgeoisie through class consciousness by means of educational, counter-misinformation, and advocacy campaigns for important social issues.²⁰

Similarly, the Puget Sound JBGC's archived website states that its chapter believes in “active resistance to the corrosive and destructive effects of white supremacy, sexism, bigotry, and economic exploitation.”²¹ Although their nexus decisively centers around firearm ownership, JBGCs advertise their involvement in numerous other activities, such as community outreach and clothing drives, in a concerted effort to soften their image and attract grassroots support.

The group's namesake, John Brown, was an American abolitionist who sought numerous ways to fight against the injustice of slavery in the early 1800s.²² Brown's first abolitionist actions included helping enslaved people on the Underground Railroad and acquiring farmland to resettle those who escaped to New York.²³ However, the rising violence in the 1850s following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act led Brown to violent mobilization for his cause. On October 16, 1859, he attempted to incite a slave revolt by capturing the U.S. arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, but was captured and hanged for treason.²⁴ First hailed as a hero by his abolitionist contemporaries in the leadup to the American Civil War, Brown again found fame with left-wing militia movements such as the JBGC, who use his name to invoke feelings of resistance towards fascism and American capitalism.

²⁰ “Intro and Mission.” *Wisconsin John Brown Gun Club*. Accessed June 19, 2024, <https://www.john-brown-gun-club.org/about>.

²¹ “Welcome to the Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club.” *Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club*. November 18, 2022. <https://web.archive.org/web/20221118220614/https://psjbgc.org/>.

²² “John Brown.” *National Park Service*. Accessed June 6, 2024. <https://www.nps.gov/people/john-brown.htm>.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Figure 1

Members of the Rhode Island JBGC posing with a Trump sign and a “Resist Marxism” banner likely taken from an encounter with Right-Wing protesters [25]



An ideological offshoot of the JBGC model,²⁶ Redneck Revolt is a self-described “anti-racist, anti-fascist community defense formation” that seeks, among other goals, to reclaim the word “redneck” and identify it with the class struggle of poor people in rural areas.²⁷ More specifically, the organizing principles of Redneck Revolt include standing against white supremacy, capitalism, and the patriarchy, organized community defense based on economic class, and conducting activities in public to build community ties.²⁸ Redneck Revolt invokes accelerationist ideas of revolution and civil war on its website, stating that the organization “believes in using any and all means at our disposal to gain our freedom and true liberty” and that it “believes that there will have to be a complete restructuring of society to provide for the survival and liberty of all people.”²⁹ Redneck Revolt frequently uses imagery and legends related to labor uprisings in the late 19th and early 20th century on merchandise and social media.

²⁵ “The Rhode Island John Brown Gun Club.” *The Rhode Island John Brown Gun Club*. Accessed June 26, 2024. <http://rijohnbrowngun.club/>.

²⁶ Saixue Watt, Cecilia. “Redneck Revolt: the armed leftwing group that wants to stamp out fascism.” *The Guardian*, July 11, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jul/11/redneck-revolt-guns-anti-racism-fascism-far-left>.

²⁷ “About.” Redneck Revolt. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/about>.

²⁸ “Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles.” Redneck Revolt. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/principles>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Symbology, Organization, & Recruitment

Official members and supporters of these groups sport various symbols and insignia to identify themselves at events nationwide. Primarily, JBGC chapter members wear militia and left-wing morale patches on their equipment and plate carriers such as chapter logo patches depicting John Brown,³⁰ LGBT flags with the words “defend equality,”³¹ anarcho-collectivist/anarcho-syndicalist flags,³² or slogans such as “I am an anti-fascist.”³³ Although more traditionally associated with Redneck Revolt, both groups also commonly wear red bandanas in a nod to coal miner uprisings such as the Battle of Blair Mountain.³⁴ At events, these bandanas conceal the faces of militia members and serve as a friendly force identifier.

Figure 2

Members of the Puget Sound JBGC at a 2018 “Say No to Misogyny, White Supremacy, and Antisemitism” rally. [35]



³⁰ Bay State John Brown Gun Club (@baystatejbgc). "Through becoming one with the rain, we have embraced the rainbow. Yesterday, we attended Small Town Pride that gained significant backlash to enjoy the festivities. We would like to thank all attendees that gave us a warm welcome. BSJBGC x @ctjbgc x @rijbgc." X, June 26, 2023. <https://x.com/baystatejbgc/status/1672970399745703937/photo/1>.

³¹ "Connecticut John Brown Gun Club." Connecticut John Brown Gun Club. Accessed June 26, 2024. <https://www.ctjbgc.org/>.

³² "Through becoming one with the rain, we have embraced the rainbow..." X.

³³ Pein, Corey Pein. "Antifa Is Arming Itself Against a Trump Crackdown." *The New Republic*, July 2, 2019. Accessed June 26, 2024. <https://newrepublic.com/article/154110/antifa-arming-trump-crackdown>.

³⁴ "The Battle of Blair Mountain," National Park Service. May 26, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/the-battle-of-blair-mountain.htm>.

³⁵ Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club (@PugetSoundJBGC), "Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club would like to thank the organizers of the "Say No to Misogyny, White Supremacy, and Antisemitism" rally yesterday. We are always glad to help out in our community and are happy we can be of service in lifting up voices of progress," X, December 2, 2018. <https://x.com/PugetSoundJBGC/status/1069454428493606913/photo/3>.

JBGC chapters follow a market model of organization. The militia is entirely decentralized, as no national organization is responsible for chapter formation or membership. Therefore, chapters operate independently, display diverse ideologies, and support causes that may not be generalizable to the movement at large. Individual chapters have indirectly addressed current and former military members, including through a 2023 post on X from the Oklahoma JBGC that stated, “If you, a veteran, understand NOW that you were manipulated and used by the US war machine, and you make an active effort to undo that and work through that, you’re welcome here and in our space.”³⁶ Redneck Revolt displays organization closer to a hub-spoke model, whereby chapters operate with a degree of autonomy but are influenced in some way by the larger organization. The main Redneck Revolt website encapsulates this model based on the requirement for chapters to be “vetted,” which allegedly takes a couple of months to complete, although it remains unclear what this process entails.³⁷ Nonetheless, there is no definitive way to determine if a chapter is “officially” sanctioned. Similar to JBGCs, Redneck Revolt targeted members of the military at least once for recruitment via a 2017 article titled “Perspective from a Veteran” addressed to both active and former members of the U.S. armed forces on reasons to join the organization.³⁸

As with many decentralized movements, exact membership figures are difficult to ascertain. A review of photos of demonstrations, training events, and outreach programs shows that individual chapters have up to a couple of dozen members in attendance at any one time. A search of Redneck Revolt chapter pages shows chapters in Watertown/Fort Drum, New York,³⁹ Ohio,⁴⁰ New York City/Long Island,⁴¹ Western Massachusetts,⁴² Lake

³⁶ Oklahoma John Brown Gun Club (@JohnBrownOK), “If you, a veteran, understand NOW that you were manipulated and used by the US war machine, and you make an active effort to undo that and work through that,” X, February 25, 2023. <https://x.com/JohnBrownOK/status/1629548412055040001>.

³⁷ “Get In Touch.” Redneck Revolt. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/contact>.

³⁸ “Perspective from a Veteran.” Redneck Revolt. May 5, 2017. <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/single-post/2017/05/08/perspective-from-a-veteran>.

³⁹ NorthCountryRR (@northcountryRR), X, January 2018. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://x.com/northcountryRR>.

⁴⁰ RedneckRevolt CMH (@SciotoRdnckRvlt), X, April 2017. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://x.com/SciotoRdnckRvlt>.

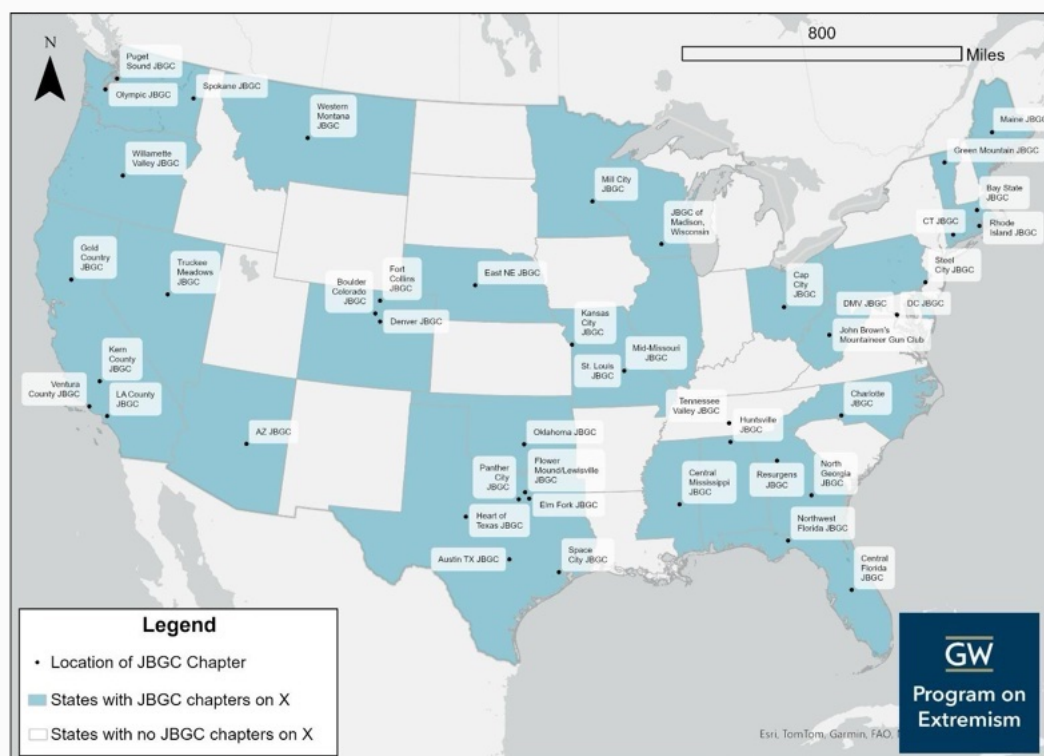
⁴¹ Redneck Revolt NYC&LI (@RRNYCLI), X, August 2020. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://x.com/RRNYCLI>.

⁴² Western Mass Redneck Revolt (@WesternMassRR), X, April 2018. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://x.com/WesternMassRR>.

Ontario,⁴³ and San Diego,⁴⁴. However, all these pages have been inactive or devoid of content since 2019. A review of X and Facebook accounts associated with the JBGC shows chapter groups in numerous states, such as Texas, Washington, and Connecticut. However, this is an imprecise measure of dispersion. Furthermore, it is likely that chapters primarily organize and communicate on secure messaging apps such as Signal, Telegram, or WhatsApp.

Figure 3

Map of John Brown Gun Club Chapters accounts on X



Activities

JBGC and Redneck Revolt members have appeared at numerous protests, counter-protests, and other public events since their creation. For example, on August 22, 2017, members of the (then Redneck Revolt affiliated) Phoenix JBGC showed up to a counter-protest outside of a Donald Trump

⁴³ Lake Ontario Redneck Revolt (@LakeRevolt), X, January 2019. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://x.com/LakeRevolt>.

⁴⁴ San Diego RR (@SDRedneckRevolt), X, October 2017. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://x.com/SDRedneckRevolt>.

rally to “provide a strong deterrent and counter to the armed members of reactionary formations present on the ground, which included white supremacists and Nazi Street formations.”⁴⁵ In 2018, the Puget Sound JBGC counter-protested a right-wing rally in Seattle along with other organizations, such as Organized Workers for Labor Solidarity.⁴⁶ In 2023, the Connecticut chapter of the JBGC claimed they provided protection for the Boston Anarchist Book Fair.⁴⁷ The Rhode Island JBGC also claimed to have provided community defense along with the Connecticut JBGC for a Rhode Island Pride festival in June of 2024.⁴⁸ JBGC members collaborated with the Huey P. Newton Gun Club at least once, as shown in the undated picture below.

Figure 4

Members of the Connecticut JBGC, Huey P. Newton Gun Club, and the New Black Panther Party pose for a photo at an event. [49]



⁴⁵ “Reportback: Phoenix Trump Rally.” Redneck Revolt. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/single-post/reportback-phoenix-trump-rally>.

⁴⁶ Bill Morlin, “Hatewatch: Patriot Prayer Rally in Seattle: Plenty of Guns and Shouting.” Southern Poverty Law Center. August 20, 2018. <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/08/20/patriot-prayer-rally-seattle-plenty-guns-and-shouting>.

⁴⁷ CT John Brown Gun Club (@ctjbgc). “Multiple chapters of the JBGC came out to defend the Boston Anarchist Book Fair this weekend. Local fascists are cowards though, so we were bored and hanging out on the jungle gym. Chicken shits.” X, November 12, 2023. <https://mobile.x.com/ctjbgc/status/1723804616914059266/photo/1>.

⁴⁸ Rhode Island John Brown Gun Club (@rijbgc). “Huge thanks to @WoonsocketPride for having us out to do community defense today! And also thank you to our comrades from @ctjbgc for the extra eyes and hands! We protect us!” X, June 9, 2024. <https://x.com/rijbgc/status/1799959371440431119/photo/1>.

⁴⁹ CT John Brown Gun Club (@ctjbgc). “No one has been held accountable for the nooses at the @amazon construction site in Windsor yet. If they won't keep ppl safe, the JBGC, NBPP, and HPNGC will. #communitydefense.” X, June 13, 2021. <https://x.com/ctjbgc/status/1404146288820690947/photo/1>.

Members of JBGCs and Redneck Revolt largely do not involve themselves in criminal acts outside of protest-related incidents. For example, in 2017, Redneck Revolt member Dwayne Dixon was arrested by the Durham County Sheriff's office after he brought an AK-style rifle to a Durham, North Carolina, counterprotest against the KKK.⁵⁰ Dixon was subsequently charged with "having a weapon at a public assembly or rally and going armed to the terror of people," both misdemeanors.⁵¹ Ultimately, Dixon and others' legal proceedings resulted in acquittals, and Dixon successfully sued Durham County for violating his constitutional rights.⁵² Dixon's participation in Redneck Revolt and his attendance at demonstrations have made him a target on the right, including being tagged by the Turning Point USA website Professor Watchlist as Antifa, Anti-Law Enforcement, Violence, Racial Ideology, Socialism, Anti-1st Amendment, and Protests.⁵³

Another example of JBGC crime is the 2023 arrest of three members of the Elm Fork JBGC after one member allegedly pepper-sprayed a protester at a drag-queen show in Fort Worth, Texas.⁵⁴ However, there is one outlier in the pattern of relatively low violence in JBGC chapters. Willem Van Spronsen, a founding member of the Puget Sound JBGC, infamously firebombed an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facility in Tacoma, Washington, in 2019.⁵⁵ Van Spronsen is analyzed in depth later in this report.

Current Status

JBGC chapters generate significant online support through their public-facing social media accounts. Their online presence and recent event sightings

⁵⁰ "Solidarity with Dwayne Dixon." *Redneck Revolt*. February 8, 2018. <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/single-post/2018/02/08/solidarity-with-dwayne-dixon>.

⁵¹ Bridges, Virginia. "Durham man charged, others sought for bringing semi-automatic rifle, other weapons to rumored KKK rally." *The Herald Sun*, September 18, 2017. <https://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article169819572.html>.

⁵² Bridges, Virginia. "Why Durham County will pay this anti-white-supremacist protester \$3,000." *The Herald Sun*, November 22, 2018. <https://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/article222036975.html>.

⁵³ "Professor Profile: Dwayne Dixon." *Professor Watchlist*. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://www.professorwatchlist.org/professor/dwayne-dixon>.

