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Lene T. Vallestad

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CONS, EX-CONS AND ODINISM ACROSS CULTURAL AND
NATIONAL BORDERS: WHY ATTEMPT TO PROCURE
KNOWLEDGE AND DARE WE NOT?

by

Lene T. Vallestad
Bachelor of Arts, University of North Dakota, 2000

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

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August

2004

This thesis, submitted by Lene T. Vallestad in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

James H. Larson
(Chairperson)

Richard L. Smith

Janet Kelly Moen

This thesis meets the standards of appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

Joseph D. Benoit
Dean of the Graduate School

August 25, 2007
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ABSTRACT

The occurrence of right-wing extremism is becoming more prominent in the social landscape of Western European countries, including Norway, and in the United States. Amongst these movements one will find groups that base and justify their racist behavior in religious beliefs. Odinism, a pre-Christian, Norse neopagan faith, has merged racist beliefs and violent behavior with religious creed and ideology, and is a prime example of these right-wing religions.

During the 1990s Odinism emerged as one of the most dynamic trends within the extreme right-wing milieu in the U.S. and Western Europe. The popularity of Odinism today is connected to the revival of paganism in general, which includes a back to the land ideology; which rejects modernism, capitalism, and commercialism. It offers a new grand narrative that is appealing to those marginalized by the globalized society. The penitentiaries of the U.S. have been noted as viable grounds for Odinist recruitment and it is currently the fastest growing religion behind prison walls.

This study provides an account for the social processes of which this ideology is a product. It attempts to depict the forces behind this right-wing religion and on those grounds emphasizes the importance for further research on Odinist prisoners in Norway. The main argument being that the prison culture in the U.S. have nourished the increase in Odinist prisoners and if Norway, being part of the global society, is heading the same direction this expansion might give insight to potential development of Odinism in Norwegian penitentiaries.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This conceptual and exploratory paper is an attempt to use the demonstrable expansion of Odinism in the penitentiaries of the United States as a way of forming a perspective from which to view the potential development of Odinism in Norwegian prisons. This is accomplished, in part, by describing extensive literatures from larger social contexts including different aspects of globalization, the increase in multicultural societies, the role of capitalism in the expansion of prison systems, right-wing extremism as a social movement, and Odinism as a special case which is influenced by these processes.

Globalization is an international system where innovation replaces tradition, where the present or future replaces the past, and where there is a rapid acceleration of human flows and changes in lifestyles. This is a system, and a process, that is hard to live in for those who prefer some measure of security in the present and future, where changes happen so rapidly it is hard to keep up. The ongoing dynamic process of integration, an overarching feature of globalization, has the ability to produce a powerful backlash from those “left behind.”

One of these powerful backlashes is the phenomenon of Odinism. Odinism is a pre-Christian, Norse neopagan religion that supports extreme right-wing attitudes in religious canon. Religious creed is a powerful motivation and justification for human

behavior and the violent warrior aspect of Odinism can lay the foundations for violent behavior towards individuals or groups that are perceived as enemies. Odinism is a reaction to the clash between the modern world and the traditional one. In a globalized system, traditional values are challenged and the means to protect these values, in the view of Odinists, are through brute force. They practice a doctrine of necessity where violence is a justified must to save society from cosmic evil.

Odinism is spreading widely in America's prison system. It is the fastest growing religion within penitentiaries and is admired by the extreme right inside and outside prison walls. The U.S. continues to be increasingly in the "prison business" and the last 15 years have seen the largest prison expansion ever in U.S. history. "The United States, "the land of the free," rang in the year 2000 as the world's number one-jailer (Wynn, 2001, p. 9)." Not only has the number of prisoners increased, but the average amount of time spent behind bars has grown; today, it is estimated that 1 out of every 32 Americans is under the control of the criminal justice system. In comparison to other countries that keep official crime statistics, the U.S. has the highest crime rate and the harshest sentences (Ross & Richards, 2003). "Although America comprises fewer than 5 percent of the world's population, it holds a quarter of the world's prisoners (Wynn, 2001, p. 9)."

Prisoner culture and organizational aspects of the prison industry are like natural fertilizer for the growth of religious extremism. Even though many of the Odinist adherents are confined behind prison walls, their ideology is not. The permeability of prison walls is essential in Odinist recruitment and the flow of information and people does not seem to be hindered by the "confinement" of prison. Odinist ideology follows convicts after release and goes back in with them if they return.

As racial diversity in Norway increases, there are tensions building noticeably amongst extreme right-wing groups and within the larger Norwegian society. Odinism is a known phenomenon in Norway, but there is little knowledge of the Odinist milieu and even less is known about Odinist adherents within the Norwegian prison system. Recruitment through the internet is extensive and transatlantic ties have been made. In an attempt to learn more about the Odinist milieu in Norway, I believe there are grounds for looking at phenomena in the U.S. in order to gain greater understanding of where Norwegian society is headed, particularly in light of the barrage of information from across the Atlantic and the pressures of a globalized world. Norway has followed the U.S. in many areas and, for all we know now, it might be heading the same way with regards to the “prison industry” and Odinist recruitment within penitentiaries

Conceptualization of Essential Terms

I have included dual research orientations to take into account the broader concepts of deviance and the labeling perspective. When writing about racists and racism, religious cults or sects, and prisoners, I have chosen to attempt to depict individuals and groups that, in general, are stigmatized and demonized by the larger society. Many of the terms used for these groups or individuals have negative connotations. A large volume of research has been done on stigmatized groups and individuals but much of this research, however, has been done by journalists, academics or groups that are far from sympathetic to the people that they have studied. In certain circumstances, this is for perfectly understandable reasons and, to their credit, these researchers are also very honest about their biases. Even though I have gained information from research done by some of these biased researchers, I have also used

literature by people who are sympathetic to these groups or individuals. I have thus included literature written by people who explicitly state the importance of, not necessarily objectivity, but the need to be open to the fact that these people might be living up to their stigma or that they are indeed genuinely affable people with interesting views which can give us greater insight into why people do what they do or believe what they believe.

Kaplan and Weinberg (1998) point out a salient negative side to the labeling of right-wing groups by biased researchers. They note that there is a price to be paid when this is done. "The price is that these efforts distort the reality. The groups and individuals who make up the radical right movement may have embarked on a destructive path, but they are often more complicated, considerably more personable, and far more nuanced than is suggested by the caricatures (2)." Gardell (2000) takes note of the same thing and explicitly emphasize that when using the word *racist* he detaches the word "from any moral assumptions and simply signifies a person who believes that mankind may be classified into any given number of "races" that "by nature" differ from each other not only in physical but also in mental and moral qualities; from this perspective, the races of mankind are often metaphorically thought of as "organisms" with different "personalities." A racist asserts that every individual member of a certain race shares fundamental mental predispositions unique to that race. To a racist, the importance of race goes beyond race as a social fact or construct generated by an essentialist reading of racial classification – for a racist, race determines how people *are*. Race is thought to provide man with his inner essence of which physical traits may be indicators. Accordingly, the color of the skin does not determine how people are; rather,

innate mental qualities are believed to determine the physical characteristics. This does not necessitate a hierarchical ordering of distinct races in terms of “superior” or “inferior,” even though this often has been the case (29).”

With regards to prisoners specifically, Ross and Richards (2003) have done extensive and valuable research and are unmistakable in their critique of research carried out by criminologists who are insensitive in their use of terms referring to convicts. They are consistent in their phraseology and use only terms such as “convict,” “exconvict” and “prisoner.” They avoid using the words “inmate” and “offender” because “inmate generally refers to persons confined to an institution, such as a prison, hospital, or asylum. Thus, the term implies that prisoners are persons who are somehow physically or mentally impaired or suffering from some sort of sickness. Too often the term “inmate” is used by correctional workers to demean and dehumanize persons. From the convict’s perspective, “inmate” is a managerial term that is used to insult prisoners. And, when convicts call another person an inmate, it is understood to be disrespectful. Inmates are understood to be prisoners that conform to institutional policy, follow the rules, obey orders, and betray the trust of other prisoners. They may be too familiar with or dependent on staff, or operate as snitches (13).” They avoid using “offender” due to the fact that someone might be convicted for a criminal offense, but that does not automatically make them an “offender.”

Whether we are discussing racists or convicts, they are often all considered to be social deviants. Largely, deviance is nonconformity to larger social norms, but it is important to take note that deviance is a socially relative phenomenon. Conceptions of normality and deviance are relative to social context and highly variable between

societies and different subcultures. When using the terms *deviant* or *deviance*, I want to underline that these are not expressions of a personal view, rather a view that is held by the larger society where these groups or individuals are found.

I have tried to be as unbiased as possible in my writing in that way and have attempted to use terms in the least offensive way possible. I have also made an effort to be consistent in their usage as suggested by researchers that have more experience and knowledge than I have. This is also a guideline, not a rule, I have chosen in high regard for those I have been in contact with who have been extremely helpful in sharing their views and knowledge with me, and who, despite our differences, have treated me with respect and kindness. Some people I have quoted might have used terms that I, personally, would not have chosen, on the other hand, this should give a more real depiction of the controversy surrounding the topics discussed in this thesis.

Chapter Overview

Chapter II serves as an “overview” and sees Odinism through a wide-angle lens. It discusses some of the powerful forces interacting in a globalized world and presents Odinism as a product of, and a reaction to, these global dimensions. It emphasizes the changes in religious institutions and describes Odinism as one of the new religious responses spurred by globalization. An extensive part of this chapter elaborates on Odinistic beliefs, rites, and religious practices. It investigates the evolving transatlantic linkages between European and American right-wing extremism of which Odinism is an integral part.

Chapter III is devoted to a comparative analysis of the criminal justice systems and penal institutions in the U.S. and Norway. It reviews the major organizational

aspects of the penitentiaries, prisoner culture, and the idea of “prisonization.” With a critical view, a particular emphasis is put on the detached and impersonal criminal justice system of the U.S., and how global traits, such as free-market economy, have led to privatization of the U.S. prison industry.

Chapter IV focuses on the unique prisoner situation in the U.S. and how cultural aspects of the penitentiaries lay the foundations for religious extremism. It illuminates the importance of prisoner-outreach programs for Odinist recruitment within penitentiaries, and the continuing relationship they facilitate when prisoners return to mainstream society. This chapter also considers how recidivism and outside contact keeps this religion viable, and how prison culture is brought out on the streets when prisoners are released. The chapter also presents one of the most well-known convicted Odinists in the U.S. and the impact his work has had on the extreme right inside and outside prison walls.

Finally, Chapter V takes a close-up view of the two most notorious Odinists in Norway. It ascertains that very little is known about the Odinist milieu in Norway, and, in light of danger assessments presented by the Norwegian police regarding groups connected to the extreme right, considers the need for further academic research. In an attempt to procure more knowledge on Odinist prisoners, I suggest and promote a method referred to as Convict Criminology. The notion that Norwegian society might, to a certain extent, be heading in the same direction as the U.S. with regard to the many complex dimensions of globalization suggests that we should take notice of what is going on with the “Big Brother” in the West. This will help us understand better the social

forces that may contribute to increases in Odinist adherents inside Norwegian penitentiaries.

CHAPTER II
PLACING ODINISTS IN THE LARGER SCHEME

Globalization

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.”

– John Donne

Economic and cultural transaction across the world has been going on for thousands of years and is not a new phenomenon. In the past few decades, though, the quantity of this flow has expanded rapidly and the interdependence of world society has increased.¹ This flux has been termed globalization and became widely used in the 1980s (Outhwaite & Bottomore, 1994). It is not a trend, but a continuous developing international system that has replaced the Cold War system that dominated the international arena since 1945. Globalization is defined by Newman (1997, p. 310) as “the process through which people’s lives all around the world become economically, politically, environmentally, and culturally interconnected.”

The speed and range of today’s communication technology give people all over the globe almost immediate access over almost unlimited space to other cultures. The global flow does not only limit itself to communication technology or other types of technology, in addition, there are shifting flows of people, in terms of tourists, guest workers, refugees, exiles, immigrants and students. The global trade market has

¹ For an excellent introduction on “the new world order” and the complexities of globalization, see Thomas L. Friedman’s well written and comprehensible *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 2000.

established a continuing flourishing flow of capital, and the media and transnational organizations such as the EU, NAFTA, EFTA and the UN have opened for “the flow of ideological and political ideas such as progress, human rights, development, freedom, and democracy (Gardell, 2003, p. 6).”

Some argue that globalization cannot only be seen as growth of world unity but has to be viewed as a redefinition of time and distance in the social world (Giddens, 1993). While others view the increasingly strong interconnection between cultures around the world as convergence to a single “global culture” where any type of boundary, whether it be traditional geographic, political, economic, and cultural, will eventually become obsolete (Newman, 1997). In most other places on the globe, except perhaps in the West, globalization is seen as an attempt by the Western countries, with the United States in the lead, to take control over the world. Modernization in the West has “exported” institutions in its own image, such as capitalist economy, technology, nation-states and scientific rationality, which in turn has fostered the globalization process, but contrary to Western imperialism, globalization is more than the expansion of one culture. The global flows, although still unbalanced in relation to power, do not have one colonial center. No single nation has monopoly of the globalizing process (Beyer, 1994).

In the context of an emerging global culture, the relativization of *all* cultures is a fact. For many Westerners this is a painful realization and this has spurred, what James Gardner (1997) refers to as, “the age of extremism.” Gardner mainly refers to right-wing extremism, but both Gardell (2003) and Zellner (1995) refer to reactionary extremism in this context, for example in the United States, ranging from Pat Buchanan to the militia movement and neonationalists, to the emergence of the Aryan revolutionary

underground. The idea of loyalty to a global society goes against what is considered loyalty to an American nation; these ideals cannot coexist. “Loyalty to global society is disloyalty to America, Buchanan declares, which might be confusing to neonationalist activists of Asia, Africa or America to whom globalization equals an American attempt at world dominion (Gardell, 2003, p. 10).” Along with a high degree of mistrust to their governments, citizens of the developed world are increasingly distrustful of their political leaders and institutions. Leonard Weinberg (1998) points out that the politics of extremism is likely to occur under conditions associated with “mass society.” They perceive the political goals as trying to tear down and/or “contaminate” traditional institutions such as family, religion, and education. These groups also often adhere to conspiracy theories, such as Zionist Occupational Government (ZOG) or apocalyptic certitude. The conspiracy theories frequently revolve around a conviction “that racial enemies have gained control over all “the once white countries” (Gardell, 2003, 10).” These countercultures² are culturally and politically critical and reject the most important norms of the larger society, such as equality for all, and fervently endorse the opposite.

In a globalized world where positivist science³ lays the foundation for rationalism as the prevailing modern mode of knowledge, the secularization⁴ process becomes even

² Countercultures are determined by exactly what they oppose in the mainstream’s conception of reality. They have common features with the larger society they are opposing but both the larger society and the counterculture tend to ignore these similarities (Gardell 2003). For further insight and case studies on countercultures in the United States, see William W. Zellner’s *Countercultures; a Sociological Analysis*, 1995.

³ Positivism is essentially a philosophy of science founded by August Comte. The philosophy today is, in short, based on an empirical view on nature of science and promotes a clear division between facts and values (McDonald 1993)

⁴ There are large differences within the sociological community on the meaning and importance of the secularization thesis. Alan Aldridge (2000), senior lecturer in sociology at the University of Nottingham, defines secularization as “the process by which religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance (1).”

more prevalent. With its anthropocentric view, concerned only with the damaging impact of the problems on human well-being and conservation only to secure the maintenance of natural resources for continued human consumption, rationalist consciousness focuses only on the physical world of the human species rather than spiritual realms. This, in turn, provides efficiency arguments where the objective positivist way of thinking provides universal truths and validity. Based in the certainty of universal truths is a belief that the ground for overcoming territorial barriers and unite the world has been laid, which spurs the globalization process even further.

Friedman (2000) pinpoints one single characteristic that is new and exceptional for globalization as a new international system and that is the balance between individuals and nation-states. Superpowers are not new in international context but single individuals with the power to eradicate thousands of people, is a new phenomenon. Because of a globalized world people now have the power and influence to affect markets and nation-states in ways never believed possible. “Individuals can increasingly act on the world stage directly – unmediated by a state. So you have today not only a superpower, not Supermarkets..., but you now have Super-empowered individuals (p. 14).”

Under the globalization system you will find both clashes of civilization and the homogenization of civilizations, both environmental disasters and amazing environmental rescues, both the triumph of liberal, free-market capitalism and backlash against it, both the durability of nation-states and the rise of enormously powerful nonstate actors. (Friedman, 2000, p. xxi)

Globalization and Neonationalism

Nationalism is not a new ideology and has played a vital role in all the political struggles of the twentieth century; and for most people, the term creates a vivid

association to ideologies related to World War II.⁵ Nationalism is closely related to the idea of nation-state, “a sovereign entity dominated by a single nation (McLean & McMillan, 2003, p. 364),” where the population inhabiting the entity share a common culture, language and ethnicity as well as strong historical continuity.

Nationalism stands in uneasy contrast to the collective international “collaboration” promoted by globalization and its supranationalism⁶, the new nationalistic feelings evoked by globalization is referred to as ‘neonationalism’. The previous importance of the nation-state has been weakened by the globalization process through an increasing focus on a transnational social reality. The term *global village* has been used to emphasize the current world situation. The term depicts the world as a physically smaller place and the increasingly interconnection between peoples and cultures. Gardell (2003) argues that it is a paradox that the same social process that promotes supranationalism and international cooperation has invoked the incentive of numerous neonationalist projects. The global flow of people and the continuing shifting of nation-state borders have made even the most ethnic pure nation-states multinational, multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual, and multireligious. The globalized world introduces cultures and religions to each other and asserts that this, in turn, will end up in a deeper understanding and acceptance of “that will culminate in a single humanity cooperating for the future survival of the planet and mankind -- and while this trend most

⁵ On nationalism in the 20th century, see Eric Hobsbawm’s *Ekstremismens Tidsalder, Det 20. Århundredets Historie (Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991)*, 1994.

⁶ Supranationalism “refers to the formal transfer of legal authority and decision-making power from member states to an institution or international body (McLean & McMillan 2003, p.527),” such as the European Union.

certainly is discernible – an opposing reaction in terms of ethnic, racial and religious fragmentation is simultaneously identifiable, as evidence by the rise of religious fundamentalism (Gardell, 2003, p. 3).⁷

Gardell (2003) argues that whereas nationalists have stressed the importance of cultural homogeneity of the nation based on tracing the “original” people back to a specific ethnic or religious group, neonationalists may still “biologize” the concept of nation but the “original connotation of “kin related by blood” has thus in practice been detached from nation (5)” as a result of the current transnational global reality where people of all ethnicities are spread out. Nation no longer necessarily means one physical, bordered area but can just as well be an “imagined community” symbolizing feelings of solidarity and belonging between people across time and space. Gardell emphasizes that even though individuals feel this type of identification with people they have never even met does not essentially mean that “imagined” equals unreal.

He distinguishes between three types of neonationalism but emphasizes that the categories are not by any means static or mutually exclusive. First, *Ethnonationalism* focuses on the idea that ethnicity is the foundation for an independent nation-state, like the Basques who, even though they have independent parliament, demands full independence from Spain. Second, *Racial nationalism*, emphasizes race as the determine factor for self-determination in a state. All races are entitled to their own state. Gardell

⁷ Fundamentalists have “a militant desire to defend religion against the onslaughts of modern, secular culture; their principal weapon is their insistence on the inerrancy of scripture (Hawley 1994, p.3).” For discussions on globalization and fundamentalism, see Peter Beyer’s *Religion and Globalization*, 1994 and Paul Heelas’ *Religion, modernity and postmodernity*, 1998.

gives the example of the Nation of Islam⁸ and other black separatist movements in the United States. Third and last, *Religious nationalism*, argues that people who belong to a certain religion belong to the same nation, such as Zionist Jews who are dedicated to the establishment of a politically viable, internationally recognized Jewish state in the biblical land of Israel (Jews can also be defined as an ethnic group).

Globalization and Religion

Most discussions regarding religion involve, to one degree or another, the idea of secularization. The secularization theory, or the idea of it, can be traced back to the Enlightenment. When the idea was first put out there it was assumed that modernization, no matter what, would lead to a decline in religious significance and influence on both the individual and societal level. To a certain extent the process has been visible especially in Western Europe but it has gone by unnoticed in the United States, which to most people would seem contradictory considering that the U.S. is seen as the most modernized country of all. Hence, secularization failed its prophecy, however, it did make its mark on the world, just not in the way it was foreseen (Haynes, 1998).

Secularization in the United States and Western Europe

Religious behavior in the US definitely falsifies the secularization hypothesis. If religion is measured by breadth of commitment to religious institutions and persistence of ritualized behavior, while living in the most modernized country in the world, Americans

⁸ Nation of Islam (NOI) was founded in Detroit in 1930 by W.D. Fard. Under the leadership of Malcom X during the 1960s NOI became a notorious advocate of black separatism, black nationalism and black pride. During the leadership of Imam Muhammad a more radical branch of NOI was initiated by Louis Farrakhan. This radical branch of NOI seeks to avoid assimilation to the larger American society and promote a separate African-American infrastructure. They highly value pillars such as nuclear family and the nation as God and believe that the larger society is suffering serious decline in moral and ethical standards. The radical NOI is militant and has taken the law into own hands on many occasions (Haynes 1998).

report “strong loyalties to their faiths and experience religion as a significant force in their lives. . . . Religious enthusiasm in the United States may ebb and flow but it has *not* followed the steady downward spiral predicted by the naive version of the modernization model (Haynes, 1998, p. 27).” Measuring religion in a society by depth and quality of commitment, a more sophisticated secularization theory has had an impact in the sense that religion has become a private matter rather than a force in public arenas (Haynes, 1998).

