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### **(Hate) Rocking the Internet: The World of White Power Rock Goes Online**

The racist right has long relied on communication technologies in order to spread its message to the general public. One of the earliest attempts to use media as a means to recruit new members by the white supremacist movement was the linking of the film, *Birth of a Nation* to a revival of the Ku Klux Klan. In 1915, William J. Simmons “bussed 15 men from Atlanta to Stone Mountain for the formal Klan revival ceremony, complete with ritual cross lighting. The day of the [film’s] Atlanta premiere, Simmons carefully placed his revival announcement in the local newspaper right next to the advertisement for [*Birth of a Nation*]” (Levin, 2002: 960). The film’s success coincided with a rise in Klan membership and activity. Many have attributed the popularity of this group to the positive image portrayed on the screen. The successful use of the film as a propaganda device by the Klan allowed it to become a formidable presence in American society for years to come.

The far right has been even more successful in its use of radio as a means of communication with the public. Hate on the radio dates back to the earliest days of regularly scheduled programs. The first publicly recognized hate radio show was that of Father Charles E. Coughlin in the 1930s on CBS. This show served as a forum for Coughlin to express his perverse, bigoted opinions. “He railed against Jews, against labor unions, against immigrants, against racial minorities, stirring and reinforcing resentment and hate against these competitors for jobs and social status in pre-war Depression-ridden America....he supported Mussolini and Hitler and blamed the Jews for the world’s ills” (Hilliard & Keith, 1999: 19). Coughlin was probably one of the most popular men in America at the time and was considered one of the nation’s first media stars. “He received an average of 80,000 letters a week, more than did the

president of the United States, and in a 1933 national poll Coughlin was voted the ‘most useful citizen of the United States’” (Hilliard & Keith, 1999: 19). World War II and America’s opposition to fascism led to the gradual end of Coughlin’s career as he became an embarrassment to his own conservative supporters. After the war, the far right returned to the airwaves with a new approach. “As the 1950s and 1960s progressed, many right-wing talk show programs and hosts became more subtle, using twisted logic rather than blatant vituperation to persuade their audiences” (Hilliard & Keith, 1999: 25). This pattern of right-wing extremism on the airwaves continued through the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The modern white supremacist movement has become marginalized to short wave radio broadcasts and the rare low power radio stations (Hilliard & Keith, 1999).

One of the most significant shifts in white supremacist use of media as a means of recruitment into the movement would occur in the mid-1970s and throughout the 1980s. The development of low-cost technologies for production of records and the ability of individuals to make homemade recordings and distribute them via cassette tape would fuel a boom in independent music production. This shift away from corporate monopolies of music would be exploited by the white supremacist movement as a means of furthering their message beyond its existing membership. A second important development was the rise of the punk rock youth subculture. The movement was based on a total rejection of the British culture in which it had formed and took on a very nihilistic approach to challenging the status quo (Hamm, 1993; Hebdige, 1979; Savage, 1992). This blind hatred for the status quo led some punks to aesthetically accept a primary symbol of fascism, the swastika. In her study of the early subculture of punk, Katherine Fox comments that “the swastika was a ‘symbol of contempt’ employed as a means of offending the traditional culture” (1987, 355). In many cases the early

punks were not at all interested in the fascist politics the symbol represented. The argument has been made that most punks explicitly rejected fascist and racist politics and the swastika fashion trend was short lived. Many of the seminal punk bands, fanzines, and personalities would openly espouse a political position that opposed neo-Nazi organizing within the punk scene. (CNC, 2001; O'Hara, 1995).

Despite the rejection of fascism and neo-Nazism by the early punks, the anger, aggression, and nihilism of the movement would ultimately draw in the explicitly racist British National Front (NF) whose leaders saw the subculture as a prime recruiting ground for new members. The NF would find its greatest spokesperson in Ian Stuart, the lead singer of a marginal punk band called Skrewdriver (CNC, 2001; Hamm, 1993; O'Hara, 1995). It would be absurd to believe that before the rise of punk a subculture, the white supremacist movement had not produced music as a reflection of its movement. However, the music was often incidental to the movement and reflected the tastes of its leadership often taking the form of country or folk ballads of heroic Klansmen and other racists (CNC, 2001). With the rise of Skrewdriver, the white supremacist movement appropriated a somewhat popular, if not controversial, musical style and subculture as a means of recruitment. Skrewdriver, and Stuart in particular, is important not only because the band represents a clear departure from the left-wing punk tradition, but also because it is the first merging of the skinhead aesthetic with explicit racism. Until the late 1970s, the skinhead subculture had been non-political at worst and explicitly anti-racist at best. Its origins lie in the West-Indian immigrant ghettos of England where black and white working class youth appropriated Jamaican ska music and Rude Boy aesthetics mixed with some elements of working class culture. As the subculture progressed, it lost its connection with Jamaican music due to the shift from ska to reggae as the dominant popular music emanating

