

## Canada Wakes Up to Right-Wing Extremism

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EVER since a bomb destroyed a federal building in Oklahoma City last month, killing at least 164 people, Canadians have been asking: Do we have heavily armed extremists, too? Could that happen here?

Most editorial commentators quickly reassure: "No, thanks to our tough gun and anti-hate laws -- but let's not get complacent."

Then the bombs began going off. On April 20, the day after the Oklahoma explosion, a pipe bomb blew up outside the provincial parliament in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

On Saturday, a large blast leveled five homes in a Toronto suburb. Hate graffiti and a swastika were found in the debris. Police called the explosion, which did not kill anyone, a "criminal act." On Sunday, a firebomb partly destroyed the Toronto home of a well-known neo-Nazi.

Authorities do not know who is responsible for these bombings. But Canadians are slowly waking to find that violent extremism knows no borders and that much of Canada's radicalism is imported from the US.

"The Canadian public thinks [a big Oklahoma-style bomb] can't happen here," says Stephen Scheinberg a historian at Concordia University in Montreal. "I'm less persuaded. Canadian extremists have already proven they can be murderous. There may be fewer than in the US, but it doesn't take too many people to launch a terrorist act."

Despite the recent spate of bombings, Canada hardly seems to be slipping toward anarchy. Tight gun laws in the "peaceable kingdom" are set to get tighter. Free-speech is tempered by Canada's tough "hate laws" that restrict what can be said or printed about a race or creed.

Unlike the US, Canada does not have a constitutional provision on a right to bear arms. Paramilitary groups are banned.

But Canada does face possible danger from 2,000 to 4,000 hard-core Canadian members of increasingly violent right-wing white supremacist groups such as the neo-Nazi Heritage Front, Aryan Nations, National Alliance, and the Northern Hammerskins, experts say.

"Almost every single hate group in Canada is an offshoot of a US group," says Warren Kinsella, author of a book on Canadian hate groups. "If US groups become armed and dangerous, they'll quickly become armed and dangerous up here."

Older white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan aren't doing well in Canada today. Instead, more radical groups such as the Northern Hammerskins and Aryan Nations are growing the fastest and forming close ties with US counterparts, experts say. British Columbia is Canada's new extremist hot spot.

"You have the proliferation of armed compounds through the northwest -- especially in the US -- and the spread of some of the more militant factions into Canada," says Alan Dutton of the Vancouver-based Canadian Anti-Racism and Education Research Society. "In British Columbia, we are seeing nothing less than the rebirth of the Aryan Nations."

Because paramilitary activities are outlawed in Canada, some right-wing extremists are taking paramilitary training in the US, Canadian law-enforcement sources and other observers say.

The Hayden Lake, Idaho, compound of Aryan Nations is a training ground for Canadian members. And members of the Toronto-based Heritage Front have taken weapons training at the Otto, N.C., compound of the now-defunct white-supremacist group Church of the Creator.

Formed in 1989 by Wolfgang Droege, a disciple of former Klan leader David Duke, the Toronto-based Heritage Front boasts about 1,800 members -- making it Canada's largest extremist group. Recruiting from high schools and colleges, the Front encourages new members to acquire firearms certificates.

### Recruiting with music

Although the Front and other Canadian groups are not nearly as heavily armed as militias and like-minded extremist groups in the US, most share the language of white supremacy.

"I'm a proud white man who wants to defend the white race," George Burdi, a 24-year-old Canadian security chief for the Heritage Front, recently told MacLean's, a Canadian weekly magazine.

Articulating that language in a way that attracts new, young followers is Mr. Burdi's particular strength. He founded Resistance Records in Detroit in 1991. Detroit was a logical location because hate laws regulating free speech in Canada made his songs impossible to produce here.

His band, RaHoWa -- an acronym for Racial Holy War -- attracts youths with head-banging music and racist lyrics.

The Heritage Front also uses the relatively mild "white rights" message to recruit youths who might ordinarily be turned off by a more overtly racist message, say antiracist groups such as B'nai Brith Canada.

But once inside the group, members swim in a shared ideological pool of overt racism seething with hatred, a former Heritage Front member who recently defected told the Monitor.

"After I joined, I began to see everything more and more through this racist lens," says Elizabeth Moore, a 21-year-old Canadian. "University lectures, TV shows, books, everything seemed like some conspiracy to put down the white race."

The "bible" of the US "patriot movement" is the "Turner Diaries," a novel -- some have called it a blueprint for revolution -- in which a band of white rebels brings down an oppressive United States government. It is popular reading among Heritage Front members and other Canadian and US white supremacist groups.

"Turner Diaries" author William Pierce heads a white supremacist group called National Alliance in Hillsboro, W. Va. A branch recently opened in Ottawa. The racism embedded in "Turner Diaries" is masked behind the rhetoric of "antigovernment, anti-Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, anti-Federal Bureau of Investigation, antitax, antigun control," says Joe Roy, chief investigator for Klanwatch in Montgomery, Ala.

That's intentional, he says, because white supremacists have targeted the fast-growing militia movement to grow their cause. They play on militia members' fears of conspiracy and try to influence them with their racist agenda.

That is where Canada's Ernst Zundel comes in.

For 20 years, Mr. Zundel, the neo-Nazi whose home here was firebombed on Sunday, has catered to the conspiracy theories of US right-wing extremists. He has been on trial twice for hate-mongering. Convicted once, he was acquitted on appeal by Canada's Supreme Court.

Since then, Zundel has operated at the margins of the law, mostly mailing his literature outside Canada. It is the US militia movement, with its fears of a government conspiracy, that Zundel and others are trying to instill with a racist agenda.

Behind the boarded-up-and-barred windows, security cameras, and electronic locks of his home locals call "the bunker," Canada's best-known neo-Nazi is trying to "liberate" America.

Four powerful AM radio stations in the US air his show six days a week to 18 "prairie" states and six Canadian provinces. His "Another Voice of Freedom" television broadcasts, produced in his basement studio, air on 60 US public-access channels, he says.

"I target my market," says Zundel as he welcomes a newcomer to his claustrophobic confines. "The amount of books and videos I sell to the Rocky Mountain and prairie states is phenomenal compared with what I sell even in the biggest cities."

Zundel more closely resembles someone's cherubic grandfather than a Nazi apologist who denies 6 million Jews were murdered in Hitler's death camps. As one of the world's largest publishers of anti-Semitic materials, Zundel circulates literature to 40 countries. It is outlawed in Germany.

But no place else on earth is more receptive to his message than middle America, he says. "They say the truth makes us free. I really believe that."

Caption: PHOTOS: 1)NEO-NAZI: For 20 years, Toronto-based Ernst Zundel has catered to the conspiracy theories of US right-wing extremists.; 2)LEFT THE GROUP: Elizabeth Moore, ex-member of Heritage Front, a Canadian hate group, says when she was with them she saw 'everything through this racist lens. Lectures, TV, books ... seemed like some conspiracy.', PHOTOS BY MARK CLAYTON

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