In Western Europe, many countries such as England, Sweden and Norway⁹ have state churches, where church and state are not separated. Here, the original secularization idea has proceeded a long way. Church attendance is clearly declining which leads to falling income levels for the Church. Fewer and fewer people become religious professionals and the social significance of religion is declining. The institution of the church was and is slowly but surely removed as a source authority between God and man (Bruce, 1998). This process was mainly spurred by the Reformation and it was insisted that “all people had a responsibility for their own spiritual state (Bruce, 1998, p. 30).”

A More Sophisticated Secularization Theory

The encompassing globalizing process has created difficult conditions for traditional religious forms and it is argued that traditional religions no longer have the public influence as that they used to (Beyer, 1994). “The shift toward functional differentiation gradually diminished the field of competence of God and the religious

⁹ For discussions on religion in modern Norway, see Pål Repstad’s *Religiøst Liv i det Moderne Norge; Et Sosiologisk Kart (Religious Life in Modern Norway; A Sociological Map)*, 1996, and Karl Milton Hartveit’s *Jakten på det Hellige; Nyåndelige bevegelser i Norge (Hunting for the Sacred; New spiritual movements in Norway)*, 1999.

elite in favor of other experts, such as secular physicians, scientists, politicians, teachers, and attorneys (Gardell, 2003, p. 17).” It is important to take notice of where the shift has taken place, though. Religion and its role have been redefined in a globalized context, but it has not lost its significance. The secular shape society has taken means that “traditional religious forms are no longer definitive for the society as a whole, but can still direct the lives of individuals and subgroups (Beyer, 1994, p. 70).” With this statement Beyer does not claim that religion no longer plays a definite role in society, he focuses on how the *traditional religious forms* have changed and how a *secular society* has led to privatization (much like a consumers’ choice) within religion. Religion has become a private matter and he distinguishes between public and private spheres locating religion primarily in the latter. Privatization is not equivalent to decline in influence in the public sphere it has laid the groundwork for a renewed and different type of religious influence.

The Paradox of Global Religious Revivalism

Paradoxical as it seems, globalization, at the same time as it pushes a secularization process where religious influence has been redefined, also stimulates religious revivalism. “Today, with some exceptions, the world is as strongly religious as it ever was (Haynes, 1998, p. 215),” and “during the past few decades tens of thousands of new religious movements have emerged worldwide (Gardell, 2003, p. 2).”

The structures in modern global society encourage the rise of pluralistic and voluntary religion among individuals (Beyer, 1994) and there are many factors that alone or combined give nourishment to this religious surge. First, globalization brings along a sense of chaos and information overflow and people feel overwhelmed and insecure. The

secular society, in addition to a specialized system, does not articulate “a sense of higher values and in no field of activity is God or morality functionally relevant (Gardell, 2003, p. 12).” The global system undermines traditional value systems and creates unequal opportunities within and among nations. It produces a deep sense of alienation in people and stimulates a search for an identity to give life meaning and purpose and answers to questions that deal with, for example, ontology (the nature of existence). A fragmented society fails to give answers to holistic issues, such as the meaning of life. Second, the globalized world is a world with primary focus on the autonomous individual. Whereas the traditional religious communities were based on *pistis* (faith or belief) the new religious landscape is colored by the goal of *gnosis* (spiritual insight). The former is related to faith and trust in an external authority, a factor for support, while the latter reflects a wisdom and insight that is attained for personal authority and self reliance. Third, the self reliant individual has more choices and opportunities than ever before. Consumerism and religion seem to be in stark contrast but in the new religious landscape “consumerism can be presented as a support to the sacred realm (Aldridge, 2000, p. 187).” “The decline in the main religious traditions leaves every large numbers of people free to experiment; free because they are not personally tied to an older form and free because the decline of that older form reduces its ability to stigmatize cultic alternatives as ‘deviant’ (Bruce, 1998, p. 27).” With an increasing cultural exchange including new awareness of religions and cultures the modern human can pick and chose what they want to believe in and how they want to practice. The consumer society has no limits and even the best fitted religion is “shopped” for, this is the ultimate personalized and privatized side to the new religious revivalism.

Types of Religious Responses Spurred by Globalization

Religion is a social mode of communication that gives explanation to holistic issues (such as the meaning of life) where sacred symbols are used, whether that communication is language, physical objects, a way of dressing, or music. Several dichotomies have been used in defining religion, such as profane/sacred, natural/supernatural, nomos/cosmos, and empirical/super-empirical (Beyer, 1994). Beyer uses the dichotomy immanence/transcendence where immanent is the whole world and transcendent is what gives the immanent a meaningful context. Therefore, religion is not only a way of communication between humans but it also provides a mode of communication between humans and the transcendent. This communication offers ways of overcoming or managing the indeterminable, and the consequences of the indeterminable, that is defining the social conditions of the social world today (Beyer, 1994).

Gardell (2003) differentiates between three different types of religious responses to globalization: fundamentalism, interreligious cooperation, and new religious movements. The religious responses are not clear cut and we can often see different fundamentalist groups cooperating or new religious movements with fundamentalist traits.

Fundamentalism¹⁰ is, first and foremost, reactive and oppositional responses to certain societal and cultural aspects, such as individualism, scientific naturalism and perceived drastic changes in moral values. It is both a reaction to and a product of its

¹⁰ Fundamentalism had become a loaded word but the term was first used by and of Protestant evangelicalism in the US during the 1920s. The term has later become to include religious groups that have a militant approach to modernism and holds a negative connotation (Stratton Hawley 1994).

time (Hawley, 1994) and there is more talk of “family resemblances” than common traits when speaking of various fundamentalist groups because they differ according to the religion concerned and the society they are in opposition to (Aldridge, 2002).

Fundamentalists try collectively to, as in opposition to individually, make order out of perceived collapse of traditional values, societal chaos and a society where scientific naturalism and relativism are threats to a supernatural belief system of one truth and one way. They believe they are the chosen people and their great agony is the individualistic society where people pick God and not the other way around, because a choice of God’s existence is not to be made by any human.

Fundamentalists are characterized by their militant oppositional ways of working and stand forcefully by the inerrancy of their scriptures and beliefs rooted in the nostalgia of an idealized past of traditional family life, home and community. They are often politically engaged and their epistemological style is characterized by universal, ahistorical truths. The idea of gender and gender roles are also prevalent in fundamentalist groups. Many will go as far as to say that gender ideology is fundamental to fundamentalism (Hawley, 1994). To many fundamentalists, the liberation of women is the prominent feature of Western secularism. It is seen as a threat to their ideal past where family life is viewed with great importance. In a perceived moral decline, women have become the scapegoats and need to be controlled.¹¹ Once seen in a global perspective fundamentalism makes perfect sense. Fundamentalism is an attempt to escape the confusion and frustration of relativism and return to clear cut answers. It is a conscious choice of authority instead of uncertainty (Aldridge, 2000).

¹¹ For an insightful and elaborate discussion on gender and fundamentalism, see Hawley’s *Fundamentalism & Gender*.

In explaining interreligious cooperation, Gardell (2003) emphasizes the conjoining effort to fight the perceived “evil” outcomes of the globalizing process, e.g. individualism. He also stresses the underlying assumption of globalization of deeper understanding, openness, and respect for other cultures and beliefs. Many interreligious cooperations are based in a belief that blame is not to be given to certain groups of people. They refrain from scapegoating or demonizing groups such as homosexuals, women, Jews, or Muslims. The perceived “evils” of the globalized world might differ from the various religious groups, and even diverse religious fundamentalist movements might cooperate, which seem quite contradicting considering their firm belief that there is one and one truth only. A defined common enemy can unite more than expected.

The final religious response to globalization that Gardell (2003) discusses is newly created religious movements. These groups are reactions to and upshots of the freedom to experiment with religion and spirituality. The decline in traditional religious forms has opened for less stigmatization of cults and sects. When this freedom is combined with a consumerist society and the idea of picking and choosing whatever is found interesting and fulfilling to the individual, an enormous creativity and mixing and matching when it comes to new beliefs and practices are found, such as uniting Norse mythology with Hindu teachings and practices¹². The variations are immense and Gardell (2003) states that conservative estimations have suggested that the United States have between one and two thousand such movements and around one thousand are active on the European continent, almost three thousand in Japan, while in Africa there are more than ten thousand.

¹² For further reading on the Norse-Hindu connections, see Gardell (2003), p.182-190.

Common for many new religious movements is their short lifespan. Some cults and sects are very particular about who their members are and have clear and strong doctrines, but in general the adherents of new religious movements find themselves belonging to more than one group simultaneously and there are often “free flows” of ideologies and practices. To estimate the size and membership numbers of these groups is therefore hard even in regard to those cults¹³ or sects¹⁴ that have very selective members because they are often not very open about numbers. Gardell differentiates between three types of movements based on how they are organized and their orientation and he emphasizes, again, that these are not absolute typologies and that they often share characteristics:

(1) the New Age scene, which is open and constantly transforming, populated by individual seekers who freely choose from a multitude of spiritual techniques and ideas offered by religious entrepreneurs; (2) new religious movements (“sects” or “cults”), which possess hierarchical organizational structures, systematic doctrines, and high missionary ambitions; and (3) pagan groups, which are autonomous or federated local communities with low missionary ambitions, revolving around reconstructions of premodern pagan tradition. (Gardell, 2003, p. 15).

¹³ According to *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* is cult “a small group of religious activists, whose beliefs are typically syncretic, esoteric and individualistic. Although it is related to the concept of a sect, the cult is not in Western society associated with mainstream Christianity. As a scientific term, it is often difficult to dissociate the idea of a cult from its commonsense pejorative significance, and it does not have a precise scientific meaning. Cultic practices appear to satisfy the needs of alienated sections of urban, middle-class youth. Cultic membership among young people is typically transitory, spasmodic, and irregular. Research suggests that young people often have multiple cult memberships. Western societies, cults have proliferated in the post-war period, and are often associated with the counter-culture (p.133).”

¹⁴ According to *The Harper Collins Sociology Dictionary* sect is “a religious, or sometimes a secular, social movement characterized by its opposition to and rejection of orthodox religious and/or secular institutions, doctrines, and practices (p.435).”

Heathens and Right-Wing Extremism in the Western World

Neopaganism and Heathens

Paganism and Neopaganism

Paganism refers to premodern and pre-Christian religions such as Germanic, Celtic, Norse, Greek, or Egyptian. Pagans focus on life in this lifetime and emphasize the importance of living at one with nature. Most of them have a polytheistic deity concept, and worship both gods and goddesses, in stark contrast to the Christian monotheistic and patriarchal idea of God. Deities are often not external beings but immanent in humans and nature. Neopaganism is the revitalization of these pre-Christian religions in a current cultural setting. Meaningful connections are made where knowledge is taken from the past and reconstructed in a modern global culture.

Neopagan¹⁵ groups are more loosely organized than most other religious groups and they put strong emphasis on traditions of the past, local communities, and tribalism. In the West, the most known neopagan groups are Druids, Wiccans, Shamanists, and Ásatrúers (Gardell, 2003; Gilhus & Mikaelson, 1998; Winje, 1999). They all hold a general belief that Christianity is to blame for the loss of traditional values and that modern society with its prevalent ideal of rationality has objectified nature and demystified life (Gardell, 2003). Where Christians value humility and chastity, neopagans replace these virtues with pride and joy over body and sexuality. Gardell states that the new interest for “paganism has much to do with roots, identity, and urban man’s romanticized notion of nature and the “natural life” (p. 16).” In general, neopagan

¹⁵ Note that Gardell uses the term ‘pagan’ for groups who have reconstructed pre-Christian religion in our time, while I have chosen to use the term ‘neopagan’ as used by Gilhus & Mikaelsson (1998) and Winje (1999) for these revitalized pagan traditions.

groups are open and inclusive. They do not discriminate against race, ethnicity, or gender and “often form “global tribes” or small imaginary pagan communities that transcend national borders (Gardell, 2003, p. 17).”

Ásatrú and Heathens

Revived Norse paganism or mythology is, in general, referred to as Ásatrú. Gardell (2003) notes that Ásatrúers refer to themselves as heathens in an attempt to make a clear distinction between themselves and other neopagan groups and “to distance themselves from what might be considered the “New Age confusion” of what Norse paganism “properly” means (p. 31).” Ásatrúers have different views from other neopagans on gender roles. Whereas the general neopagan community emphasizes the equality between men and women, Ásatrúers strongly advocate and adhere to traditional gender roles. The Ásatrú communities are organized into *kindreds* or *hearts* that are independent or connected to a network of autonomous tribes. In theory, kindreds are local communities but, in practice, this is not always possible. Many tribes, because of geographical distance, maintain contact through mail or exist only in cyberspace.

There are Ásatrú communities or groups located in Scandinavia, England, Germany and the U.S. In Scandinavia, these groups are most prevalent in Sweden, but they are also active in Denmark and Norway (Gilhus & Mikaelsson, 1998). In Iceland, the first Ásatrú organization, Ásatrúarfélagið, was founded in 1972 and a year later it was accepted as an official religion by the Icelandic government. The group is still active and counts well above 400 members (Ásatrúarfélagið, 2004). In Norway, the first Ásatrú group was established in 1983 but was later replaced by Bifrost which now operates as an

umbrella organization for many of the blotslag (blotgroups)¹⁶ and individuals without affiliation in the country (Gilhus & Mikaelsson, 1998; Winje, 1999). Bifrost was recognized as a religion by the Norwegian government in 1996. The organization receives government subsidies and is therefore required to keep official membership lists. The members of Bifrost also pay an annual membership fee and cannot be members of any other religious organization or group in Norway (Bifrost, 2004). The first efforts to reconstruct Norse paganism in the U.S. were in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The first group of significance was the Odinist Fellowship founded by Else Christensen in 1969. Now there are “more than a hundred independent kindreds that may or may not be federated into networks of independent tribes (Gardell, 2003, p. 162).”

Living Ásatrú. Mother Earth is seen as a living entity where everything in nature has spirit. Time is cyclical and everything present has roots in the past and, hence, holds the seeds for the future. The Well of Urd is situated under the cosmic tree Yggdrasil and connotes the combined working of the three Germanic goddesses of fate, Urd (that which has become), Verandi (that which is becoming), and Skuld (that which shall be), and how everything in existence has a destined path (Cotterell, 1997; Gardell, 2003). “The different realms of the Norse universe correspond to mental states, realms, ways of being, and mindsets among men. Yggdrasil is both an outer macrocosmic world tree and an inner microcosmic world tree within the mental universe of an individual man (Gardell, 2003, p. 155).” Myths in Norse mythology do not give reason for dogmas or doctrines; their prime function is as a source for understanding knowledge and moral values. They are tools for understanding the complex system of the forces of nature and the dimensions

¹⁶ Blotslag (blotgroups) is the general term for Ásatrú groups in Norway.

that surround us. Even though there are no set dogmas or commandments, most kindreds expect their members to embody the “nine noble virtues.” The virtues are guidelines and entail: courage, honor, truth, loyalty, discipline, hospitality (friendliness), industriousness, self-reliance (freedom), and self-preservation.

Gods and Goddesses. What we know of the ancient Norse gods and goddesses is first and foremost learned from *The Poetic Edda* or *Elder Edda*, dating from the 9th-12th century. This collection of more than 30 poems on Scandinavian and Germanic gods and human heroes was written in Iceland during the 12th century, but was probably composed elsewhere. Another resource on Norse gods and goddesses is a collection of skaldic poetry by Snorri Sturlason called *Prose Edda* or *Younger Edda*, dated to approximately 1222.

Many of the deities have sexual relations with humans and other beings and have offspring that live in various worlds, including the world of man. Many see Norse gods and goddesses as different forces within man that one can get in touch with and connect with. This connection with different sides of the forces and at different levels facilitates self-growth and personal development (Gardell, 2003). Norse mythology is intricate and there is no unanimously accepted theology. There is no clear division between good and evil, probably because the Norse language did not possess a clear distinction. The gods and goddesses are complex characters with a multitude of personal traits, some definitely stronger than others, and they are rarely portrayed as kind, gentle or compassionate (Henriksen, 1993).

There are nine interrelated worlds populated by beings such as divinities, ancestors, Jotner (giants), dwarves, and elves, linked by the giant world tree, Yggdrasil.

The connections between the worlds and their locations are debated and while several scholars have tried to put the worlds in an interrelated system that seems rational, they very often come up with different logical connections. The worlds are intertwined and there might be no clear depiction or meaning of how they interrelate, only that they do. Midgård (midyard) or Mannaheim (home of man) is the world of humankind; Muspelheim is the land of fire; Asgård the world of Aesir; Vanaheim the world of Vanir; Jotunheim home of giants or Jotner; Valhall is the home of the ancestors; Alvheim the world of elves; Helheimr the world beneath the worlds, or the Germanic netherworld resided by Hel after being banished by Odin, the realm of the unworthy dead; and the cold world of Niflheim beneath the roots of Yggdrasil (Cotterell, 1997; Henriksen, 1993; Vikernes, 2001).

There are two types of gods and goddesses, Aesir and Vanir. According to Vikernes (2001), the Aesir are gods of sky and earth and the Vanir are gods of water (coming from the Norse word for water). Whereas Aesir represent the conscious, clear and firm human thought, Vanir depict impressionable and transitory human feelings. Cotterell (1997), in contrast, writes that Aesir are predominantly connected to warfare, and that the Vanir are associated with fertility, wealth and good weather. They do agree, though, that these two divine races were at war with each other, that a couple of gods were taken hostage from each side, and, when the conflict ended, they chose to continue to live in other worlds.

Odin (Wotan) is the highest ranked Norse god and is the chief god of the Aesir. Odin is the collective concept of creative power in the universe. The one eyed Odin has two ravens by his side (Huginn and Munin); two wolves by his feet (Geri and Freki); he

rides an eight-legged horse (Sleipnir); and has a ring (Draupnir) that symbolizes abundance and fertility on his arm. He is the wisest and most powerful god, and among the multitude of his personal traits, his strength, courage and love for battle are probably the most well-known and emphasized. He is also the god of magic, ecstasy, writing, culture, poetry, death, and victory (both spiritual and physical) (Gardell, 2003). Thór is the son of Odin and is well known for his hammer, Mjollnir. He is reliable and fearless and a tireless warrior with raw and untamed strength. He is the god of thunder and fertility and his hair and beard are as red as fire. Týr is also the son of Odin; he is noble and sees the importance of sacrifice to serve the interest of the greater whole. He is the god of bravery, might, rationality and good judgment. Unlike Odin, who is a god of war for the sake of war, Týr is a god of victory in war. To him, war is to be won.

Heimdallr is another of Odin's sons and was born of nine sisters. He is the guardian of the gods and stands on the bridge, Bifrost, which connects the world of man to the world of gods. When he blows his horn, Gjallarhorn, the gods will be summoned to the battle of Ragnarök where he will be the last one to fall in a single combat with Loki, the sly and cunning god of Jotne decent.

One of the most prominent female Aesir in Norse mythology is Frigg, wife of Odin, goddess of earth, fertility, motherhood, courage, dedication, sexuality and female power. She is the mother of Baldr who was beautiful, gentle and wise. He was the light of the mind, the light of the soul, pure and innocent. He is invulnerable and favored by all of nature. Baldr has something of a martyr's role because he was destined to die but by his death he became the rightful god of the world to come after Ragnarök.

Loki is benevolent but also dangerous and damaging. He is beautiful to look at but is both full of deceit and lies and kindness and cunning ideas. He often puts the Aesirs in difficult situations but helps them out with his cunningness. Loki is said to have a family lineage with the Jotner (giants), which explains his evil side, but, some also claim, that he is just one of the many sides of Odin, which implies that Odin killed his own son because Loki was to blame for Baldr's death.

Among the Vanir, Njord is one of the most popular deities. He is the wealthy god of the sea and, together with Frey and Freya, decided to stay in Asgård after the battle with the Aesir (Cotterell, 1997; Gardell, 2003; Henriksen, 1993; Vikernes, 2001). "These three are all gods of fertility, eroticism, sexuality, prosperity, wealth, pleasure, satisfaction, and inner peace, but also powerful masters of warfare and magic (Gardell, 2003, p. 156)." Aesir and Vanir, despite their divinity, are not immortal, many of them are fated to die during Ragnarok, the doom of the gods, when Loki and his children unite with the giants to attack Asgård.

Traditions and Rites. Ásatrú is generally a path of spiritual self-experience and is therefore open to a spectrum of individual ideological variations. They have male, goði, and female, gyðia, ritual leaders (in plural goðar) that only exercise authority in terms of their spiritual growth, acknowledged ritual competence, and religious knowledge.

The *blot* is the most important celebration of the changing of seasons in nature. These ceremonies are feasts to the forces of nature, the gods and goddesses, and include both communication and socialization with these powers. The blot can take many shapes: from small, short ceremonies with simple structures and a few people; to large gatherings with complex rituals demanding group involvement. Blots can be performed

by single individuals or by groups. The blots can last for several days and are performed outside. They serve a social as well as religious function. In the old traditions, blood sacrifices were made in honor of the gods, but now mead is used to perform the same blessing and is sprinkled on the participants. Usually there are four blot ceremonies a year but some groups hold up to eight. It is common for the ritual leader to invite the gods to the ceremony site for their participation in the blot. It may continue with poetry readings or readings from the Edda, performances, singing, eating and drinking. They perform a drinking ritual where a horn or a bowl of mead is shared and passed around to all the participants and each member salutes or raises a toast to someone or something they want to honor. Other important communal ceremonies include rites of passage, such as birth, marriage, and initiation (Gardell, 2003).