from the nation and the skinheads ultimately became nothing more than working class street thugs; their choice of music was a rougher form of punk rock known as Oi! which contained lyrics that often reflected the working class lifestyles of the audience (Hamm, 1993; Marshall, 1994; Ridgeway, 1995). It is from this culture of thuggery that Stuart would form Skrewdriver. Taking the most violent elements of skinhead subculture, mixing them with over racism, and adding the angry 4-4 beat of Oi!, white supremacy found its newest spokesman and top recruiter (CNC, 2001; Hamm, 1993; Marshall, 1994; Ridgeway, 1995).

Skrewdriver would inspire hundreds of angry, young, white men to follow in Stuart's footsteps by starting bands, fanzines, and record labels. Soon, a marginal subculture would grow into a full-fledged racist movement across Europe and North America. Nazi skinheads began to appear in the United States around 1984 with the formation of the neo-Nazi organization (read: gang) known as Romantic Violence by skinhead Clark Martell. The group began its activities by publishing leaflets and distributing records by European white supremacist bands such as Skrewdriver, No Remorse, and Brutal Attack in Chicago area record stores and through the mail. Martell also formed the first American neo-Nazi skinhead band, Final Solution, in 1985 (CNC, 2001; Hamm, 1993). His work in bringing the white power skinhead subculture to America planted the seeds for significant growth in the skinhead movement in the U.S. and Canada. However, some of the most significant growth in skinhead activity would be in Europe where the German record label, Rock-O-Rama, would be the most prolific producer of white power music throughout the late 1980s. This label released music not only by Skrewdriver, but many European neo-Nazi acts and developed a worldwide distribution system using the white supremacist movement to sell its hate rock. Rock-O-Rama's domination of the white power music scene would be short lived because it was ultimately shut down for violating Germany's

strict anti-hate laws. (CNC, 2001) There were, of course, others waiting in the wings to take up the position of provider of racist music and the void would soon be filled by a Canadian neo-Nazi named George Burdi with Resistance Records. This label would be the most successful operation in the white supremacist movement due in large part to good timing on Burdi's part. Resistance was founded in the early 1990s, a time when the media had latched on to the Nazi skinhead phenomenon to increase ratings and the internet would develop as a means of communication and shopping. Burdi's media exposure would serve as free advertising for his record label and website and would generate a great deal of attention from exactly the kind of alienated youth the white supremacist movement seeks to recruit (CNC, 2001).

The final significant development in the growth of white supremacist media use is the development of the internet. Traditionally, the general public's access to white supremacist propaganda, subculture, and cultural materials was limited to campaigns by local members of the movement. However, the internet has managed to close the gap on the public's access to the white supremacist movement by allowing individuals to access to the groups from the privacy of their homes. The white supremacist involvement with the world of computers began in the early 1980s with the formation of bulletin board systems (BBS) by prominent leaders and organizers in the movement. The first extreme right BBS was founded by George Dietz in 1983 under the name of Liberty Bell Net or Info. International Network (the names were used interchangeably). Aryan Nations followed suit in 1984 by establishing a BBS of its own to promote its ideology of white supremacy as religious dogma. The organization linked some its chapters into a network that would be a precursor to the modern internet by forming the Aryan Nations Liberty net which "consisted of a variety of dial-up bulletin boards connected to telephone numbers in the states of Texas, Idaho, and North Carolina" (Levin, 2002: 962). Not to be outdone, Tom Metzger joined

the racist movement online by starting a BBS for his White Aryan Resistance (WAR) in 1986 (ADL, 1999; Hamm, 1993; Levin, 2002). These groups stood at the forefront of the white supremacist movement in part due to their ability to organize followers in remote locations through new communication technologies.

