

# Domestic Terrorism in the United States

- SRA-21l, Threat of Terrorism and Crime
- Penn State Altoona
- Larry Garvin

# Domestic Terrorism in the United States

- Is there Domestic Terrorism in the United States?
- Is there a lot?
- Is this a new phenomenon?

# Domestic Terrorism

- Terrorism within the United States with some basis in American culture
- The USA has been plague with terrorism
- Historical examples
  - Native American Indians – took their land, made it state tolerated to hurt Indians
  - Slavery – institutionalized slave trade, took people from their homes and shipped people across the world
  - Unfortunately, state tolerated, if not state sponsored terrorism has been part of American history

# Smallpox infested blankets?

- During the 1763 Indian uprising against the British at Fort Pitt, the British used chemical warfare to defeat the Shawnee Indians.
- British officers gave the Indians blankets infected with Smallpox to exterminate the Indians.
- This story is somewhat vague due to the fact that the Indians may have had Smallpox before the blankets were given to them.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iXfZ1eYdtA>

# John Brown

- Born in 1800 to parents that raised him to fear god and hate slavery
- John Brown was a radical objector who believed in the violent overthrow of the slavery system.
- He engaged in activities to prompt slaves to rebel and join the fight for their freedom.
- Brown was caught by General Lee and hanged in Charleston, South Carolina
- His actions garnered him many admirers
- <https://www.history.com/topics/john-brown/videos>

# John Brown

- During the Bleeding Kansas conflicts, Brown and his sons led attacks on pro-slavery residents.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqZJc7B8xsc>
- Justifying his actions as the will of God, Brown soon became a hero in the eyes of Northern extremists and was quick to capitalize on his growing reputation.
- By early 1858, he had succeeded in enlisting a small “army” of insurrectionists whose mission was to foment rebellion among the slaves.

# John Brown

- In 1859, Brown and 21 of his followers attacked and occupied the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry.
- Their goal was to capture supplies and use them to arm a slave rebellion.
- Brown was captured during the raid and later hanged, but not before becoming an anti-slavery icon.

# Early Studies of Domestic Terrorism

- Ted Robert Gurr and J. Bowyer Bell
  - Terrorism is a tactic used by the weak to intimidate the strong and, in turn, used by the strong to repress the weak THOUGHTS?
  - Terrorism in the nineteenth century was primarily aimed at protecting the status quo and the economic environment
  - Some vigilante actions equaled terrorism, e.g., the Ku Klux Klan

# Early Studies of Domestic Terrorism

- The shift toward left-wing violence was derived from foreign models
- Even though the United States has avoided significant domestic terrorism, both criminals and political activists have used terrorist tactics on a local level  
**REMEMBER SOME OF THE VIDEOS?**
- Nationalistic terrorists from Puerto Rico have been far more successful than revolutionaries at launching terrorist campaigns because they have an indigenous base of support

# Categorizing Domestic Terrorism

- Robert Gurr classified 3 types of Domestic Terrorism
  - **Vigilante terrorism**
    - The purpose of vigilantes is to defend the status quo or return to the status quo of an earlier period EXAMPLES?
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eiWIOKKuyGE>
  - **Insurgent terrorism**
    - Insurgent terrorism aims to change political policies through direct threats of action against the government EXAMPLES?
  - **Transnational terrorism**
    - Transnational terrorism occurs when nonindigenous terrorists cross national borders EXAMPLES?
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjZe-PBYUfc>

# Categorizing Domestic Terrorism

- Griset and Mahan
  - State sponsored
  - Left wing
  - Anarchists(ecological)
  - White supremacists
  - Religious extremists

# Yungher Defines Four Categories

- Left wing
- Right wing
- Ecological
- On behalf of their country of origin

# The Problem of Conceptualizing Terrorism in the United States

- Reasons police departments have not prepared for terrorism
  - American police officers do not spend a lot of time thinking about terrorism; A number of U.S. law enforcement agencies remain focused on local issues
  - Although U.S. law enforcement officers routinely deal with terrorism, they call it something else
  - Even after September 11 most domestic terrorism goes unnoticed
    - William Dyson has identified nearly three hundred terrorist incidents between September 11, 2001 and December 2004
  - Terrorism developed slowly in America. Terrorists did not routinely target the United States until 1982

# Left Wing Domestic Terrorism

- For the most part this is a phenomenon of the past – looking back sheds light on an American phase and the evolution of American society.
- Many lessons have been learned through growth.
- Two defunct examples.....