Communication with the divine is through meditation, rune magic, soul journeys, or other shamanistic techniques. They are performed at communal ceremonies, such as blot, or as individual rites. Some of these can be shorter daily routines, or routines and rites oriented toward specific spiritual goals that is to develop over time. Runes play a central role in Norse magic and are used in meditation, spells, incantations, divination, art, and communication with the divine.

Rune means “mystical” or “secret” in Old Norse and they are considered secret knowledge. For those who see the Norse gods and goddesses as different forces within man and see the Norse universe with nine worlds to be a composite of body, mind and a number of souls, they use runes to reach new mental states, realms, and ways of being. The runes are believed to be carriers of energy; they can influence the course of events and can link the microcosm of man to the macrocosm of the universe. Each rune consists

of three elements; the “song,” or phonetic sound, corresponding to its exoteric meaning; the stave, or shape; and the hidden meaning or esoteric interpretation. One can excel through the three elements through the “nine runic grades” with the esoteric interpretation as the highest level. This way, insight to the nine worlds is attained by understanding the elements of the runes. It is said that Odin attained knowledge of the nine worlds by hanging from Yggdrasil for nine nights pierced by a spear before grasping the mysteries of the runes (Gardell, 2003; Vikernes, 2001).

Odinists: Racist Heathens

The heathen or neopagan communities envision the future in terms of the past. In their efforts to revive the pre-Christian traditions an underlying ethnocentrism shines through. While their modern day successors cannot avoid being in the midst of a global debate on an issue such as race, the idea or concept of race¹⁷ was unknown and not likely a matter in question to the pre-Christian Norse communities. Gardell (2003) states that “racist pagans tend to biologize spirituality (p. 17),” he goes on further to explain that “somehow, gods and goddesses are encoded in the DNA of the descendants of the ancients. Blood is thought to carry memories of the ancient past, and divinities are believed to be genetically engraved upon or to reverberate from deep down within the abyss of the collective subconscious or “folk soul” of a given ethnic or racial group (p. 17).”

The Ásatrú community is extremely diverse and split in its concerns for whom the Nordic path is destined. There are many distinct ideological variations and profound

¹⁷ For further insights on the idea or concept of race, see Paul Gilroy's *Against Race; Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*, Charles A. Gallagher's *Rethinking the Color Line; Readings in Race and Ethnicity*, and Rasmussen, Klingenberg, Nexica and Wray's *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*.

differences of opinion on what Ásatrú is all about¹⁸. Some of the groups are political and have racial interpretations with clear national socialistic traits while some have more religious and ethnic interpretations. Others are more militant and glorify a warrior ideal; some envision a future stateless American confederacy with decentralized tribal units. All of them are culture critics and believe that the values of the larger society are, and have been, going through a process of deterioration in relation to the environment, gender roles, religion or race. The differences between the Ásatrú groups are of such magnitude that it sometimes would be more practical to discuss them as different religions. The difficulty in doing so is the fact that there are really no such neat divisions.

In view of the larger society, there is an implicit racist logic when neopagans link ethnicity with spirituality. This, however, is not always acknowledged by the practicing group or individual themselves and may straight out be denied. Other neopagan groups or individuals are more than honest and open about racist elements in their faith and practices and show pride in whom they are and what they believe to be the truth. Excluding the antiracist wing, Gardell (2003) distinguishes between two camps of Nordic neopagans and their interpretation of for whom the Nordic path is intended. There is one “*radical racist* position that defines Ásatrú/Odinism as an expression of the Aryan race soul and sees it as an exclusively Aryan path; and an *ethnic* position that, not always successfully, tries to get beyond the issue by claiming that Ásatrú is linked with north European ethnicity (p. 153).”

¹⁸ A general view of the large differences within the Ásatrú community can to a certain extent be seen by groups presenting themselves and their views on Internet websites.

For those who do biologize spirituality and view the Aryan race as divine, or believe that Norse paganism is entirely to be practiced by people who are linked to northern European ethnicity, they have felt a need to distinguish themselves from the antiracist Ásatrúers by often calling themselves Odinists. While antiracist Ásatrúers are viewed as victims of a “new age confusion,” Odinists adhere to the strongest and war-loving god in Norse mythology, Odin. It is not exclusively so that the “racist” Ásatrúers call themselves Odinists, but in order to keep the two camps separate, Odinists will be the term that is used as defining those who adhere to Norse neopaganism and practice the white man’s “true” religion. The largest difference between these two camps, if you set aside the race factor, is their adaptation to the larger, global, modern, society. Whereas Ásatrúers want to establish and carry on old customs and traditions to provide a sense of community in adjustment to a modern way of living, Odinists want to reconstitute what they perceive as a golden past in the postapocalyptic modern world for a future of racial purity.

Gods of the Blood

Ragnarok was the doom of the Germanic gods. After a terrible winter lasting three years, a final battle would be fought between the gods and the frost giants on the Vigrid plain. On the side of Odin and the gods were ranged the “glorious dead” who had fallen in battle and were taken to live in Valhalla; while with the fire god Loki and the frost giants fought the “unworthy dead” from Hel (the Germanic netherworld), plus the fearsome wolf Fenrir and the sea monster Jormungand. There was nothing that the chief god Odin could do to prevent this catastrophe. His only consolation was the foreknowledge that Ragnarok was not the end of the cosmos. (Cotterell, 1997, p. 52)

The apocalyptic battle of Ragnarök and the defeat of the Norse gods lead to a dark period in history of the earth known as the Wolf Age. The Wolf Age is an era of darkness and despair. The life-forces of the Norse gods are fading away and in this

postapocalyptic time of globalization where cultures and races mix, the white race is forced to neglect its racial consciousness. Because the perceived “Norse/Germanic societies were demonstrably of one racial stock, this condition must reflect the exclusivist racial consciousness of the Golden Age forefathers (Kaplan, 1997, p. 77),” which again must be reflected in the return of the Golden Age where racial purity will lead to harmony and universal happiness.

Odinists hold the belief that religion is immanent in man, Odinism is therefore a religion of race and blood and membership is exclusively through genetic inheritance. By reconnecting with their racial consciousness, Odinists will assure their race’s continuing existence and by religious rituals they will “remagicalize” the world. Odinism is a religion based on battle; and the warrior aspects of Odin and Thór are seen as models for emulation. The berserker ideal is glorified and violence is considered a necessity for survival. The war to be fought is a racial war to return to a Golden Age to ensure the survival of the Aryan race. “The Odinist dream is of battle, of Valhalla, and of a world restored to the ancient virtues of folk and tribe. That this dream is reminiscent of National Socialism is no accident. The borderline separating racialist Odinism and National Socialism is exceedingly thin, and much of the material produced by racialist Odinism contains explicit odes to Hitler and to the Third Reich (Kaplan, 1997, p. 85).”

Race, Conspiracy Theories, and Anti-Semitism

Throughout U.S. history, “whiteness” has determined status and power in society and has been linked to the fundamental question of what it means to be an American.

There is no surprise, then, that Odinism, a product of the modern era, has adapted to one of the most salient features of American society, the question of whiteness and race¹⁹.

During the age of slavery, “blackness” and its physical characteristics were associated with the realms of evil, a divine curse. As time went on, biological and anthropological theories were used for “scientific” construction of racism and people were considered, “by nature,” to have less intellect and be less civilized than the white man. Following emancipation, blacks were believed to pose a greater threat and racism grew. But scientific racism saw a gradual retreat between the two world wars.

Racism is based on exclusion, but for the rationality and instrumentality governing the global world, inclusion has become a more salient feature. The capitalist economy finds race irrelevant because its main preoccupation is profit. That an ideology that took hundreds of years to construct, and that was legitimized in the constitution at the time, has not ended should not come as a surprise. Odinists, however, blame the federal government for a deteriorating, multicultural society and see it as an enemy of the people. They claim that different races are not meant to live together and that the government is causing racial tension. Some Odinists believe that they have the right and duty to abolish the government and institute a government of their own; the Laws of Nature dictate racial separation, and it is considered key to Aryan survival (Gardell, 2003).

Odinists have a strong belief that there is no such thing as “chance” or “bad luck,” everything happens for a reason and with thought behind it (decided by the Well of Urd).

¹⁹ For readings on the idea of whiteness, see Rasmussen, Klingenberg, Nexica and Wray’s *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*. For further readings explicitly on race and history of racism, see Joe R. Feagin’s *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, & Future Reparations*, and Joe R. Feagin, Hernán Vera and Pinar Batur’s *White Racism*.

Therefore, they are convinced of the existence of omnipotent conspiracies. Globalization and relativization of Western civilization is “interpreted as the plan of an omnipotent cabal, working through the administration of the United States and through global institutions like the UN, WHO, or the World Bank, to terminate the American way of life (Gardell, 2003, p. 95).”

The main conspiracy theory used to explain the deteriorating world is ZOG (Zionist Occupational Government). The ultimate goal of the conspiratorial elite is the genocide of the white race through assimilation of foreign communities within national borders. Odinists see it as an innate trait in Jews to want to exterminate the Aryan race in order to secure global supremacy. In their opinion, the omnipotent and omnipresent ZOG can be used to explain just about everything that goes wrong from systematic discrimination against whites to personal failure. “Promoting sick values to contaminate the Aryan mind, ZOG controls television, media, music, art, fashion, religion, science, and education. It constructs corrupting “isms” such as humanism, egalitarianism, communism, and feminism to feed the minds of the gullible masses and make them easier to manipulate. ZOG makes white men ashamed of their maleness, race, history, and cultural greatness (Gardell, 2003, p. 68).”

The Jewish forces behind ZOG target white, fertile women convincing them to become feminists and hate males of their own race. The goal of this brainwashing is to stop white women bringing new Aryans into the world. Jews are therefore perceived as the archenemy of the Aryan man and are bestowed with semi-divine, evil powers. Many Odinists are vigorous in their Holocaust denial and sometimes use this as fervent

recruitment propaganda, while others cannot understand why a great accomplishment, such as killing millions of Jews, should be denied when, in fact, it should be celebrated.

Christianity is also viewed as an integral part of the larger Jewish conspiracy because only Jews can benefit from a religion where Jews are “God’s chosen people.” Christianity is not a religion following the Laws of Nature. Instead of putting one’s race first, it teaches acceptance and integration; it is anti-nature. By “turning the other cheek,” it denies natural instincts such as the warrior spirit and survival instinct. “Judeo-Christianity was formed to first conquer, then use the White race. America was formed to first use, then exterminate the White race. What was planned is nearly completed (Lane, 1999, p. 34).” Returning to the ancient gods of a pre-Christian era is an act of spiritual emancipation. They believe that only in this way can the Aryan man fight the conspiracy of mental control, restore Aryan independence, and ensure the continuing existence of the white race.

Race and Warrior Ideals

Parallel to other heathens Odinist groups are, in general, tribal or kindred-oriented. They embrace the idea of “leaderless resistance” and are divided into cells. In contrast to the traditional pyramid organizational structure that is considered extremely dangerous to groups who mobilize against “state tyranny,” cells are less vulnerable to government infiltration and destruction. The concept of leaderless resistance was suggested by Ku Klux Klan veteran Louis Beam, he states that “all individuals and groups operate independently of each other, and never report to a central headquarters or a single leader for direction and instruction (Gardell, 2003, p. 200).”

Odinism as a counterculture reflects the current mainstream culture. In the same way as Odinist ideology towards race reflects the race issue in the larger society, so does the Odinist war and its warrior ideal. America has always had a war and warrior culture and warrior ideals are ever-present in the revolutionary Aryan counterculture. “American war culture celebrates two different warrior ideals: the individual gunman who acts alone (or with a loosely structured tribe of warriors) and the valiant soldier who belongs to a military or police unit (Gardell, 2003, p. 89).” Odinism is a warrior religion and emphasizes “hard virtues” such as courage, strength, honesty, honor, glory, fearlessness, and endurance. The warrior figure stands strong and is influential in the construction of an Aryan male identity. Kindreds consist of Aryan “warriors,” just like military units, are comprised of valiant soldiers.

“The appropriation of the role of the underdog is a key factor in the processes of identity construction in the radical racist culture. The underdog has long been an all-American folk hero, the righteous individual who, with trust in himself, his God, and his gun, fights against all odds for what is right and decent, emerging victorious at the end (Gardell, 2003, p. 69).” Kindreds are, as noted earlier, ideally a local community, but in reality it might be individuals spread out over larger geographical areas with a common goal, or existing in cyberworld. The warrior culture does not become any less prevalent when members are branched out. In combination with leaderless resistance and warrior ideals, the “lone-wolf” has become a prototype that is widespread and in fashion. Just like the individual gunmen, the lone-wolves are fighting for a perceived good cause centered on existence and fighting extinction (Gardell, 2003).

Rituals. The importance and ceremonial patterns of rituals amongst Odinist groups differ. Gardell (2003) notes that “a lack of reliable and sufficient sources of knowledge about Norse pre-Christian ceremonies presents a problem in modern efforts to revive Norse paganism, which necessitates experimentation, inspiration, studies, and, to varying degrees, a willingness to incorporate elements from other traditions (p. 213).” Ceremonial patterns taught by the pagan elders are likely to change as new ideas are incorporated into the already established. The contents of religious rituals in Ásatrú are focused on the god/goddess in season while the ceremonies in most Odinist groups remain focused on Aryan Survival and empowerment. Seasonal blots, rites of passage (birth, marriage, initiation, death), and magical warfare are common communal rituals. During the blots when the horn of mead is raised in honor and loyalty, the qualities of the warrior are frequently hailed. The single most important private ritual is meditation, but some individuals also hold offering ceremonies, sejd, rune casting, and magic.

Individual rites are performed to reach goals such as increase in strength, steadfastness, safety, or courage. They are also used for success in social life and love. The extent of personal daily invocation differs and there is no requirement to perform any individual rituals at all. The “rite of scorn” is a ritual of revenge and is part of magical warfare. It is used in both communal and individual ceremonies (Gardell, 2003).²⁰

A Phenomenon of Globalization

On the topic on fundamentalism as a reaction to a globalized reality, Bruce Lawrence (1998) states that: “Once framed in its global perspective, fundamentalism

²⁰ For a more descriptive and detailed introduction on Odinistic rituals, see Ron McVan’s *Creed of Iron: Wotansvolk Wisdom* (1997), and Gardell (2003) p.213-216.

makes sense. It is an ideology. It is counter-cultural. It is often political, but it is above all religious (p. 96).” The same can be said about Odinism. Not only does it possess certain fundamentalist traits, but it certainly makes sense when it is viewed through a prism of a reaction to a globalized international system which has made an impact on people’s everyday lives to such a degree.

The Norse gods are gods of the blood and Odinism is the essence of the Aryan folk on the moral and religious plane. An Aryan race perceived to be on the verge of extinction needs to be defended by the noble warrior. Religious conviction combined with warrior ideals and leaderless resistance result in wannabe leaders searching for viable solutions and recognition and “can lead racists to do desperate acts of panic, such as the Oklahoma City bombing²¹ (Gardell, 2003, p. 78).” The visible Anti-Americanism attitudes held by these groups and individuals is a contributing fact to the globalization of Odinism, and racial nationalist white power in general. It is essential, one can argue, for connecting with the traditionally anti-American fascist scene in Europe. The lone-wolf has always been present in the American society, but because of globalization the lone-wolfs have been given the ability to become Super-empowered individuals. The lone-wolf is a threat because his acts are desperate and the damage done can be enormous.

Extreme Right-Wing Groups in the Western World

Weinberg (1998) notes that globalization has provided the necessary circumstances for the furtherance of extreme right-wing groups (ERGs) in the West.

²¹ Timothy McVeigh, whose 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City killed 168 people. The motivations behind the bombing were strong convictions that the federal government had deteriorated beyond repair. McVeigh was inspired by the writings of white supremacist William Pierce who appoints the federal government as the enemy of white Americans and expresses his hate in *The Turner Diaries*.

ERGs in North America and Western Europe are similar in nature, but not identical. People who reside in these Western countries experience many of the same external factors which have an impact on their daily lives. Where the highly educated, adaptable and creative individual is benefiting from the new global economy others are suffering because of it. There can be a chain of social factors: jobs might be lost for individuals holding "routine production jobs" either to technological advancement or because the global economy enables large companies to export manufacturing jobs out of the Western world to countries where companies can pay low lower wages; income differences might become substantially larger and inequality more visible; Western countries might continue to experience strong immigration pressure from poorer countries; and, as a result of entry gained legally or illegally, parts of the indigenous population in fear of downward mobility might react to the many newcomers with resentment and xenophobia and might seek to vent these frustrations through violent acts against immigrants²².

Family situations have dramatically changed. The definition of family is culturally determined, and in the West, the family institution has gone through a shift from the strong nuclear family's role in society to a redefinition of what constitutes a family and what role it plays. The percentage of children living with a single parent, especially mothers, has increased. Absent fathers and unstable family life is affecting youth at a time in life when they are searching the most for their own personal identities. Female single parent households, especially in the U.S., have a standard of living that is often below the poverty line. U.S. Census Bureau reports that in 2002 the number of

²² For statistics and readings on hate crimes in the US, see Jack Levin and Jack McDevitt's *Hate Crimes: America's War on Those Who Are Different*, 2002.

female householder families living below the poverty line increased to 3.6 million from 3.5 million in 2001. Newman (1997) states that in 1993: “80% of people living in poor families are women and children (p. 361)” and “perhaps the most striking feature about the increase of women in poverty is that they are largely people who were not born into poverty but were instead forced into it by unemployment, illness, and especially divorce (p. 361).”

Immigration, jobs, economy and family are all factors that have large impact on people’s lives and it seems to create dismay towards the political leaders in the Western democracies. Weinberg (1998) also notes a decline in civic and voluntary organizations. He comments on William Kornhauser’s work and notes that in his view “the politics of extremism is likely to occur under conditions associated with “mass society.” Mass society results from the breakdown of voluntary organizations and social institutions that link individuals or families to the broader society. When these intermediary bodies are weakened or destroyed as the result of rapid economic and social change, people are transformed into “masses.” They become vulnerable to recruitment and manipulation by extreme political movements (p. 7).”

ERGs are many and very diverse. Some extreme right-wing political parties (ERPs) actively seek to recruit members, some take part in electoral processes while other extraparliamentary ERGs express their political views in ways other than the ballot box. Weinberg (1998) defines ERGs by using the political scientist Cas Mudde’s account of what constitutes an ERG. Mudde identifies five attributes of right-wing extremism: neonationalism²³, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, and the strong state. While

²³ Mudde uses the word nationalism originally, but I have chosen to be consistent with the use of

neonationalism has previously been discussed in this thesis, some of the other terms need further explanation. “*Racism* is a mode of social classification that determines who is who, who deserves what, who properly belongs where and does what; as such, it is inalienably linked to power (Gardell, 2003, p. 33).” These classifications can be related to biology or culturally developed attributes. *Xenophobia* “is a culturally based fear of outsiders. It has often been associated with the hostile reception given those who immigrate into societies and communities. In some cases xenophobia is based on a genuine fear of strangers and the unknown but more often it has a more concrete basis, especially as it involves competition for jobs, or ethnic, racial, or religious prejudice (Johnson, 1995, p. 321).” “The *anti-democracy* of right-wing extremism includes an aversion of the democratic rules of the game. Anti-democracy involves a rejection of the principle of equality. It also involves opposition to a pluralist conception of society. Last, the preference for a *strong state* is expressed by support for militarism and for “law and order” against the threat of crime and chaos (Weinberg, 1998, p. 8).”

Extreme Right-Wing Groups in Western Europe

Weinberg (1998) uses *Political Extremism and the Threat to Democracy in Europe*, published in 1994 by the European Center for Research and Action on Racism and Anti-Semitism, as a primary source for his analysis on political right-wing extremism in Western Europe. Weinberg states that since the postwar years the ERPs have had a, somewhat, constant activity pattern of surge and decline and their electoral performance has been inconsistent. Over the past 15 years, the activity level has accelerated, not only are they performing a little better in the electoral processes but they are also more

¹neonationalism’ when referring to nationalistic feelings evoked by globalization.

consistent in their performances. In 1994-1995, it was estimated that around 40 ERPs were active, distributed among 16 countries in Western Europe²⁴ (ranging from 0-7). Weinberg defines two types of ERP: those who are nostalgic; and those he refers to as right-wing populist. The former is backward-looking neo-Fascist aggregations who revive Nazi ideas. The latter group focuses on postindustrial present and future.

Both types of groups seek to exploit chauvinistic, racist and xenophobic sentiments but the more modern parties support capitalistic ideas. They are pro low taxes and anti welfare and excessive state control. They are against supranational organizations, such as the EU, and often possess anti-American attitudes because the U.S. represents the ultimate multicultural society, something to avoid. ERPs attract voters from all groups of society but they do have a disproportionate number of male supporters. They have a tendency to be considerably young, they are self-employed or involved in small business and have white-collar jobs. Now that the xenophobic and racist attitudes have had an upsurge in the Western European countries, these parties have had a tendency to get increasingly stronger support from blue-collar workers.

The representation of extraparliamentary ERGs in Western European countries varies from none or very few in some, all the way up to more than forty in others. While Austria and Germany are on the top of the list, countries like Norway and Sweden have more than their fair share with regard to their population. Weinberg divides the extraparliamentary ERGs into three categories: neo-Nazis (most common), skinheads and "other". In general, the repertoire of ERG activity is extensive and "includes categories

²⁴ In 1994-1995, 40 ERG parties were distributed among sixteen Western European Countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom (Kaplan 1998).

such as “violent/nonviolent,” “carefully planned/relatively spontaneous,” and “public/surreptitious” (Weinberg, 1998, p. 15).” They take part in paramilitary behavior, anti-foreigner violence, violence towards objects such as mosques or Jewish-related symbols, ethnic and religious celebrations, public displays of racist symbols, music festivals, street protests, and literary pursuits to validate, for example, Holocaust denial.