⁵⁴ Hartley, James. "Police: Video shows counterprotesters use pepper spray, fight officers at Fort Worth drag show." *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, April 25, 2023. <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/fort-worth/article274673546.html>.

⁵⁵ Allam, Hannah and Jim Urquhart. "'I am Antifa': One Activist's Violent Death Became a Symbol For the Radical Right and Left." *National Public Radio*, July 23, 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/23/893533916/i-am-antifa-one-activist-s-violent-death-became-a-symbol-for-the-right-and-left>.

indicate that JBGC chapters remain active nationwide. At present, Redneck Revolt chapters seem to be largely defunct. This lack of activity is potentially the result of allegations from JBGC chapters of inappropriate behavior in 2017 by Redneck Revolt co-founder Dave Strano,⁵⁶ as supported by a blog dedicated to discussions of what happened,⁵⁷ and Reddit comments on the unofficial Socialist Rifle Association subreddit.⁵⁸ It is likely that many chapters and members of Redneck Revolt evolved into standalone JBGC-branded chapters or formed splinter groups in the wake of this organizational fallout.

Socialist Rifle Association

Background & Ideology

The Socialist Rifle Association (SRA) began as a disorganized collection of groups operating under the same name until a 2018 consolidation founded the national organization as a 501(c)(4) not-for-profit corporation in Kansas.⁵⁹ According to its national committee bylaws, the purpose of the SRA is to

recognize all aspects of self and community defense to include topics such as firearms, disaster relief, medicine, logistics, agriculture, general survival skills, and other pursuits necessary to unify and strengthen communities against the hardships of life under capitalism... We maintain the necessity of and work towards the implementation of an anti-capitalist platform for protecting and promoting the inherent human right to defend oneself and one's community.⁶⁰

In the words of Faye Ecklar, co-founder and former Vice President of the SRA, "If you support gun control on civilians, you are supporting the status quo."⁶¹ On the national level, the SRA aligns itself as an educational organization, which includes the production and distribution of firearm, defense,

⁵⁶ "Accountability Requires Action." *Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club*. April 21, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20211026115645/https://psjbgc.org/blog/accountability-requires-action/>.

⁵⁷ "Abusing and Abandoning Community: Strano Style." *Abusing and Abandoning Community: Strano Style (blog)*, December 10, 2017. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://davestrano.noblogs.org/responses/>.

⁵⁸ r/SocialistRA (@SocialistRA), "What happened to Redneck Revolt?" *Reddit*, September 13, 2021. https://www.reddit.com/r/SocialistRA/comments/pnsgek/what_happened_to_redneck_revolt/.

⁵⁹ "About." *Socialist Rifle Association*. Accessed June 23, 2024, <https://socialistra.org/about/>.

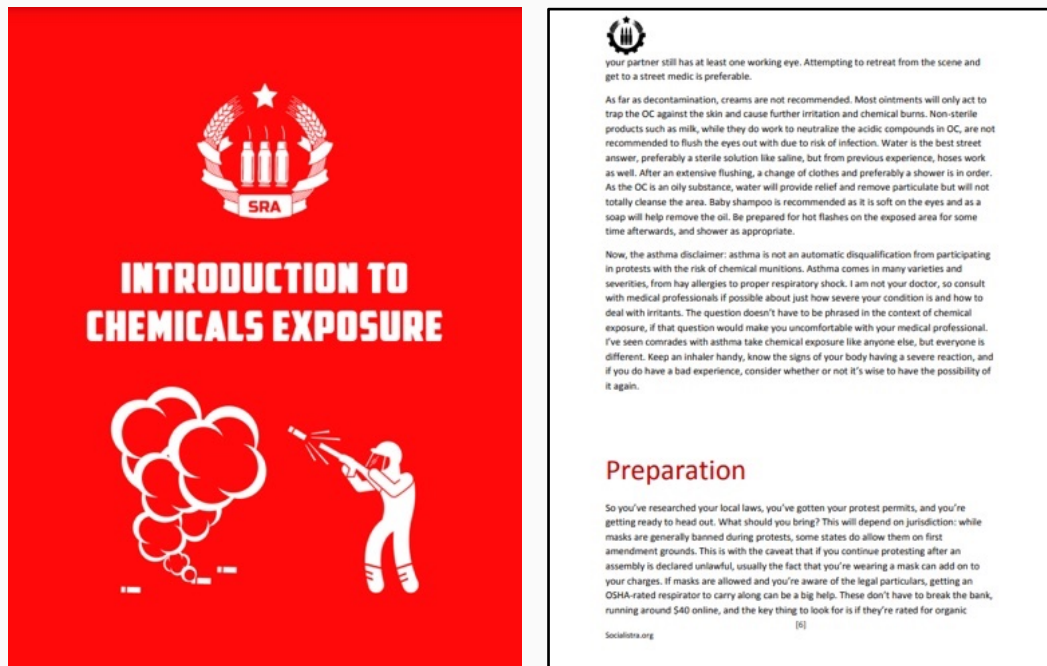
⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Softboy Social Club (@SSC), "Should The Left Be Armed? Interview w/ The Socialist Rifle Association," *YouTube*, August 20, 2020: 6:37 to 6:43. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9TeSNj8GGc>.

and ideological guides with titles such as, “Rifles For Rookies: A Firearm Manual For the Completely New,” “Introduction to Chemicals Exposure,” and “Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice.”⁶²

Figure 5

Pages from the SRA’s “Introduction to Chemicals Exposure” manual. ^[63]



The SRA adamantly denies it is a militia. The first FAQ on the national website asks, “Are you a militia?” They replied, “We are not a militia. As a social welfare organization, we work to educate and advocate.”⁶⁴ The answer further argues because they forbid armed protests as an organization, they fall outside of the boundaries of what constitutes a militia.⁶⁵ Furthermore, members of the unofficial SRA subreddit, r/SocialistRA, echo this sentiment.⁶⁶ However, as explained above, the lack of demonstrating under an organizational banner does not preclude an organization from being defined

⁶² “Defense Education.” *Socialist Rifle Association*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://socialistra.org/edu/>.

⁶³ “Introduction to Chemicals Exposure.” *Socialistra.org*. Accessed July 17, 2024. https://srastatic.nyc3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/web/dl/edu/Intro_to_Chemicals_Exposure.pdf.

⁶⁴ “About,” *Socialist Rifle Association*.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ r/SocialistRA (@r/SocialistRA), “We are NOT a militia,” *Reddit*, November 19, 2021. https://www.reddit.com/r/SocialistRA/comments/qxnqel/we_are_not_a_militia/.

as a militia, and patterns of training, organization, hierarchy, and uniformity of many local chapters of the SRA fall neatly within the definition of constituting a militia. Moreover, the education, training, and socialization provided by SRA chapters enable members or groups of members from these chapters to attend protests, thereby de-facto operating as a chapter at an event without jeopardizing their national membership.

Figure 6

Members of the Upstate New York SRA at a winter range day. ^[67]



Symbology, Organization, & Recruitment

SRA chapters design their logos using a mix of communist symbolism and local flair. For example, the logo of the Maine chapter of the SRA is a lighthouse surrounded by a wreath of lobster claws.⁶⁸ Alternatively, the logo of the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania chapter of the SRA is a view of the Pittsburgh skyline surrounded by a wreath of wheat.⁶⁹ These logos are used for flags (as seen above), patches on tactical gear, and other merchandise for sale online on SRA websites.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Smedley Butlers Ghost (@u/RedFlag1945), "Winter Range Day," Reddit, December 18, 2023. https://www.reddit.com/r/SocialistRA/comments/18ld6jk/winter_range_day/.

⁶⁸ Maine SRA (@maine_sra), X. Accessed June 26, 2024. https://x.com/maine_sra/photo.

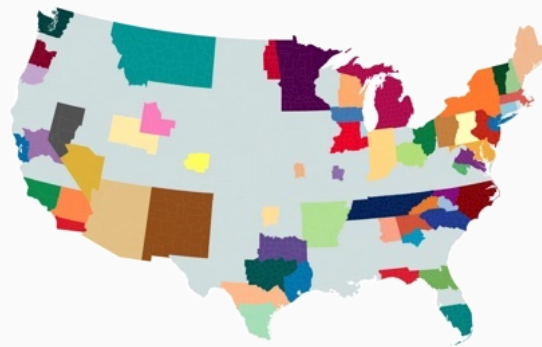
⁶⁹ "Home." Pittsburgh PA Chapter of the Socialist Rifle Association. Accessed June 26, 2024. <https://pgh-sra.org/>.

⁷⁰ "Shop: All products." Socialist Rifle Association Merch. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://shop.socialistra.org/collections/all>.

The SRA follows the hub-spoke organization model, whereby a national assembly and organizing committee oversees chapters throughout the United States. However, chapters retain some autonomy, including the ability to create specific participation requirements and representation in the National Assembly that increases based on chapter size.⁷¹ Per the national website, at least one member of the national organization is a veteran.⁷² The SRA website also states that the organization has “nearly six thousand members and over sixty ratified chapters nationwide with members in every state & Puerto Rico.”⁷³ Prospective members first fill out a membership application on the SRA main website, pay a membership dues fee of \$36 a year, and list their locality for placement in the closest chapter to them.⁷⁴ A review of social media found a handful of references to veterans and currently serving members of the military, including a 2023 post from the Kentucky Socialist Rifle Association discussing “the usefulness of military service” in the context of skills learned relevant to their organization⁷⁵ and a 2018 post from the Ozarks Region Socialist Rifle Association linking “Advice for our current military peeps.”⁷⁶

Figure 7

Map of alleged SRA chapters (produced by a leader of the Upstate NY SRA) in the United States as of January 26, 2024. [77]



⁷¹ “Bylaws.” Socialist Rifle Association. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://socialistra.org/bylaws/>.

⁷² “Leadership.” Socialist Rifle Association. Accessed June 26, 2024. <https://socialistra.org/leadership/>.

⁷³ “About,” Socialist Rifle Association.

⁷⁴ “Annual Membership.” Socialist Rifle Association. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://app.joinit.com/o/socialist-rifle-association/M5FnhYzbcZRPesXAg>.

⁷⁵ Kentucky Socialist Rifle Association (@KentuckySRA), “A controversial idea within leftist 2A circles was the usefulness of military service...,” Facebook, July 15, 2023. <https://www.facebook.com/KentuckySRA/posts/pfbid02f5AuYcMS9tPPErVLe4N8Xbnp3pJEXXvoigmF2Ed4ip6vvik3WGNyEobvn4VjaD9XL>.

⁷⁶ SRA – Ozarks Region Socialist Rifle Association (@SRAOzarks), “Advice for our current military peeps,” Facebook, October 31, 2018. <https://www.facebook.com/SRAOzarks/posts/pfbid0CeX2ApwagnBvexyfyvoVJ2UPivrf14k1v8MFUtSZRaS89pw5GpC4SKrsXsEDbWdKL>.

⁷⁷ r/SocialistRA (@r/SocialistRA), “Map of current SRA chapters,” Reddit, January 26, 2024. https://www.reddit.com/r/SocialistRA/comments/1abu2h5/map_of_current_sra_chapters/.

Activities

Activities of SRA chapters are exceedingly diverse. For example, the Puget Sound SRA advertises monthly range days on its website for members to “learn to shoot or refine your technique as part of a welcoming group.”⁷⁸ The chapter additionally claims to host medical and radio training.⁷⁹ In 2019, members of the Michigan SRA ran a booth at a 2nd Amendment march, giving out gun locks and ideological materials.⁸⁰ In 2020, the Tulsa SRA ran a disaster relief drive for victims of Hurricane Sally, collecting items such as baby supplies and food.⁸¹ In February 2024, members of the Upstate New York chapter of the SRA attended a pro-Palestine rally at Binghamton University.⁸² Their national organization runs a YouTube channel with training videos on marksmanship, basic firearms handling, shooting from cover and concealment, and moving and shooting.⁸³

There is also evidence of cooperation between SRA chapters. In 2022, the Pittsburgh SRA, Michigan SRA, Upstate New York SRA, and Philadelphia SRA participated in a multi-chapter training weekend called “Rustbelt Rendezvous.”⁸⁴ In 2023, organizers hosted the event for a second time. A Facebook post of the event from the Upstate New York chapter of the SRA shows pictures of medical training, members clad in tactical gear (including plate carriers, chest

⁷⁸ “Puget Sound SRA.” *Puget Sound Socialist Rifle Association*. Accessed June 23, 2024, <https://www.pugetsoundsra.org/>.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Michigan Socialist Rifle Association (@rifle_mi), “MI SRA made its presence felt at this year’s 2A March. We spent our time educating attendees on the leftist case for self defense – arming the working class and the marginalized against oppression. Don’t be fooled: we are not liberals,” X, September 14, 2019. https://x.com/rifle_mi/status/1172759228324429825/photo/2.

⁸¹ Socialist Rifle Association – Tulsa (@SocialistRATulsa), “Our chapter is gearing back up for another trip to help our Southern neighbors, this time for #HurricaneSally,” Facebook, September 17, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/SocialistRATulsa/posts/pfbid02apnotkCAsgqLzWdEAUArBiyN129wY2jf71k9H95ngzPUFBUDiP2ZWcFubAdUa8YPI>.

⁸² Socialist Rifle Association of Upstate New York (@upstatenysra), “Members of our chapter braved the freezing cold to with students of Binghamton University calling for an end to the bombing of Palestinians and the crimes of Israel,” Facebook, February 16, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/upstatenysra/posts/pfbid0sWB40xtsxwtkh96gwgkTTKySHx2GG6MZw6i366bzpPfifBxcjJgQ5EFmW4kgJbdTL>.

⁸³ Socialist Rifle Association (@SocialistRA), YouTube. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/@SocialistRA/videos>.

⁸⁴ Pittsburgh SRA (@PittsburghSRA), “Welcome to the Rustbelt Rendezvous. We along with @rifle_mi, @sra_upstateny & @phillysra spent a soggy weekend training, building solidarity and generally having a great time! Special thanks to @bayareasra and specifically one of their trainers who came out. It was a blast!” X, May 11, 2022. <https://x.com/PittsburghSRA/status/1524380142604275712>.

rigs, and battle belts), and stress shooting courses.⁸⁵ According to this post, over 50 members from seven chapters were in attendance.⁸⁶

Figure 8

SRA members at the 2023 Rustbelt Rendezvous. ^[87]



⁸⁵ Socialist Rifle Association of Upstate New York (@upstatenysra), "Our chapter event sent a contingent out of state to partake in the second Rustbelt Rendezvous," Facebook, June 20, 2023. <https://www.facebook.com/upstatenysra/posts/pfbid02EjxMTrYu3dyX9S9grFWPv3NqpGN2bFjZ3bmYqymWhG71pwXkeFNqBCU5wSnn5mjLI>.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Socialist Rifle Association of Upstate New York (@upstatenysra), "Our chapter sent a contingent out of state to partake in the second Rustbelt Rendezvous. We all had a great time working and training with well over 50 other members from 7 chapters. Next time we'll make sure to bring even more members! As well, thank you to the folks at OffColorDecals for supplying us with our new chapter patches, all produced by union labor. Visit their site here and get some swag [link]," Facebook, June 20, 2023. <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=579935160994316&set=pb.100069335114031.-2207520000>.