The activities of the BBS networks are outlined in the following sections of the Aryan Nations Liberty Net: “The first and predominant area was ‘hate propaganda,’ which consisted of new and reprinted material as well as member contributions. The second section was a fee-based listing of racist and antigovernment organizations. Another section identified groups and individuals designated as enemies and traitors of the Aryan cause” (Levin, 2002: 962). These activities serve to create what the Anti-Defamation League has referred to as “creating [an] electronic community of hate” by “inspiring/guiding criminal activity, coordinating extremist events, and making money” (2001a). The ability to meet these three goals would increase exponentially as the movement transitioned from BBSes onto the internet.

The first major white supremacist website, Stormfront.org was started by former Klansman Don Black in 1995 (ADL, 1998; ADL, 1999; Levin, 2002). Until then, the racist right’s presence on the internet was limited to email lists, newsgroups, and chats (ADL, 1999). While all of these forms of communication are still important factors in maintaining the hardcore of the movement, the ability to reach a broad audience through a presence on the world wide web (www or web). Much like the BBS movement of a decade before, Black’s success on the web was followed by the launch of websites by other major white supremacist organizations. The National Alliance <www.natall.com>, World Church of the Creator (WCOTC) <www.creator.org>, WAR <www.resist.com>, and even organized skinheads in the form of the Hammerskins <www.hammerskins.com> staked out a presence in cyberspace (ADL, 1998; ADL,

1999; Levin, 2002). The major organizations were joined by minor groups and individual white supremacists. According Brian Levin (2002), organizations which track white supremacist activity online have found approximately 300-400 websites run by organized hate groups. In addition, “[t]he Simon Wiesenthal Center (2000) estimated that there are more than 3,000 Web sites containing hate, racism, terrorist agendas, and bomb-making instructions today” (Lee & Leets, 2002). Compared to the relatively small numbers of BBSes across the country, the white supremacist presence on the web has been astonishing and has worked to further the goals of organizing online.

The development has served to magnify the functions of other recruitment tools of white supremacist movements. By providing the general public access to white supremacist propaganda materials, the net facilitates easier distribution of propaganda to both new recruits and the general public. This has clearly been the case for the distribution of white supremacist music. White supremacist music labels such as Resistance and Panzerfaust records have websites which allow anyone to purchase their products. The presence of neo-Nazi hate rock on the internet serves three crucial purposes: recruitment of new members, distribution of music to new and committed members, and provided much needed revenue.

### *Recruitment*

As a political movement, white supremacy seeks to build a mass base of support for its ideologies. In order to achieve this end, the movement looks to recruit new members who will further its goals of white revolution. The most active members are often those who can recruit others into the movement in order to enlarge its membership base and political power (Blazak, 2001; Ezekiel, 1995; Ridgeway, 1995). The most traditional forms of recruitment by the

movement have been leafleting, selling newspapers and magazines, rallies, and personal recruitment of individuals. However, over the past 25 years, music has become a critical form of recruitment for the movement (Blazak, 2001; Lethbridge, 1995).

White supremacists seek to new recruits from whites who find themselves in anomic situations who are experiencing some form of strain. In his research on neo-Nazi skinheads, Blazak (2001) discuss four clear types of threats to whites that define strain which could be exploited by white supremacists as “threats to ethnic or racial status, threats to gender status, threats to heterosexual status, and threats to economic status” (989). Teenagers who find themselves experiencing any or all of the above threats are likely to find themselves in positions where they are vulnerable to skinhead recruitment. Music is a fairly common tool of recruitment for youth. Citing Cialdini (1993), Blazak (2001: 995) points out six principles of cult recruitment that apply to Nazi skinhead recruitment as well. These elements are also present when music is introduced into the recruitment process.

1. The rule of reciprocity: Initial exposure to music for many recruits is done through older members of the movement who provide tapes or CDs to them. This begins a process of mentoring where new recruits find themselves beholden to older members as their sponsor in organizations and the subculture as a whole. New members owe their status to older members and their position in the movement is often tied to older members until they can establish themselves as trustworthy. Because older members have established a position of respect (read: control) over new recruits they may bring them further into the movement. The critical role played by music in this case is defined by its use in developing personal relationships between older members and new recruits.