Membership size on these groups is hard to estimate because the groups themselves have a tendency to exaggerate their numbers to convey the idea that they are more powerful than they really are and governments might downplay the numbers to give the impression that the problem is “dealt with” in a proper manner and that things are under control. The turnover rates in these groups are large, the adherents are usually not life long members and they are often members of several groups at the same time. In contrast to the ERPs, extraparliamentary ERGs have a tendency to recruit very young men of lower class society. Weinberg quotes Peter Merkl who notes that: “Being a radical right-winger seems to be highly related to the difficulties of growing up (Weinberg, 1998, p. 15).” He characterizes them as ethnocentric, marginalized and criminal youth. This is in contrast to those who take part in the political arena who have a stronger ideology connected to their acts and who also tend to have a more successful life in terms of schools and jobs. The leaders of extraparliamentary ERGs, on the other hand, are usually of higher socioeconomic status than their followers.

Extreme Right-Wing Groups in the United States

The ERGs in the U.S. are many in quantity and large in diversity. There are definite similarities to their European counterparts but there are also some profound differences. American society is, compared to European standards (with exception of, for

example, Ireland and Poland), highly religious and the ownership and use of firearms are widespread, the latter which can give explanation to a higher murder rate. American ERGs, then, tend to be armed, paramilitary organizations with religious perspectives and undertones. Weinberg (1998) states that such a combination results in “a dangerous, hysterical atmosphere among ERGs (p. 19).”

The political arena for ERPs in the U.S. is quite different to that in Europe (with the exception of the United Kingdom) because of the complete dominance of two major parties. This might seem quite contradictory considering the fact that many European countries have constitutional bans on anti-democratic right-wing parties while in the U.S. the First Amendment makes it almost impossible to outlaw these kinds of parties (Kaplan & Weinberg, 1998). This two party domination leads to a very small likelihood of winning any seats in the U.S. Congress but, on the other hand, it has been easy for insurgent groups or individuals to achieve significant political influence on the more decentralized level. The Republican Party (GOP) is not in itself an ERP, but appears to represent many of the main causes that ERGs, in general, fight for. GOP is passionately anti-communist; it opposes a welfare state and defends traditional family values. With regard to the welfare state, many of the ERGs have the attitude that there is no use in spending money on people who are biologically predisposed to “fail anyway,” and when it comes to defending traditional values, GOP are definitely supported by the religious right on issues relating to the women’s movement, gay liberation, multiculturalism, and possibly abortion (Weinberg, 1998).

Weinberg uses the *Klanwatch Intelligence Report 77* from 1995 to define the types of extraparliamentary ERGs active in the U.S. Topping the list, not surprisingly,

one finds the Ku Klux Klan, followed by neo-Nazis, skinheads, religious groups and “other.” In addition, the U.S. has quite a few militia movements represented. There is no surprise that the religious groups are more prevalent in the U.S. than in Europe and that the neo-Nazi groups are more strongly represented in Europe than in the U.S.

Again, measuring the number of, and participation in extraparliamentary ERGs is not an easy task. The U.S. has about the same amount or a few more ERGs (in relation to population) as all the Western European countries combined (Weinberg, 1998). Their membership traits are similar to their European counterparts and tend to be men with little education and low paid jobs (if they have jobs at all). They engage in many of the same types of activities such as violence and vandalism. The high religious activity in American ERGs opens the way for more ceremonial and ritual settings. The size of the country, the ability to “disappear,” and their extensive use of firearms results in a large number of militia movements and retreats from society (Weinberg, 1998). Two more factors are significantly different from European ERGs. First, even though freedom of speech is valued in Europe there are several countries that have laws against publicly voicing racist opinions, while in the U.S. this is legal and ERGs have the ability to state their views in various ways whether it would be on street corner or in newspapers. Second, in Europe “the targets of attack are essentially private, racial and religious minorities and their institutions (Kaplan & Weinberg, 1998, p. 63),” while ERGs in the U.S. have declared war on the state itself and have taken part in terrorist campaigns e.g. the Oklahoma bombing.

Transatlantic Connections

Much research has been done on ERGs in Western Europe and North America. Little research, however, has been carried out on the transatlantic extreme right-wing connection and Kaplan and Weinberg (1998) would confirm that the research has “tended to stop at the water’s edge (p. 1).” The links between ERGs on the two continents have been numerous throughout history. Their level of activity has been dynamic over time as has the direction of flow and strength of information and influence. Kaplan and Weinberg (1998) were pioneers by publishing an extensive account and analysis on these connections within the fields of cultural history and political science.

Even though the historical perspective shines through, they put particular emphasis on the exceptional convergence of ERGs on the two continents the end of the twentieth century and present a holistic and informative overview. They refer to this connection as a movement. Giddens (1993) defines social movement as a “collective attempt to further a common interest, or secure a common goal, through collective action outside the sphere of established institutions (p. 642).” The definition of social movement is required to be expansive because there is such a large variation between types of movements. The movements do not only differ in interest and ideology, but they also differ in size and whether or not they operate their activities within the laws of the society in which they exist.

Social movements emerge when people are unsatisfied and see their condition as a result of society’s inability to meet their needs. People come to believe that they have a moral right to satisfy their unmet expectations and when individuals and groups share this sense of frustration and unfairness, whether it is across national borders, through

interacting with one another, then, the existing system begins to lose its perceived legitimacy. Underlying all social movements then is change: the desire to enact it, stop it, or reverse it. Kaplan and Weinberg emphasize that they do not “believe that a movement is or needs be a single cohesive organization with a clear hierarchy. We are dealing with “aggrieved social actors and allies” operating on two continents, a collection of groups, organizations and individuals sharing a relatively common outlook and similar grievances, not a single minded conspiratorial organization (p. 77).”

To many, the transcendence of national boundaries seems unlikely because of the different history and circumstances countries find themselves in and, not least, because ERGs have strong nationalistic and xenophobic factors. The attempt to make a transatlantic connection is not new and efforts by Americans and Europeans can be traced back to the 1920s and 1930s. The flow of right-wing ideas and practices were initially from Europe to America but the flow changed direction in later years (Kaplan & Weinberg, 1998). In the case of conspiracy theories it is a common trait that “if you are American the conspiracy originates in Europe while if you are European, the conspiracy has been made in America (Kaplan & Weinberg, 1998, p. 56).” Kaplan and Weinberg (1998) note both obstacles for a strong transatlantic connection and the factors that make it possible.

The obvious obstacles are the strong hatred for the U.S. both for its role in World War II and because of the multicultural society it represents, it is the antimodel to be avoided. The U.S. is also the symbol of Zionist Occupational Government (ZOG) and is the strong “proof” that this power has taken control. On the other hand, this belief can

also seem uniting across the Atlantic because this is an attitude that is held by many American supremacist groups, they are as anti-American as their counterparts in Europe.

As mentioned earlier, globalization is definitely a strong force behind the uniting transatlantic ERGs. Not surprisingly, the Internet is one of the main sources for the convergence of a Euro-American radical right subculture. “The increased personal interactions and improved means by which radical rightists can communicate with one another has helped promote the consolidation of a distinct Euro-American radical right subculture, or what we label, a cultic milieu. We mean by this term a variety of cultural expressions, both of form and substance, that separated those who share the radical right outlook from the general population on both sides of the Atlantic (Kaplan & Weinberg, 1998, p. 87).” This developing reciprocal relationship acts in two ways, emulation and penetration. “*Emulation* occurs when a group or organization located in one country chooses to copy the name, style, and modus operandi of a group or organization active in another. No direct transnational communication has to occur in order for the process to take place. *Penetration*, in contrast, is a process that requires direct personal contact between members of groups from different countries (Weinberg, 1998, p. 26).”

Weinberg (1998) reports that more than 50% of the Western European ERGs emulate foreign groups, whereas Norway and Sweden are well above this average. Because of a lack of information one can only consider the American groups in relation to the extent they penetrate European ERGs. Penetration is less common than emulation but Weinberg estimates that close to 30% of these organizations have personal interaction across national borders.

The Internet as a medium for transnational communication has definitely allowed stronger connection to be set up between ERGs across national borders, but to what extent has this instrument produced a global racist subculture? Back, Keith and Solomos (1998) define two types of wings within the Internet movement, the 'above-ground' political and social front and the 'other front' that consists of secretive networks that are beyond surveillance. This medium of communication makes it possible to coordinate activities, develop networks, circulate texts and share visual representations which are almost inaccessible for law enforcement and without censorship by the state or without physically confrontation with their antiracist opponents. ERGs across national borders can suddenly reach a larger number of people in a short amount of time and an audience they have never before been able to reach. Many young people, especially males, who would normally not be exposed to these kinds of ideologies and ideas suddenly get them presented in their own homes and they do not even have to leave their rooms to get a feeling of group belonging.

A new type of harassment has evolved as a consequence of the use of the Internet and that is mail bombs and advanced simulated racist violence. These "networlds" make it possible for a utopian sphere where the distinction between social reality and fantasy is blurred. Because this violence is a part of "networlds" many view this as harmless play. On the other hand, this blurred distinction between what is real and what is fantasy can be transferred into real life, just as well as it might stay put in cyberspace and the created utopian "networlds." ERGs on the Internet combine a transnational multiculturalism with xenophobic nationalism (Back, Keith & Solomos, 1998).

In a time where national identity in Western European countries is going through a decline, especially among the younger segments of the population, there has been an increase in trust across historic and national borders. “Networlds” are one of the means that have allowed a greater shared use of extreme right-wing symbols and language and have promoted a transnational racial identity that has given people an opportunity to express defiance while identifying themselves with a felt menacing and powerful force. They have been given or taken the opportunity to take part in something that gives them a feeling of significance and importance.

Chapter II End Note

The international “collaboration” promoted by globalization stands, still, pretty firm on the negative stigma of racism and as the turnover rate among ERGs is high it is common for them to have difficulty in recruiting and keeping their members. Jeffrey Kaplan, who has done much research in this field, states that: “The key question facing movement leaders is how to move beyond residual nationalist loyalties to a world defined by kith, kin and, race (Kaplan, 1998, p. 103).” He suggests that religion, broadly conceived, offers the most promising path toward realization of the white nationalist dream. Right-wing religion refers to belief systems that incorporate some form of hatred or racism in their basic doctrines. Religious behavior is also, according to Jonathan White (2001), a factor that shapes social constructs and might act as bases for negative human behaviors because of expectations of conformity. These expectations influence morality, and justify actions and feelings and can act as motivation for violent behavior.

Odinism is a reaction to, and product of globalization. It is an extreme right-wing religion that is part of the transnational extreme right-wing movement. There are many

and diverse Odinist groups and their transnational activity varies in its direction of flow, the amount of information exchanged, and the medium of reciprocation. Odinism plays a vital role in the world of the radical right and racist Norse neopaganism has been subject of admiration all over the Western world. There are Odinist groups and individuals both in Norway and in the U.S. The transatlantic connection is established usually not by direct oversea memberships but through flow of information and knowledge of groups and individuals on the other side of the Atlantic. The Odinist milieu in the U.S. is, as far as we know, larger and to certain extent stronger than in Norway. Norway holds a couple of very visible front men but little is known about the larger Odinist scene. We know that recruitment on both continents often happens through the Internet, friends or through active recruitment by leaders, and according to Jeffrey Kaplan (2000) in the U.S. “a key recruiting ground for racialist Odinism is the prisons of America (p. 232).”

Prison systems are part of the global society on the same level as other social institutions, and to one degree or another they are affected by this international system. With an increasing interconnection between cultures, cultural traits regarding social institutions are also part of the exchange. In Chapter III I will be looking at criminal justice systems and penal institutions in Norway and the U.S. The two systems are quite different but insight in to them might reveal answers to why prisons in the U.S. are recruiting grounds for Odinism and if penal institutions in Norway are just as prone to be a base for recruitment, and if they are not subjected to it right now, might they become at a later stage when global exchange has gained stronger admittance.

CHAPTER III

PRISONERS UNDER RED, WHITE AND BLUE BUT WHY THE LARGE DIFFERENCES?

A System of Criminal Justice or a System of Crime Control?

So far, not much has been said about two major features of globalization; the free-market capitalism and technology. These are both strong actors in the globalized society and they fit descriptive words used of other aspects in this international system such as efficiency, speed, range, rationality, rapid acceleration and innovation. These terms all describe traits of the global industry which is made up of free-market capitalism and technology. This again directs us toward the discussion of prisons and the trademarks of a prison system within this international structure. Penal institutions are part of a criminal justice system that has become increasingly industrialized in ways that are similar or equal to our profit oriented economic way of thinking. Violations of the law have become an inexhaustible resource and as the pressure for action against crime has increased the supply and demand relationship has been established. This has laid the foundation for a criminal justice system as a crime control industry with an unlimited potentiality for growth. Crime control as profitable industry creates workplaces and produce means of regulation over those we feel the need to control. The fight against crime has become so legitimized that the growth of the control industry has become equally legitimate. Another side to this is the continuing strives for efficiency and how

the industrial society has put pressure on the criminal justice system to adapt to an efficacious way of working. In a high paced society a slow, not very effective legal system might seem a little old fashioned (Christie, 2000).

Crime is not a constant existing “thing;” crime and deviance are constructed. This social construct, or social typing, is generated in a cultural context. In this cultural context, there are large differences between those who label and those who are labeled (Christie, 2000). The gaps between people and the power structure in a society are extremely unconcealed when actions are given the definition of deviance and illegality, and individuals the label of criminals. An alleged behavior or condition is “deviant” if people say it is. As a social phenomenon, then, deviance consists of a set of interpretations and social reactions (Becker, 1963; Rubington & Weinberg, 1999; Wallace & Wolf, 1999). Rubington and Weinberg (1999) call this a subjectively problematic approach one “which focuses on the definitions and actions both of the deviants themselves and of the people who label them deviant, and the social interaction between the two (p. 2).”

Not only are there significant differences between the penal systems in the world, there is also a world of difference in the size of prison populations. The variation and divergence is so large that one might ask the question if it is any use at all in making comparisons. I would argue that it is essential. We live in a global society and we are all becoming, alarmingly enough, increasingly close to resembling a system where efficiency has been allowed to reign and where every inch of society, including the penal institutions, have adapted to a rational economic/industrial attitude that is growing stronger. Prison systems and number of convicts can say, to large extent, something

about the culture and the characteristics of a society. How convicts and individuals in the crime control system are treated also says a whole lot about what is considered legitimate to do to other humans. These societal traits are important to note, especially because societal characteristics are export commodities in the global process.

Cons, Ex-Cons, and the Crime Control System in the U.S.

The U.S. has a considerably larger part of its population under the control of the criminal justice system than any other country in industrialized Europe and America. Only Russia comes close to the same high number of prisoners as the U.S. Considering that this great nation is surrounded by two countries, Canada and Mexico, with large cultural and economical differences but both with a number of convicts that equals Western European standards, the U.S. deviates to the extreme. Something has gone completely wrong with the criminal justice system in the U.S. There has been an explosion in number of men and women behind bars over the past ten years and it keeps on growing. Not only has the number of people behind bars multiplied but the amount of time served has increased as well.

Calculating Punishment

How sentences are measured has become increasingly easy to do in the U.S. because of the development of a new system of measure that aims to increase the efficiency and to decrease the difference in punishment for the same type of violation. The new punishment table indicates on a scale how many points different offenses are “worth.” The particulars of the case are added up in a points system in accordance with, for example, the extent of violence carried out, use of weapons, and if the act was premeditated or not. Finally, points are added for previous convictions and time served.

The advantages of this system are apparent. It is explicit what is taken into account and what is not taken into account. Factors such as education, profession, family ties, addictions such as alcohol or drugs, age, mental and physical conditions, commitments and other ties to society are explicitly emphasized not to be taken into consideration so no one will be discriminated against. But we must also look at what is not taken into consideration. There are no listed mitigating circumstances incorporated in this system! This is to avoid people with advantages getting any special treatment, but at the same time it eliminates the possibility for reductions in punishment for those who are already disadvantaged. This way, the whole question of social justices is challenged. To prevent the advantaged few exploiting the system, the factors which define the majority of the prison population are closed out as being mitigating circumstances. In theory, it should not be any harder to give additional points or subtract points for social factors than it is to give additional points for previous violations or time served (Christie, 2000). Christie (2000) suggests that if social factors were taken into account there would be so many subtractions in points that the chart would erupt and the figure would end up in negative digits and the society would have to pay to compensation to the individual for all the damages done by society. He also notes that the idea of just retaliation is unjust in the sense that people from and with different premises end up with the same punishment.

Jails, State Prisons and Federal Prisons

Jennifer Wynn (2001) describes the differences between jails and prisons, she states: "Whereas prison house convicted felons (with sentences of one year or more), jails hold mostly pretrial detainees. In addition, jails house people convicted for misdemeanors (serving sentences of less than one year) as well as convicted felons

awaiting transfer to State prison (p. 6).” She goes on to say: “Not surprisingly, criminologists have described jails as the “strange social hybrids” of the correctional landscape, as “detention centers for suspects.” They have been called the “poorhouses of the twentieth century,” the “ghetto ghettos,” the “social garbage cans” used to discard “society’s rubble” (p. 6).” There are also differences between State and Federal prisons. In states with large urban areas the prisons have a majority of Black prisoners, this, of course, differ from state to state because certain states like California and Texas have a larger concentration of prisoners that are Hispanic. State prisons house people from impoverished backgrounds and neighborhoods.

Federal prisons in the U.S. have the longest sentences in the world and the idea of rehabilitation is officially repudiated, there is no parole system and most of the people serving time in these institutions are convicted for non violent offenses. 58% are doing time for drug convictions and the average age is 37 years (Ross & Richards, 2002). “Federal prisoners are considered the elite of the prison world. These are the men and women who local authorities were unable to corner, arrest, and convict. Some of them actually beat state charges with high-powered lawyers, but were then reidicted under federal law (this is called federal oversight). Others were simply too quick, savage, or sophisticated for city, country, or state police agencies (ibid, p. 30).”

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) uses a classification system, with maximum security on the top and minimum security at the bottom, as a means to segregate, control, punish, and reward convicts. These security levels reflect the crime and length of sentence. Minimum security prisons or Federal Prison Camps (FPC) house younger convicts serving their first prison sentence. Medium security prisons or Federal

Correctional Institutions (FCI) have operated as reformatories for young adult convicts. These prisons with gun towers and razor wire fences can be extremely violent places. The convicts with long crime records, previous sentences and history of violence end up in maximum security penitentiaries. The minimum age for being in a maximum security prison is 26 years, but this is not always followed (ibid). Ross and Richards (2002, p. 48-49) outline FBOP's Central Inmate Monitoring System (CIMS) which is a computer program that tracks nine special categories of prisoners:

- *Witness Security* prisoners are government informers who did, are, or will testify in court cases.
- *Special Security* refers to prison snitches cooperating in internal investigations.
- *Sophisticated Criminal Activity* identifies cons involved in large-scale criminal conspiracies, for example organized crime, drugs, or white collar. They may be men or women who were targets of federal "Racketeer Influence and Corrupt Organization" (RICO) or "Continuing Criminal Enterprise" (CCE) prosecution, which carry life sentences. Many of these convicts are thought to be persons connected to major drug-smuggling organizations, who refused to plead guilty, cooperate, or inform on other persons.
- *Threats to Government Officials* covers prisoners convicted of writing letters, making phone calls, or issuing verbal remarks that convey the intent to do bodily harm to public officials.
- *Broad Publicity* prisoners are those who are featured in high-profile cases that have received a lot of media attention. This may include, for example, a former U.S. Attorney convicted of selling heroin, or the Attorney General of state serving time for bribery.
- *State Prisoners* are difficult convicts serving state sentences who were transferred into the federal system. Gang leaders, prisoners convicted of violent offences against staff or other convicts, or those with histories of prison escapes are transferred into the FBOP. This may include juvenile prisoners from state prisons, covered in tattoos, who because of their institutional history of violence had been reassigned to the FBOP.
- *Separation* requires that persons who are government witnesses, institutional snitches, gang leaders, or are in danger of being killed or killing someone else be mobbed to another incarceration.
- *Special Supervision* prisoners are cops, judges, and politicians and are provided protective privilege. These men and women are usually assigned to camps; they would not survive long in a penitentiary.

- *Disruptive Groups* may include members of organizations such as street or prison gangs and political subversives.

Scary Numbers

The most recent reports from Bureau of Justice Statistics (2002) on people in correctional custody, serving time in jail and prison (State and Federal) show that number of the convicts for the first time exceeded 2 million. If those on parole or probation are included the number reaches 6.7 million (6,732,400), with 4 million on probation and 753,141 on parole. This number has more than tripled since 1980 (1,840,400) and is still increasing at an alarming rate (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002; Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 2002).

From 1983 to 1991 there was an increase in the number of adult²⁵ convicts from 645,713 to almost double the amount, 1,266,640. If people under probation and parole are included in the calculation the number of people under the control of the justice system increased by more than 2 million men and women (from 2,475,100 in 1983 to 4,535,600 in 1991). In a ten year span from 1991 to 2001, the number, including those on parole and probation, grew by more than 2 million again (to 6,581,700 in 2001). From year 2001 to 2002, there was a 2.3% escalation in numbers which meant that another 150,700 people came under the control of the justice system during one year (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 2002). Looking at the growth per year from 1996 to 2002, the yearly increase had a mean average close to 170,000 people and if this trend continues, a conservative estimate would be that by 2006 there could be around 7.5 million people under the control of the U.S. system of justice. If this were limited to

²⁵ Adult is considered 18 years of age or older.

people only serving time in prison and jail the number could roughly be estimated at 2.6 million behind bars.

