



White Nationalism & White Supremacy: Looking Beyond White Hoods & Swastikas

www.landstewardshipproject.org

The Land Stewardship Project's mission is to create a more just and sustainable food and farming system for everyone, no exceptions. Our organizing is based on shared values of community, democracy, stewardship, health, and justice. Racist hatred, exclusion, and violence are clear violations of our strongly held values that every person has value that cannot be earned or taken away. In short, racism, and the actions and policies it spawns, are not sustainable.

Identifying the Ever-Changing, Insidious Face of Racism

But identifying and fighting racism is not as simple as calling out someone wearing a white robe with the letters KKK emblazoned on the front. In recent years, groups that benefit from creating racial division in our communities have worked hard to shed the traditional image of Ku Klux Klan members and neo-Nazis marching down the street. These new groups are utilizing sophisticated language and technology to recruit people into a "cause" that may not be what it first appears. They have also been emboldened by political leaders who have, at best, failed to disavow such groups, and in some cases have actively courted and encouraged them.

These groups have a presence in all aspects of U.S. society. But recently, Land Stewardship Project members and staff have been noting a growing presence of hate groups in rural communities (see *"Who is Active in the Upper Midwest?"* on page 2). The seeds of racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism often find fertile ground in communities that are suffering economically. People of color, new immigrants, and others can make handy scapegoats for what plagues a community and are easier to identify and target than corporate power and political corruption. And there's little doubt rural America is currently in the midst of a devastating financial crisis. People are hurting, and they're looking for someone to blame. Adding to the anxiety and anger that can emerge when discussions of race and racism emerge is confusion around language and what certain terms mean.

Definitions

⇒ **Racism:** Discrimination or hatred based on race and the belief that certain races of people are by birth and nature superior to others.

⇒ **Systemic Racism:** A form of racism that is embed-

ded as normal practice within society or an organization. It can lead to such issues as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, access to farmland, healthcare, political power, and education.

⇒ **White Supremacy:** This is both a belief and takes the form of institutionalized systems of oppression. Social, economic, and political systems can collectively enable white people to maintain power over people of other races. White supremacy is also a belief that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that white people should have control over people of other races. A person who holds these beliefs is considered a white supremacist.

⇒ **White Nationalist:** Someone who espouses white supremacy and advocates for enforced racial segregation. White nationalism has been gaining ground in the U.S. in recent years, partially as a result of the failure of some public policy officials to disavow this movement. According to the Western States Center, "...by the late 1990s, white nationalism emerged as its own distinct ideology with an emphasis on anti-Semitism and the creation of all-white ethnostates through violence and policies that increase the vulnerability, criminalization and removal of minorities and other targeted communities. Short of achieving its end goal of an entirely white nation state, white nationalism directly and indirectly influences a myriad of policies ranging from immigration enforcement, voter disenfranchisement and suppression, and state disinvestments that continue to marginalize and repress communities of color."

⇒ **White Privilege:** The set of social and economic advantages that white people have by virtue of their race in a culture characterized by racial inequality.

⇒ **Anti-Semitism:** Hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic, or racial group. The Jewish community is often portrayed as a powerful force that has outsized control of media, banking, entertainment, education, and politics.

⇒ **Xenophobia:** Fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign. Discrimination against immigrants, particularly those who are people of color or of a non-Christian religious faith, is one result of xenophobia.

⇒ **Misogyny:** A hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against women. Misogyny and racism often go hand-in-hand, especially in online forums and in gaming circles.

See page 3...

Who is Active in the Upper Midwest?

Don't be fooled by groups who may have innocuous sounding names and have coopted phrasing that makes them seem "patriotic," "cultural," or even "religious." Also, be aware that in the age of the Internet, nothing happens in a vacuum, and we see these extreme movements often cross-pollinating with each other. We can see this in the Boogaloo Bois, and their desire for a second civil war, something that white nationalists have been pushing and referring to as the "boogaloo" long before the Boogaloo Bois emerged. We can also see this in the anti-Semitic trends within Q-Anon, which repackages centuries-old tropes accusing Jews of kidnapping children.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the following groups, as of autumn 2020, are active in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota. No matter what they call themselves, these and other groups are based on racist beliefs:

- ◆ American Identity Movement
- ◆ Asatru Folk Assembly
- ◆ Concerned Community Citizens
- ◆ Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge
- ◆ Patriot Front
- ◆ Proud Boys
- ◆ Sons of Liberty Media (formerly known as You Can Run But You Can't Hide)
- ◆ The Remnant/The Remnant Press
- ◆ The Right Stuff
- ◆ United Skinhead Nation
- ◆ Vinlanders Social Club
- ◆ American Freedom Party
- ◆ Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints
- ◆ PZG Inc.
- ◆ Great Millstone
- ◆ National Alliance
- ◆ Act for America
- ◆ Nation of Islam
- ◆ New Order
- ◆ Pilgrims Covenant Church
- ◆ Radio Wehrwolf
- ◆ The Heathen Coalition
- ◆ The Daily Stormer
- ◆ The Base

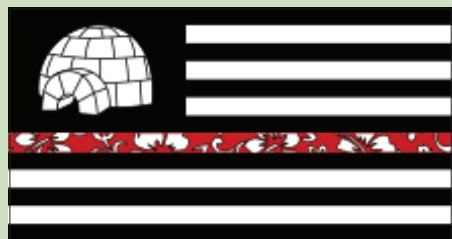
Some of the Symbols Such Groups Feature in Bumper Stickers, Banners, Graffiti & Tattoos:



"SS" or "lightning bolts" is a common white supremacist symbol borrowed from the Schutzstaffel unit in Nazi Germany, which was responsible for the genocidal killing of Jews and other victims during the Holocaust.