Current Status

A review of open-source court documents and news sources found no specific mention of SRA members arrested on charges related to their activities as an organization. Following the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, the SRA, alongside other militias, were named in a lawsuit by Georgetown Law's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection that alleged the groups "organized as 'military' units within the meaning of Article I, Section 13 of the Virginia Constitution."⁸⁸ In 2018, nearly all defendants of the suit, including representatives of Redneck Revolt and their John Brown Gun Club affiliates, signed consent decrees enjoining the militias "from returning to Charlottesville, Virginia, as part of a unit of two or more persons acting in concert while armed with a firearm, weapon, shield, or any item whose purpose is to inflict bodily harm, at any demonstration, rally, protest, or march."⁸⁹ However, no consent decree could be obtained from the SRA. In 2019, the national organization of the SRA claimed that the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), a firearms industry trade association and lobbying group, revoked their membership due to their ideology not aligning with free market capitalism, generating a large anti-NSSF response on social media.⁹⁰ SRA chapters continue to grow in size and number, with a particularly significant presence at left-wing events and social media.

Not Fucking Around Coalition

Background & Ideology

John Fitzgerald Johnson, also known as Grandmaster Jay, founded the Not Fucking Around Coalition (NFAC) in 2017.⁹¹ The NFAC is a Black militia centered around the expansion of firearm ownership, training, and knowledge

⁸⁸ Complaint for Injunctive and Declaratory Relief, *City of Charlottesville et al v. Pennsylvania Light Foot Militia et al.*, (17000560-00, Charlottesville Cir. 2017). <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/icap/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2018/02/lawsuit-charlottesville.pdf>.

⁸⁹ Consent Decrees and Default Judgements, *City of Charlottesville et al v. Pennsylvania Light Food Militia et al.*, (17000560-00, Charlottesville Cir. 2018). <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/icap/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2018/08/All-Consent-Decrees-and-Default-Judgments-without-photos.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Socialist Rifle Association (@SocialistRifle), "NSSF REVOKES SRA MEMBERSHIP," Facebook, July 23, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/SocialistRifle/posts/nssf-revokes-sra-membershipstatement-from-the-sra-central-committeeon-friday-jul/857774674600191/?_rdr.

⁹¹ Chavez, Nicole, Ryan Young, and Angela Barajas. "An all-Black group is arming itself and demanding change. They are the NFAC." CNN, October 25, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/25/us/nfac-black-armed-group/index.html>.

in the Black community to achieve Black liberation and protect community members from racial violence.⁹² In a 2020 interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network posted to Johnson's personal YouTube account, Johnson described the formation of the NFAC as "inevitable" and "out of necessity, based on the environment and the pressures exacted on the Black population by the United States of America and all participating countries that have a Black population around the world."⁹³

Figure 9

John Fitzgerald Johnson (center), founder of the Not Fucking Around Coalition. ^[94]



The ideology of the NFAC is not immediately apparent. According to a 2021 interview with Johnson by journalist Graeme Wood, one goal of the NFAC is the establishment of a "racially pure country called the United Black Kemetic Nation" (UBKN).⁹⁵ Additional references to the UBKN are found on the official

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ The Official Grand Master Jay (@JayBlazeAkaGrandmasterJay), "CBN Interview," November 6, 2020, YouTube, November 6, 2020: 12:34 to 15:30. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxLY-59-f2k>.

⁹⁴ The Official Grand Master Jay (@TheOfficialGra30), "#NewProfilePic," X, September 8, 2020. <https://x.com/TheOfficialGra3/status/1303407795757371392>.

⁹⁵ Wood, Graeme. "A Black Army Rises to Fight the Racist Right." *The Atlantic*, April 2, 2021. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/04/the-many-lives-of-grandmaster-jay/618408/>.

NFAC website,⁹⁶ an official NFAC merchandise page,⁹⁷ and at least twenty-three times in comments left by donors to Johnson's legal defense fund.⁹⁸ Militia members are generally not seen wearing personal ideological affiliations on their clothing, such as patches or flags, during NFAC events. Nonetheless, photographs show Johnson and some members with insignia supporting various left-wing causes, including police accountability,⁹⁹ Pan-Africanism,¹⁰⁰ Black separatism,¹⁰¹ and Black Panther Party imagery.¹⁰²

A U.S. Army veteran, Johnson enlisted in the Virginia National Guard in 1989 before transferring to the Active Duty Army in 1990.¹⁰³ In 1999, Johnson left Active Duty with an Other than Honorable Discharge (OTH) in lieu of a court martial.¹⁰⁴ For unknown reasons, Johnson was able to rejoin the Army in the early 2000s, where he served until his arrest in 2006 for being Absent Without Leave (AWOL).¹⁰⁵ This charge again resulted in an OTH discharge in lieu of a court martial.¹⁰⁶ Public records of his activities between 2006 and 2017 are sparse, although it seems Johnson became a community activist during this time, notably helping to organize a march for victims of the Charleston church shooting in 2015.¹⁰⁷ Just before founding the NFAC, Johnson registered to run for President as an Independent in the 2016 election.¹⁰⁸

⁹⁶ "Gallery." Not Fucking Around Coalition. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.blacknfac.com/gallery>.

⁹⁷ "Official NFAC Gear." The Articol Collective. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://thearticol.com/nfacgear>.

⁹⁸ "The Grand Master Jay Legal Defense Fund." GoFundMe. January 9, 2021. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-grand-master-jay-legal-defense-fund>.

⁹⁹ Knutson, Jack. "In photos: Armed militias protest in downtown Louisville." Axios, July 25, 2020. <https://www.axios.com/2020/07/25/armed-militias-protest-louisville-photos>.

¹⁰⁰ Nakamura, Go. "Black Militia group NFAC marches in Lafayette." Reuters, October 5, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/news/picture/idUSRTX804C5/>.

¹⁰¹ The Official Grand Master Jay (@TheOfficialGra3), "The Second Amendment Is An Equal Opportunity Employer. #blacknation," X, November 9, 2020. <https://x.com/TheOfficialGra3/status/1325932557968560128/photo/1>.

¹⁰² Nakamura, Go. "Black Militia group NFAC marches in Lafayette." Reuters, October 5, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/news/picture/idUSRTX804C5/>.

¹⁰³ Government Sentencing Memorandum, *United States of America v. Johnson*, (3:21-cr-00031-BJB-RSE, W.D. Ky. 2022). <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.kywd.120460/gov.uscourts.kywd.120460.106.0.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Defense Sentencing Memorandum, *United States of America v. Johnson*, (3:21-cr-00031-BJB-RSE, W.D. Ky. 2022). <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.kywd.120460/gov.uscourts.kywd.120460.107.0.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ "Candidate Profiles: Johnson, John Fitzgerald Mr." Federal Election Commission. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.fec.gov/data/candidate/P60012234/>.

Symbology, Organization, & Recruitment

At demonstrations, NFAC members open-carry long rifles and shotguns, marching in military-style formations clad in all-black clothing and tactical gear.¹⁰⁹ The militia also conducts private training events for members covering topics such as marksmanship and firearm maintenance.¹¹⁰ When asked why the group is heavily armed, Johnson replied, “[W]hy not? Everyone else has guns. This country was born out of revolution. We fought over slavery with guns. As a matter of fact, they left the British with guns. As a matter of fact, when the police show up the first thing they pull out is a gun.”¹¹¹ The concept of 2nd Amendment reciprocity to Black people is essential to the identity of NFAC members, who believe that the media attention alone generated from their assemblies of armed, Black demonstrators is proof in itself that the community is de facto denied the same freedoms extended to other races and enshrined in the 1st and 2nd Amendments.¹¹²

Figure 10

Members of the NFAC standing in formation during the September 5, 2020, Derby Day protest in Louisville, Kentucky.^[113]



¹⁰⁹ Woolston, Bryan. “Black armed protesters march in Kentucky demanding justice for Breonna Taylor.” Reuters, July 25, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN24R028/>.

¹¹⁰ “Training.” Not Fucking Around Coalition. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.blacknfac.com/training>.

¹¹¹ “CBN Interview,” YouTube: 16:47 to 17:05.

¹¹² The Official Grand Master Jay (@JayBlazeAkaGrandmasterJay), “CNN NFAC Interview,” YouTube, October 25, 2020: 5:08. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWd-WULZ3zc>.

¹¹³ Upshaw Jr., Sam. “Members of an armed militia stood in formation a few blocks from Churchill Downs during the Kentucky Derby in Louisville, Ky. on Sept. 5, 2020.” *Louisville Courier Journal*, September 5, 2020. <https://www.courier-journal.com/picture-gallery/news/local/2020/09/04/weekend-protests-louisville-continue-breonna-taylor-louisville-police/5712990002/>.

The NFAC follows a bureaucratic model, with Johnson seeming to control the locations where the militia would show up to protest. NFAC regulates membership through an application process via email. According to the NFAC official website, members must be Black, aged 18 years or older, eligible for a concealed carry license, and not have been a law enforcement or corrections officer.¹¹⁴ The website specifically states that former military members are preferred.¹¹⁵

Activities

The group appeared to surge in membership and publicity during the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests, organizing demonstrations in Georgia,¹¹⁶ Kentucky,¹¹⁷ and Louisiana¹¹⁸ during the summer and fall of 2020. However, Johnson himself has gone on record to distance the militia from mainstream demonstrators, stating that “we will not be identified with the Black Lives Matter movement.”¹¹⁹ NFAC events drew hundreds of militia members in attendance throughout this timeframe.^{120,121}

¹¹⁴ “NFAC Coalition Members.” *Not Fucking Around Coalition*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.blacknfac.com/nfac-coalition-members>.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁶ Gorman, Steve. “Predominantly Black armed protesters march through Confederate memorial park in Georgia.” *Reuters*, July 5, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-race-usa-stone-mountain-idUSKBN24605G/>.

¹¹⁷ Woolston, Bryan. “Black armed protesters march in Kentucky demanding justice for Breonna Taylor.” *Reuters*, July 25, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN24R028/>.

¹¹⁸ Murray, Kelly, Angela Barajas, and Ryan Young. “NFAC protest in Lafayette over the police shooting of Trayford Pellerin ends peacefully.” *CNN*, October 4, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/04/us/louisiana-gun-discharge-demonstration-trayford-pellerin-death/index.html>.

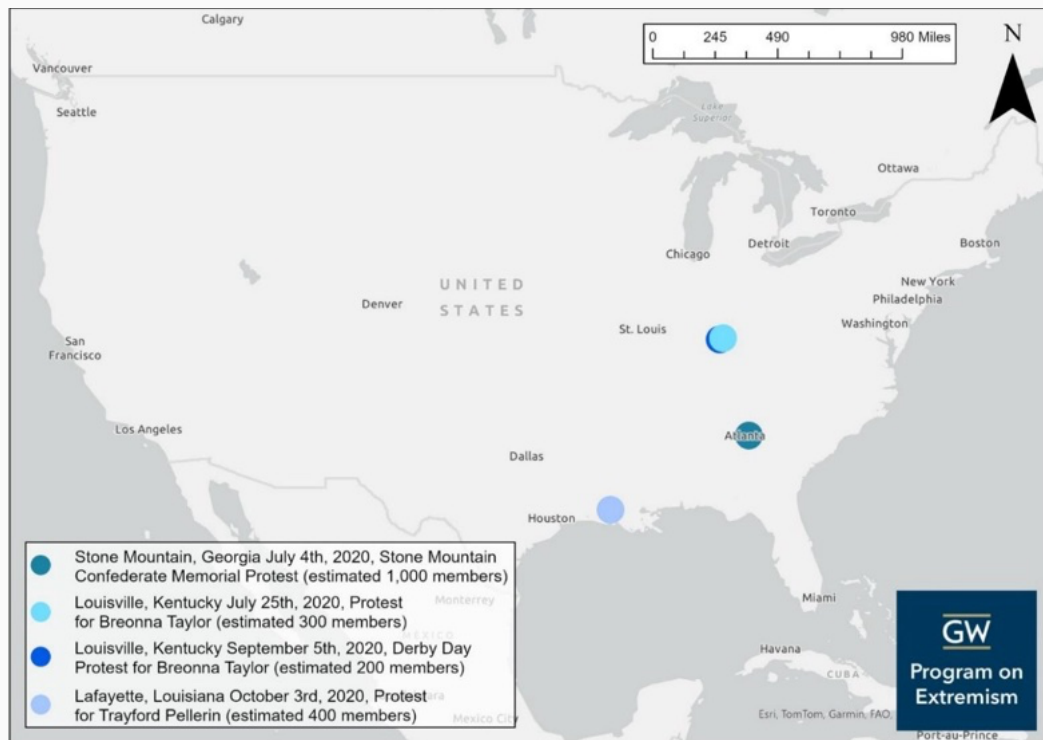
¹¹⁹ Neil, Shane Paul. “What Is the NFAC, and Who is Grandmaster Jay?” *Complex*, September 4, 2020. <https://www.complex.com/life/a/spneil/not-fucking-around-coalition-grandmaster-jay-explainer>.

¹²⁰ Ladd, Sarah and Ben Tobin. “Black militia leader: Media blew gunfire at Louisville march out of proportion.” *Louisville Courier Journal*, July 27, 2020. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/2020/07/27/louisville-protests-nfac-leader-explains-accidental-discharge/5520115002/>.

¹²¹ Owen, Tess. “‘If You Attack Us, We Will Kill You’: The Not Fucking Around Coalition Wants to Protect Black Americans.” *Vice News*, October 28, 2020. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/3anz38/the-not-fucking-around-coalition-wants-to-protect-black-americans>.

Figure 11

Map of NFAC Activity in the United States in 2020.



Since its founding, NFAC members have been involved in several crimes and firearm incidents. However, they do not appear to be directed by the militia group. On two occasions, members of the NFAC allegedly negligently discharged firearms during demonstrations despite their insistence on discipline and training. The first incident occurred during the July 2020 demonstrations in Louisville, injuring three other NFAC members.¹²² Johnson later confirmed that an NFAC member discharged their firearm after having a heat-related emergency during the event.¹²³ A second negligent discharge was reported during the Lafayette protest in October, although the NFAC denied that the person responsible was a militia member.¹²⁴

¹²² Ladd, Sarah. "Police: 3 Black militia members injured in negligent gun discharge, may result in charges." *Louisville Courier Journal*, July 26, 2020. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/2020/07/26/nfac-shooting-louisville-being-investigated-negligent-shooting/5514492002/>.

¹²³ Ladd and Tobin, "Black militia leader: Media blew gunfire at Louisville march out of proportion."

¹²⁴ Murray, Barajas, and Young, "NFAC protest in Lafayette over the police shooting of Trayford Pellerin ends peacefully."

One notable case involving an NFAC member is the murder of Daytona Beach police officer Jason Raynor. On the night of June 23, 2021, Raynor responded to a suspicious incident call on Kensington Avenue.¹²⁵ Body-worn camera footage from Raynor shows him approaching a gray Honda HR-V occupied by Othal Wallace, also known as "O-Zone," to ask Wallace what he was doing there.¹²⁶ A struggle between the two ensued, culminating in Wallace shooting Raynor in the head with a pistol before fleeing the scene of the crime.¹²⁷ Tragically, Raynor succumbed to his injuries 55 days after the shooting.¹²⁸

Wallace attended NFAC demonstrations as a member in 2020, eventually breaking off and forming another organization aligned with the Black Hebrew Israelites (BHI).¹²⁹ Both before and after the shooting, Wallace posted anti-police and Black nationalist content across multiple social media platforms. On an Instagram story posted one day after the shooting of Officer Raynor, Wallace stated, "Keep fucking fighting! Move fucking forward! And don't let these pussy ass pigs fuck with you! I love y'all, Black Power and Shalom."¹³⁰ On June 26, 2021, a multi-agency task force captured Wallace hiding in a treehouse stocked with rifles, handguns, body armor, and other tactical equipment on the property of another alleged NFAC member outside of Atlanta.¹³¹ Wallace was found guilty of Manslaughter in September 2023 and sentenced to 30 years in prison.¹³²

¹²⁵ Cutway, Adrienne. "Body camera video shows officer being shot in Daytona Beach." *ClickOrlando*, July 2, 2021. <https://www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2021/06/24/body-camera-video-shows-officer-being-shot-in-daytona-beach/>.