In 2002, the local jail incarceration rate was 417 per 100,000 males, 147 per 100,000 whites, 470 per 100,000 blacks, and 256 per 100,000 Hispanics. When looking at the number of inmates in State or Federal prisons and local jails per 100,000, black males in their twenties were found to be represented at a higher level in comparison to other groups. 12,877 per 100,000 black males between the ages 25 to 29 are incarcerated in contrast to 1,615 white males and 4,339 Hispanic males in the same age group. It is estimated that 12% of black males, 4% of Hispanic males, and 1.6% of white males in their twenties and early thirties were in prison or jail. Among black females, the rate was highest (1,024 per 100,000) among those aged 30 to 34. This rate was nearly 5 times higher than the rate among white females in the same age group (213 per 100,000) (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002).

Criminologists, in general, would state that the official numbers are underreports, in parts because the numbers are increasing at such a rate that it is hard to keep track of them and because the Bureau of Justice Statistics fails to count the millions of people arrested and released every year without being formally charged. The U.S. Department of Justice suggests that “nearly 23 million people are locked up in local jails in the course of a year, with the same persons (e.g., homeless, derelicts, addicts, etc.) jailed numerous times. The more than 5 million people in correctional custody do not include juveniles, military prisoners, and mental health patients. Also neglected from the Bureau of Prison Statistics estimates are the tens of thousands of men, women, and children incarcerated

by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in detention centers (Ross & Richards, 2002, p. xi-xii).”

Serving Time and Time Served: The Convict in the U.S.

“The public reacts to crime with fear and intensity because they have been led to believe by the media and public officials that thousands of vicious, intractable street criminals menace innocent citizens (Austin & Irwin, 2001, p. 17).” The old idea of the “criminal type” has unfortunately been resurrected by researchers who have been lured by government incentives and in that way add fuel to the stereotype “career criminal” created by the media (Austin & Irwin, 2001; Ross & Richards, 2002). Research indicates that the vast majority of the prison population is made up of young, male, nonviolent, first-time offenders. The most frequent crimes are drug possession, followed by burglary, theft and fraud, and drug delivery.

These nonviolent crimes constitute over 50% of all prison admissions. In 2002, 54.7% of the Federal prison population was sentenced with drug offenses (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 2002). And as the proportion of prison admissions for drug crimes has increased, so has the proportions of nonwhites being sent to prison (Austin & Irwin, 2001).

Almost eight times more prisoners served time in State prisons than in Federal correctional facilities. In 2002, 1,277,127 convicts served time in State prisons while 163,528 were sentenced to serve their time in Federal facilities. Black convicts are the largest single group and constitute 46% of the whole State prison population followed by whites who make up 36% and the rest are Hispanics, Native Americans and Asian/Pacific Islanders. 93.1% of Federal prisoners were male, 56.2% were white and 40.7% were

black. If divided into ethnicity, 54.8% were Hispanic while the remaining 45.2% were non-Hispanic. 80% of convicts were between the ages of 18-45 where the majority centers around 26-35 years of age. 70.7% of prisoners are U.S. citizens while 28.5 % were non-U.S. citizens. 50.5% of the convicts were equally housed in medium and low security levels and only 11.4% (18,559) serve Federal time at high security level.

In 2001, there were 14,873 prisoners serving Federal time in high security level of those were 7.5 % white and 13.7% blacks (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 2002). Almost nine out of every ten jail inmates were adult males. However, between 1990 and 2000, the number of juveniles and adult females in jail increased faster than males (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). There are also a significant number of psychotic inmates in prison, Wynn (2001). It is noted that in New York there are twice as many psychotic cases in prison as in mental-health institutions.

Welcome to the Slammer: Isolation or Overcrowding

The factor that affects the daily prison life the most is probably overcrowding. With the prison population exploding there is bound to be lack of a space and a question of where to put them all. Austin and Irwin (2001) report that in 1998 there were only twelve states that operated prisons below their rated bed capacities; nationwide, prisons were overcrowded by a factor of 22%. As many as ten states reported a capacity burst exceeding 150%. The overcrowded prisons affect the local jails that have to house some of the overflow. The overexertion of capacity in prisons exhausts the accommodation resources. Cells are converted to contain more than they were first intended for and recreation rooms are made into dormitories. The expenses of expansions are taken from budgets intended for prisoner education or other programs intended for recreation and

much space is lost for physical mobility and access to prison facilities and resources (Austin & Irwin, 2001).

One single unit in medium security prisons can house up to 500 men. Maximum security prisons are divided into three categories; “big houses”, new generation pens, supermax and administrative detention. USP Leavenworth in Kansas is one of these “big house” penitentiaries. It can hold as many as 2,000 prisoners in four cell-houses. It is protected by six gun towers, the prison walls are 35 feet high, 12 feet wide, and extend 35 feet into the ground. Leavenworth is also called “Hot House” because of the extreme hot temperatures in the summer, in the winter it is all the more freezing (Ross & Richards, 2001).

The super max security institutions, also called “Maxi-Maxi,” are more or less fully automated penitentiaries. Both Pelican Bay in California and the Administrative Detention Maximum (ADX) in Florence, Colorado, are such “Maxi-Maxi” prisons. Once inside one of these institutions, human contact is severely limited or non-existent at all. Convicts have limited privileges as far as phone calls, mail, and visitors. These prisoners are never social with other prisoners. They are confined to cells made out of cement, steel, and without windows for more than 22 hours a day. They eat all their meals alone and do not participate in any type of activity whatsoever. They only leave their cells for showering and exercise which is all done alone. The doors to the cells are opened and closed electronically by the guards in the control room. The convicts do not have any contact with any guards and all communication is through radio. Some State prisons work by the same system, such as Stark, the State prison in Florida. It is estimated that

2% of all prisoners in the U.S. are confined to one of these “Maxi-Maxi” institutions (Austin & Irwin, 2001; Christie, 2000; Ross & Richards, 2001).

The U.S., land of contrast, does not only have extremely isolated convicts but they also have convicts subjected to overcrowding in the extreme. On Rikers Island in New York there were rooms that housed up to 57 prisoners and the local jail, Sybil Brand in Los Angeles had 130-156 women in overfilled rooms without any chance of privacy. Because of the overcrowding, units which were built for 50 people are housing 90 prisoners (Christie, 2000; Wynn, 2001).

Becoming a Convict and Prison Culture

Prison is a microcosm of the streets, whatever’s out there is gonna be in here – the drugs, the violence. Generally all the bad characteristics of what’s in the streets is also right here.

– Cowley (Convict interviewed by Wynn, 2001, p. 69)

While the living conditions definitely have an impact on prison culture, becoming a convict is a problematic process specific to prison itself. Experiences in prison will differ according to who you are (age, education, physical size, gender, sexual orientation, criminal history), your crime, sentence, and the security level you are placed in. But everyone goes through the same routine upon arrival in prison and everyone must get acquainted with two set of rules if they want to survive: the convict’s code and the prison rules (Ross & Richards, 2002).

This socialization process is also termed prisonization, as first used by Clemmer in *The Prison Community* (1940). This is a process that comes to determine what kind of position the convict will have within the informal structure of prison culture. Convicts go from being people who are evaluated by themselves and others on the basis of their social

and personal characteristics. Suddenly they are reevaluated by others, and themselves, on the basis of a negative label attached by the criminal justice system. Whom ever they used to be is overshadowed by the stigma of their new label. "The assault on conceptions of self and self-worth is often considerable (Thomas, 1987, p. 124)." Thomas (1987) categorizes the problems experienced due to the prison itself in four categories. "(1) the degradation rituals associated with entry into the prison, (.2) the problems of prison life itself, (3) the disruption relationships beyond the walls of the prison, and (4) the anxieties linked to forthcoming release from prison (p. 125)."

Penitentiaries deal with an enormous amount of people and in order for the system to "handle" them they all go through the same "degradation rituals." The idea is to strip the convict from any identity had in the "free world." They are not viewed as separate individuals and are all put in the same category based on the new label given to them, with the stigma that goes along with it, by the criminal justice system. The label is not only to be felt, it is to be lived. "These degradation or induction rituals are aimed at convincing new offenders that they are negatively evaluated outcasts from the larger society who will now occupy powerless positions at the very bottom of the organizational structure of the prison (Thomas, 1987, p. 125)."²⁶

The obvious pains of imprisonment are the loss of liberty, autonomy, security and heterosexual relationships. Including the losses experienced, the arrival problems include adjustment to the "prison way," this is even hard for those who have done time before. Monotone and predictable life becomes a problem, so do endless noise, horrible food and

²⁶ For further examples and a vivid description on life as a con see Ross and Richard's *Behind Bars; Surviving Prison*, 2002.

a lack of privacy. These settings build up exasperation and a volatile emotional environment. The triggers can be tiny and trivial, but they can produce explosive consequences. Convicts are constantly in an extreme, aggravating and threatening set of conditions which are not made any more tolerable with overcrowding. Prisoner-to-prisoner violence is one of the worst features of penitentiaries. There is a clear “color line,” with few exceptions, and whites associate with whites, blacks with blacks and Hispanics with Hispanics. This tripartite division, especially in prisons with violent convicts, is often extremely hostile and brutal. “Hostilities between the three groups may be such that a convict who strays into the turf of a group not his own may suffer beatings, rape, even death (Ross & Richards, 2002, p. 51).” It is assumed that a large percentage of convicts are gang members. How large, on the other hand, is hard to say and it differs from prison to prison. Levin and McDevitt (2002) reports that “according to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Illinois, 90 percent of the inmates in one State prison are gang members (p. 198).”

Ties to the outside world are hard to maintain. Many lose complete contact with family and friends in the “free world” while they are incarcerated. Restrictions on visits, phone calls, and mail can be total or partial. Those who are serving time in a penitentiary close to their families are lucky but very often, because of overpopulated prisons, convicts are moved to facilities far away from their loved ones. Constantly moving around is not unusual and it is hard for families to keep track of their incarcerated family members, and because of these transfers, mail and phone calls are hard to get. How long a convict is incarcerated for is also a factor that determines how well the ties to the outside are maintained. Those who are released often find that their family situations

have changed considerably, either that their companions have found new partners or that their children have grown up, adjusting to a family situation after being away from it is not an easy task.

Being done serving time is not something all convicts look forward too. The fast moving and high paced world outside might seem more scary than tempting to some who have spent years behind bars in an environment that is slow-paced, controlled, and highly routinized. It is also a stress element to know that situations outside have changed and that the ones that have been left behind for years might not be there when the convict returns.

Revolving Doors: Cons, Ex-Cons and Cons Again

Can anyone get out of prison with \$50, limited skills, limited education and no hope to get anything more than a minimum wage job, and then be able to support their family, make restitution, pay court costs, and pay a monthly stipend to the parole board for the privilege of being monitored? We set them up to fail and when they recidivate, we act offended, they can't make it under these circumstances and neither could you.

– Dr. H.C. Davis of the Correctional Education Association (Wynn, 2001, p. 169).

Wynn (2001) reports that almost half a million people return to society after imprisonment during one year. In New York alone, 350 ex-cons return to the city *everyday*. Yet, the majority will be back behind bars again after three years. The return rate to Federal prisons is less than recidivism to State prisons and jails. For convicts who were released for the first time the aggregate of return to Federal prisons within three years of release from 1986-1997 was 15.7%. The majority of those who returned were black males, between the ages of 21 and 40 who had served time for drugs, violence or public disorder (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 2002).

Are they set up for failure? Ex-cons are expected to reintegrate to society and function normally after serving their time, but this is easy to expect but not so easily done. Prisons are for punishment and not for “rehabilitation;” very few gain any knowledge and skills during the time they serve behind bars that will prepare them for a better life on the outside, and whatever they did know might be forgotten. The transition into the “real” world is often hard psychologically and many ex-cons feel disorganized, disturbed, and depressed. The longer they have been incarcerated the harder it usually is to adapt.

The resources for accomplishing tasks such as getting a job, finding a place to live and buying necessities such as food and toiletries are scarce. Those who are lucky enough to have family and friends waiting for them on the outside often experience dependency on their loved ones (Austin & Irwin, 2001; Ross & Richards, 2002; Wynn, 2001). Anita Marton, deputy director of state policy at the Legal Action Center in New York says: “We have erected an array of legal and practical barriers that bar many ex-offenders from obtaining housing jobs, public assistance, and school loans (Wynn, 2001, p. 169).”

Making Money on Punishment; Prison Privatization

By midyear 2002, 6.1% (86,626) of all State and Federal prisoners were held in private facilities. 12.6% of Federal prisoners and 5.2% of State prisoners were housed in private prisons. Texas and Oklahoma are on top when it comes to convicts in private facilities; most of the private prisons are low and medium level security institutions (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). The relative recent growth in private prisons in the U.S. has been an attempt to relieve one of the most burdensome problems tormenting the

U.S. criminal justice system, overcrowding. There are two types of private correctional services: contracting-out, where the correctional agencies remain the financier and maintain policy control; and “asset sale,” where ownership is transferred to the private sector and the government is left with a limited or nonexistent role. Private contracting saves money and when the need for more beds is high, facilities to meet the need can be built more quickly. Another claim is that private facilities can operate more efficiently. This is achieved by reducing the costs of labor associated with operational costs.

Certain benefits related to private prisons have put pressure on the public sector to re-examine how it does business and make savings (Austin & Irwin, 2001). Having said that, private firms make decisions based on profit. They are more prone to cut corners that will save them money which again could be detrimental to the rights and well-being of the convict. It also questions certain legal aspects such as “allowing a private prison to punish inmates who have violated institutional rules (which may differ from those of publicly operated facilities) without oversight by the state could be a denial of due process especially if the punishment entails the loss of good time that could serve to lengthen an inmate’s period of imprisonment (Austin & Irwin, 2001, p. 76).”

The prison industry in the U.S. means money, big money. It signifies money for the building industry, equipment needed (food, security, health services and so on), and daily operation. When prisoners are used as cheap labor to save money the only winner is heavy industry. The danger is that, eventually, crime can be profitable – for the state and for private industry. The prison industry constitutes a large percentage of the workforce in the U.S. The crime control industry is estimated at 4% of the total U.S. workforce. This is a conservative estimation because that number does not include those

who build the institutions, those who provide the equipment used in them, and those who supply necessities such as food.

The prisoner is important to the U.S. economy, not by what he produces, but because of the resources he consumes. The prisoner has attained a new and important role in U.S. society, the role as a commodity for the control industry. Not only is the perceived dangerous criminal brought under complete control, but this control is exercised by the same industry that has made him superfluous outside the prison walls (Christie, 2000).

Cons, Ex-Cons, and Prison System in Norway

There are a total 48 prisons in Norway; one of them restricted to females only. Most other prisons hold prisoners of both sexes. The largest prison is located in Oslo and has a capacity of 354 convicts the smallest in Mosjøen holds 9 prisoners. Imprisonment and other special penal reactions can be carried out in high security prisons (closed prisons); low security prisons (open prisons); hostels; and, non-custodial and early release programs with special conditions including supervision and control by the probation service. In open institutions there are no special security measures taken to prevent prisoners escaping, unlike those taken in closed institutions. The two types of institutions combined had, in 2000, a bed capacity of 2923.

The Penal Code groups criminal offences into felonies and misdemeanors. There are two types of prison convictions: a sentence of immediate imprisonment, time that have to be served behind bars; and a suspended prison sentence, which means in essence parole for a certain amount of time. Felonies are, with some exceptions, offences with a maximum penalty exceeding three months imprisonment. Misdemeanors are generally

minor offences carrying a maximum penalty of three months imprisonment (Kriminalomsorgen, 2004). “Some 30% of all prisoners in Norway, that is to say about a thousand people, are in open prisons. They are those with only one year to eighteen months left to serve, or those who started with a very short sentence. They need the maximum adjustment to normal life before leaving prison, the authorities believe, and this is not at all easy after a long term. That is why these open prisons have such a free regime. It is in society’s interest to get back a full-fledged citizen (Kriminalomsorgen, 2004).”

Very few recorded offenses in Norway lead to time behind bars. A prison sentence can be from 14 days to 15 years and for specific cases, such as murder, serious drug crimes, rape, and robbery causing death, the law gives explicit instructions that 21 years can be given. Prisoners rarely serve their full sentence, it is normal to be let out on parole when two thirds of the sentence is served. Almost three out of ten convictions end up sentenced to immediate imprisonment.

Most prison sentences are very short and 77% of the sentences of immediate imprisonment in 2000 were three months or less. 12% were from three months and up to a year and 11% were imprisoned for a year or more. Of the total number who were sentenced to immediate imprisonment, 19% were convicted with a suspended sentence in addition. Only 15 people were sentenced to imprisonment for 11 years or more in 2000. The average sentencing in 2000 was 229 days. Per day, there was an average of 2,762 convicts in prison in 2001, almost 94% of them were male (Ellingsen, 2001; Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2003).

People under the age of 18 and people who do not have any previous sentences are less likely to be convicted to an immediate prison sentence. Imprisonment as punishment is mostly used on people over the age of 18; the majority is around the ages 30-39. Prison sentences are more likely given to people who have committed crimes before than to first time offenders.

Eight out of ten people who were sentenced to immediate imprisonment had had previous convictions. Younger people and first time offenders usually get suspended sentences or penalty notice. This is, in part, because younger people commit less serious crimes and partly because the law takes into account mitigating circumstances related to age. It is common for younger people to get sentenced for 2 years probation, and in 2000, 88% of the probation cases had law abidance as the only condition. 3 out of 10 prisoners in Norway serve their time for drug related convictions and a large percentage are convicted for violence. In 2000, 55% of the prisoners were over 30 years and only 24% were between the ages of 15-24. 13% of Norwegian inmates are foreign citizens and most of them are doing time for crimes related to drugs (Ellingsen, 2001; Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2003).

From 1980 to 1990, the crime rate in Norway doubled but during the 1990s the increase has been more moderate. A total of 239,240 convictions were made in 2001 but only 8,441 were sanctioned with imprisonment. There is an acute lack of space in Norwegian prisons and it is solved by a queue arrangement where people wait in line for their turn to serve time. There was only an average of 2,800 prisoners serving time in Norwegian penitentiaries in 2001, which is the highest number ever recorded. The queue arrangement is, of course, an arrangement that concerns the less serious cases, which is

the majority. In 1990 there were 4,500 people waiting in line to serve their time (Ellingsen, 2001; Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2003).

Those who serve short sentences might be exempt from participating in work schemes that are compulsory for all Norwegian prisoners. Convicts are paid for their work and they can also participate in programs on all levels run by the Ministry of Education. Both work and school is rewarded with around \$6 per day. The prison service is obligated to provide opportunities for the convicts to participate in leisure activities, cultural or physical, in their time off work or school. The goal is for all inmates to have a personal contact officer for support and motivation. Convicts are usually allowed to have televisions, radios and magazines in their cells. Most prisons have a priest who holds regular church services and helps organize social events (Kriminalomsorgen, 2004).

There were a total of 61,7 persons for each 100,000 Norwegian citizen in prison in 2001. Of all the people convicted, including all types of punishment, for some sort of crime in 1995 (65,000) about 28,000 or 42% of them experienced relapse into crime during a time period of five years. The majority of those who do relapse do it within the first year. There is a large number recidivism amongst young people in comparison to those over 40 and it is those who have previously been convicted for theft or drugs who have a tendency to fall back into to old patterns. Recidivism is highest amongst those who have been sentenced with immediate imprisonment.

Making the Connection

It would be easy to assume that the increase in prison population is due to higher crime rates and more serious crimes committed. Contrary to the popular belief in the

U.S., the number of victims has decreased and so has the number of serious violations reported to the police. Even though the murder rates in the U.S. are ten times higher than those in Scandinavia, homicide is still rare and cannot explain the dramatic increase in the incarcerated population. There is no doubt that there are high crime rates in the U.S. but the conventional explanation for an expanding prison population is due to harder sentences and stricter crime policies (Christie, 2000). Instead of looking at crime as an effect of social and economic conditions it has become the cause of fear and disorder.

Are numbers of imprisoned individuals an indicator for level of crime? If it so is, does not that mean that the development of these numbers is predestined? Christie (2000) suggests that society is presented with a magnitude of actions that can be given the meaning of crime. It is through actions that are labeled “unwanted” that we can measure crime and understand the differences between criminal justice systems. There are social mechanisms behind small and large prison populations because the boundaries of the control industry are manmade. The size of the prison population is determined by the society, it is regulated by human decisions. That bad and irresponsible decisions are made is obvious. It is a collective responsibility to make sure that future decisions are made for the betterment of the majority. Because when we resort to explain behavior as “natural crime” we authorize the free play of economic forces (Christie, 2000).

The personal and social traits of a prosecuted individual seem to be irrelevant when punishment is measured in the U.S. In this way, distance is created between the convicted and the person as a human being. When social traits are eliminated in the conviction process it creates an impersonal and seemingly objective system. In this de-personification process, a gap is created and maintained for the authorities where it

becomes almost impossible for them to identify with the prosecuted. Criminals are a species of their own and need to be treated and handled in ways that other people are not. The physical and social distance to convicts created by technology is another example of de-personification. When someone is just a voice in a speaker or a picture on a screen distance is created. This way the convicts do not have to be dealt with in a way that requires any physical and therefore no emotional involvement.