# Weather Underground Organization (WUO)

- The Weather Underground Organization (WUO), commonly known as the Weather Underground, was an American militant radical left-wing organization founded on the Ann Arbor campus of the University of Michigan.
- Weatherman organized in 1969 as a faction of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) composed for the most part of the national office leadership of SDS and their supporters.

# Weather Underground Organization (WUO)

- Their goal was to create a revolutionary party for the overthrow of the U.S. Government.
- With revolutionary positions characterized by black power and opposition to the Vietnam War, the group conducted a campaign of bombings through the mid-1970s and took part in actions such as the jailbreak of Dr. Timothy Leary.
- The "Days of Rage", their first public demonstration on October 8, 1969, was a riot in Chicago timed to coincide with the trial of the Chicago Seven.

# Weather Underground Organization (WUO)

- In 1970 the group issued a "Declaration of a State of War" against the United States government, under the name "Weather Underground Organization".
- The bombing campaign targeted mostly government buildings, along with several banks.

# Weather Underground Organization (WUO)

- The group stated that the government had been exploiting other nations by waging war as a means of solidifying America as a greater nation.
- Most were preceded by evacuation warnings, along with communications identifying the particular matter that the attack was intended to protest.
- No people were killed in any of their acts of property destruction, although three members of the group were killed in the [Greenwich Village townhouse explosion.](#)

# Weather Underground recap

- Emerged in response to the Vietnam War
- Composed of young, idealistic people
- Plotted the violent overthrow of the US government
- Engaged in bombings
- When the war ended, so did the group

# Black Panther Party

- The Black Panther Party (originally the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense) was a revolutionary black nationalist and socialist organization active in the United States from 1966 until 1982, with international chapters operating in the United Kingdom in the early 1970s, and in Algeria from 1969 until 1972.
- At its inception on October 15, 1966, the Black Panther Party's core practice was its armed citizens' patrols to monitor the behavior of officers of the Oakland Police Department and challenge police brutality in Oakland, California.
- In 1969, community social programs became a core activity of party members.
- The Black Panther Party instituted a variety of community social programs, most extensively the Free Breakfast for Children Programs, and community health clinics.

# Black Panther Party

- The party grew and made the greatest impact in the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Area, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Philadelphia.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover called the party "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country", and he supervised an extensive program (COINTELPRO) of surveillance, infiltration, perjury, police harassment, and many other tactics designed to undermine Panther leadership, incriminate party members, discredit and criminalize the Party, and drain the organization of resources and manpower.
- The program was also accused of assassinating Black Panther members.

# Black Panthers recap

- Emerged in the 1960's
- Combined a unique brand of Marxism, Mao, black nationalism, white revolution groups and the Nation of Islam
- Resulted in absurdly incompatible doctrine
- Multiple violent conflicts with law enforcement
- In the 1970's, internal conflicts over doctrine and criminal acts resulted in the demise of the group
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jY-qxHbvWFI>

# Right Wing Domestic Terrorism

- Largely religious and nonreligious racists
- Potentially very dangerous
- Believe God created the world for whites only
- Anti-Semitic
- Violently opposed to the federal government
- Extremely racist
- Estimated to number from 50k to millions???

# Christian Identity

- Christian Identity is a religious ideology popular in extreme right-wing circles.
- Adherents believe that whites of European descent can be traced back to the "Lost Tribes of Israel."
- Many consider Jews to be the Satanic offspring of Eve and the Serpent, while non-whites are "mud peoples" created before Adam and Eve.

# Christian Identity

- Its lethal racist and anti-Semitic beliefs are usually accompanied by extreme anti-government sentiments.
- Despite its small size, Christian Identity influences virtually all white supremacist and extreme anti-government movements.
- It has also been part of criminal behavior ranging from hate crimes to acts of terrorism.