¹²⁶ WKMG News 6 ClickOrlando (@News6WKMG), "RAW VIDEO: Body camera video shows officer being shot in Daytona Beach," Youtube, June 24, 2021: 0:21. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbTX1wm3mV8>.

¹²⁷ "Black Nationalist Arrested Following Shooting of Florida Officer." *Anti-Defamation League*. June 28, 2021. <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/black-nationalist-arrested-following-shooting-florida-officer>.

¹²⁸ Fernandez, Frank. "Daytona Beach Police Officer Jason Raynor dies 55 days after he was shot while on patrol." *The Daytona Beach-News Journal*, August 19, 2021. <https://www.news-journalonline.com/story/news/2021/08/17/daytona-beach-police-officer-jayson-raynor-dies-othal-wallace/8174227002/>.

¹²⁹ "Black Nationalist Arrested Following Shooting of Florida Officer," *Anti-Defamation League*.

¹³⁰ WESH 2 News (@WESH), "'Somebody shot a cop': Terrifying footage released from night Daytona Beach officer shot," YouTube, August 10, 2021: 1:38. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1ql8AKZC9o>.

¹³¹ Fernandez, Frank. "Suspect in shooting of Daytona Beach officer, Othal Wallace, captured in Georgia treehouse." *The Daytona Beach News-Journal*, June 30, 2021. <https://www.news-journalonline.com/story/news/crime/2021/06/26/othal-wallace-accused-shooting-daytona-beach-officer-captured/5356363001/>.

¹³² Castro, Ezzy. "Othal Wallace sentenced to 30 years in prison for manslaughter of Daytona Beach officer." *ClickOrlando*, October 27, 2023. <https://www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2023/10/27/othal-wallace-to-be-sentenced-for-manslaughter-of-daytona-beach-officer/>.

Figure 12

Photo of Othal Wallace (circled) marching with the NFAC at the September 5, 2020, Derby Day protest in Louisville, Kentucky.^[133]



On September 5, 2020, NFAC members gathered en masse to protest the shooting death of Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky,¹³⁴ strategically timed to be on “Derby Day,” the date of the 146th Kentucky Derby horse race, also held in Louisville. During this event, federal Task Force Officers overseeing the protest witnessed the leader of the NFAC, John Fitzgerald Johnson, aiming an AR platform rifle at them as they stood on the roof of a nearby government building.¹³⁵ On December 3, 2020, federal authorities arrested Johnson at his home in Ohio and charged him with 18 U.S.C. § 111(b) and 1114, Assaulting, Resisting, or Impeding; and 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) (1)(A), Brandishing a Firearm in Relation to a Crime of Violence.¹³⁶ In November

¹³³ Ford Fisher (@FordFisher), “A manhunt is taking place in Daytona Beach after police say Othal “O-Zone” Wallace shot a cop, leaving them in critical condition. I filmed Wallace march with the Black nationalist NFAC Militia September 2020 in Louisville, Kentucky. See 2:45 intro [link],” X, June 24, 2021. <https://x.com/FordFischer/status/1408125467392155651/photo/1>.

¹³⁴ Cohen, Jessie. “NFAC returns to Louisville, holds large march to Churchill Downs.” WHAS11, September 5, 2020. <https://www.whas11.com/article/news/local/nfac-louisville-protest-churchill-downs/417-5435a83f-71c6-4cb9-834d-1035645561de>.

¹³⁵ “NFAC Leader “Grandmaster Jay” Charged With Assaulting Law Enforcement Officers.” US Attorney’s Office, Western District of Kentucky Press Release. December 3, 2020). Accessed June 23, 2024, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdky/pr/feds-charge-nfac-leader-grandmaster-jay>.

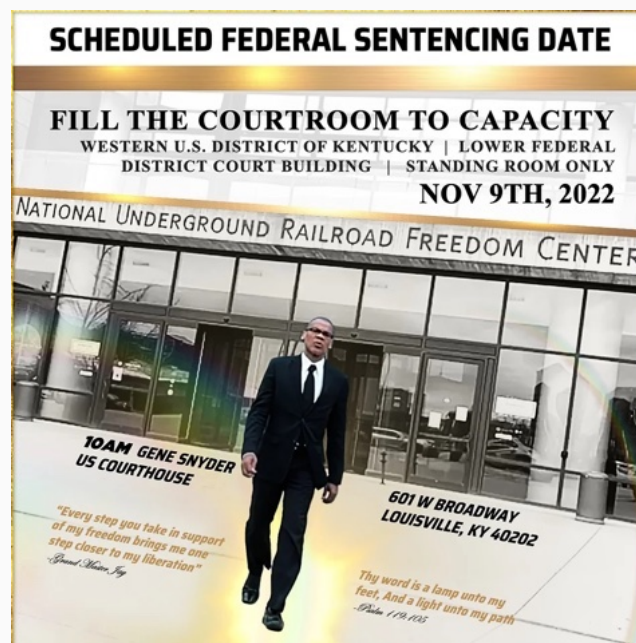
¹³⁶ Indictment, *United States of America v. Johnson*, (3:21-cr-00031-BJB-RSE, W.D. Ky. 2022). <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.kywd.120460/gov.uscourts.kywd.120460.13.0.pdf>.

of 2022, Johnson was found guilty of both charges and sentenced to 86 months in federal prison.¹³⁷

Since the arrest and conviction of Johnson, the militia ceased its public-facing demonstrations. This lack of public activity corresponds to a stand-down order allegedly given by Johnson in December 2020.¹³⁸ Additionally, social media sites used by Johnson to post interviews, propaganda, and militia content have gone silent.^{139,140} It is likely that Johnson's arrest and subsequent incarceration created a void in the NFAC's leadership that cannot be filled operationally. However, the continued outpouring of support for Johnson in prison, combined with considerable online NFAC activity, paints a different story regarding the group's status.

Figure 13

A 2022 flyer posted to the Justice for Grandmaster Jay website advertising the location and date of his federal sentencing hearing.^[141]



¹³⁷ Judgment, *United States of America v. Johnson*, (3:21-cr-00031-BJB-RSE, W.D. Ky. 2022). <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.kywd.120460/gov.uscourts.kywd.120460.111.0.pdf>.

¹³⁸ Wood, "A Black Army Rises to Fight the Racist Right."

¹³⁹ The Official Grand Master Jay (@JayBlazeAkaGrandmasterJay), YouTube, January 22, 2017. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/@JayBlazeAkaGrandmasterJay>.

¹⁴⁰ The Official Grand Master Jay (@theofficialgra3), X, October 2019. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://x.com/theofficialgra3?lang=en>.

¹⁴¹ "On One Accord." Justice4GMJ. Accessed July 2, 2024. <https://www.justiceforgmj.com/on-one-accord>.

Current Status

In December 2020, an account with a username associated with the Huey P. Newton Gun Club started a Change.org petition to “Dismiss all charges against Grandmaster J of the NFAC,” accruing over 1,200 signatures.¹⁴² In 2021, a friend of Johnson named Eleanor Harvey started a GoFundMe page titled “The Grand Master Jay Legal Defense Fund.”¹⁴³ As of 2024, the page has raised over \$340,000 for Johnson with numerous new donations in the last month.¹⁴⁴ Comments from donors to the fund include ideologically diverse extremist rhetoric such as “the devil knows his time is short the god of justice will pay them back in full for there [sic] evil against his chosen people,” “...Grand Master Jay, has been chosen to carry out God’s mission to let the devil white people know that when push comes to shove, opposite of Martin Luther King, blacks will come out fighting kill or die!” and “Justice is determined by the man with the biggest army and best weapons.”¹⁴⁵ To date, Harvey has posted over 100 updates to the page, including the legal status of Johnson’s case, Johnson’s health issues, requests for letters, and vigil announcements.¹⁴⁶

Later, supporters created a dedicated Grandmaster Jay website for a similar purpose. This website sells merchandise, posts updates on his case and well-being, and reposts large quantities of written and video content of Johnson speaking about various topics related to the NFAC and his personal religious ideology.¹⁴⁷ The website has corresponding accounts on Facebook,¹⁴⁸ YouTube,¹⁴⁹

¹⁴² “Dismiss all charges against Grandmaster J of the NFAC.” Change.org. Accessed June 23, 2024. https://www.change.org/p/huey-p-newton-gun-club-dismiss-all-charges-against-grandmaster-j-of-the-nfac?source_location=search.

¹⁴³ “The Grand Master Jay Legal Defense Fund,” GoFundMe.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ “The Grand Master Jay Legal Defense Fund: Updates (106).” GoFundMe. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-grand-master-jay-legal-defense-fund?modal=updates>.

¹⁴⁷ “Justice4GMJ.” Justice4GMJ. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.justiceforgmj.com/>.

¹⁴⁸ “OB H Home.” Facebook. Accessed June 23, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100084057943870>.

¹⁴⁹ Operation Bring Him Home (@operationbringhimhome1175), YouTube, August 1, 2022. Accessed June 23, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1fuJinWfxKD60rktX_T9oA.

Instagram,¹⁵⁰ X,¹⁵¹ and TikTok,¹⁵² all of which operate under variations of the username “Operation Bring Him Home.” Other websites, such as Articol Creative Services, continue to sell NFAC and Johnson-related products, such as clothing and flags.¹⁵³ Overall, the abundance of online activity of NFAC members and supporters in the years since the arrest of Johnson points to a committed base of people waiting for his release from prison.

The Huey P. Newton Gun Club/Guerilla Mainframe/Geronimo Tactical

Background & Ideology

In 2014, Darrin Reed, Charles Goodson, and Christopher Daniels founded the Huey P. Newton Gun Club (HPNGC) in Dallas, Texas.¹⁵⁴ Reed, Goodson, and Daniels also go by the names Babu Omowale, Yafeuh Balogun, and Rakem Balogun, respectively, across social media and in their duties as leaders of the HPNGC.¹⁵⁵ The club’s namesake derives from political activist and Marxist-Leninist revolutionary Huey Percy Newton, who founded the Black Panther Party (BPP) along with Bobby Seale in 1966.¹⁵⁶

The HPNGC is an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, Black power militia group dedicated to the liberation of African Americans. The mission statement of the HPNGC is “to educate the masses of people on the necessity of self. That includes self-preservation, self-defense, and self-sufficiency through militant culture.”¹⁵⁷ In pursuit of these goals, HPNGC chapters conduct a wide variety

¹⁵⁰ Operation Bring Him Home (@obh_home), Instagram. Accessed June 23, 2024. https://www.instagram.com/obh_home/.

¹⁵¹ OBHH Campaign (@OBHH_Campaign), X, August 2022. Accessed June 23, 2024. https://x.com/OBHH_Campaign.

¹⁵² obhh_Campaign (@obhh_Campaign), TikTok. Accessed June 23, 2024. https://www.tiktok.com/@obhh_campaign.

¹⁵³ “Official NFAC Gear,” *The Articol Collective*.

¹⁵⁴ Simek, Peter. “The Right to Bear Arms (And Say Shocking Stuff on Facebook).” *DMagazine*, September 17, 2018. <https://www.dmagazine.com/publications/d-magazine/2018/october/the-right-to-bear-arms-and-say-shocking-stuff-on-facebook/>.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

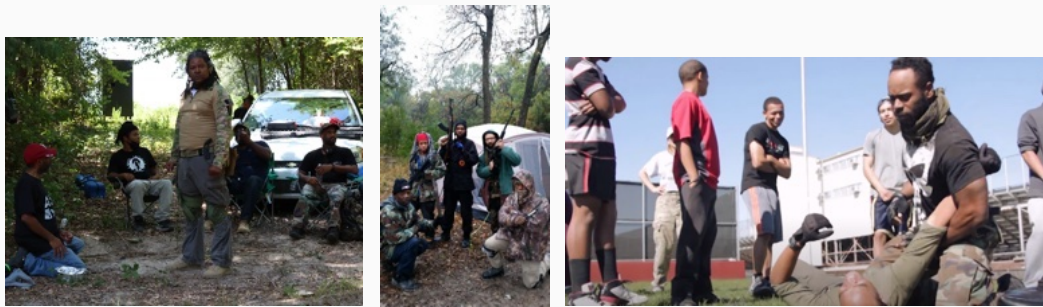
¹⁵⁶ “Huey P. Newton (February 17, 1942 – August 22, 1989).” *The US National Archives and Records Administration*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/individuals/huey-newton>.

¹⁵⁷ “About.” *Huey P. Newton Gun Club*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://hueypnewtongunclub.org/about>.

of activities aimed at arming Black people while educating them about their ideology, including protests,¹⁵⁸ shooting classes,¹⁵⁹ speaker tours by HPNGC members,¹⁶⁰ and other survival¹⁶¹ and self-defense classes.¹⁶² On an individual level, the co-founders subscribe to a variety of ideologies. For example, a 2019 Facebook post on Reed's personal X account captioned "End Game.." shows a map of a proposed Black separatist nation, the Republic of New Afrika, comprising Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina.¹⁶³ In a 2019 video posted to an HPNGC-affiliated YouTube account, Goodson stated, "What I'm calling for... is a left, a leftist movement, a political movement that no longer will we allow the right-wingers to shoot us down with the right-wing ideology, but we are willing to defend ourselves..."¹⁶⁴

Figure 14

(From left to right) Photos of HPNGC Defensive Shooting,^[165] Survival,^[166] and Self Defense Classes.^[167]



¹⁵⁸ "Huey P. Newton Gun Club leads open-carry rally in South Dallas." *The Dallas Morning News*, August 20, 2014. <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/2014/08/21/huey-p-newton-gun-club-leads-open-carry-rally-in-south-dallas/>.

¹⁵⁹ "Recap images of The Family Friendly Defensive Shooting Class." *Huey P. Newton Gun Club*. August 24, 2020. <https://hueypnewtongunclub.org/blogs/latest-news/posts/recap-images-of-the-family-friendly-defensive-shooting-class/recap-images-of-the-family-friendly-defensive-shooting-class>.

¹⁶⁰ "Speaker Tour with Yafeuh Balogun." *Huey P. Newton Gun Club*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://hueypnewtongunclub.org/join-speaker-tour>.

¹⁶¹ "Survival programs/Emergency response." *Huey P. Newton Gun Club*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://hueypnewtongunclub.org/survival-programs>.

¹⁶² "Self Defense Training – Huey P. Newton Gun Club x Guerilla Mind Frame." *Huey P. Newton Gun Club*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://hueypnewtongunclub.org/blogs/latest-news/posts/self-defense-training-huey-p-newton-gun-club-x-guerilla-mind-frame/self-defense-training-huey-p-newton-gun-club-x-guerilla-mind-frame>.

¹⁶³ BABU OMOVALE (@BabuOmwale), "End Game," X, January 23, 2019. <https://x.com/BabuOmwale/status/1088227615092154369>.

¹⁶⁴ Brotha SHAWT (@BrothaSHAWT), "Yafeuh Balogun Speaks," YouTube, August 11, 2019: 1:05-1:19. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rUXpVLPxeY.

¹⁶⁵ "Recap images of The Family Friendly Defensive Shooting Class," *Huey P. Newton Gun Club*.

¹⁶⁶ "Survival programs/Emergency response," *Huey P. Newton Gun Club*.

¹⁶⁷ Brotha SHAWT (@BrothaSHAWT), "Self Defense Training – Huey P. Newton Gun Club x Guerilla Mind Frame," YouTube, April 10, 2016: 5:48. <https://youtu.be/VEKVsozofI?si=huPhjVDIdNPHFWUR&t=348>.