This detachment makes it easier to commit negative acts towards those who are already punished by sitting locked up behind prison walls. When private companies are used in the development and daily operation of penitentiaries, citizens in the democratic U.S. create another distancing factor. When the government has control, citizens are responsible for the type of services that are offered. When a private company has control, a distance towards convicts and society is established, and responsibility is renounced and given to the company in charge. The prison guard represents the company he or she works for and seemingly people believe that their responsibility ended when the government handed over its involvement (Christie, 2000).

In 1990, there were 2,500 people in Norwegian prisons but there were 4,500 waiting in line to serve their time (Ellingsen, 2001). Waiting for punishment is usually not a good situation to be in, but the fact that queuing is used as an alternative to overcrowded facilities or prison privatization says something about the social mechanisms behind the idea of punishment and people in general. Christie (2000) notes, that for the most part, people are convicted as ordinary, normal people and not as a species of their own. They can be blamed for something that they have done wrong and they are expected to serve their time, but they are not savages and they can wait for their

turn, just like everybody else. To take the solution of a queue arrangement means an acceptance of the idea that most people are not dangerous monsters and that there is not such thing as “natural crime.” They are put in prison to serve their time. They are not incarcerated because they are wild animals who are finally caught.

Without even pointing them out there are obvious, noticeable and large differences in the incarceration systems in Norway and the U.S. Many of them have to do with the amount of people who go through the systems and the population size both inside and outside the prison walls. There will always be differences but the similarities might become stronger in the future. The justice system in the U.S. has adapted to a society increasingly lead by market forces even though Norway is quite resilient there has been a tendency to follow the “Big Brother” in the west on many occasions. Free-market capitalism and technology is unavoidable and Norway is definitely a part of the global market. The U.S. has to a greater extent than most European countries let these factors pervade all parts of the social structure. The question is, how long can other countries avoid the pressure and when will the want for profit turn criminal justice systems into systems of crime control (Christie, 2000)?

CHAPTER IV
RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND SLAMMER CULTURE;
A PROSPEROUS RELATIONSHIP

The Good Health of Extremism in Prison

Bank robbers cannot rob banks in prisons, but ideological extremists still can pursue their goals in many ways. (ADL, 2002, p. 6)

There is an intimate but complex relationship between extremist ideology and prison culture. Any type of, whether it is right-wing or left-wing, extremism thrives in the prison setting. There are both internal and external factors that generate such attitudes and behaviors. The internally generated problems provide the dynamics for the violent and gang related prison culture, and the externally generated problems provide for greater insertion of extremists into the prison environment.

Gang Banging

Over the years, a distinct prison culture has evolved in America. Convicts have developed their own slang, customs, music, fashion (mostly tattoos or “rags” which are bandanas or head scarves), social groups and organizations. The social structure of prison culture makes it increasingly hard not to be part of prison gangs while incarcerated. There is a high factor of prisoner-to-prisoner violence in State and high security Federal prisons where the prison populations are large. In general, though, the majority of prisoners in the U.S. are not exposed to a high degree of violence. However, this does not indicate that they, by any means, do not have to be prepared for it.

The racial and ethnic lines are visible in gang culture and structure, and their names often reflect racial and/or ethnic affiliation. Some of the most well known prison gangs such as the Crips, Bloods, Aryan Brotherhood, Mexican Mafia, Latin Kings, and Syndicate have been around for decades and are infamous far beyond the confines of prison walls. Prison gangs are extensions of life on the streets outside penitentiaries and, just like gangs, they are organized and have a similar organizational structure. Street gangs usually have a geographic component that entails a higher likeliness of multiracial or multiethnic group composition while prison gangs profess to an ideological motivation which is often related to race and ethnic segregation.

Because racial lines are so strong inside the pens, it is easy to nourish extreme right-wing attitudes and related violent behavior. New members are usually indoctrinated with these ideological motivations (ADL, 2002). Wynn (2001) reports that black youth who are charged with drug offences are 48 times more prone to be sentenced to juvenile prison. Considering the recidivism rates, a majority of these youth will end up behind bars again. When they enter prison as adults, they have gained plenty of experience both from previous jail or prison time and from the streets. They have skills and knowledge of how to survive in threatening, dangerous, and violent situations. They are hardened and possess survival skills that many whites lack when they enter the prison environment. With this “disadvantage,” there is a strong need for whites to get the protection that gangs can provide.

Working in gangs, so-called gang banging, is often used for physical protection and security; it is not rare for it to provide a substitute for family relations and social and emotional needs (Ross & Richard, 2002). The essentiality of group connection becomes

recognizable when we consider that the “autonomous individual” is exterminated after entry into the penal institutions. “Time after time and day after day, they are reminded that they are individually powerless to shape the course of their own lives. Individually, they are impotent. They are isolated. They are subordinate. They are dependent. They are objects rather than the holders of power. If they have influence or power to control significant aspects of everyday life, then that influence and power must come from them as members of a group rather than as individual people (Thomas, 1987, p. 126).” “Joint mentality” (slammer slang for the perspective prisoners acquire from living in a total institution²⁷, where every aspect of their life is regimented and regulated) or loss of individual autonomy can partly be regained by becoming members of a gang and thus feeling that they can control aspects of their daily lives. Not only can they prevent, to a certain extent, physical violence directed towards them, but by gang banging, they can also be in a position of control over other prisoners as well, whether it be groups or individuals. They have in that manner gained power and control of a small but very important part of their daily lives, the prisoner-to-prisoner interaction.

Some gangs are more violent than others. Gang business can be for primarily economical gain, such as selling drugs, theft or extortion, or just for mutual physical protection. One does not automatically become member of a gang, or “click up” (prison slang for joining a gang), just because of skin color or ethnicity. There is such a thing as being worthy of membership; if someone is to stick their neck out for you, you better be

²⁷ Total institution is a term first introduced by Erving Goffman in 1961. It is defined by “a range of institutions in which whole blocks of people are bureaucratically processed, whilst being physically isolated from the normal round of activities, by being required to sleep, work, and play within the confines of the same institution (Marshall 1998, p.669).”

worth it. Membership eligibility is automatically granted to those who have been members of gangs before they are incarcerated. Other potential members have to prove their competency.

Aryan Brotherhood (AB) has a probationary period for white convicts who seek to become members. Successful probationers may have been required to prove their loyalty, or “make their bones,” through major tasks such as attacking another convict or a corrections officer (ADL, 2002). Those who are accepted as core members have attained fully fledged membership. They “hang around fellow gang members and are very active in the gang’s pursuits: robbing other prisoners, dealing drugs, controlling some of the prison homosexuals, and carrying on murderous feuds with other gangs, particularly those of other races (Austin & Irwin, 2001, p. 108).” Gangs such as AB create constitutions which express their idealized views and create a sense of unification (ADL, 2002).

Besides core members, there are also gang associates. They are not involved in day-to-day activities and might be family or friends who are loosely connected to the members. They might have chosen to be just associates or have been found not competent enough to be full members, but are considered helpful in certain situations and for certain activities. “Joining a gang carries many obligations and responsibilities you might not enjoy. There is a price to pay for affiliation that may include participating in revenge, retaliation, feuds, even all out gang wars against rival factions that may extend from the “hood” to the penitentiary and last for years (Ross & Richards, 2002, p. 130).” These are activities that the associates do not always have to participate in, but they still get to enjoy a certain amount of protection from the gangs. Gangs use visits from

outsiders to maintain contact with the free world. They increasingly rely on female supporters (wives and girlfriends) to act as a vanguard in the outside.

In some prisons, the correctional officers allow certain gangs to have power over other convicts. In this way they let the gang members keep the prisoners under control and they gain some slack from the officers in return. In most penal institutions, though, the prison authorities work hard to keep gang affiliations limited because they create a more hostile and violent environment. Prison administrations attempt to identify core gang members and leaders and in Federal prisons, the Central Inmate Monitoring System (CIMS) is used. By using CIMS they are, sometimes, able to locate or identify central individuals and place them in the “hole” which is administrative segregation or “super max” units. There they might be placed for years. A “slam down,” however, does not prevent other gang members from carrying out activities in the “mainline” (Austin and Irwin, 2001).

Insertion of Extremists to the Pens

Extremist adherents, whether they are left-wing or right-wing, often commit law violations to protest or demonstrate political views. They routinely enter the prison system because of manifestations of their extremist convictions and to further their cause. These prisoners pose a continuing problem and threat to a criminal justice system which is trying to regulate violent behavior and gang relations. The number of extremist criminals is on the rise and so are their activities behind prison walls. There is not much that can stop these prisoners from advancing their extremist activities while they are incarcerated. These convicts often see themselves as being in prison for “political

reasons” rather than imprisoned for the crimes they actually did commit; they view themselves as “political prisoners” or “prisoners of war.”

While incarcerated, extremist prisoners continue their activities in three ways. First, they may attempt to rally support for themselves. They recruit other prisoners by passing around copies of fringe publications, assist with legal strategies, or bring in visitors from the outside (often under the guise of religious instruction). Second, some might tie their activities to prison gangs. Those who are convicted for hate crimes are often in desperate need for gang protection and right-wingers who enter the prison system because of their ideological convictions are often more committed to racial supremacy ideologies than other convicts. Sometimes, there is friction between supremacist groups already established in the prison setting and the extremists who enter, but these newly entered convicts can also provide new motivation and revived affirmation for gang activities and attitudes. Third, as mentioned earlier, extremist convicts who are imprisoned for furthering their cause see themselves as “prisoners of war” and use this to recruit members outside prison walls. Recruitment to the “war” is often through written statements and articles in extremist magazines published on the outside. Some of these writings are plainly about prison life but the recurring theme is the call to action, radical action expressed in no uncertain terms (ADL, 2002).

To Believe or Not to Believe: Faith for Fringes

Prisoners practicing religion in the U.S. are protected by the First Amendment and prisoners are generally allowed access to religious services, personnel, and material. Michael Pass’ (1999) study on religion and convicts in maximum security prisons shows that religious affiliation rose with incarceration. He also reports that one third of the

prisoners in his study changed their religious affiliation after imprisonment. While Pass' study and most other studies that involve religion and crime focus on religiosity as a preventive force, Pass also notes that "religious group membership does not necessarily mean acceptance of moral values and conventional authority (p. 120)." Many white and black extremists have adopted or created religions that support their political and racial ideologies in order to bolster their racist agendas. These religions often justify and advocate violence for the achievement of political goals.

The dilemma that arises for the prison authorities when dealing with violent religious groups is the balance between responsibility for security in the institutions and preserving prisoner rights. Even though correction officials have the authority to determine whether or not a specific group is a security threat and limit their access to services and materials, there are definitely loopholes that the convicts can exploit in order to camouflage their extreme racist ideologies and criminal behavior. These loopholes could be "bogus" religious groups. These prison gangs might engage in regular meetings under the guise of "religious" ceremonies or the production of zines (slang for prisoner produced magazines) in order to recruit or communicate with other members.

There have been plenty of lawsuits by prisoners who have been denied access to religious services, reading materials, hygiene, and dietary practices by claiming that their right to free exercise of religion has been violated. Even though extremist ideology can be violent and even advocate overthrow of the viewed illegitimate government authority, extremist speech is still protected speech.

In September 2000, President Clinton signed the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) which enhanced the religious rights of prisoners.

RLUIPA protects prisoners' right to practice their religion, at the same time it leaves it up to the courts to define what beliefs actually constitute religion. This again creates conflict and the loophole remains for those who use their creativity to advocate violence and spread their extremist views while incarcerated (ADL, 2003; Levin, 2000).

Christian Identity²⁸ and Odinism are the two most common religions used by incarcerated white supremacists to get religious privileges. Prison officials have noticed that large numbers of young right-wing extremists have "adopted" these religious beliefs and are, more or less, superficially interested in order to be part of a gang and receive the benefits that come along with religious affiliation. This is not to say that all adherents to these religions are fig-leaf followers because many practice these religions with great conviction.

There has been a noted increase in Odinist adherents inside and outside prison walls. A growing number of right-wingers under the age of 30 are Odinists. This rise has been at the expense of the Christian Identity movement which has lost many of its followers to this Norse neopagan religion. Identity followers who had a penchant for violence might have found that not enough violent action was taking place and may have turned to Odinism for fiercer implementation of their racist views.

A new generation of racial activists have come to the forefront, and Christian Identity has become an "old man's religion." Christian Identity has the advantage of being a Christian sect, which may deceive prison officials who have no knowledge of its

²⁸ Christian Identity is a deeply divided movement with disputes over doctrine and interpretation. It identifies the peoples of northern Europe with the lost tribes of Israel. It emerged already in the 1930s, but since then modern Christian Identity has evolved to be a racist recasting of British-Israelism (Gardell 2003; Kaplan 2000).

extreme anti- Semitic, racist and violent nature. Even though Christian Identity brands Jews as Satanic and other non-whites as subhuman, it is still tied to Christianity which is viewed by younger white supremacists to be bound to a secular state. It is also seen as a tolerant religion that encourages different races to live side by side and turn the other cheek (ADL, 2002; Gardell, 2003; SPLC, 2000).

*Permeable Prisons; Recruiting Inside
and Outside the Slammer*

The permeability of prison walls has partly been depicted by my description of the drafting roles of inserted extremists, their continuing extremist activities within the prison system, and their rally for support in the free world. Extremist activities do not stop at prison walls, they flow through. The walls seem to have been built with penetrable materials and serve as no hindrance for extremist recruitment. Recruitment flow goes in more than one direction. Extremist groups, whether they are religious or anti-governmental, view prisoners as a viable source for recruits or converts to their extreme causes and are active in and sponsor prison “outreach” programs. The flow is not only written material related to ideologies and religion; there is also a substantial flow of humans going through the prison system either visitors from the outside, through extremists being imprisoned, converted prisoners being released, or ex-cons returning again. Because of this human flow of extremist individuals, action and behavior learned inside the penitentiaries follows. It continues on the streets and is encouraged further by written material.

The recruitment factor is strong but there are also many extremist organizations that provide support for their already incarcerated members who have showed their

devotion by sacrificing their freedom. These organizations encourage their adherents to contact prisoners to show them that they are supported in their cause. Outreach programs are widely used by extremist organizations from the left and right, they put up pen-pal lists, encourage economical donations for convicts' personal use or donations for newsletters subscriptions. Some of these incarcerated convicts are viewed as "celebrity" prisoners and are admired in the free world all of the U.S., and even overseas.

Hammerskin Nation (HSN) is a good example of how right-wing extremist groups can provide support for prisoners. They do not recruit from the prison population, but they glorify prisoners who have fought for the betterment of the white race and view prisons as just another arena for a continuing race war. Like many other groups, they publish newsletters and "political prisoners" are not charged for these publications (ADL, 2002).

Odin in the Pen

Several sources report that Odinism is the fastest growing religion in U.S. prisons (ADL, 2002; Gardell, 2003; Kaplan, 2000; SPL, 2000). Few states keep statistics of their Odinst population, but of those that do, Texas apparently has the largest number with 189 known adherents, Kansas reports 120, Colorado 92, and Arizona 90. These numbers are probably not representative of the actual number, and the estimations are more than likely to be conservative. Considering that these numbers were reported in 2000, the figures are expected to be quite a bit higher at the present time. Other states report significant presences but they are not quantified. It is noted that these prisoners are especially violent and that they are probably monitored more than other prisoners (SPLC, 2000).

This growing religion is observed by intelligence units. Information packages have been put together to enlighten people who might be in contact with Odinist adherents. These documents contain information written by researchers and Odinists themselves. The documents also hold letters from named imprisoned Odinists sent to outreach programs and individuals they hope to get support from. They regularly inquire about support in terms of spiritual guidance, financial support, and literature. There are also letters directed to the prison officials with requests for literature, time and equipment for religious services (Sacramento Intelligence Unit, 2003). (For examples of letters, see Appendix A)

Many Odinist kindreds are often offshoots of Aryan revolutionary groups such as the Order. The Order or the Brüder Schweigen (Silent Brotherhood) was founded by Robert J. Mathews in 1983. It consisted of a group of militant young men casting themselves as a Holy Order of Aryan warriors. This armed underground of Aryan revolutionaries were determined to fulfill their “sacred duty to do whatever is necessary to deliver our people from the Jew and bring total victory to the Aryan race.” The group members differed in their perceptions of what they were doing and in what ways to serve their cause. They, however, became successful armored-car robbers and counterfeiters and evolved to be a multimillion-dollar organization which enabled them to acquire arms, vehicles, and technical equipment. The Order rapidly engaged more people and became involved in other areas of activity. Following the July 1984 robbery of a Brinks armored car, which landed the Order \$3.6 million dollars, and the June 1984 assassination of racist-baiting talk-radio host Alan Berg, the FBI began closing in on the group. During an eighteen-month period the Order had killed two FBI agents, a sheriff, and a state

trooper. The whole Order was behind bars by spring 1986 and they got a total of 900 years of incarceration. The Order activists and a hard core consisting of Frank Silva, Randy Evans, Richard Scutari, Richard Kemp, Gary Yarbrough, David Tate, Randy Duey, David Land, and Bruce Pierce are all well known right-wingers and are hailed as heroic Aryan “prisoners of war” in numerous poems and White Power music lyrics (Gardell, 2003; Kaplan, 2000; Kaplan, 1997; Levin & McDevitt, 2002).

Several of the Order’s inner circle, such as Richard Scutari, Richard Kemp and David Lane, have become devoted Odinists after their incarceration. Odinism was recognized as a legitimate religion at the Federal penitentiary in Lompoc, California, in 1997. Richard Scutari, who is incarcerated at Lompoc, organized in 1998 a prison branch of the tribal Vor Ætt (our lineage) Odinist group, in hope that Aryan convicts will have tribes to link up with on release. The brotherhood of incarcerated Odinists was named the Sons of the Noble Wolf. According to Scutari, the weekly meetings held in the penitentiary had an average attendance of 50 to 55 prisoners.

Aryan prisoners are trained to be advanced warriors in the approaching Raganarök. They are expected to live by strict rules of conduct. They study runology, mythology, philosophy, archeology, and scientific racism and advance through the nine runic grades by passing tests both in regard to knowledge and physical fitness. The incarcerated members may seek initiation into the Úlfhednar (heathen wolfs) Brotherhood and become elite warriors. Membership in the Úlfhednar requires additional training in survival skills, military science, paramilitary tactics, martial arts, communications, and intelligence gathering (Gardell, 2003). “Like their power animal,

the wolf, the úlfhednar will care for their kin and show savagery in their protection (ibid., p. 219).”

David Lane and Wotansvolk

Another of the Order’s core members, David Lane, was captured by the FBI in March 1985 after an Order member turned FBI informant. Lane is currently imprisoned in a maximum security prison beneath the ground in Florence, Colorado. He was convicted of racketeering and of violating the civil rights of Alan Berg by killing him. He is serving a total of 190 years behind bars. Lane adopted a neopagan philosophy based on his understanding of Nature’s law and has, after his imprisonment, devoted his time to the study of Odinism, history, philosophy, and mystery religions.

Lane casts himself as being called by the Gods of the Blood to stop the Zionist murder of the White race and bring down the present Zionist World Order. He proclaims that the highest law of Nature is the preservation of one’s own kind, racism is therefore “a nature ordained imperative of the highest order (Lane, 1999, p. 2)”. Law of Nature stems from “the survival of the fittest,” and race determines the ability to think, create, and live. Personality, on the other hand, is not determined by race, it is dependent on race. He is convinced that the Aryan man is at the brink of extermination and uses the “14 Words” as a rallying point for a pan-Aryan militant uprising: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children (Lane, 1999, p. 6).”

Lane married Katja in 1994 and together they established the 14 Word Press. Katja is the channel of communication between David Lane and the outside world and she has had the key function of building up his reputation as a prisoner-of-war. The *Focus Fourteen* news letter was released monthly to encourage racial revival. Together

with Ron McVan²⁹, the two founded Wotansvolk in 1995. Wotansvolk was legally recognized as a church in 2000 under the name Temple of Wotan.

Through the 14 Word Press and *Focus Fourteen*, Lane and McVan have combined their religious and political views to provide supporters with a moral justification for racist beliefs. Their establishment is located in St. Maries, Idaho, where time is devoted to historical research and the dissemination of material on pre-Christian Norse mythology, traditions, rituals, rune wisdom, and artifacts. Katja and McVan served as key actors and operated the business on a daily basis. Because of the increasing workload, Katja Lane had a hard time handling the 14 Word Press, website, and Wotansvolk administration. It has now been handed over to John Post (Gardell, 2003; Kaplan, 2000; Lane, 1999).

WOTAN is the Germanic word for Odin; it is also the acronym for Will of the Aryan Nation. Wotansvolk teaches that each race is by nature unique and given distinct qualities. McVan states that Wotan symbolizes “the essential soul and spirit of the Aryan folk made manifest” and Wotansim is “the inner voice of the Aryan soul, which links the infinite past with the infinite future (Gardell, 2003, p. 208).” Wotan, the iron-willed warrior God, provides the necessary qualities for the white race to win the ongoing struggle for Aryan survival. “Wotansvolk teaches that each race is by nature unique and given distinct qualities truly their own. To survive and evolve along the desired path of

²⁹ McVan, born in 1950, is including one of the founders of Wotansvolk a racial artist. He has a radical anti-government political and pro-White political position. He was a member of the militant and racist Church of the Creator (COTC). He found the spiritual teachings of COTC shallow and searched for a different spiritual path. He developed a strong interest for Odinism and cofounded the group Wotan’s Kindred in 1992. McVans’s artistry adds an important cultural dimension to Wotansvolk (Kaplan 2000).

racial greatness, a race must develop a high level of “folk consciousness” (Gardell, 2003, p. 208).”

