

BEN LEE

WHAT IS SIEGE CULTURE?

Although a fringe set of beliefs, Siege Culture has underpinned many of the recent counter terrorism cases linked to the extreme-right in the UK.

Siege Culture is the most extreme interpretation of fascism and national socialism yet seen. Siege Culture supporters have an anti-democratic, anti-enlightenment, racist and white supremacist worldview. They believe they are Aryans, a specific and superior group at the top of a racial hierarchy. They are hostile towards non-whites, non-heterosexuals, Jews, and government. Siege Culture includes the idea of 'The System', a conspiracy of the government, Jews, capitalists, and all other forces acting against Aryan interests.

Within Siege Culture, fascism is treated as a higher truth and a natural state in which Aryans will dominate all others. As a result, Siege Culture believes that any softening of their message to increase their appeal is impossible, and that any form of politics or compromise is inherently flawed. Siege Culture is critical of other right-wing actors who are seen as being insufficiently committed.

Siege Culture argues that societies are in a period of involution: a period of decay caused by weakness. The eventual collapse of society and destruction of The System is considered inevitable. Collapse is a necessary precursor to the rise of the organic state and a return to the natural hierarchy.

ACCELERATIONISTS

Accelerationism refers to a violent strategy in which terrorism is used to hasten societal collapse by provoking reactions from authorities and exacerbating existing social tensions. Although it did not originate with Siege Culture, the term has come to be closely associated with the space to the extent that Siege Culture inspired groups are often referred to as accelerationists.

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OCCULTISM

Although cultic influences have been a persistent feature on the fringes of the extreme-right, from 2016 onwards occultism has played a greater role in Siege Culture. In some cases, this has taken the form of Christian Identity, Esoteric Hitlerism, and other beliefs that align heavily with racism. Since 2017, Left Hand Path Satanism including the groups Order of the Nine Angles and Tempel ov Blood, have also featured in Siege Culture. The incorporation of these ideas has been divisive and caused splits within Siege Culture.

AESTHETICS

Performance is a key aspect of Siege Culture. Activists linked to groups and brands are conscious of how they present themselves. Militancy, hypermasculinity, firearms, and neo-Nazi symbols are key aspects of online and (on rare occasions) public performance. Several key aesthetics have emerged from Siege Culture, most influential has been the work of Canadian propagandist Dark Foreigner.

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ORGANISATION

Siege Culture is not a single ideology with a uniform set of beliefs. There is no acknowledged leader or single dominant personality. The centre of the subculture is online. At various times this has included some key web forums (Iron March, Fascist Forge) and websites (Siege Culture, Noose, American Futurist). Siege Culture also persists on Telegram and other encrypted applications as well as less moderated platforms such as Odysee and Internet Archive. Some activists have founded small groups (such as Sonnenkrieg Division and Feuerkrieg Division). Online organising undoubtedly contributes to the lack of a uniform ideology and a strong transnational perspective. The decentralised nature of Siege Culture has left it vulnerable to ideological drift and introspection, including rifts caused by the influence of occultism.

VIOLENCE AND OFFENDING

The relationship between Siege Culture and violence is complex. Militancy is a key element of how Siege Culture presents itself. However, to date, successful and clearly identifiable right-wing terrorist attacks associated with Siege Culture have been rare. Plotting activity and actual violence have been far outstripped by online rhetoric and overall presentation.

Siege Culture has however contributed to the large upsurge in right-wing terrorism offending in the UK. The proscription of National Action in 2016 was a watershed moment and the numbers of right-wing terrorist offenders in prison, many convicted of membership offences, began to rise from 2017 onwards. Members of successor organisations, such as Sonnenkrieg Divison, have been convicted of terrorism offences including encouraging terrorism.

Despite proscription, the online subculture and networks that underpin Siege Culture remain persistent. Militancy and 'edginess' are a core part of the scene's aesthetic. Recent publications have sought to place renewed emphasis on direct



Image: Extract from an Atomwaffen Fission pamphlet

action. It is currently not possible to say if these efforts have been successful at encouraging more violence. To read more of Ben's work on Siege Culture and accelerationism in the UK please see our CREST guide at www.crestresearch.ac.uk/resources/siege-culture-and-accelerationism-in-the-uk

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