The group's co-founders come from a variety of backgrounds. Darrin Reed graduated from H. Grady Spruce High School in 1985,¹⁶⁸ and, according to his personal Facebook profile, is a U.S. Army veteran¹⁶⁹ with a son who served in the Army as well.¹⁷⁰ Similarly, Christopher Daniels is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who deployed to Iraq in 2003.¹⁷¹ In a 2018 interview, Daniels cited negative experiences in the Marine Corps as formative to his ideology and desire to protect the Black community.¹⁷² Daniels left active duty early with an other-than-honorable (OTH) discharge, although the exact date and circumstances of this discharge are unclear.¹⁷³ In 2007, Daniels was convicted of misdemeanor domestic assault in Tipton County, Tennessee.¹⁷⁴ Charles Goodson never served in the military and is a self-claimed graduate of El Centro College in Dallas, where he majored in Applied Science.¹⁷⁵

Symbology, Organization, & Recruitment

The HPNGC is just one arm of a larger network created by Reed, Goodson, Daniels, and other activists. Prior to the creation of the HPNGC, Goodson and Daniels co-founded a militia called Guerilla Mainframe in 2008.¹⁷⁶ Activities of Guerilla Mainframe include similar firearms and martial arts training for community members.^{177, 178} From the creation of the HPNGC to Daniels and Goodson's claimed dissociation with the HPNGC, it seems that

¹⁶⁸ "Yearbook." *Classmates*. Accessed June 11, 2024. <https://www.classmates.com/siteui/yearbooks/105053?page=243>.

¹⁶⁹ Darrin Fugi Reed (@darrin.reed.125), Facebook, February 15, 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=397579587478333&set=pb.100016788840679.-2207520000&type=3>.

¹⁷⁰ Darrin Fugi Reed (@darrin.reed.125), Facebook, December 3, 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=561073381128952&set=a.248110995758527>.

¹⁷¹ Simek, "The Right to Bear Arms (And Say Shocking Stuff on Facebook)."

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Indictment, *United States of America v. Daniels*, (3:18-cr-00005-D, N.D. Tx. 2018). https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.txnd.297615/gov.uscourts.txnd.297615.14.0_3.pdf.

¹⁷⁵ "Speaker Tour with Yafeuh Balogun," *Huey P. Newton Gun Club*.

¹⁷⁶ "Guerilla Mainframe," Facebook, October 3, 2016. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/352415385095442/about>.

¹⁷⁷ Guerrilla Mainframe (@Guerrillamainframe), "We plan to train all of those who are willing Malcom X once said 'the black woman is the most unprotected woman in this country' not on our watch - @uhuru_balogun," *Instagram*, January 14, 2020. https://www.instagram.com/p/B7UOxfRpY5C/?img_index=1.

¹⁷⁸ Guerrilla Mainframe (@Guerrillamainframe), "Guerrilla Mainframe Martial Arts Program Men," *Instagram*, September 24, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CUOgAxiD-Qy/>.

these groups were functionally the same, although names may be interchanged depending on the venue or type of activity. The existence of this network is further evidenced by a YouTube video posted by Goodson explaining that the founding of the HPNGC was the consolidation of various political and militia organizations run by the cofounders.¹⁷⁹ In 2016, Geronimo Tactical was created as an offshoot militia of the HPNGC.¹⁸⁰ According to the group's Facebook page, "A group of dedicated Men and Women from HPNGC decided that they wanted to take militancy and readiness to the next level with actual weekly training and preparation."¹⁸¹ The private group has over 700 members.¹⁸²

Figure 15

Christopher Daniels, Co-Founder of the HPNGC. [183]



¹⁷⁹ Street Reportin W/ Yafeuh Balogun (@yafeuhbaloguntheorganizer7205), "Yafeuh Balogun talks about why The Huey P. Newton Gun Club Was Started," Youtube, November 16, 2020: 22:17. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=154kkaaCkzQ>.

¹⁸⁰ "Geronimo Tactical," Facebook, March 6, 2014. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/224932467702752/>.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ Rakem Balogun (@rakem_balogun), "Zuwaa!" Instagram, June 23, 2016. https://www.instagram.com/p/BG_vqYZjokL/.

Members of the HPNGC, including Reed, are also associated with the New Black Panther Party (NBPP) and its various offshoots. In a 2014 HPNGC event video, many members displayed BPP and NBPP insignia, such as patches, berets, and pins.¹⁸⁴ The HPNGC and NBPP operated together at various demonstrations throughout the 2010s, most notably during the counter-protest of a Nation of Islam mosque opening in 2016.¹⁸⁵ A 2023 livestream with members of the NBPP announced Reed as the organization's new National Chairman, although it remains unclear if this appointment was for a splinter group or the main NBPP organization.¹⁸⁶ In the caption of a 2024 YouTube video of a NBPP event posted to an account associated with Reed, he was again referred to as "Chairman" and spoke to attendees about various topics such as Black liberation and resistance.¹⁸⁷ The HPNGC's continued association with the NBPP allegedly led Daniels and Goodson to distance themselves from the group.¹⁸⁸

Unlike the NFAC, the HPNGC is officially open to everyone, regardless of race.¹⁸⁹ According to Facebook posts such as one from Darrin Reed in 2021, the HPNGC specifically encourages current and former members of the military to apply for membership.¹⁹⁰ Members of the HPNGC are expected to educate themselves on the ideology of Huey P. Newton, purchase a handgun and a rifle, host a celebration on February 17 (the birthday of Huey P. Newton), and demonstrate respect toward former members of various Civil Rights and

¹⁸⁴ Sky Chadde (@behindblueskies), "Huey P. Newton Gun Club and Black Panthers march on MLK Blvd," YouTube, August 20, 2014: 2:24. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLqXYF3ephY>.

¹⁸⁵ Mervosh, Sarah. "Armed clash over black mosque triggers anger in South Dallas." *The Dallas Morning News*, April 2, 2016. <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/2016/04/02/armed-clash-over-black-mosque-triggers-anger-in-south-dallas/>.

¹⁸⁶ TRUTH2POWER WAR ROOM (@truth2powerwarroom955), "Resurrection of the NBPP," YouTube, November 5, 2023: 1:00:56, <https://www.youtube.com/live/1ZHNtu5hagE?si=jiMXBk4aD1ITi3aU&t=180>.

¹⁸⁷ TRUTH2POWER WAR ROOM (@truth2powerwarroom955), "New Black Panther Chairman Speaks," YouTube, April 5, 2024: 17:55. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNS_sUzwQwU.

¹⁸⁸ Simek, "The Right to Bear Arms (And Say Shocking Stuff on Facebook)."

¹⁸⁹ "A Message from Yafeuh Balogun, co-founder of the Huey P. Newton Gun Club." *Huey P. Newton Gun Club*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://hueypnewtongunclub.org/blogs/latest-news/posts/5536206/hpngc-alpha-company-intercommunalism>.

¹⁹⁰ Babu X Omowale (@darrin.reed.94), "Dallas/Ft.Worth and around the country we are looking for like minded individuals to build and lead Second amendment and survival groups are you ready to do your part will you answer the call? Current and former military members we want you!!!!" Facebook, November 10, 2021. <https://www.facebook.com/darrin.reed.94/posts/pfbid0ugXvCLEvof55xeNEmnip4zjhJZEP5gSG9TyRCBTkofq8pLfQ7yEAhMMkbXWpQVJul>.

Black Nationalist movements.¹⁹¹ Examples of “respected” organizations provided by the HPNGC include the BPP, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (a Black separatist and nationalist organization), and Revolutionary Action Movement (a Marxist-Leninist Black nationalist organization active during the Civil Rights Movement).¹⁹² At demonstrations, HPNGC members generally wear black clothing and tactical gear, although this does not seem to be as strictly enforced as with the NFAC. Members are instead positively identified with HPNGC patches on their clothing or plate carriers.¹⁹³

Figure 16

Darrin Reed (standing, second from right) with HPNGC militia members in 2020. ^[194]



¹⁹¹ “A Message from Yafeuh Balogun, co-founder of the Huey P. Newton Gun Club,” Huey P. Newton Gun Club.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Dowd, Trone. “Photos Show Black Gun Owners Marching on Tulsa’s Black Wall Street.” Vice News, June 1, 2021. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/akg33e/tulsa-race-massacre-photos-black-gun-owners-black-wall-street>.

¹⁹⁴ Huey P Newton Gun Club (@HueyPNewtonGun), “Huey P Newton Gun Club has formed alliances with many organizations as it will take the multitude to combat racism,” X, November 18, 2020. <https://x.com/HueyPNewtonGun/status/1329169678481166337/photo/1>.

The rise of the HPNGC “Alpha Company” main chapter in Texas metastasized chapters across the country. Facebook pages for chapters in New Jersey,¹⁹⁵ Charlotte, North Carolina,¹⁹⁶ Alabama,¹⁹⁷ and Oklahoma¹⁹⁸ appeared in 2016. In 2017, similar pages were created for a Houston chapter that currently has over 4,000 followers,¹⁹⁹ an Atlanta chapter with over 1,400 members,²⁰⁰ and a Las Vegas Chapter that in June of 2024 was renamed “The People’s Basic Gun Safety & Survival Program Las Vegas.”²⁰¹ In 2020, an Iowa chapter²⁰² and an Ohio chapter appeared.²⁰³ The true scale, scope, and activities of these chapters is unclear.

¹⁹⁵ “New Jersey Branch Of the Huey P. Newton Gun Club.” Facebook. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067120267686>.

¹⁹⁶ “Huey P Newton Gun Club of Charlotte NC.” Facebook, November 7, 2016. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1804095656535753/about>.

¹⁹⁷ “Huey P. Newton Gun Club Alabama Chapter.” Facebook. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064376814276>.

¹⁹⁸ “HUEY P. NEWTON GUN CLUB OKLAHOMA.” Facebook. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1164708963614043>.

¹⁹⁹ Huey P Newton Gun Club Houston (@hpngch), Facebook, May 18, 2017. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/hpngch>.

²⁰⁰ “Huey P Newton Gun Club Atlanta.” Facebook, August 27, 2017. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1919582035033476/>.

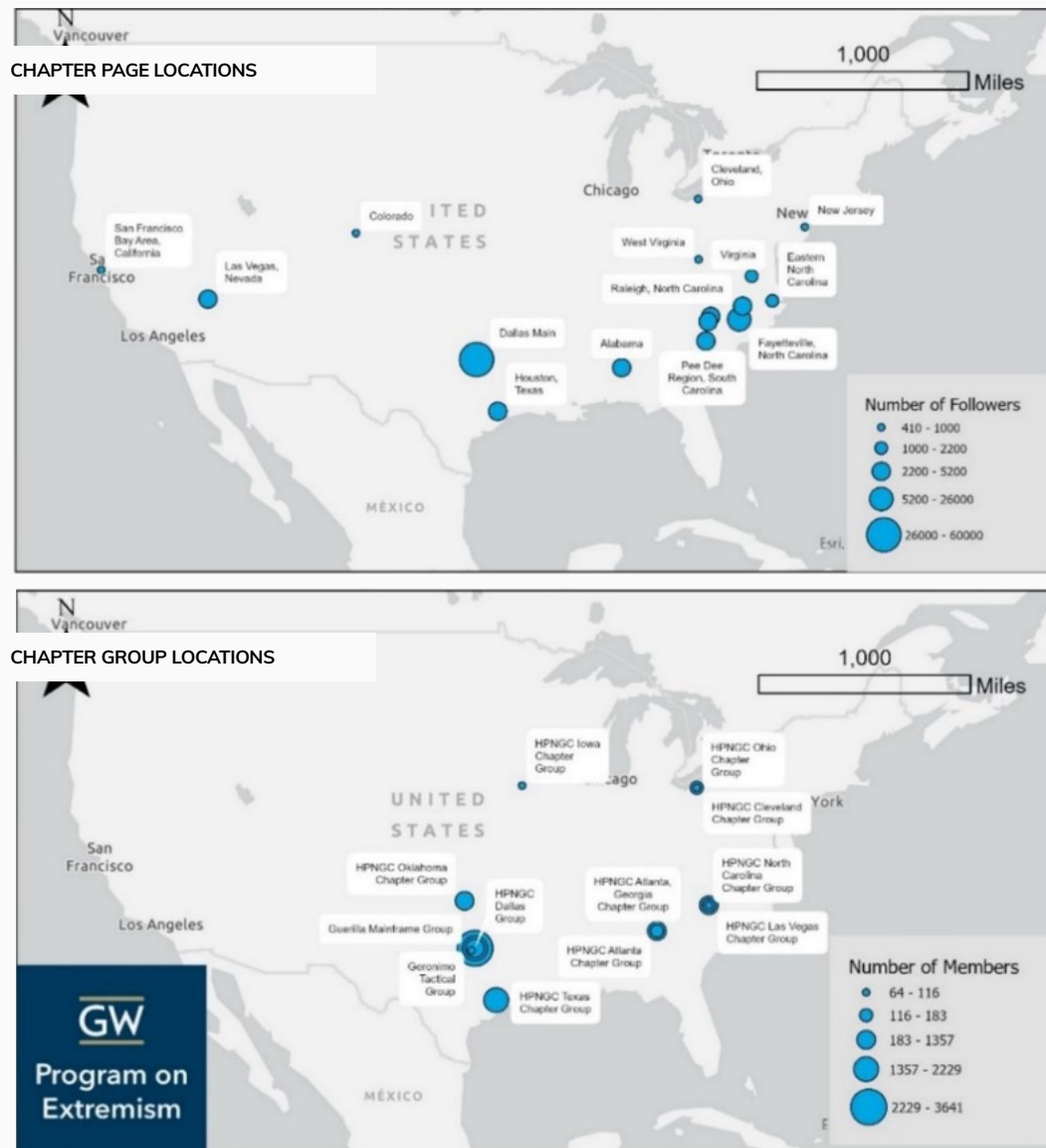
²⁰¹ “The People’s Basic Gun Safety & Survival Program Las Vegas.” Facebook, August 7, 2017. Accessed June 23, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/283811168692432/>.

²⁰² “Huey P Newton Gun Club: Iowa Chapter.” Facebook, July 2, 2020. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1665307933645459/>.

²⁰³ “Huey P Newton Gun Club Ohio.” Facebook, January 17, 2019. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2011517362483282/>.

Figure 17

Map of HPNGC Chapter Page vs. Chapter Group Membership on Facebook.



Activities

The HPNGC's "Alpha Company" conducted numerous protests and other activities since its founding as the first chapter of the militia. According to its online activity, it is likely that this chapter is also the most active and front-facing. In August 2014, the group hosted an open-carry rally in Dallas protesting the killing of Michael Brown and other victims of police brutality.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ "Huey P. Newton Gun Club leads open-carry rally in South Dallas," *The Dallas Morning News*.

A video from the march shows members, many clad in all-black clothing and tactical gear, wielding a variety of weapons, including SKS-style rifles, Hi-Point carbines, AK- and AR-style rifles, and bolt action rifles.²⁰⁵ In 2016, members of the HPNGC counterprotested a demonstration against the opening of a Nation of Islam Mosque in Dallas by members of the right-wing group Bureau for American Islamic Relations (BAIS).²⁰⁶ Geronimo Tactical cites this incident as the reason for their creation.²⁰⁷ Following an alleged incident in June of 2016 involving a firearm between an Exxon employee and a customer in Dallas, members of the HPNGC staged a protest at the gas station, lining up outside the Exxon store's doors with rifles and shotguns.²⁰⁸ In 2020, the HPNGC conducted armed community patrols through areas in South Dallas.²⁰⁹ On May 29, 2021, members of the HPNGC and multiple other left-wing organizations and militias marched through Tulsa, Oklahoma, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre.²¹⁰ At most of these demonstrations, HPNGC Alpha Company membership usually numbered in the dozens. Geronimo Tactical offered Dallas-based classes run by Daniels and others for small unit tactics and marksmanship in 2017,²¹¹ and paid beginner rifle and pistol training for women in 2018.²¹²

²⁰⁵ Sky Chadde (@behindblueskies), "Huey P. Newton Gun Club and Black Panthers march on MLK Blvd," YouTube, August 20, 2014: 2:24. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLqXYF3ephY>.