By performing rituals and ceremonies developed by the ancestors, the powerful unconscious Aryan archetypes and soul can be made conscious. As long as the white race is alive, these archetypes or the gods of the blood will be in existence. Wotansvolk’s aim is to re-create this lost folk consciousness in order to destroy its perceived enemies. There are no clear distinctions between Aryan man and Aryan gods, they are kin. Wotan is the personified divine essence of the Aryan man. Nature’s law is God’s law therefore race is our religion (Kaplan, 2000; Gardell, 2003; Lane, 1999).

The white race is on the verge of extinction and can be blamed on women’s liberation which has castrated white males. The white males are warriors who have to secure the existence of the Aryan race and Lane (1999) mentions two examples of how this is done “(1) when through war the male population is decimated, then common sense and nature’s law demand that wombs be filled, or (2) in the abomination of a multi-racial society, if a White man of energy and ability can support many wives and thereby keep White girls from mating with racial aliens (p. 27)” he should do so.

Wotansvolk has rapidly expanded its reach through cyberspace and ambitious prison-outreach programs. David Lane is one of the most infamous incarcerated Odinists and “prisoners of war.” A lot of written propaganda has been produced during the endless hours of Lane’s imprisonment. The outreach program has been, and still is, the highest priority of Wotansvolk and they continue to work for full religious recognition in the states where this has not yet been granted. As of 30 January 2001, the organization catered to more than 5,000 prisoners. There is a high presence of Odinist prisoners in

Arizona, California, Texas, Michigan, Florida, Indiana, Missouri, and Pennsylvania, with three to five hundred prisoners in each state. Gardell (2003) reports that when he first visited the Wotansvolk headquarters in 1996 there were less than a hundred prison kindreds but by 2000 the number had risen to 300. This gives evidence of a high pagan revival among white prisoners. Reportedly, there have been conversions of whole prison gangs to the Norse neopagan racist religion.

Wotansvolk is the most successful Odinist prison-outreach program and donates literature, videos, and ceremonial artifacts to assist imprisoned kindreds to hold regular services, study circles, and seasonal ceremonies. They also keep in contact with prison chaplains and assist convicts to legally challenge prison authorities in order that they recognize Odinism as a legitimate religion. In fact, Katja Lane's work has led to the permission of the wearing of a Thór's hammer in all states. Reflecting on their prison-outreach program, Katja Lane states:

Most of the males who still have their instinct as warriors, protectors, defenders of their nation, their womenfolk, and their children, these men are the ones who find themselves in prison. They're virtually on the frontline of the battle for the preservation of our race, and they are the first casualties. And there you'll find some of the most fervent interest in Odinism. Men in prison, not having to take time to make a living for their families, take time to love their wives and deal with daily problems, turn inward and look for their spiritual soul, and, so those two factors have created a very strong Wotanist presence in the prisons. Prisons, as you know, are very racially tense...and usually violent. The men need a sense of their own identity and having an expression for it. So, nearly every prison now, both state and federal has a kindred, and in nearly every case... Odinism or Wotanism are now officially recognized. (Gardell, 2003, p. 218)

Other prominent groups in promoting Odinism among prisoners are the White Order of Thule based in Richmond, Virginia, and the Pagan Liberation League based in Deer Park, Washington (ADL, 2002; Gardell, 2003; Kaplan, 2000).

David Lane envisions a postrevolutionary era, an all-Aryan nation of Odin, based on tribal structure ruled by the Philosphe-Elect. By this he means that only through a strong dictatorship will racial regeneration and advancement happen and individual rights must be sacrificed in the process. Even though Lane believes that absolute power is corrupt in nature, he suggests himself as the leader until the phase of transition is over. Just like Lane's motto, 14 Words has taken hold all over the white racist world, so has his 88 Precepts. (For 88 Precepts in its entirety, see Appendix B). The number of precepts is not coincidental. The number 88 is an important number within racialist movements. As "h" is the eight letter of the alphabet, the number 88 has come to stand for "Heil Hitler." In addition, to serve likeminded souls outside and inside prison walls in the U.S., Wotansvolk has developed contacts with Odinists all over Eastern and Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, and Chile (ADL, 2002; Gardell, 2003; Kaplan, 2000).

The Omnipresent Odin

American Naivety

United States relies on prisons to maintain societal order and control crime has even become controversial; the U.S. has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world. Yet Americans have discovered something comforting in the existence of prisons, as places where they can lodge criminals, at least temporarily protecting the rest of society from their ravages, real and imagined. The truth, though, is rather less comforting. Convicts are not nearly so insulated from the rest of society as many Americans would like to believe, nor are Americans somewhat unaffected by what goes on inside prison walls. (ADL, 2002, p. 4)

Americans have lulled themselves into a false sense of security by placing prisoners behind bars and assuming that the problem is then dealt with. Prison walls protect and isolate less than they think. What is on the streets is in the prisons and what is in the

prisons is on the streets. There is little difference other than the setting, in fact the prison scene heightens the intensification of hate and violence because there are no surrounding factors and no conventional society to tone down it down. A high number of these prisoners return to society and show signs of the intensity experienced during their confinement. They then leave their mark on society before they are sent back behind the walls.

The Case of James Byrd, Jr.

After midnight on June 7, 1998, the forty-nine-year old James Byrd, Jr., was walking home from a family party. Byrd a resident of Jasper, Texas, did not own a car and lived in a small apartment by himself and had no friends to drive him around, but he was used to walking and, in a place like Jasper, whose 8,000 residents usually knew each other pretty well, rides were often easy to get. After walking for just a few blocks, a grey pick up stopped and Byrd was offered a ride with Sean Berry and his two friends John King and Russell Brewer, three Jasper residents. The group stopped at a nearby convenience store before heading out of town. This was the last time anyone saw James Byrd, Jr. alive because instead of dropping their hitchhiker off at his home, the three buddies drove a few miles into a pine forest east of the town. The three men pulled Byrd out of the back of the truck and brutally beat him and spray-painted his face before they placed a heavy logging chain around his ankles and connected Byrd's chained body to the back of the pickup. Later that Sunday, Bryd's body was found in several different places. The three men had dragged the chained body for more than two miles; Byrd had not died until he had hit the edge of a concrete culvert which had ripped his head, right shoulder, and right arm from his body. The trio dragged the rest of his body another mile before

they unhooked it. When the pieces of his body were found by the police, it was discovered that Byrd's heels, elbows, and buttocks had been ground to the bone (ADL, 2002; Levin & McDevitt, 2002).

Byrd was a black man and his three killers were white. Both black and white residents of Jasper that had known the three men for years were shocked by the apparent race-based hate crime. No one could understand why they would target Byrd because he was black. The three killers were convicted in three different trials and as the details on the motives became clearer, they seemed to make the case more troublesome. All three of the killers had previous prison experiences based on charges ranging from theft to cocaine possession. But it became more and more apparent what had transformed King and Brewer into brutal racial killers. During their last incarceration, King and Brewer shared cell and they both became members of a small white supremacist prison gang, the Confederate Knights of America (CKA). They were heavily decorated with tattoos on their wrists, underarms, scalp, and chest, one depicting a black man being lynched. The two had left prison as changed men and were planning on starting a local chapter of the Confederate Knights, named Texas Rebel Soldiers, the only thing missing was a dramatic incident that would draw the attention to their cause (ADL, 2002; Levin & McDevitt, 2002). "During the trial, Assistant District Attorney Pat Hardy summarized their motivations. They were two people who couldn't fit into society, he explained, but they found a place in Prison, among the members of the CKA. And when they left, "they brought the prison life out with them" (ADL, 2002, p. 3)."

Hate Crimes

Most violent crimes are motivated by profit, protection, uncontrolled anger, or revenge. There are relatively low numbers of hate offenses in the U.S., at least reported, and the annual estimate is between eight thousand and twenty-five thousand on an annual basis. When hate crimes are committed it is not only the primary victim that is the target, it is everyone in that victim's group that has become targeted. Hate crimes do not only leave the individual target with physical and psychological marks it creates insecurity and fear amongst larger groups of people. These offenses are crimes against society as a whole because it eats away the bonds that hold the members of society together (Levin & McDevitt, 2002).

Hate crimes tend to be excessively brutal and are much more likely to entail personal violence than other crimes. Hate crimes can also constitute vandalism or destruction of property. The hatred in these crimes is expressed when force is exercised beyond what may be necessary to subdue victims, make them comply, disarm them, or take their possessions. The crimes are often senseless and irrational. The perpetrators often target random and total strangers. When total strangers are targeted, no one knows who will be next and this creates fear amongst groups in the larger society.

Hate victims are usually targeted by more than one offender. There are usually groups of four or more that attack the victims. The force behind the need for acceptance and the feeling of group belonging can be incredibly strong and provoke actions that probably would have never been thought of, or committed, by single individuals. Group mentality and energies can be ticking bombs ready to explode at anytime. In the case of James Byrd, there were few who understood how Berry could have committed a hate

crime, he had black friends and interacted with black residents, and was not known to be a racist. Barry craved acceptance from King and Brewer and the pressure of conformity became too strong (Levin & McDevitt, 2002).

Prisoners as Easy Targets and Instigators After Release

The case of James Byrd's death is not an isolated case related to prison experience. Even though this case was particularly gruesome and brutal, it depicts some of the prison-related problems that exist in the U.S., namely the effects of hate and extremism in the prison system. Prisoners are not only susceptible to extremist ideology and religion for gang related physical protection. Convicts are also emotionally vulnerable when we consider that they are isolated from family, friends, and conventional society. They are looking for anything that can connect them to the outside world and are therefore easy recruitment targets. They are also products of a modern globalized society that fosters a framework where rapid changes and a focus on individuality can leave some people behind. This can lead them to seek a collective identity due to an intrinsic need for an integrated and continuous social self.

Divine Recruitment

Research carried out by Clear, Stout, Dammer, Kelly, Hardyman, and Shapiro (1992) notes that religious affiliation has an effect on prison adjustment in two major ways: dealing with emotional strains connected to incarceration; and dealing with deprivations due to the prison environment. In dealing with emotional strains of incarceration, guilt, adaptation to a new way of life, and dealing with loss (especially freedom) were intrinsic motivations for religiousness while being imprisoned. Safety, material comforts, and access to outsiders were factors related to dealing with the

deprivation of the prison environment. "Adjustment" to prison is thought of as coping and avoiding trouble. "Coping" with prison life is measured by how well the prisoner feels in himself that he is able to "get along" in the prison setting without feeling unduly threatened, anxious, or upset. "Trouble" is measured by staying free of infractions.

Religiously devoted prisoners have a tendency not to excuse their guilt, but to take responsibility for their crimes and for the wrongfulness of their acts. Prisoners who are religiously active adapt to a new way of life that "changes" them: "it facilitates a type of "total replacement," whereby the ways of the past are subordinated to a new, fully developed way of living (Clear & Stout with others, 1992, p. 5)." This feeling of "life change" results in a sense of personal power that helps them cope with the pressures of prison life. In dealing with loss, prisoners reported that they felt a "freedom" or "peace" because they could see the difference between things of "the world" and spirituality; spirituality became the focal point which enabled them to deal with their losses. Religion is a means to deal with deprivations of imprisonment. Safety is provided by socializing with other religious inmates that might be less violent, the chapel is a safe haven, and religious prisoners often keep to themselves and stay out of trouble. Those participating in religious activity approved by the prison authority gain some material comforts and access to outsiders. The pastors holding ceremonies provide ties to the world outside and might bring in foods. The chaplains may allow extra phone calls and being away from the monotony of one's cell can also be considered a material comfort (Clear & Stout with others 1992).

Many of the same factors, noted by Clear and Stout with others, apply to Odinist convicts. Their religiosity also provides a means for dealing with the strains related to

incarceration and deprivations caused by the prison environment. The largest differences are that Odinists “adjust” in different ways. Whereas most religious prisoners avoid infractions because of their religiosity, Odinists receive more infractions, e.g. being placed in super-max units, because of behavior related to their religious conviction such as violence. In general, other religious prisoners deal with guilt in a remorseful way, Odinists, however, show no remorse for their actions and feel no guilt. Instead, they glorify their actions by considering them “acts of war.” Those Odinists recruited after incarceration find new ways of life and they find a new sense of personal power related to the “war” they are fighting. Their way of coping with the pressures of prison is to become part of the violence and hatred instead of resisting it. This is also how they deal with losses of freedom. They connect their fight to the world outside and see the prisons as another place where the war has to be fought. The inner peace reported by religious prisoners might be found with the Odinist adherents too. The inner peace experienced by Odinists is probably more related to their new found life, their feeling of connection with the world outside, the religious meaning of their violent behavior, and last, but not least, the religious connection to being white.

It might not be so strange that Odinism is the fastest growing religion inside the penitentiaries. Whereas “other” religions “adapt” to prison culture by finding means to pull away from it and resist the ongoing “natural” fights that are going on, Odinists do not resist but join the fights with full force and all their religious conviction. They do adapt to the powerful forces that exist in the prison environment and their adaptation process might come more easily because they do not fight against the forces but become part of it.

When Time Has Come to Return to the Free World

How a person comes to participate in, or gain admittance to, a gang or deviant subculture is referred to as *entry* by Rubington and Weinberg (1999). After entry, *acculturation*—the new ways and meanings a person acquires from that gang, takes place (Rubington & Weinberg, 1999). Many members of racist prison gangs, particularly those who joined merely for protection or profit, end their association with such groups when released from prison. However, sometimes acculturation not only leads to compliance with gang rules and ways of working, but it might lead to internalization where members become truly ideologically committed. Members of some white prison gangs, for instance, may become true white supremacists, committed to the idea of an all-white society.

Odinist prison-outreach programs fill a central role in the life of their targeted prison audience and play a great role in acculturation. They serve as a connection to the outside and provide feelings of support. Odinist ideology does not only excuse imprisonment but it gives justification and rationale for violent acts inside prison, it even serves the same purpose on the outside of the prison walls. Religious beliefs and spirituality are strongly related to emotions connected to individual identity. When members of a group, then, are tied together by religion, the likeliness of acculturation leading to internalization becomes more likely, and the association to the group is less likely to be ended by a return to the free world.

The anxieties related to release after serving time are lessened by the knowledge that group ties can be continued. The free world does not seem as scary because there has been communication going on through pen pals, newsletters, literature, and visitors.

It is comforting for ex-convicts to know that they are viewed as “war heroes” instead of social outcasts and that the world outside also has kindreds that fight the same war.

Association with Odinist groups outside prison dissipates anxiety and replaces it with the rewards of fellowship, security, and religious spirituality.

When returning to the free world, they seek to settle where they are tolerated and where they find likeminded individuals or groups. The St. Paul Pioneer Press reported in 2003 that northern Utah attracts white supremacists that have found their kindreds in prison and settle in the state after release. Here they often return to criminal lifestyles. The low presence of police and a high level of tolerance make the counties of northern Utah attractive places to take residence. As many as 132 white supremacists were tracked in Weber county and several of the settlers, because of their continuing criminal activities, ended up behind bars again. Many are caught for drug offenses, residential burglaries, and strong-arm robberies. (For the entire article, see Appendix C)

The fellowship created with kindreds on the outside of prison walls “strengthens the bonds to unconventionality. At the same time, it weakens social ties to certain members of the conventional world, in turn reinforcing the ties to the unconventional group (Rubington & Weinberg, 1999, p. 261).” Odinists’ criticism of conventional culture and the larger society’s focus on the individual, scientific naturalism, and perceived drastic changes in moral values, combined with weakened ties to the conventional society and closer links to an unconventional group, does not encourage identification with the conventional world. Instead, it might lead to them furthering their criminal careers in the regime of their new found sense of “peoplehood,” which might result ultimately in more time behind bars.

Ex-convicts are already stigmatized when they return to society and their affiliation with deviant organizations, such as Odinist groups, does not lessen their stigmatized status. Many Odinists, like other white supremacists, are marked with visible tattoos that symbolize their group belonging and/or racist beliefs. This might make it more difficult to be accepted by the larger society. Bjørge (1998) notes that it is easy to join unconventional and deviant groups because they “fulfill the functional needs of their members in terms of providing identity, community, protection, and excitement (p. 233).” He continues to say that reasons for leaving the group can be many, such as: negative social sanctions experienced from the larger society; loss of faith in ideology and politics; a feeling that “things are going too far,” especially in terms of violence; growth of dismay with the inner workings and activities of the group e.g. too much beer drinking and not enough political propaganda and ideology; loss of status and position in the group; exhaustion from struggles with various enemies and the constant threat of violence; and pressure of being publicly known as a group member lessens the chances of getting a conventional job.

Even if they wanted to, members of deviant organizations have a hard time pulling out of the group and joining conventional society again. Even though there are plenty of reasons to leave, there are also strong ties that are hard to break. Positivity is provided by the group and disengagement from it can be inhibited by characteristics of the group that are considered too valuable to leave behind, such as: community; friendships, a “family” substitute; identity; security against perceived external threats and enemies; and excitement and adventure. Many also fear negative sanctions in terms of violent attacks, harassment, and verbal threats from the group from which they want to

disengage, and a loss of protection against former enemies. Relations with family and friends from the conventional world are often impaired by joining groups in the first place, many experience therefore a vacuum when disengaging and run the risk of becoming social outcasts without social ties to either worlds (Bjørøgo, 1998).

Religion and spirituality tie members of groups closer together. If we then combine religion with race, there are stronger factors that bind. Group connection, race, and religion fuse to form a powerful bond, and develop deep devotion to the cause or the group. If this is put in a prison setting, the violence-encouraging religion of Odinism provides a motivation for furthering the race war – a war that is related to your spiritual self as White. Your race has become your religion and the cause you fight for is divine, and so are you. At the same time, the war on the inside of the prisons is encouraged by the knowledge that it is supported and admired on the outside and that the same war is fought by kindred spirits in the free world. This fight for a common cause gives a feeling of connection to the outside world – a connection that is renewed when convicts return to the conventional world. Instead of complying to the rules of a society they have little knowledge of and ties to, they will more likely continue their affiliation with the group that has supported them while they have served time, a group affiliation that might put them back in the slammer.

CHAPTER V

DO WE DARE NOT TO LEARN? ASSESSING THE DANGER

Odin in His Native District – A Growing Force?

For most of recorded history, Norway has been a relatively homogenous nation. In recent years, a general belief amongst the “white skinned” Norwegian inhabitants is that large percentages of the population are immigrants and refugees from developing countries. There is no doubt that the number of immigrants has gone up. From 2002 to 2003, 333,000 newcomers were recorded, 21,000 more than the year before. Still, by the beginning of 2003, the immigrant population constituted only 7.3 percent of the total population in Norway. The immigrant population is defined by two parents born abroad: “277,300 were first generation immigrants and 55,500 were born in Norway of two foreign-born parents. During 2002, the immigrant population increased by 4,000 persons born in Norway of two foreign-born parents, and 17,200 first generation immigrants (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2004).”

Persons from Pakistan are the largest immigrant group; three out of four Pakistanis live in Oslo. The immigrant population, generally, reside in the larger cities of Norway, especially non-western immigrants. 37 percent of immigrants live in Oslo alone and 17 percent of the whole population in Oslo are non-western immigrants. Non-western immigrants have, on average, the lowest income and a large percentage are unemployed (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2004).

The crime rates in Norway are highest in the larger cities and non-western immigrants are registered more than any other group as victims of violence. This does not necessarily indicate racially based violence but might indicate that violence amongst the immigrant groups is large. Just like the larger population, the majority of perpetrators from the immigrant milieu are young men. There are no apparent differences in criminal behavior among the “white” population in Norway and the immigrant population, but the amount of criminal behavior, in general, has increased (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2000). Since the immigrant population has increased, the prisons in Norway are experiencing a more diverse population, which can lead to racial tension within the penitentiaries.

The right-wing milieu in Norway perceives the immigrants, fugitives, and interracial breeding as a threat to the pure Aryan race. A considerable amount of research has been done on right-wing extremism in Norway but little has been done on the Odinistic scene and even less on Odinist adherents in prison. The presence of Odinism in Norway is well known through a few infamous front men. However, there is little knowledge of the actual level of activity other than information that the groups themselves put on their websites. As part of my enquiries into Odinism as a religion, I contacted two publicly well-known Odinists that allowed me to use our private conversations as material for background information in my writing.

The Prophet of Odin

Tore Wilhelm Tvedt has given up his conventional life to fight for his calling to enlighten the “brainwashed Norwegian people” and save the Nordic or Aryan race from extinction. At the time of our conversation (summer, 2002), Tvedt, then aged 59, felt that he was victimized by the Norwegian police and had to move around in order to avoid

capture. Tvedt has on a number of occasions been charged for racist statements, has served time for derogatory remarks, and went to trial for illegal possession of weapons. In a relatively religious conservative country like Norway, where state and church are still one, he has become notorious for the Odinist ceremonies he has performed and the group of young people that he has attracted. One of Norway's best known and, believed to be, largest Odinist organizations, Vigrid, was initiated by Tvedt. He says he believes in leaderless resistance but has been de facto the public face of Vigrid since it was founded in January 1999 with the publication of their magazine *Vigrid* of the same name. The organization and the magazine take their name from the battlefield of Ragnarök, symbolizing the current war to preserve the Nordic race.

Tvedt was born in Oslo and is the middle child of three. His father was in the resistance movement when Norway was occupied by Germany during World War II. He was a troubled teenager and got into lots of trouble at school. In his later teens, he had an alcohol problem, and car theft and fights led to encounters with the police. Around the age of 20, after spending a few months out at sea, he decided to sober up and straighten out his life. He went back to school and graduated with a two year degree from the Norwegian School of Management (BI) in computer science. He was an active sportsman and participated at a high level in rowing, karate, and biking. Tvedt is pretentious in his descriptions of himself. He declares himself to be the best at whatever he does, whether it is school, sports, or sobering up (said with a smile). He is a man of nature and thrives in the outdoors. When times have been hard, he has found refuge in the mountains, but says that there is nothing like being out on the sea on a sailboat.