2. Commitment and consistency: As the new recruit begins to enter the subculture of white racist music, she/he is often expected to exclusively engage in that subculture to the extent that other choices and tastes are denied. Diversity of musical tastes cannot be tolerated within the subculture, especially when the lyrical content or musical style contradicts the ideals of the movement. Significant peer pressure is used by older, more established members to develop purity in the musical tastes of new recruits leaving them solely with racist music as their primary form of entertainment.
3. Social Proof: Hate rock serves as a reinforcing element for new recruits in developing their racist ideologies. Because the new recruit is immersed into a world where racism becomes the norm, she/he begins to view it as the norm. When all of the new recruits social interactions, especially those involving entertainment such as listening to music, going to parties, or attending concerts, are defined by racism, she/he begins to view the ideology of the movement as normal.
4. Liking: Racists have become particularly clever in developing music that will appeal to young people. The shift away from folk and country music to punk rock and more recently heavy metal and gothic styles is clear proof of this fact. Young recruits are far more likely to take the movement more seriously when it appeals to their tastes. Similarly, lyrical content is more likely to be taken seriously when it is sung to music that the new recruit already enjoys.
5. Authority: For many, the allure of the rock star as social authority exists regardless of their membership in a subculture. This is doubly true for members

of the white supremacist movement. Band members, especially lead singers, are seen as crucial leaders in the movement. Their words and ideas are taken very seriously by the movement. New recruits in particular may view the racist beliefs of singers with the same awe they would the political opinions of stars in other genres of music. Because they are given celebrity status in the movement, many band members speak authoritatively on issues related to racial prejudice.

6. Scarcity: White supremacist music is seen as taboo even within the subcultures from which many neo-Nazis recruit. Records are often made in small pressings number in the hundreds of thousands and some labels have been shut down by legal proceedings against them. This gives older music a certain quality as a collectible for members. The greater threat for potential recruits in the taboo assigned to hate rock within their subcultures. Because of its racism, hate rock is often seen as the worst element of punk, heavy metal, and other marginal music subcultures. The racist lyrics also give the music some appeal because listeners see themselves as being privy to secret information which is only available to members of their subculture. In both respects new recruits may find great appeal within hate rock and drift further into organized white racism.

These principles clearly represent the key factors through which new recruits find themselves interested in and accepting the message of hate rock. A crucial element in terms of the development of a broader white supremacist movement is the concept of “liking” noted above. In this case, the white racist movement has sought to appeal directly to the musical tastes of its targets. This began with the recruitment of Ian Stuart and Skrewdriver as the spokespeople for the British National Front. As previously mentioned, the NF saw within the punk subculture

a perfect base for recruitment and needed a band to represent its views. By appropriating the skinhead subculture for its own racist ends, the white supremacist movement has been able to develop and grow over the last 25 years (CNC, 2001). However, there have are several limitations to attaching the movement to the skinhead subculture. First, there has been much resistance from traditional and anti-racist skinheads and left-wing punk rockers to neo-Nazi recruitment within their subculture. Second, there is a limit of potential recruits due to the limited appeal of the musical genre and its own marginalization. In response, the white supremacist movement has sought to expand its musical base by entering new subcultures from which to recruit. Since it is unlikely that mainstream, popular audiences would react positively to overt expressions of racism typical in hate rock, the movement has sought to follow the model used in the punk rock scene in heavy metal, gothic, industrial, and noise rock genres. Each of these musical styles and subcultures contains the same recruiting base as punk rock, mostly white youth experiencing some form of strain. In addition, these genres' commitment to shocking the mainstream by appealing to the darker aspects of society has often led some of the most extreme performers to adopt fascist imagery and neo-Nazi lyrics. Because of this commitment to shock, racist recruitment in some of the aforementioned subcultures has been accepted or simply not resisted to the point that some, such as certain genres of Black Metal, have become virtually synonymous with neo-Nazism in a manner not unlike the skinhead subculture. White supremacist infiltration of these genres of music goes beyond cultivating relationships with bands and individuals involved with these "scenes." In some cases, prominent bands in the neo-Nazi Oi! scene such as RaHoWa (Racial Holy War) began to "experiment" with different musical genres and styles in order to build a fan base outside of the skinhead scene.