²⁰⁶ Mervosh, "Armed clash over black mosque triggers anger in South Dallas."

²⁰⁷ "Geronimo Tactical," Facebook.

²⁰⁸ "Shut down EXXON in Oakcliff Dallas." Huey P. Newton Gun Club. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://hueypnewtongunclub.org/blogs/latest-news/posts/shut-down-exxon-in-oakcliff-dallas/shut-down-exxon-in-oakcliff-dallas>.

²⁰⁹ Vaughn, Jacob. "Protecting Themselves: Underserved Communities Tasked With Combatting Crime." *Dallas Observer*, November 17, 2020. <https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/protecting-themselves-underserved-communities-tasked-with-combatting-crime-11962611>.

²¹⁰ Dowd, "Photos Show Black Gun Owners Marching on Tulsa's Black Wall Street."

²¹¹ Rakem Balogum (@rakem_balogun), "Last weekend of August! Set your Calendar," *Instagram*, June 8, 2017. <https://www.instagram.com/p/BVEabsWA5Xy/>.

²¹² Rakem Balogum (@rakem_balogun), *Instagram*, August 30, 2018. <https://www.instagram.com/p/BnGwo44hBsA/>.

Figure 18

Poster advertising the 2021 Tulsa, Oklahoma rally weekend commemorating the 1921 Tulsa Massacre.^[213]



HPNGC members and affiliated supporters are involved in several criminal incidents. The most infamous of these is the 2016 Dallas police officer ambush, which led to the deaths of five officers and the wounding of eleven other people.²¹⁴ The shooter, Micah Xavier Johnson, was a veteran of the U.S. Army who deployed to Afghanistan from 2013 to 2014.²¹⁵ According to Johnson's Facebook page, he was an avid consumer of Black power content online, liking pages associated with the HPNGC, NBPP, Black Riders Liberation

²¹³ Huey P Newton Gun Club (@HueyPNewtonGun), "All Eyes On Black Wall Street..," X, April 5, 2021. <https://x.com/HueyPNewtonGun/status/1379249580638887945/photo/1>.

²¹⁴ New, Brian. "A timeline of the July 7, 2016 Dallas police ambush." CBS News, July 7, 2023. <https://www.cbsnews.com/texas/news/a-timeline-of-the-july-7-2016-dallas-police-ambush/>.

²¹⁵ Arkin, William, Tracy Connor, and Jim Miklaszewski. "Dallas Shooter Micah Johnson Was Army Veteran and 'Loner'." NBC News, July 9, 2016. <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/dallas-police-ambush/dallas-shooter-micah-xavier-johnson-was-army-veteran-n606101>.

Party, and others.²¹⁶ Furthermore, Johnson allegedly attended HPNGC events and was a known acquaintance of Darrin Reed, an HPNGC co-founder.²¹⁷

In a different incident on May 1, 2017, Derick Lamont Brown fatally shot his roommate and wounded two others, including a paramedic responding to the incident, before turning his gun on himself.²¹⁸ Brown had a lengthy criminal history and was the subject of an open FBI investigation at the time of the shooting.²¹⁹ Subsequent reporting found that Brown was an alleged leader in the NBPP and a confirmed member of the HPNGC per a statement by Reed, although there is no evidence that the shooting was related to his membership in either group.²²⁰

Figure 19

Derick Lamont Brown with HPNGC co-founder Darrin Reed. [221]



²¹⁶ Parker, Ned and Mimi Dwyer. "Dallas gunman was drawn to anger of 'black power' groups." Reuters, July 8, 2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN0ZP01M/>.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ Friedman, Scott. "Dallas Shooting Suspect Was Leader in Black Nationalist Group." 5NBCDFW, May 2, 2017. <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/dallas-shooting-suspect-was-leader-in-black-nationalist-group/19317/>.

²¹⁹ McLaughlin, Elliot C. and AnneClaire Stapleton. "Feds had eye on Dallas gunman before paramedic shooting." CNN, May 2, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/05/02/us/dallas-firefighter-shooting/index.html>.

²²⁰ Friedman, "Dallas Shooting Suspect Was Leader in Black Nationalist Group."

²²¹ Brotha Dk (@dk.daboss), Facebook, March 19, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1618353078192491&set=pb.100000534441285.-2207520000&type=3>.

The HPNGC made national news when, on December 12, 2017, federal officials charged HPNGC co-founder Christopher Daniels with 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(9), Prohibited person in possession of a firearm.²²² The corresponding affidavit alleged that Daniels illegally possessed a .38 caliber pistol and a Norinco SKS-style rifle due to his prior domestic violence conviction, which were both located and seized by federal agents during the execution of a search warrant earlier that December at Daniels' apartment in Dallas.²²³ Further evidence provided by the prosecution alleged that Daniels made several violent anti-police statements on social media, including posts and comments praising Micah Xavier Johnson on Facebook.²²⁴ Fueled by a leaked 2017 FBI memo on a new classification of "Black Identity Extremists" (BIEs), many believed that Daniels was being unjustly targeted for his association with the HPNGC and Guerilla Mainframe.²²⁵ On May 1, 2018, the indictment was dismissed due to Daniels' prior Tennessee conviction not qualifying as a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence under the federal statute.²²⁶ In 2019, Daniels was charged with Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon in Collin County, Texas. According to a GoFundMe created by Daniels' supporters, the incident involved an altercation in a convenience store with the store's owner.²²⁷ Daniels was found guilty of the offense in 2022 and sentenced to eight years in prison.²²⁸

²²² Criminal Complaint, *United States of America v. Daniels*, (3:18-cr-00005-D, N.D. Tx. 2017). https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.txnd.297615/gov.uscourts.txnd.297615.1.0_2.pdf.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ Government Exhibit 1, *United States of America v. Daniels*, (3:18-cr-00005-D, N.D. Tx. 2018). https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.txnd.297615/gov.uscourts.txnd.297615.18.0_1.pdf.

²²⁵ De Bourmont, Martin. "Is a Court Case in Texas the First Prosecution of a 'Black Identity Extremist?'" *Foreign Policy*, January 30, 2018. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/30/is-a-court-case-in-texas-the-first-prosecution-of-a-black-identity-extremist/>.

²²⁶ Memorandum Opinion and Order, *United States of America v. Daniels*, (3:18-cr-00005-D, N.D. Tx. 2018). <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.txnd.297615/gov.uscourts.txnd.297615.38.0.pdf>.

²²⁷ "Free Rakem Balogun (Legal Fees)." GoFundMe. Accessed June 23, 2024. https://www.gofundme.com/f/free-rakem-balogun-legal-fees?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer.

²²⁸ General Docket Entry, *The State of Texas vs. Christopher Maurice Daniels*, (219-84498-2019, Collin Co. March 16 2022). <https://apps2.collincountytx.gov/JudicialOnlineSearch2/case/630fe49e-4277-41c4-bad7-3dab67b33fef>.

Current Status

At present, founders of the HPNGC network continue to post militia, socialist, NBPP, and Black nationalist content on multiple social media platforms. In 2022, Darrin Reed started a YouTube channel called “TRUTH2POWER WAR ROOM,” which posts various HPNGC, NBPP, and Guerilla Mainframe content in addition to the main HPNGC YouTube channel.²²⁹ He also runs active Instagram,²³⁰ X,²³¹ and Facebook accounts.²³² Similarities in posts between Reed on his personal social media accounts and the HPNGC main social media pages indicate he has been the leader of the main chapter since the dissociation of Goodson and Daniels.

Charles Goodson continues to post on various social media sites such as Instagram,²³³ YouTube,²³⁴ and Facebook,²³⁵ although most posts focus on either Guerilla Mainframe or CMB. He also runs a media account on Facebook called “Street Reportin with Yafeuh Balogun.”²³⁶ Recently, Goodson became involved in the 501(c)-3 nonprofit organization Community Movement Builders (CMB). According to their website, CMB is a “member-based collective of black people creating sustainable, self-determining communities through cooperative economic advancement and collective community organizing”²³⁷ with chapters in Atlanta, Dallas, and Detroit.²³⁸ CMB espouses Black nationalist, separatist, and anti-capitalist views, including the creation of “liberated zones” for Black self-determination in certain areas of the United

²²⁹ TRUTH2POWER WAR ROOM (@truth2powerwarroom955), YouTube, July 4, 2022. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTI8XGZ-QjbQzaqXDCY1rhQ>.

²³⁰ “babu_omo,” Instagram. Accessed June 23, 2024. https://www.instagram.com/babu_omo/?hl=en.

²³¹ BABU OMOWALE (@BabuOmowale), X, October 2017. Accessed June 23, 2024. https://x.com/BabuOmowale/with_replies?lang=en.

²³² Babu X Omowale (@darrin.reed.94), Facebook. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/darrin.reed.94/>.

²³³ Yafeuh Balogun (@streetreporteryafeuhbalogun), Instagram. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.instagram.com/streetreporteryafeuhbalogun/?ref=spectralthinking.org>.

²³⁴ Street Reportin W/ Yafeuh Balogun (@yafeuhbaloguntheorganizer7205), YouTube, July 17, 2022. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/@yafeuhbaloguntheorganizer7205/featured>.

²³⁵ Yafeuh Balogun (@yafeuhbalogun), Facebook. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/yafeuhbalogun/>.

²³⁶ “Street Reportin W/ Yafeuh Balogun.” Facebook. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/people/Street-Reportin-W-Yafeuh-Balogun/100088523857987/>.

²³⁷ “Our Mission and Values.” Community Movement Builders. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://communitymovementbuilders.org/our-mission-and-values/>.

²³⁸ “Chapters.” Community Movement Builders. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://communitymovementbuilders.org/chapters/>.

States²³⁹ and a mutual aid fund for former members of the original Black Panther Party.²⁴⁰ As of 2024, Goodson is listed as the Dallas Chapter Lead Organizer for CMB.²⁴¹

Christopher Daniels is incarcerated in the H. H. Coffield Correctional Facility in Texas.²⁴² Prison records show he will be eligible for parole beginning in November of 2025.²⁴³

Heroes and Martyrs of the Left-Wing Militia Movement

In a similar manner to famous individuals venerated by right-wing extremists, the left-wing militia movement co-opted the stories of numerous people whose lives or deaths give meaning to their causes. Below are a few examples of people commemorated in the left-wing militia sphere.

Willem van Spronsen

Willem van Spronsen, aged 69, was a folk singer, anarchist, and an active member of the Puget Sound JBGC in Washington State.²⁴⁴ In 2018, Spronsen was convicted of obstructing an officer during a protest at a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center in Tacoma.²⁴⁵ On July 13, 2019, Spronsen returned to the facility alone and launched an attack.²⁴⁶ Armed with a semiautomatic rifle and Molotov cocktails, he attempted to destroy

²³⁹ "Liberated Zones." *Community Movement Builders*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://communitymovementbuilders.org/liberated-zones/>.

²⁴⁰ "Black Panther Party Veterans Mutual Aid Fund." *Community Movement Builders*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://communitymovementbuilders.org/black-panther-party-veterans/>.

²⁴¹ "Our People." *Community Movement Builders*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://communitymovementbuilders.org/our-people/>.

²⁴² "Inmate Information Details: Daniels, Christopher Maurice." *Texas Department of Criminal Justice*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://inmate.tdcj.texas.gov/InmateSearch/viewDetail.action?sid=06052831>.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ Krell, Alexis. "'Maybe it was his last stand.' Man killed at Tacoma detention center felt strongly about ICE/" *The News Tribune*, July 23, 2019. <https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article232755852.html>.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ Contreras, Brian and Paige Cornwell. "Armed man attacking Tacoma's ICE detention center killed in officer-involved shooting." *The Seattle Times*, July 14, 2019. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/tacoma-police-armed-man-throwing-incendiary-devices-shot-outside-ice-detention-center/>.

vehicles by setting them on fire.²⁴⁷ Responding officers to the scene ordered Spronsen to put down his weapons before shooting and killing him.²⁴⁸

Figure 20

Willem van Spronsen, perpetrator of the 2019 Tacoma attack. ^[249]



In an abstract manifesto published as a folk music album, van Spronsen sang, "We don't give up / we don't give in / we don't consent to any shackles."²⁵⁰ His accompanying final statement, as found on an anarchist community website, stated various anti-fascist and anarchist motivations, including "You don't have to burn the motherfucker down, but are you going to just stand

²⁴⁷ Needles, Allison. "Tacoma police justified in shooting gunman outside ICE facility in 2019, prosecutor says." *The News Tribune*, August 18, 2020. <https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article245060650.html>.

²⁴⁸ Contreras and Cornwell, "Armed man attacking Tacoma's ICE detention center killed in officer-involved shooting."

²⁴⁹ Van Spronsen, Willem. "Find A Grave. Accessed June 23, 2024. https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/221134685/willem-van_spronsen.

²⁵⁰ "emma durutti – the audio manifesto." *Internet Archive*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://archive.org/details/emma-durutti--the-audio-manifesto/02+the+invitation.mp3>.

by?”²⁵¹ Further down, van Spronsen called for others to arm themselves, stating, “I strongly encourage comrades and incoming comrades to arm themselves. We are now responsible for defending people from the predatory state. Ignore the law in arming yourself if you have the luxury, I did.”²⁵²

Figure 21

Photo of Supporters of Willem van Spronsen posted to the Puget Sound Anarchist News Website.^[253]



Since his death, van Spronsen’s activism became a rallying cry for various left-wing groups, including militias such as the JBGC, anarchists, and environmental extremists. The Puget Sound JBGC posted Van Spronsen memorial content on their website blog in 2020²⁵⁴ and 2021,²⁵⁵ labeling him

²⁵¹ “On Willem Van Spronsen & His Final Statement.” *It’s Going Down*. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://itsgoingdown.org/on-williem-van-spronsen/>.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ “We Are The Fire That Will Melt ICE – Rest in power, Will Van Spronsen [Olympia WA].” Puget Sound Anarchists. Accessed June 23, 2024. <https://pugetsoundanarchists.org/we-are-the-fire-that-will-melt-ice-rest-in-power-will-van-spronsen-olympia-wa/>.

²⁵⁴ “Rest in Power, Will, One Year Later.” Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club. July 13, 2020. <https://web.archive.org/web/20221211121725/https://psjbgc.org/blog/rest-in-power-will-one-year-later/>.

²⁵⁵ “You don’t have to burn the motherfucker down, but...” Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club, July 13, 2021. <https://web.archive.org/web/20211026110645/https://psjbgc.org/blog/you-don-t-have-to-burn-the-motherfucker-down-but/>.

a “hero in many ways” and claiming that his actions in disabling vehicles used for deportations “surely saved several lives.” This sentiment was echoed by It’s Going Down, a self-described “digital community center for anarchist, anti-fascist, autonomous anti-capitalist and anti-colonial movements,” who posted an article by CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective, on their website one day after van Spronsen’s attack, stated, “In those regards, what he did was heroic.”²⁵⁶ On Reddit, content of van Spronsen has been posted to numerous ideologically left-wing and anarchist subreddits, including r/Anarchism,²⁵⁷ r/LeftRefuge,²⁵⁸ r/aPeoplesCalendar,²⁵⁹ r/Anarchy4Everyone,²⁶⁰ and r/socialism,²⁶¹ among others.