QAnon is the umbrella term for a web of right-wing Internet conspiracy theories with anti-Semitic and anti-LGBTQ elements. A recent QAnon campaign has used the hashtags #SaveTheChildren and #SaveOurChildren.



The Boogaloo Bois movement is an anti-government extremist movement. The term "boogaloo" refers to a future civil war. While the movement is not explicitly white supremacist, there are white supremacists within the Boogaloo Bois.



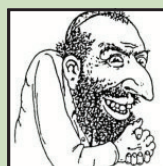
This small prison/street gang is active in Minnesota and Kentucky. An Aryan Cowboy Brotherhood biker group recently made an appearance in Stillwater, Minn.



The "OK" symbol is also sometimes used to symbolize "white power." Use caution when assigning meaning to this symbol, but be aware that it does not always mean "OK."



The American Identity Movement is a neo-Nazi group which officially disbanded in November 2020 but was recently active in Minnesota.



"The Happy Merchant" is a common anti-Semitic meme popularized by the alt-right, representing the "greedy Jew."



Pepe the Frog is a common Internet meme, and the first catchphrase associated with it was, "Feels good, man." Many Pepe memes are non-bigoted, but alt-right and anti-Semitic variations on the meme are growing. This meme must be evaluated in context.

Continued from page 1...

I'm Proud of My Heritage, Does That Make Me a Racist/White Supremacist?

There's a big difference between being proud of your heritage and ethnic ancestry, as well as identifying with that background closely, and viewing that heritage as superior to others. For example, the Asatru Folk Assembly identifies itself as a "northern European religion." However, deeper digging shows it promotes white culture to the exclusion of all other ethnicities, making it a group based on racist beliefs.

Demanding racial justice and equity is not about white lives not mattering, or favoring one group of people over another, but about fair treatment for everyone, no matter the color of their skin, national origin, sexual identity, or economic/social status. That is what a just, sustainable society is based on.

Corporations Benefit From Divisions

When we allow people of color and others to be targeted and victimized, we are failing to engage in battling the real threat to viable rural communities: corporations that extract wealth via the abuse of resources and people. For example, the meatpacking industry relies on paying low wages to new immigrants and people of color who are working in unsafe conditions (the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reports that 90% of meatpacking workers infected with COVID-19 are people of color). The industry also bases its business model on monopolistic practices that prevent independent family farmers from receiving a fair income for their livestock production. White farmers and employees of the meatpacking industry face a common enemy, and divisions based on race keep these groups from coming together and fighting for a fair economic system for all. Just as the "rural-urban" divide is a barrier to developing a sustainable food and farm system, so is the lack of racial equity and the gap it produces between people.

Am I or Someone I Know Being Recruited?

These groups have become particularly adept at using social media, YouTube, and the Internet in general to reach out and radicalize people who feel frustrated with current economic conditions. Sophisticated videos, chat room platforms, e-letters disguised as "news sources," fliers handed out in public, and even online gaming platforms are all used by these groups to influence and recruit young people in particular.

LSP would like to thank Brandon Schorsch of Jewish Community Action for providing supporting materials and guidance for this fact sheet. This fact sheet is brought to you by the members and staff of the Land Stewardship Project, a nonprofit organization devoted to fostering an ethic of farmland stewardship and to seeing more successful farmers on the land raising crops and livestock. For more information, call 612-722-6377 (Minneapolis), 320-269-2105 (Montevideo), or 507-523-3366 (Lewiston); or visit www.landstewardshipproject.org.

These groups often hide behind innocuous-sounding, positive language that expresses love for white people rather than overt hate of others, as well as a promise of making it possible to become part of a "bigger movement for change." It has been well documented that these groups are especially interested in recruiting teenagers and pre-teens. Terms like "Help us reclaim our heritage" and "Let's reclaim America" are often code for ideologies that see any activities that support people of color as equivalent to "white genocide." These groups also hide behind the shield of "free speech" and the First Amendment to justify language that puts others in danger.

Resources & More Information

Southern Poverty Law Center

The Southern Poverty Law Center is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people. Its website tracks hate group activities around the country, including in the Midwest: www.splcenter.org.

ExitUSA

Founded and run by former hate group members who have led successful post-movement lives, ExitUSA provides support to individuals who are looking to leave racism and violence behind. The organization uses a variety of strategies, including public awareness campaigns, individualized education, job training programs, and the leveraging of strategic community partnerships to help individuals get their lives back on track: www.lifeafterhate.org/exitusa.

Confronting White Nationalism in Schools

The Western States Center has developed a resource for parents and teachers who are concerned about the recruitment of young people by hate groups. It provides background material on white nationalism, scenarios, and best practices for confronting this problem in the classroom as well as at home: www.westernstatescenter.org.

LSP & Racial Justice

For more information on the Land Stewardship Project's racial justice work, see www.landstewardship-project.org/about/racialjustice. On that web page, you can subscribe to *Amplify!*, an e-letter featuring updates, action items, and resources for LSP leaders engaging in racial justice work in their communities.