The key component of hate rock in terms of recruitment is, of course, the lyrics and

imagery used by the bands. These can best be understood in the context of what Lee and Leets (2002) dub persuasive storytelling or “the use of narrative to persuade or convince” (929). In a study of effects of white racist website content on adolescent viewers, it was found that people who already agree with the message were most likely to be persuaded by the message regardless of their level of narrative or explicitness. While respondents who self-identified as neutral in initial agreement often found hate sites almost as persuasive as those who agree at the outset (Lee & Leets, 2002). It may be argued that the lyrics to white racist music, regardless of genre, may have similar effects on new recruits. Lyrics such as the following may serve as an introduction to the politics of the movement and the blatant racism and anti-Semitism to which its members subscribe:

You say you've seen the holocaust.  
You ain't seen nothing yet.  
Six million lies will not compare  
To what you're gonna get.  
We'll destroy the grip you money holds  
On the leaders of this nation.  
Only your extinction guarantees  
The white salvation.  
You undermine our culture  
And you think you're blending in.  
But every time you make a dime,  
We take it on the chin.  
Everything that you destroy  
The Aryans rebuild.  
Our job is done, the war is won  
When all of you are killed. (Mudoven quoted in CNC, 2001: 14)

Ezekiel (1995) has pointed out that despite mainstream perceptions of white supremacists focusing their hatred on blacks or other racial minorities, Jews are seen as the primary evil in American society. The lyrics quoted above present a concise version of the white racist image of Jews, wealthy controllers of media and industry who profit off the labor of whites and destroy

American culture, and the neo-Nazi solution to the social problem they represent, mass extermination and genocide. To a new recruit, these lyrics serve as cliff notes on the ideology of the movement and an introduction that she/he can follow up on through racist propaganda easily available on websites and in liner notes of CDs. Racist lyrics also serve to reinforce the people's membership in the movement and subculture. These lyrics are typical of Oi! and focus on the skinhead both an Aryan warrior and social rebel much like these from the Midtown Boot Boys:

Boots and braces-  
skinhead rule the world-  
Boots and braces  
The Swastika and Old Glory are unfurled-  
Boots and braces  
The world belongs to the white man,  
and the left wing scum will fall  
The time will come to arm yourself  
when you hear the battle call (quoted in CNC, 2001: 24)

The explicit references to the markers of skinhead fashion, "boots and braces;" are attached to images of patriotism and racism, "the swastika and old glory;" and the notion of skinheads as warriors, "hear the battle call." With such lyrics the new recruit is given both a manual for how to dress and how to behave if she/he wishes to be accepted as a member of the subculture.

The influence of hate rock lyrics is significant given the importance the music plays in the lives of members and new recruits. Music plays a large part in the lives of younger members of the movement because it is the element that binds them together. The influence of the subculture is almost absolute. It provides both the point of entry into the movement and the culture to which members adhere (Blazak, 2001; CNC, 2001). There has been some debate around the possibility of music as an influence on the ideas and actions of people who listen to particularly violent or offensive lyrics, but there does appear to be a correlation between active involvement in the hate violence and consistent exposure to hate rock. In his ground breaking study of the

neo-Nazi skinhead movement, Hamm (1993) discusses the musical preferences of what he labels as “terrorist” skinheads, defined by their commitment to organized white supremacist groups and active participation in violence. The findings indicate that active, violent neo-Nazi skinheads consistently (91%) reported that Skrewdriver, the seminal white power Oi! Band, was their favorite band. In sharp contrast, the “non-terrorist” skinheads interviewed often cited more classic skinhead bands which had no overt ties to neo-Nazi organizations, and only a minority (21%) chose Skrewdriver. “Terrorist” skinheads also listed as their favorite bands a number of right-wing and explicitly racist bands including “Last Resort, Midtown Boot Boys, Brutal Attack, War Zone, Danzig, No Surrender, White Noise, and Doc Marten” (Hamm, 1993: 117). Of this list, only three bands are not overtly racist: Last Resort, War Zone, and Danzig. However, Last Resort and War Zone have violent, nationalist lyrics and Glenn Danzig, singer of Danzig, has made racist statements in print interviews and was promoted in the racist Resistance Magazine (Blush, 1997; Resistance, 2003). Although there has been no way to test direct effects of lyrical content on ideas or behavior, research seems to indicate that it is an effective recruiting tool in that active racist skinheads often declare racist bands as their favorite and consistently list racist music as that which they prefer. Furthermore, racist leaders such as George Burdi have bragged about the power of their lyrics as propaganda. “We hear the slogan ‘White people awake. Save our great Race’ twice per chorus, eight times in total through an entire song and if they play that tape five times a week and just listen to that one song, they’re listening to ‘White people awake. Save our great Race!’ forty times in that one week, which means 160 times a month and you do the math beyond that” (Burdi quoted in CNC, 2001: 12).