Figure 22

A meme praising Willem van Spronsen and Arron Bushnell, who self-immolated outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington D.C. to protest for Palestine in 2024, posted to the r/Anarchy Meme Collective subreddit.^[262]



²⁵⁶ “On Willem Van Spronsen & His Final Statement,” *It’s Going Down*.

²⁵⁷ u/Nick_____ (@r/Anarchism), “On this day in 2019, anti-fascist and anarchist Willem van Spronsen was shot dead by police after firebombing a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) compound in Tacoma, Washington,” Reddit, July 14, 2021. https://www.reddit.com/r/Anarchism/comments/ojx5xe/on_this_day_in_2019_antifascist_and_anarchist/.

²⁵⁸ “The wisdom of Willem Van Spronsen.” Reddit, July 14, 2019. https://www.reddit.com/r/LeftRefuge/comments/cda4po/the_wisdom_of_willem_van_spronsen/.

²⁵⁹ u/A_Peoples_Calendar (@r/aPeoplesCalendar), “On this day in 2019, anti-fascist and anarchist Willem van Spronsen was shot dead by police after firebombing a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) compound in Tacoma, Washington,” Reddit, July 13, 2023. https://www.reddit.com/r/aPeoplesCalendar/comments/14ym4bz/on_this_day_in_2019_anarchist_antifascist_willem/.

²⁶⁰ (@r/Anarchy4Everyone), “Abolish ICE,” Reddit, December 12, 2022. https://www.reddit.com/r/Anarchy4Everyone/comments/zjxycy/abolish_ice/.

²⁶¹ u/RageofTheMonkey (@r/socialism), “Willem Van Spronsen and Histories of Resistance,” Reddit, July 14, 2020. https://www.reddit.com/r/socialism/comments/hrb1i7/willem_van_spronsen_and_histories_of_resistance/.

²⁶² u/DietSpam (@r/AnarchyMemeCollective), “hero,” Reddit, February 29, 2024. <https://www.reddit.com/r/AnarchyMemeCollective/comments/1b2tyy4/hero/>.

Deep Green Resistance News Service, a website that posts environmental activist content, responded to the Tacoma attack by saying, “Direct action of this kind against the American immigration enforcement is justified and moral.”²⁶³ Another environmental activist site, Earth First, wrote in 2020, “Don’t forget about the execution of Willem van Spronsen by Tacoma police,” when reposting his final statement and an article praising his attack from their journal.²⁶⁴

Micah Xavier Johnson

As mentioned previously, Micah Xavier Johnson conducted an ambush on police officers in Dallas on July 7, 2016, killing five, injuring nine more, and further injuring two civilians.²⁶⁵ The attack happened during a police brutality demonstration demanding justice for Philando Castile and Alton Sterling, among others.²⁶⁶ Body-worn camera footage from the shooting recorded Johnson screaming “Black supremacy! Black liberation” before continuing to shoot at officers from where he was barricaded in El Centro College.²⁶⁷ Ultimately, the police employed a robot with explosives to kill Johnson and end the standoff.²⁶⁸

Figure 23

Micah Xavier Johnson, perpetrator of the 2016 Dallas Police Ambush.^[269]



²⁶³ “Response to Armed Attack on ICE Facility.” Deep Green Resistance News Service, July 31, 2019. <https://dgrnewsservice.org/civilization/white-supremacy/response-to-armed-attack-on-ice-facility/>.

²⁶⁴ “July 13: Remembering Willem Van Spronsen.” *Earth First! The Journal of Ecological Resistance*. July 13, 2020. <https://earthfirstjournal.news/2020/07/13/july-13-remembering-willem-van-spronsen/>.

²⁶⁵ New, “A timeline of the July 7, 2016 Dallas police ambush.”

²⁶⁶ Fernandez, Fernandez, Richard Perez-Pena, and Jonah Engel Bromwich. “Five Dallas Officers Were Killed as Payback, Police Chief Says.” *The New York Times*, July 8, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/09/us/dallas-police-shooting.html>.

²⁶⁷ WFAA (@Wfaa8), “The Heroes’ Perspective: Officers pursue Dallas ambush gunman on July 7th, 2016,” Youtube, July 8, 2021: 10:11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6C4n9cd5vyQ>.

²⁶⁸ Fernandez, Perez-Pena, and Bromwich, “Five Dallas Officers Were Killed as Payback, Police Chief Says.”

²⁶⁹ “Micah Xavier Johnson via Facebook.” *Black Entertainment Television*. Accessed July 2, 2024. <https://www.bet.com/article/mm0fue/micah-xavier-johnson-was-rejected-from-black-power-groups>.

Johnson served in the U.S. Army from 2009 to 2015.²⁷⁰ A review of Johnson's social media uncovered a trove of concerning extremist activity, including likes on pages for Southern Poverty Law Center designated hate groups including the Nation of Islam, NBPP, and the Black Riders Liberation Party.²⁷¹ Following a search of Johnson's home, police located additional rifles, bomb-making equipment, ballistic vests, and a journal detailing combat tactics.²⁷²

Left-wing spaces have turned Johnson into a martyr for their causes. For example, HPNGC leadership continues to praise Johnson's attack. In 2019, Christopher Daniels posted on Facebook that "[Johnson] was killed by Dallas Police while taking the ultimate stand for Black Lives who were killed by fascist police."²⁷³ Darrin Reed made a similar post praising Johnson in 2019, reposting a photo of Johnson in uniform with the caption, "Thank you for your service Micah Johnson."²⁷⁴ Johnson has also received praise on various subreddits to include r/fuckthepolice,²⁷⁵ r/BlackSeparatists,²⁷⁶ and r/Bad_Cop_No_Donut.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁰ Fernandez, Perez-Pena, and Bromwich, "Five Dallas Officers Were Killed as Payback, Police Chief Says."

²⁷¹ Belrich, Heidi and Ryan Lenz. "Dallas Sniper Connected to Black Separatist Hate Groups on Facebook." Southern Poverty Law Center, July 8, 2016. <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2016/07/08/dallas-sniper-connected-black-separatist-hate-groups-facebook>.

²⁷² "Dallas Shooting Suspect Micah Xavier Johnson Had Rifles, Bombmaking Materials in His Home, Police Say." ABC News, July 9, 2016. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/dallas-shooting-suspect-wanted-kill-white-people-white/story?id=40431306>.

²⁷³ Rakem Khafre Balogun (@christopher.daniels.54943), "Hello my name is Micah X, I was killed by Dallas Police while taking in the ultimate stand for Black Lives who were killed by fascist police. Shetamia Taylor is suing my mother for my stance and nobody in the Black Liberation Movement cares. Smh," Facebook, February 26, 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/christopher.daniels.54943/posts/pfbid0385M9h1h3zMKBGj2tQDgSiafbbaUX9x2VsgwJCvx869eCJxiYpbgX8f116ZesAGDel>.

²⁷⁴ Babu X Omowale (@darrin.reed.94), "Thank you for your service Micah Johnson," Facebook, November 11, 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/darrin.reed.94/posts/pfbid02YQtZuiYGbccDzbT5NpddRbs2fVpPWGenpj3MYPDGxeDvnPFFyYC7vu37KUMtHwPil>.

²⁷⁵ u/wumaoslayer (@r/fuckthepolice), "His name is Micah Xavier Johnson," Reddit, June 19, 2020. https://www.reddit.com/r/fuckthepolice/comments/hcevyv/his_name_is_micah_xavier_johnson/.

²⁷⁶ u/Melanated-Bimbo (@r/BlackSeparatists), "Micah Xavier Johnson – A True Hero," Reddit, November 7, 2022. https://www.reddit.com/r/BlackSeparatists/comments/ypadqb/micah_xavier_johnson_a_true_hero/.

²⁷⁷ u/Adsso1 (@r/Bad_Cop_No_Donut), "R.I.P. to micah xavier johnson former veteran and American hero shot and killed by police," Reddit, March 29, 2019. https://www.reddit.com/r/Bad_Cop_No_Donut/comments/b75v35/rip_to_micah_xavier_johnson_former_veteran_and/.

Christopher Dorner

On February 3, 2013, former Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officer Christopher Dorner shot and killed Monica Quan and Keith Lawrence in Irvine, California, setting into motion what would become a ten-day shooting rampage that left four dead and two injured.²⁷⁸ This incident was the culmination of Dorner's hate and anger towards the Los Angeles Police Department, which he accused of systemic racism.²⁷⁹

Figure 24

Christopher Dorner in his U.S. Navy Uniform.^[280]



Dorner served as an officer in the U.S. Navy from 2002 to 2013, deploying to Iraq in 2006.²⁸¹ He first joined the LAPD in 2005.²⁸² In 2007, Dorner filed a

²⁷⁸ Goertzen, Jeff. "Timeline of the Christopher Dorner manhunt 10 years later." *The Sun*, February 9, 2023. <https://www.sbsun.com/2023/02/09/timeline-of-the-christopher-dorner-manhunt-10-years-later/>.

²⁷⁹ Kelly, Jon. "Christopher Dorner: What made a police officer kill?" *BBC News*, February 16, 2013. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21476904>.

²⁸⁰ AP News/LAPD Police Dept. "Christopher Dorner, a former Los Angeles officer, is suspected of killing a couple over the weekend and opening fire on four officers early Thursday, Feb. 7, 2013, killing one and critically wounding another." *CBS News*, February 7, 2013. Accessed July 2, 2024. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/christopher-dorner-update-ex-los-angeles-cops-manifesto-hints-at-racism-as-motive-for-killings/>.

²⁸¹ Hanna, Jason and Holly Yan. "Timeline in manhunt for ex-L.A. cop turned fugitive." *CNN*, February 13, 2013. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/02/07/us/lapd-attacks-timeline/index.html>.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

report against another officer for using excessive force.²⁸³ Dorner was dismissed from the LAPD in 2008 following charges that he made false statements.²⁸⁴ He attempted to appeal this dismissal until 2011 when a court denied him from rejoining the force.²⁸⁵

What followed was a descent into madness. Dorner wrote a lengthy manifesto in which he identified members of the LAPD he intended to kill and explained why he felt they deserved death, saying, “To those children of the officers who are eradicated, your parent was not the individual you thought they were.”²⁸⁶ From February 3 to February 12, Dorner drove around Southern California, hunting the officers in his manifesto and getting into shootouts with the LAPD before fleeing into the mountains.²⁸⁷ Ultimately, police located and trapped Dorner in a cabin that lit on fire when police deployed smoke grenades, causing him to commit suicide.²⁸⁸

Figure 25

Meme posted to the “Christopher Dorner fan page” Facebook group on February 12, 2013.^[289]



²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ Kelly, “Christopher Dorner: What made a police officer kill?”

²⁸⁵ Hanna and Yan, “Timeline in manhunt for ex-L.A. cop turned fugitive.”

²⁸⁶ “Chris Dorner’s Manifesto.” CBS News. February 2013. Accessed June 24, 2024. <https://assets1.cbsnewsstatic.com/i/cbslocal/wp-content/uploads/sites/15909776/2013/02/chris-dorners-manifesto.pdf>.

²⁸⁷ Hanna and Yan, “Timeline in manhunt for ex-L.A. cop turned fugitive.”

²⁸⁸ Hanna and Yan, “Timeline in manhunt for ex-L.A. cop turned fugitive.”

²⁸⁹ Luke Stephens (@Beaverino), Facebook, February 12, 2013. <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10152549475270032&set=g.158963710924464>.

Online, Dorner is widely celebrated and praised for his police attacks. Terms such as “Can’t corner the Dorner” and “#DornerGang” appeared immediately following the attacks on social media. A Facebook page titled “We Stand With Christopher Dorner,” with over 18,000 followers, posts various memes praising Dorner, justifying his attack, and advocating for violence against police officers.²⁹⁰ A public Facebook group called the “Christopher Dorner Appreciation Society,” with over 2,000 members, is similarly full of memes posted by members commemorating Dorner.²⁹¹ HPNGC co-founder Christopher Daniels posted a meme praising Dorner in 2014 with the caption, “All hail a modern Nat Turner, Christopher Dorner... Long live Christopher Dorner,” to which HPNGC co-founder Darrin Reed commented, “Brother Christopher chose to seek justice in a system that has been an injustice for black and oppressed people.”²⁹²

The MOVE Bombing Victims

MOVE is a Black liberation organization spanning multiple streams of left-wing ideologies founded in 1972 by Korean War veteran and West Philadelphia native Vincent Leaphart, also known as John Africa.²⁹³ Broadly speaking, the group encompasses anti-government, anti-technology, animal rights, and environmental activist beliefs.²⁹⁴ On May 13, 1985, the Philadelphia police attempted to arrest and evict members of MOVE from their compound on Osage Avenue, leading to a gunfight and standoff.²⁹⁵ During the standoff, the mayor of Philadelphia approved the use of a helicopter-dropped bomb to breach the compound, which started a fire that killed eleven members of MOVE (including five children), burned over sixty other houses, and displaced over two hundred people.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁰ “We Stand With Christopher Dorner.” Facebook, accessed June 24, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/WeStandWithChristopherDorner>.

²⁹¹ “Christopher Dorner fan page.” Facebook, February 7, 2013. Accessed June 24, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/158963710924464/media>.

²⁹² Rakem Khafre Balogun (@christopher.daniels.54943), “All hail a modern Nat Turner, Christopher Dorner... Long live Christopher Dorner Rest in power...,” Facebook, March 13, 2014. <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=250723385105765&set=a.107190376125734>.

²⁹³ Norward, Lindsey. “The day Philadelphia bombed its own people.” Vox, August 15, 2019. <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/8/8/20747198/philadelphia-bombing-1985-move>.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ “This Day in History: May 13, 1985: Philadelphia Police Bomb MOVE.” Zinn Education Project. Accessed June 24, 2024. <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/move-bombing/>.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Figure 26

Destroyed city blocks in the wake of the MOVE Bombing.^[297]



The MOVE bombing is frequently used as evidence of a war waged against Black people and left-wing groups and has taken on almost legendary status in the decades since. Gatherings are still held near the site of the bombing to commemorate the victims and hear from surviving members of the Africa family.²⁹⁸ Mike Africa Jr., a relative of the MOVE victims, sells 1985 bombing-related merchandise online.²⁹⁹ In 2018, the official HPNGC Facebook page posted a link to an NPR article on the MOVE bombing with the caption, “A lot of people still don’t know the pigs dropped bombs on blacks in Philly.”³⁰⁰ Darrin Reed similarly posted the same NPR article to his

²⁹⁷ Bettmann/Getty. “The police bombing of the MOVE collective in West Philadelphia killed eleven people and left city blocks in ashes.” *The New Yorker*, May 16, 2021. Accessed July 2, 2024. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/essay/saying-her-name>.

²⁹⁸ Sharber, Cory. “39 years after MOVE bombing, activists remember victims of the West Philly tragedy.” *WHYY*, May 14, 2024. <https://whyy.org/articles/move-bombing-memorial-philadelphia-may-2024/>.

²⁹⁹ “MOVE.” *Philadelphia Print Works*. Accessed June 24, 2024. <https://philadelphiaprintworks.com/collections/move>.

³⁰⁰ Huey P Newton Gun Club (@HueyPNewtonGunClub), “A lot of people still don’t know the pigs dropped bombs on blacks in Philly,” Facebook, March 10, 2018. <https://www.facebook.com/HueyPNewtonGunClub/posts/pfbid02AFNrv7Z8m2YkLUqoAt7qEoAwMAQUbfEpaPAdS1LqsVYFpx1wsX9nqgWxJUa3Nqevl>.

profile with the caption, “Philly we want you to join Huey P Newton Gun Club this can never be allowed again...”³⁰¹ Other left-wing pages, such as Red Toronto (a Canadian communist Facebook page)³⁰² and Occupy Wall Street³⁰³ have posted MOVE bombing content to their platforms.