# Christian Identity Movement profile

- **Origins:** Mid-20th Century (origins date to mid-19th Century) Concept originated in England during the Victorian era.
- Re-emerged in America during the mid 1900's as an anti-Semitic, racist, religious extremist movement.
- They believe Armageddon begins with the second coming of Christ which begins a massive war between white people and everyone else.
- **Ideology:** Anti-Semitic, racist, anti-government, conspiratorial
- **Outreach:** Churches, pamphlets, tracts, books, shortwave radio, Web sites  
Estimated Size: 25,000 to 50,000
- **Criminal activity:** Overall level of criminal activity is high, ranging from hate crimes to acts of terrorism

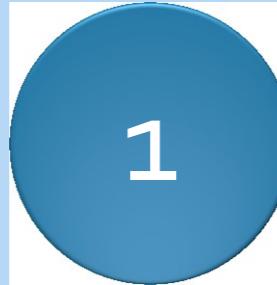
# The Posse Comitatus

- **Background/History:** The Posse Comitatus was an anti-government movement active in the 1970s and 1980s, many of whose leaders were Christian Identity adherents, and whose ideology formed the basis of later groups such as the Montana Freemen.
- The Posse died away in the late 1980s but former Posse leader James Wickstrom restarted it in the 1990s solely as a white supremacist group, shedding most of the Posse's pseudo legal theories.

# Posse Comitatus profile

- Located in Midwest and Northwest
- Loose network, no clear hierarchical organization
- Highest form of government is the local sheriff
- State and Federal governments viewed with disdain
- Racists
- Love conspiracy theories
- Tend to be religious

# Current Status of Left and Right Wing Terrorism



Left wing sought to improve all of mankind



right wing only cared about those like them



Left wing largely historical; right wing remains a potential danger

# Criteria for Analyzing Differences

Ideology

Economic views

Location

Tactics

Target selection

# Applied to Left Wing

Socialist Marxist  
agenda

Located in urban areas

Organized in cells

Use safe houses

Rob armored cars for  
funds

Target government  
facilities and capitalism

# Applied to Right Wing

Religious

Anti communist

Located in rural areas

Network nationally

Live in compounds

Rob armored cars for funds

Target government, different  
races and different religious  
groups

# Statistics On Each Group

Left

- Average age of 35
- 73% male
- 71% minorities
- 54% college degrees
- White collar professionals

Right

- Average age of 40
- 97% male
- 12% college degrees
- Unemployed, generally poor

# Ecological Terrorism

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Single issue terrorist who engage in terrorism on behalf of the earth or on animals

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Prefer to avoid killing people; direct attacks toward property instead

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Gradually becoming more violent

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In May of 2005, the FBI characterized them as:  
"Violent animal rights extremists...pose one of the  
most serious terrorism threats to the nation."

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# Earth Liberation Front(ELF)

- No central structure or leadership, nonhierarchical
- People join operations on an ad-hoc basis
- Movement's goal is to destroy the property of those who damage the earth
- Have caused millions of dollars in damage, but no one has died, yet
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAGxy85R38o>

# Animal Liberation Front(ALF)

- Loose collection of grassroots activists, no formal structure
- Engages in acts of arson, vandalism and attacks on companies the group considers abusive to animals

# Terrorism on Behalf of the Old Country

- Two categories
  - Attacks within the United States on behalf of a country of origin for a cause affiliated with that country of origin
  - Use of American money and freedoms to help the cause of terrorists in their country of origin

# FALN

- A Puerto Rican terror group dedicated to liberation of Puerto Rico
- Existed between 1974 and 1983
- Engaged in multiple bombings
- Largely defunct after being caught and imprisoned
- Clinton pardoned most of them at the end of his presidency
- The Macheteros are an offshoot of the FALN and still exist today

# American Muslim Support of Terrorists

- Recent increase in the number of Muslim immigrants to America
- A few use their opportunities here to support terrorism elsewhere in the world
- How?
- The Holy Land Foundation
  - Ran advertisements in magazines to help suffering children in the Holy Land
  - Actually a front for Hamas that funneled money to them

# Four Ways to Take Advantage

- Recruitment – can be easier because of religious freedom
- Fund raising - allowed in the USA, plus easier to money launder
- Networking – Muslims typically stay together just like other groups
- Direct organization - Purposeful establishment of terror cells in America

# Muslim Terror Groups in US

- Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hezbollah are all believed to have established terror cells in every state in the US

# Muslim Terror Groups in US

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QeBuWVkUL4A>

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- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4V5-6ZlOA8>