### *Distribution*

Traditionally, racist music has been distributed through informal means through fans who are interested in promoting both the bands and the ideology they represent. Organized groups of skinheads often bring music to local record stores in order to promote it to new audiences. Racist bands were also promoted through skinhead fanzines which were produced by racist or sympathizing skinheads and distributed within the punk and skinhead scenes. A final method of distribution often involved the reproduction of music at home by Nazi skinheads to give to new members as a way of sharing the music with new recruits and bringing them further into the subculture and movement (Blazak, 2001; CNC, 2001; Hamm, 1993). The internet would radically change the operation of music distribution by white supremacists from an informal, word-of-mouth process into a formal distribution network rivaling that of larger, more successful music companies.

One of the greatest problems faced by racist skinheads in distributing their music to record stores or within the punk rock music scene was often resistance by non-racists in the subculture to the presence of Nazis within their scene. Record stores that sold racist records are threatened with boycotts and protests, fanzines that advertised for neo-Nazi music labels are boycotted and not stocked in record or magazine stores, and individuals who attempt to sell racist music in person are often asked to leave punk rock concerts. These processes of resistance had relegated the white power rock scene to a shadowy underworld of underground, mail order distribution among people who were already members of the subculture. The internet would ease the ability of racist music labels to distribute their music to a wider audience.

First and foremost, the internet, especially on websites, facilitates anonymous communication which allows individuals with an interest in racist music to purchase it from the comfort and safety of their own home rather than risking negative reactions from music store

clerks or angry anti-racist protesters. Any interested individual can log on to a racist music website and easily purchase the latest release from any number of white supremacist bands from the comfort and anonymity of her/his own home. These people can then easily become part of the larger movement without having made initial contact with a committed member. In this sense recruitment into the movement can be done directly through the internet rather than having to make physical contact and worry about the threat of resistance from anti-racists.

White racist music labels often use the decentralized nature of the internet as a source of free advertising for their websites. They provide easy to copy links and banner ads for supporters who can then promote their site on any personal websites dedicated to skinhead, Black Metal, gothic, industrial, or noise music, not to mention the myriad sites created by individuals who may be marginally connected to the movement. Anyone who stumbles upon these individual sites could eventually be led to racist music labels from which she/he can purchase music, magazines, and even fashion accessories associated with the racist right. Furthermore, anti-racists often unwittingly provide free advertising to racist music websites by featuring them in reports on racist organizing. A curious observer may find themselves searching for websites featured in educational reports and susceptible to the persuasive storytelling discussed previously. Years of cultural marginalization have given white supremacists the knowledge to perfect systems of decentralized distribution to the extent that they have exploited that element of the internet for their benefit.

The final significant impact of distribution has been a magnification of the informal distribution of music that was once done through networks of “friends” passing tapes to one another. White supremacists have often relied on such a network to pass cassette tapes of out of print or hard to find music to one another. This system has also been a key element in

recruitment as neo-Nazis often relied on homemade tapes as an introduction for new members to the music that is crucial in forming their subculture. With the development of transferring music into digital formats, white supremacists have been able to make it available to a wider audience via the internet. In their early days, neo-Nazi websites, including music labels, often allowed visitors to download music. As technology developed means of storing musical information of higher quality in smaller file sizes, many individual neo-Nazi websites and hate rock fan sites began to feature pages that allowed visitors to download hundreds, if not thousands of songs in mp3 format.

The development of peer-to-peer file sharing technology would magnify this process. Napster would facilitate the easy transfer of white power rock from any number of individuals to new and old members of the white supremacist movement as well as any number of curious outsiders who could be interested in the music. The chat capability of Napster also would allow users to communicate with one another to establish virtual communities and bonds (Vysotsky, 2002). This feature could easily be exploited by white supremacists to find new recruits from the number of people who may be downloading files from their computer. The successful lawsuit against Napster has not brought the end of peer-to-peer sharing of music including hate rock. The popular file sharing application known as Kazaa facilitates the simple transfer of files on a peer-to-peer network. Searches on Kazaa for music files using key words such as white power, white pride, or Nazi yield dozens of racist songs. These can be used by any interested party as an entry point into the hate rock music scene. In this sense, the peer-to-peer file sharing phenomenon has increased the availability of racist music on the internet.