Breonna Taylor

On March 13, 2020, Louisville Police shot and killed 26-year-old Breonna Taylor in her home during the execution of a search warrant as part of an ongoing investigation into Taylor’s ex-boyfriend, who was suspected of drug-related offenses.³⁰⁴ Taylor previously worked as an Emergency Room Technician, registered nurse, and Emergency Medical Technician for the city of Louisville.^{305 306}

According to Kenneth Walker, Taylor’s then-boyfriend and a legal firearm owner, police officers executing the warrant did not announce who they were as they broke down the door.³⁰⁷ Fearing for their safety, Walker, who was in the house with Taylor, retrieved his pistol and fired a shot at the officers as they broke through, hitting one officer in the leg.³⁰⁸ Officers responded by firing more than thirty rounds into the apartment, some blindly, hitting Taylor six times and killing her.³⁰⁹

³⁰¹ Babu X Omowale (@darrin.reed.94), “Philly we want you to join Huey P Newton Gun Club this can never be allowed again...,” Facebook, March 21, 2018. <https://www.facebook.com/darrin.reed.94/posts/pfbid034dGwpxf34EArjpp4RtGhdgcjTCEyhYwy9ZEgac9H9sPsCDcj5iF9Sd2AEPQbTxnWI>.

³⁰² Red Toronto | Toronto Rouge (@RedTorontoRouge), “Ever heard of the MOVE bombing?” Facebook, December 3, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/RedTorontoRouge/posts/pfbid0Uf1vgck3w6JXwMS06SMVGrfMNpEzPx9EiDR43eoUAQaaH8mLEWBnHtfZajDwjKUnl>.

³⁰³ Occupy Wall St. (@OccupyWallSt), “Read about the bombing from the Philadelphia Inquirer,” Facebook, May 13, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/OccupyWallSt/posts/pfbid02C2h13qXvzqMzdMwefAYwZ4dzDPD5zLyZ4vTBdAA1MXo3FD6ne2uXCeqVDsgDadMml>.

³⁰⁴ Oppel Jr., Richard A., Derrick Bryson Taylor, and Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs. “What to Know About Breonna Taylor’s Death.” *The New York Times*, December 13, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/breonna-taylor-police.html>.

³⁰⁵ Dixon, Euell A.. “Breonna Taylor (1993-2020).” *Black Past*, July 16, 2020. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/people-african-american-history/breonna-taylor-1993-2020/>.

³⁰⁶ Waldrop, Theresa, Elliott C. McLaughlin, Sonia Moghe, and Hannah Rabinowitz. “Breonna Taylor killing: A timeline of the police raid and its aftermath.” *CNN*, August 4, 2022. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/04/us/no-knock-raid-breonna-taylor-timeline/index.html>.

³⁰⁷ Glover, Scott, Collette Richards, Curt Devine, and Drew Griffin. “A key miscalculation by officers contributed to the tragic death of Breonna Taylor.” *CNN*, July 23, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/23/us/breonna-taylor-police-shooting-invs/index.html>.

³⁰⁸ Bogel-Burroughs, Nicholas. “Federal Officials Charge Four Officers in Breonna Taylor Raid.” *The New York Times*, August 4, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/04/us/breonna-taylor-officers-charged.html>.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Figure 27Breonna Taylor in her EMS uniform.^[310]

A subsequent investigation of the shooting revealed numerous allegations of LPD misconduct, dangerous tactics, and criminal activity. In 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice charged four of the officers with various crimes relating to the shooting, including submitting a false affidavit that led to the approval of the search warrant and shooting through a covered window and glass door into the apartment.³¹¹ Taylor's death sparked a national uproar due to numerous issues surrounding the legality of the search warrant, false statements made by Louisville police officers, the right of Taylor's boyfriend to defend their apartment, and the timing of her death just two months before the murder of George Floyd.

³¹⁰ Taylor Family. "Breonna Taylor's graduation photo." *Black Past*. Accessed July 2, 2024. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/people-african-american-history/breonna-taylor-1993-2020/>.

³¹¹ "Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke Delivers Remarks Announcing Current and Former Louisville, Kentucky Police Officers Charged with Federal Crimes Related to Death of Breonna Taylor." US Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs. August 4, 2022. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/assistant-attorney-general-kristen-clarke-delivers-remarks-announcing-current-and-former>.

As a result, numerous organizations in the left-wing militia movement invoke Taylor's death to further their ideology. Connecticut³¹² and Puget Sound³¹³ JBGC chapters posted about Taylor's death on their official X accounts. At the July 25, 2020, NFAC demonstration in Louisville, militia leader John Fitzgerald Johnson stated, "[Kenneth Walker] did what you supposed to do, defend your motherfucking queen."³¹⁴ In 2022, HPNGC co-founder Darrin Reed shouted out the NFAC for their Breonna Taylor activism, saying,

To all the human rights activists and protestors especially NFAC members I thank you for yours service in the case of Breonna Taylor, we still need a conviction but you comrades set the precedence for these charges salute to you all.³¹⁵

At least 20 posts in the unofficial subreddit of the SRA, r/SocialistRA, mention Breonna Taylor by name.³¹⁶

Philando Castile

On July 6, 2016, St. Anthony Police Department Officer Jeronimo Yanez pulled over Philando Castile during a routine traffic stop for broken tail lights.³¹⁷ Castile's girlfriend, Diamond Reynolds, and her four-year-old daughter were also in the car.³¹⁸ Dashcam video from the stop shows Castile calmly informing Officer Yanez that he was carrying a concealed handgun within one minute of the stop after being asked to produce his driver's license.³¹⁹ Castile then attempts to grab his license from his pocket, causing

³¹² CT John Brown Gun Club (@ctjbgc), "Breonna Taylor would like a word but she can't have one because she's dead," X, March 3, 2023. <https://x.com/ctjbgc/status/1631743931422572574>.

³¹³ Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club (@PugetSoundJBGC), "Demand justice for Breonna Taylor and Kenneth Walker," X, May 18, 2020. <https://x.com/PugetSoundJBGC/status/1262233047153340416>.

³¹⁴ News2Share (@N2SReports), "Full NFAC 'Grandmaster Jay' Speech in Louisville Kentucky," Youtube, July 26, 2020: 14:35-14:44. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEQXbmlN5UY>.

³¹⁵ Babu X Omowale (@darrin.reed.94), "To all the human rights activists and protestors especially NFAC members I thank youyou're your service in the case of Breonna Taylor, we still need a conviction but you comrades set the precedence for these charges salute to you all. Protest now, protest injustices forever...," Facebook, August 4, 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/darrin.reed.94/posts/pfbid02N99c9Q6nBNVewPS587wbVNoy7sSongSUR7AeX4X4vASdHg8DXbFNUomHy55L6MEml>.

³¹⁶ "Search: 'Breonna Taylor'." Reddit. Accessed June 24, 2024. <https://www.reddit.com/r/SocialistRA/search?q=breonna+taylor&type=link&dd=35f2dcbc-f2ec-4cbc-bbaf-30e105dd3060&id=fe4a3114-5824-4739-86b5-5e6b313b2b5c>.

³¹⁷ Croft, Jay. "Philando Castile shooting: Dashcam video shows rapid event." CNN, June 21, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/06/20/us/philando-castile-shooting-dashcam/index.html>.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ CNN (@CNN), "Combined videos show fatal Castile shooting," YouTube, June 22, 2017: 3:19. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85Y_yOm9IhA.

Officer Yanez to fire seven shots into the car at Castile.³²⁰ Officer Yanez later claimed that he believed Castile was reaching for his handgun.³²¹ Tragically, Philando Castile passed away from his injuries at the hospital.³²²

The immediate aftermath of the shooting was live-streamed on Facebook by Castile's girlfriend, who yelled, "You just killed my boyfriend," while Castile, covered in blood, moaned in pain.³²³ In 2016, prosecutors charged Officer Yanez with second-degree manslaughter and two counts of intentional discharge of a firearm that endangers safety.³²⁴ After a lengthy trial, a jury acquitted Yanez in 2017,³²⁵ mobilizing thousands of protestors to the streets in Minneapolis when the verdict came out.³²⁶

Figure 28

Breonna Taylor in her EMS uniform.^[327]



³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ Croft, "Philando Castile shooting: Dashcam video shows rapid event."

³²² "Press Release Report." Hennepin County Medical Examiner. July 7, 2016. https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MNHENNE/2016/07/07/file_attachments/582665/2016-3828%2BCastile%252C%2BPhilando.pdf.

³²³ CNN, "Combined videos show fatal Castile shooting."

³²⁴ McCarthy, Clara. "Philando Castile: police officer charged with manslaughter over shooting death." *The Guardian*, November 16, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/16/philando-castile-shooting-manslaughter-police-jeronimo-yanez>.

³²⁵ Ellis, Ralph and Bill Kirkos. "Officer who shot Philando Castile found not guilty on all counts." CNN, June 16, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/06/16/us/philando-castile-trial-verdict/index.html>.

³²⁶ Ellis, Ralph and Bill Kirkos. "Philando Castile shooting: 18 arrested as thousands protest verdict." CNN, June 17, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/06/16/us/philando-castile-verdict-protests/index.html>.

³²⁷ Philando Castile (@philando.castile), Facebook, March 23, 2012. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=416410981719314&set=pb.100000512474102.-2207520000&type=3>.

Like the Breonna Taylor case, supporters of Philando Castile use his death as an example of how law enforcement in the United States treats Black gun owners differently than Whites. In 2017, HPNGC co-founder Darrin Reed reposted a video compilation of Castile's death, captioning it "Never forget how the 2nd amendment really applies to people of color..."³²⁸ A post from the Puget Sound JBGC said Castile "was killed by a police officer while legally carrying and following orders."³²⁹ On the fifth anniversary of his death, the Minnesota SRA posted a photo of him to their X account, saying, "May we never grow tired of fighting for justice."³³⁰ As explained above, Castile has also been the subject of anti-police demonstrations by left-wing militias including the HPNGC.

Assessment

A qualitative analysis of the left-wing militia movement reveals specific behavioral, operational, and membership trends. A first consistent theme is the movement's relatively low level of violence when compared to groups in other ideological streams, such as racially motivated violent extremism or ethnonationalism. The primarily reactive nature of many left-wing militias regarding event participation likely contributes to this apprehension toward direct conflict.

A second theme of left-wing militias is emphasizing discipline and restraint when demonstrating. These values serve to distance them from many right-wing militias that either espouse aggression and confrontation when dealing with counter-protesters at their events or seek to instigate conflict to achieve their ideological goals. However, this factor does not preclude them from violence, especially if provoked by a group they see as attacking their constituency.

³²⁸Babu X Omowale (@darrin.reed.94), "Never forget how the 2nd amendment really applies to people of color...", Facebook, September 7, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/darrin.reed.94/posts/pfbid02ubHcsVzn6a3EMD5kdYKs23heDFNi2AHZJKYhEkUREMTEdPPkjkUgzSARPtWzWmVel>.

³²⁹ Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club (PugetSoundJBGC), "Philando Castile, a beloved school cafeteria supervisor, was killed by a police officer while legally carrying and following orders. Now his mom is giving back to the community in his name by paying off student lunch debts that kept them from graduation," X, May 3, 2019. <https://x.com/PugetSoundJBGC/status/1124488593370533889>.

³³⁰ Minnesota SRA (@SRA_Minnesota), "5 years ago today, Philando Castile was murdered by Falcon Heights officer Jeronimo Yanez. Philando worked in education as a nutritional supervisor at J.J. Hill Montessori Magnet School. May we never grow tired in fighting for justice. A better world is possible," X, July 6, 2021. https://x.com/SRA_Minnesota/status/1412475669238398976.

Third, left-wing militias possess an enormous social media presence paired with a highly active support base in the cyber domain. During periods in the United States with little protest activity, such as the relative calm experienced after the inauguration of President Joe Biden in 2021, this lull may mislead law enforcement that organizations in their locality are extinct rather than kinetically dormant. Furthermore, these pages, groups, and individual accounts seem to be scarcely moderated by social media companies, in stark contrast to the scrutiny applied to right-wing militia accounts, as evidenced by the easily accessible online rhetoric provided by this report.

Fourth, left-wing militias recruit from the active-duty military and veteran populations to build a more tactically competent force, as evidenced by their social media posts, recruitment websites, and membership applications. Furthermore, many of the groups examined in this report have leadership with military backgrounds. The simultaneous targeting of servicemembers by right-wing groups such as the Oath Keepers means that both sides are now pulling these historically vulnerable populations towards extremism.

Fifth, left-wing militias collaborate frequently with other militias and political organizations at protests, training events, or online spaces. This collaboration includes coordination with multiple chapters of the same ideological/national organization, coordination between militias of different left-wing streams, and cooperation between left-wing militias and various political movements.

Sixth, left-wing militias often make a deliberate attempt to conceal or obscure the nature of these organizations to separate themselves from right-wing groups and the attention of law enforcement. In place of the militia label, organizations use terms such as “mutual aid,” “community defense,” or “armed resistance” to describe their activities while still claiming they are not a militia due to their defensive posture when compared to the instigating nature of many right-wing groups. These claims are categorically false. Furthermore, the quality and quantity of weapons, tactical gear, and training possessed by some of these groups are likely equal to those in right-wing militias.

Seventh, left-wing militias all subscribe to the “antifascist” ideology despite differences in goals, other ideologies, and causes. Specifically, left-wing militias can all be traced to a communal belief that their organization stands against fascism in the United States of America originating from the political

right, which may be perceived to be either already institutionalized in the U.S. government or that the U.S. is trending towards a fascist takeover. Left-wing militia rhetoric indicates that these groups are willing to use violence to achieve this aim under the right circumstances.

Eighth, left-wing militias share similar views and goals with other forms of extremism. In a broader sense, the concept of “armed antifascism” can encompass a wide range of ideologies throughout the anti-authority/anti-government extremism space. For example, some ideological branches of the Boogaloo movement identified with BLM protesters throughout the 2020 George Floyd Protests against militarized policing and the perceived targeting of minority communities by law enforcement, generating a mixed response from other BLM protesters and organizers. Some organizations in the left-wing militia movement also exhibit accelerationist rhetoric, further blurring ideological boundaries.

Finally, this topic requires further in-depth research and network analyses to understand the left-wing militia landscape's true scale and confirm the identified qualitative trends. Other organizations encountered while writing this report that may qualify as militias include General Defense Committees, the Anubis Gun Club, Black Cat Rifle Group, Yellow Peril Tactical, Soup and Rifles Collective, Black Women's Defense League, Brothas Against Racist Cops, Free The People, Cascadia Gun Club, The People's Basic Gun Safety & Survival Program, the Elmer Geronimo Pratt Gun Club, and the Fred Hampton Gun Club. Possible examples of militia collaboration encountered while writing this report include the Pan-African Alliance and Solidarity for East Palestine mutual aid effort. Many of these groups and alliances have little to no publicly available research. Furthermore, the maps provided in this report are only proxies for activity through social media accounts, protests, and self-reported chapters; they should not be considered definitive evidence of militia activity in an area.

As the United States has recently witnessed a growing number of Left Wing inspired violent acts, it is imperative to consider the potential for violence that left-wing militias pose, especially if confronted by right-wing militias or other extremists at political events. This conflict may come in many forms, including attacks against right-wing groups, violence at demonstrations, or against traditional targets such as law enforcement, certain government

officials, and the state. Overall, the prevalence and motivation of left-wing militia groups in the United States should be closely monitored by the counter-extremism community, even when attacker trends point to other ideologies, to prevent a rhyme of Bleeding Kansas and the replacement of the ballot box with the cartridge box to settle political differences.

Program on Extremism

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