*Revenue*

Although the white supremacist movement has relied heavily on music as a means of recruitment and has benefitted greatly from the distribution that the internet provides, the most significant impact of the combination of music production and presence on the internet is generating revenue. The initial association of Skrewdriver with the British National Front gave the movement a much needed financial boost that allowed it to funnel money into other projects as well as give its leaders necessary income. This ability to create revenue from music would be increased due to the ability of the racist right to use the internet to distribute music. Furthermore, the ties between established racist organizations and music labels often would lead to an increase in the organization's influence in the movement.

It has already been established that the internet has given the racist music scene an increased distribution network through which it can sell CDs and cassettes to individuals interested in the music. Initially, racist music labels such as Ian Stuart's White Noise or George Burdi's Resistance Records produced a limited number of records, tapes, or CDs because they saw their market as limited by their ability to successfully distribute their music. When he first brought Resistance Records onto the internet Burdi instantly increased his production from a few thousand CDs per band into the tens of thousands. As the most prominent music label in the white supremacist movement today, Resistance Records produces between 70,000 and 80,000 CDs and cassettes annually generating a profit of \$700,000 to over \$1,000,000 (ADL, 2000; CNC, 2001). There are an estimated 49 music labels and distributors in the U.S. alone who generate millions of dollars for the movement (CNC, 2001). The success of music as a source of revenue for the movement has allowed it to move from its traditional source of revenue in illegal activities which has given it a greater sense of legitimacy (CNC, 2001; Ridgeway, 1995). The movement can portray itself as a legitimate series of organizations whose only black mark is the

occasional “lone wolf” activist who commits a hate crime.

Access to millions of dollars in music revenues has had a direct effect on the balance of power in the white supremacist movement. Generally, the white supremacist movement has suffered from splintering over disputes involving ideology, levels and types of activity, and personal squabbles between leaders and those who wish to lead. This has often forced many white racist groups to compete for a support base in order to establish themselves as prominent within the movement. This has led to the downfall of poorly organized groups such as the Ku Klux Klan which splintered into dozens of Klan groups in the 1970s and 80s and the rise of organizations with strong, charismatic leaders and formal bureaucratic structures of authority (Berbrier, 1999; Dobratz & Shanks-Meile, 1995; Ezekiel, 1995; Ridgeway, 1995). A particular organization’s influence also appears to be directly tied to its involvement in music production and recruitment within music oriented subcultures.

The involvement of the NF with Skrewdriver and the Oi! scene would result in significant changes in the status of the organization both in the UK and the world. In the late 1970s, the NF was a struggling group with barely 1000 members and little revenue. After Stuart founded his band and label, the organization saw a significant rise in its membership due to the band’s ability to recruit new members to the organization. The music label provided a much needed source of revenue which was funneled to the organization’s propaganda wing for the production of leaflets and other propaganda. Stuart used his influence to build a virtual army within the NF with groups of skinheads recruited into his Blood and Honour and Combat 18 groups (CNC, 2001; Hamm, 1993).

Tom Metzger used both the electronic communication through BBSes and music distribution as a means of building WAR and generating revenue. In the late 1980s, Metzger

solicited neo-Nazi skinheads bands for a compilation record titled “The Spirit of Oi!” which was released by Stuart’s White Noise label and whose profits went to WAR. The association of WAR with Oi! music and the skinhead scene allowed him to recruit heavily in the United States and become one of the most prominent leaders of the neo-Nazi movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Hamm, 1993).

Similarly, the effective use of the internet as a distribution source for Resistance Records would serve to help build two rival organizations who would serve as its owners and sponsors, the World Church of the Creator (currently known as the Creativity Movement due a legal injunction) and the National Alliance (NA). The label was founded by Canadian Creativity Movement member George Burdi in 1993 as a means for distributing his racist band, RaHoWa. He soon supplemented the label with a glossy magazine and slick internet site. The promotional blitz Burdi put on gave the Creativity movement a massive base from which to recruit new members as the music reflected its ideology, the magazine featured articles from its members, and the website promoted the label, the magazine, and the organization. When Burdi was arrested for assaulting an anti-racist protester after a concert and subsequently for tax-evasion (the label was run out of Detroit despite Burdi’s Canadian citizenship), the Resistance Records label was ultimately sold to William Pierce, head of the NA. The NA immediately began to diversify the label by declaring that it “will handle a much broader spectrum of White resistance music, including such genres as Gothic metal and black metal” (Pierce quoted in CNC, 2001: 38). With the purchase of Resistance, the NA has managed to channel the momentum that saved the Creativity Movement in the early 1990s. The profits the label generates and the propaganda opportunities it presents through the music, magazine, and website have allowed the NA to become one of the most prominent hate groups in the United States today (ADL, 2000; CNC,

2001).

By generating revenue for the movement and building a following of fans, white supremacist music labels have managed to give the racist right a shot of adrenaline that has kept it operating since the late 1970s. Music has been a primary source of funds that allows racist organizations to present themselves as legitimate political organizations rather than criminal terrorist groups funded by counterfeiting and bank robbery (CNC, 2001; Ridgeway, 1995). The internet has given the racist right an extraordinary ability to increase its membership base by decentralizing music distribution networks and allowing it to generate millions of dollars in profits. Organizations that have been associated with music labels and internet marketing have benefitted greatly from this relationship and risen to prominent positions within the racist right.

### *Conclusion*

The white supremacist movement has long relied on the media to aid in its recruitment to the cause of racism. Some early films and radio broadcasts were directly responsible for the increase in hate group membership as they were skillfully used by racists to organize the general public. This trend would decrease with the civil rights movement, but would dawn once again at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. White racists would soon find that cheap technologies could allow them access to the media that had been denied to them for decades.

The anger and nihilism of early punk rock, coupled with plummeting costs in record production would allow the British National Front to exploit the racist beliefs of a band known as Skrewdriver to rebuild its fledgling movement. Skrewdriver would serve as a model for countless other neo-Nazi bands that would arise out of the punk rock and skinhead subcultures. Because of the level of anomie displayed by many members of those subcultures, white racists

would see them as primary recruiting grounds and use the style of music as a means to create revenues with which to fund the movement. However, grass roots resistance by many punks and skinheads and the limited appeal of the musical genre would force the movement to look to other music scenes to use for similar purposes. White supremacists would soon appeal to heavy metal, gothic, industrial, and noise music scenes in an attempt to build its membership and profit off the members of those scenes.

White supremacist music is a primary recruitment tool for teenagers. The anger of the music and lyrics specifically appeals to teenagers who feel some form of social strain. The relationships they build with older members of the movement are often related to their developing taste for racist music where older members share the taboo neo-Nazi music with potential recruits. Furthermore, the lyrics can be extremely influential upon people who are initially recruited into the movement. As one prominent neo-Nazi band leader expressed, the repeated choruses are used to influence new recruits because it will have an almost brain washing effect. New recruits' developing racism is justified through the repeated message of the lyrics. They are also given concise instructions on the aesthetic and politics of the subculture which they are joining and know the exact rules for how to belong.

The internet has served to increase the effectiveness of the white power music scene. As a recruitment tool, the internet allows anonymous individuals to come to the movement rather than having the movement come to them. Anyone vaguely interested in hearing racist music can easily access it through websites or peer-to-peer technology. In addition, the resources for becoming an active member of a hate group are available alongside the music for any youth to consume. The distribution of hate rock has increased due to the internet. Would be fans are no longer limited to seeking out obscure records in collectors shops when they can simply search for

a label or distributor and order directly. There is no fear of boycott or judgement for those who sell and purchase music online because of the relative anonymity of the net. Also, the peer-to-peer file sharing phenomenon allows both the relationship of older, more committed members sharing music with new recruits to continue and gives curious dabblers the chance to find racist music by searching in any peer-to-peer application. This allows people to become fans of the music, and possibly the politics it represents, without making financial commitments. However, peer-to-peer sharing has not hurt the white supremacist music scene as much as mainstream, pop music. White supremacist music labels have seen their revenues increase with their presence on the internet. In total, the hate rock scene in the U.S. stands to make millions of dollars this year off of CD and cassette sales. These funds will help to fund the movement and give it a certain legitimacy as it will no longer be forced to engage in illegal activities for fund-raising. By effectively using the internet, the neo-Nazi music scene is likely continue to grow without significant opposition.

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