From not being politically active or having any interest in politics at all, Tvedt became increasingly aware of Norwegian politics during the 1990s. He reacted strongly to what he perceived as a mass immigration of foreigners. In his words, he wondered “what the hell was happening in our country?”; lying politicians were letting immigrants and refugees enter the country under the pretense of asylum until it was safe for them to return home while they, in fact, ended up staying and settling here. He felt it was wrong to allow foreigners use resources meant for the Norse people of Norway. They got tax reductions when opening shops and they got employment and access to schools on a quota basis. Large-scale immigration, or what Tvedt calls occupation or invasion, was a direct consequence of one major nefarious factor, ZOG. The government in Oslo was controlled by an overarching Jewish conspiracy, a conspiracy that aimed to destroy the Nordic race. He became increasingly interested in history, family lineage, languages, and Norse traditions and studied on his own to develop his knowledge. He then came to the conclusion that mass immigration and racemixing were part of a bigger picture. This really did not have anything to do with Norway as a nation, but the survival of the Norse race as a whole.

His extreme views became too much for his wife who divorced him in 1994. Tvedt states that he has always been Norse and that he had left the Norwegian state church at the age of 18. However, it was not until December 18th 1994 that he received a calling from Odin to become a prophet. He was out of money and depressed when “Odin woke him up.” All his inner doubts and problems were gone and he felt inner peace.

Tvedt, who has always been a leader type, claims to be highborn and a descendent on his father’s side of Håkon den Gode, one of Norway’s old Viking kings, he claims his

mother's side was Swedish nobility. As a result, he sees it as his personal crusade to lead the Norwegian people in the battle for the survival of the Norse race. Tvedt traveled around Europe for a year and a half in his car with and a few personal belongings. He is proficient in French, German, and Dutch. How he made enough money for his travels was not discussed because "that could put him behind bars."

In 1996, he moved back to Norway and started contacting small white supremacist groups and moved on to larger projects. He initiated contact with political groups who intended to become functional ERPs (Extreme Right-Wing Political Parties) basing their manifestos on anti-immigration. He soon realized that their level of activity did not suit him. "This is a situation where our people are being relocated and extinguished it's not enough, then, to write letters to newspapers that don't even publish the material because it's too racist," he said. He turned to the skinhead scene and moved to Tønsberg (south of Oslo) where this milieu, at the time, was extensive and out on the streets. He built connections with two neo-Nazi groups, Boot Boys and Blood and Honor. He became well respected in the two groups and members enjoyed having a more mature member among them. After getting to know them, he realized that these were troubled kids who did not really want to put their words into action. He split from the groups and moved to Lier (between Oslo and Tønsberg). This led to the foundation of his own group, Vigrid, in January 1999.

Vigrid

Norse or Germanic culture is rooted in the need for self-governance; Vigrid is therefore a decentralized network-organization of leaderless resistance made up of small local groups or cells and individual adherents. There is no "membership status" because

people are already a part of the race war. People who are initiated into the network have to build up their own cells with people they trust. Tvedt is contacted for rites of passage ceremonies such as initiation, baptism, confirmations and weddings; he travels around the country to perform religious rituals on request. All rites are performed with the hammer of Thór, Mjöllnir (a symbol of strength and power) and swords, axes, and knives. They symbolize the warrior culture that Odinism represents (for pictures see Appendix D). Active adherents of Vigrid do not use alcohol or drugs and they are encouraged to learn how to use the internet for communication, sale, and promotion. Anyone of Aryan decent can join; their vision is to build a new Aryan society based on the historical Germanic ideals. Even though Vigrid's war is not related to a particular nation, but to kin related by blood across time and space, the group is not a branch of a larger international Odinist network. They believe there is no need for such a connection because Aryans are linked by race and the war is being fought everywhere there are Aryans conscious of their Norse blood. Tvedt himself is familiar with international groups and networks; he knows much of David Lane and admires the work of Wotansvolk. He is also an honorary member of National Alliance³⁰.

Tvedt claims he does not know the number of adherents but he stated that Vigrid had supporters from all age groups. He was reluctant to admit that the majority of Vigrid was made up of young teenagers, but on the question of why he thought that teenagers were interested and willing to be part of a group with such notoriety he said: "Older

³⁰ National Alliance is a National Socialist organization headed by William Pierce. The Alliance has roots back to the 1970s and is today known for its successful book distribution, radio program (*American Dissident Voices*), website, and a thriving email outreach (Kaplan 2000).

people have something to loose, they often have families and mortgages, young people are tougher.” He admitted that weapon training was important in the group; Tvedt always carried a knife and kept a shotgun and an axe in his car, he said. He emphasized that it was important to learn how to fight with and without weapons and, if requested, he would teach those who wanted to know how disarm and to fight with knives, axes, and small logs. Those who wanted to could go and practice with paintball guns and he taught them how to use his rifle. On the question of why it was so important to learn these skills, he said that it was because the group was frequently attacked by antiracist groups and immigrants.

Tvedt stated that he wanted to teach these people how to use their heads, to see the larger picture and understand how endangered the Norse race had become. When I asked him what using their heads had to do with weapons he stated: “I am a warrior and I don’t see the difference. I have no quarrels using violence, all people use violence to defend themselves.”

Odin as the One, But Not the Messiah

Tvedt says Odin is the all encompassing creative power of the universe. Odin means ‘one’; it is what is initial and original; everything stems from this ‘one’. Odinism is faith in nature and in man because man is nature. Man has to adapt to nature and race is nature, therefore, religion is determined by race. Tvedt said that no race has the same religion: “niggers have their own religion.” According to Tvedt, most written material and myths on Norse religion are historical tales. What others perceive as different gods in Norse mythology are, in fact, people that have lived at some point in history. He referred to this misplaced belief as “perverted faith.”

Tvedt also claims that the blond, Nordic human originated on one geographical location. Civilization originated in Nordic countries and the Nordic race is superior to all other races. According to him, all civilized societies have taken their starting point as the Nordic societal systems because the Nordic race is superior in understanding legal and judicial matters and societal organization. In his view, there would have been no technology and advancement in the world if it had not been for the Nordic race. He stated: "If it hadn't been for us there would have been no cars in nigger land. We do not import nigger technology; it's the other way around. We dominate and we have always dominated."

Tvedt, the prophet, here to save the Norse race from elimination, envisions a time where the extermination will end. The enemies are many, but the main adversary of the Aryan people are the Jews. He says that only the Jews have a religious conviction to take over the world by killing other races. Jews have created power centers through international corporations and own and control everything that is important in this world. Everything in Norway is owned by Jews and, because of them, we cannot live as Nordic people. ZOG contaminate everything with their international organizations and imports of foreigners. He said: "Our women have been brainwashed to believe that being a home-wife and giving birth to children is not attractive, and instead they take long educations and become too old to have kids," and the brainwashing goes as far as wanting to breed racially mixed children. "It's a personal threat to me when foreign men come and take our women." In Tvedt's view, Jews are controlling an occupation and invasion of Norway and, if no one attempts stop them, the Norse race will be gone in 50 years. "Exterminate or be exterminated! Jews are the curse of our world." To the

question how should the archenemy be exterminated, he replied: "Let the sun shine over Tel Aviv."

A Puppet or a Master of the Media?

The media in Norway have become increasingly interested in Vigrid and the ceremonies performed by Tvedt. Vigrid's website has been visited frequently and the organization's best method of recruitment has been through the internet.

The Norwegian counter-intelligence police (PST)³¹ had probably kept Tvedt and the activities of Vigrid under surveillance for months before they started raids in December 1999. As a result of the media coverage and the police raids, Tvedt was forced to move around and found it hard to find places to live. "No one wants to rent out to someone whose door might be bashed in by the police at anytime," He said. For the most part, he was living in his car because staying with friends frequently ended up in police visits and questioning. According to Tvedt, there were no grounds for the aggressive actions of the police, and the behavior towards him, his family, friends and acquaintances, was unwarranted and unnecessary. Everyone who contacted Tvedt or had been in touch with Tvedt before were contacted by the police. The police then notified the children's parents of their activities. He stated that "it's sick, just plainly sick! I'm the only individual in Norway who is hunted down with all the means in possession of the state." When describing police-action towards his own children, he became markedly emotional especially when he tried to describe the threats directed towards his youngest daughter. Tvedt states that the police's unjustifiable treatment left the girl, who was

³¹ At the time the counter-intelligence police, Polititests sikkerhetstjeneste or PST, was called the police security service, Politiets overvåkningstjenest or POT.

thirteen at that time, with emotional and psychological problems. At the time of our meeting, Tvedt was living in cabins in the mountains, but the police were still tracking his cell phone. He felt hunted by the police and that they were determined to end his activities. He spoke freely about the violations he felt were done to him by PST and blatantly states his hate for the police and the government.

In areas where Tvedt has held recruitment campaigns, the local newspapers have shown interest. He recalls that after a wedding ritual he had performed he became front page news for several of the largest national newspapers. Tvedt's extremist views have had a lot of news coverage and his encounters with the law have made him even more appealing as material for the media. From 1999 to 2000, the police received a series of reports against Tvedt, primarily from humanitarian organizations, regarding what was perceived as gross violations of Article 135a in the Norwegian Penal Code. According to the statute book, it is punishable in Norway to make statements publicly, orally or by other means, that can threaten, scorn or hatefully expose, persecute or hold in contempt a person or a group of individuals on the basis of their faith, race, skin color, national or ethnical origin, and sexual orientation.³² The accusations were, in general, related to statements Tvedt had made in the monthly magazine *Vigrid* and on the group's website, but also in response to posters, leaflets, and other similar material. Tvedt has stated that: "ZOG doesn't do much to stop the rape wave in Norway. It would probably have been

³² "§ 135a. Med bøter eller fengsel inntil 2 år straffes den som ved uttalelse eller annen meddelelse som framsettes offentlig eller på annen måte spres blant allmennheten, truer, forhåner eller utsetter for hat, forfølgelse eller ringeakt en person eller en gruppe av personer på grunn av deres trosbekjennelse, rase, hudfarge eller nasjonale eller etniske opprinnelse. Tilsvarende gjelder slike krenkelser overfor en person eller en gruppe på grunn av deres homofile legning, leveform eller orientering.

På samme måte straffes den som tilskynder eller på annen måte medvirker til en handling som nevnt i første ledd (Norges lover 1687-1997,p.61)."

different if the AIDS-infested, drugged-down black skulls had started raping Jewish women, but not even a pack like that would get a hard-on by them;” and “It is said that the Jews used to have guards by the corpses of their dead women so that other Jews wouldn’t come and enjoy themselves.” Based on charges in line with Article 135a in the Penal Code, the police confiscated Tvedt’s computer and, at the same time, came across an illegally kept sawed-off shotgun. He has also been accused of illegal possession of arms (a shotgun, knife, and a container of gas) under the Norwegian Weapon Law³³, resisting and hindering a civil servant in performing his duty, and violence against a civil servant.

Media coverage has fluctuated depending on what new ceremonies have been performed, actions by the police, and charges made against Tvedt. Even though I got the impression that he took pleasure in the media interest, he stated that the media had not always been an enjoyment, but whatever damage they have done they repaid by serving his cause, probably, more than they initially intended to.

In January 2001, 15 year old Benjamin Hermansen was murdered by members of the neo-Nazi group, Boot Boys, in a suburb of Oslo.³⁴ Tvedt was linked to the murder

³³ The laws regarding possession of weapons are quite strict in Norway. For further insight in laws regarding weapons, see *Norges Lov 1687-1997* (1998) p.917-923.

³⁴ The Holmlia murder (Holmlia-drapet) shocked a whole nation, not only because of its violent nature, but also because the victim, Benjamin Hermansen, was only fifteen years old and the killers were in their late teens. Hermansen, the son of a white Norwegian mother and a black Ghanaian father, lived in Holmlia, one of the multiracial suburbs in Oslo, with his mother. Late on January 26, 2001, Hermansen and another dark-skinned friend were out walking when a group of neo-Nazis from the gang Boot Boys spotted them from their car. They went after and chased the two teenagers, two of the neo-Nazis caught Hermansen, knocked him to the ground and repeatedly stabbed him in the chest, back and arm. The police charged three people for the murder: Joe Erling Jahr, Ole Nicolai Kvisler, and Veronica Andreassen; the former two for premeditated murder under extremely aggravating circumstances and the latter for assault. Jahr got a sentence of 16 years, Kvisler a sentence of 15 years, and Andreassen 3 years (Benjamins Minnefond 2004; Levin and McDevitt 2002).

because two of the girls had previously been members of Vigrid. According to Tvedt, this was not true because the only connection was that one of the girls was dating a member of Vigrid at the time. Police sources, apparently within the right-wing extremist milieu, inform that Tvedt is well known amongst the extremist right, and acts for many as a mentor. After the police announced Tvedt as a mentor for these teenagers, the media went wild and he was contacted by newspapers, TV channels, magazines, and radio.

Interviews were given and Norwegian Channel 2 made a documentary called "The Nazi." Now, Tvedt laughs at the media hysteria around him then and says that they were so eager to get the news out that some of it was probably not edited in a way that it was intended, primarily as "mudslinging of the Nazi milieu in Norway." Instead, the media were condemned for propagating the ideologies they were trying to forewarn against. The case turned about face when the media coverage was discussed in the Norwegian parliament; suddenly, Tvedt had used the media for propaganda. In reality, Tvedt does not care who is to blame. He is thrilled by the free advertising for his cause; visits to Vigrid's website reached new heights and the number of people contacting the organisation increased. He stated that: "The promotion campaign given was worth millions because I could never pay for such promotion, and now I got it for free!"

In the media, Tvedt is referred to as a neo-Nazi; not many use the word Odinist. I asked Tvedt how it felt to be called a neo-Nazi, he replied: "It's ok to call me a Nazi. That means that I'm heterosexual, a white, honest and nice guy and that I don't like Jews and mass immigration." Tvedt has learned to handle the media in ways that are beneficial to him. For months at a time, he will refuse to speak to them to build up their interest and then suddenly he will announce that he is willing to do interviews. This way,

he claims, he keeps them on their toes and, through their writing, he evokes new interest from possible members and reminds the public that he is still around.

On their website (Vigrid, 2004), Tvedt acknowledges that many might be reluctant to join Vigrid in the fight against the genocide and suppression of the Aryan race. This is because for fear of the hateful and violent suppressive campaigns operated by the authorities against Vigrid's adherents who fight for their freedom. He states that "your children need us if they are to have a future in freedom and peace and a meaningful life."

Tvedt, for his own part, has given up 20 years of marriage and has lost contact with all of his four children for the sake of saving the Norse race from genocide. His children have felt, physically and psychologically, what it means to be related to the notorious Odinist. They are all strongly opposed to the ideology embraced by their father.

Tore W. Tvedt wears a chain with Mjölfnir around his neck symbolizing strength and courage. He prophet of Odin is a true warrior who has made sacrifices for the war he is fighting; a war that he knows will not be won in his lifetime. Therefore, he eagerly recruits for an ongoing war that will continue after he has entered Valhall, where all honorable warriors go. (For picture see Appendix E)

Black Metal, Satan, and Odin

In the early 1990s, the Black Metal milieu in Norway was large: "it is difficult to offer an explanation of how Norway, a country on the outskirts of Europe with less than 4.5 million people, should become the epicenter of blasphemous Black Metal (Moynihan & Söderlind, 2003, p. 39.)." The groups Mayhem and Burzum are legendary beyond

Norway's borders not only because of the music itself, but because of the Satanic ideology prominently expressed within it.³⁵ During this period of a flourishing and Black Metal underground, several Norwegian stave churches were burned down to the ground by individuals associated with this community. These unique wooden churches were built soon after the arrival of Christianity in Scandinavia around 1000 A.D., and the destruction of these historical treasures made national headlines. Moynihan and Söderlind (2003) do not find one satisfactory explanation for why the Black Metal culture in Norway went to such extremes³⁶, and after the founder of Mayhem, Øystein Aarseth, aka "Euronymous," was brutally stabbed to death in 1993, the infamous nature of the Norwegian Black Metal milieu reached new heights and got international cult status. The killer, at that time known as "Count Grishnack," or just "the Count" (Greven), is now the most infamous Black Metal musician in the world.

³⁵ For further readings on the Satanic Black Metal underground in Norway and the U.S., see, Moynihan and Söderlind's *Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground*, 2003.

³⁶ Moynihan and Söderlind (2003) interviewed Martin Alsvåg and Jacob Jervell hoping that they he could fill in a few gaps on why this milieu was so prominent in Norway. Alsvåg, a graduate from the Theological Seminary in Oslo, who had written his thesis on Black Metal (*Rock and Satanism*), said that there were not any simple explanations for the rise of Norwegian Black Metal and could not put his finger on one specific factor. One of the reasons might have been that the Norwegian Black Metal underground founded two good bands and that this was probably the initial grounds for the established extreme scene. He also stated that: "I think Norway, being a very wealthy country with a high standard of living, makes young kids very blasé. It's not enough to just play pinball anymore. They need something strong, and Black Metal provides really strong impulses if you get into it. They're looking for something more in life than what they have already, and might feel that it's better to identify with evil than not to identify with anything at all. Black Metal is something strong that gives you respect and a sense of belonging in certain circles (p.43)." Jervell, a retired professor of theology and a minister in the State Church, addressed how organized Christianity in Norway might lead to younger people's interest in evil and a darker side. He stated that the Norwegian church hardly ever brought up the uncomfortable darker sides and when the evil sides are not discussed "young people encounter the flat moralism of the Church, they get the feeling that it doesn't make sense (p.77)." The teachings of the church does not fit a secular modern society and the darker Satanic ideas "is something they can connect to – powerful forces that have resonance within themselves (p.77)."

Gardell (2003) notes that: “during the late 1990s, racist Satanists and darkside heathens have made a discernible imprint on the Aryan revolutionary counterculture (p. 284).” He connects religious Satanism, nothing to do with worshipping the Christian devil, to the darker sides of Norse neopaganism.³⁷ The compatibility lies in that Satanism is egocentric, in comparison to theocentric, it is concerned with one’s own will, not with the will of god. There is no higher power in the universe and sometimes Satan is identified as an archetype of individual self, just like Odin is viewed by many Odinists. Satanists set themselves beyond good and evil. No entity, thought, act, or symbol is good or evil as such but becomes one or the other depending on the context and perspective (p. 285).” In Norse mythology the gods and goddesses, who are seen by many as aspects of the forces within man, possesses no definite good or evil traits. Just like the complex character of the individual man they symbolize, their actions can be seen as both good and evil depending on the situation, and the eyes that see. “Evil” in the milieu has a positive connotation, it is generally a compliment. Acts done by some Odinists are considered “evil” in the conventional world but are viewed as honorable, brave, and necessary in order to do good for the white race in an Odinistic sense.

The Lone-Wolf

Varg Vikernes, also known as Greven or Count Grishnack, has been sentenced to 21 years for the murder of Øystein Aarseth (Euronymous); for the arson of three stave churches; one arson attempt; and the theft and storage of 100 kilos of dynamite and 50 kilos of glynite (slow ignition explosives). At the time of the three occasions when I met

³⁷ For further reading on Satanism and Norse neopaganism, see Gardell (2003) p.284-323.

him (summer 2003), he had served 10 years of his sentence and had been transferred to Berg, a minimum security prison, for the remaining part of his sentence.

Vikernes was born in Bergen (western Norway) in 1973. His parents were divorced when he was 14 and he has a two-year older brother. He was a rebel with a self-proclaimed strong sense of justice, a sense of justice that might be in conflict with the general idea of what is just. Vikernes sees injustice done when, for example, a disabled child is shown consideration. In his view, this consideration takes away opportunities and resources that should be given to able-bodied children so they are not held back in any way. He despises weakness. Vikernes did not like school much because the teachers were too socialistic. He noticed that there were significant changes in the school environment when the number of immigrant children increased. He said that there were more fights and that they fought in a different way that was both cowardly and unfair. He has no education beyond high school but gives the impression of being extremely well-read and self educated. To the question of whether or not he was a teenager that was seeking to find his place and an ideology that suited him, he answered that he was probably not more seeking than other young people. He had a period where he was disillusioned and depressive but he knew what the problem was; but not how to solve it. When he was younger he was frustrated by not finding others with the same views. I asked him if he had found that in the Black Metal milieu and he answered that he thought he had found likeminded people but “realized that they were just a bunch of idiots.”

Vikernes found himself at the center of the Black Metal controversy, both in Norway and the rest of the world. The Black Metal milieu, and the criminal proceedings against central figures associated with this culture, got massive media coverage, but

nothing could compare to the media hysteria around Vikernes' persona and his trial. Now, he strongly dissociates himself from the Satanic and Black Metal milieu which made him so infamous. He says that most of it was media fabricated. He has never been a Satanist and stated that he was just plainly misunderstood. His blatant hate for Christianity had been interpreted as Satanic ideology, but hating Christianity was not synonymous to being a Satanist. He said that he had always been heathen and an Odinist. Even though he claimed not to have burned down any churches, he said that burning down churches was a symbolic act against Christianity. He believes those churches were built on top of Norway's true culture and it was not a tragedy that they burned down: one cannot find one's true culture when it is covered by something that ruined it.

The first church that was burned down was Fantoft Stave Church in Bergen, Vikernes' home town. Because the incendiary was on June 6th on the 6th day of the week, it was linked to Satanism (666). Vikernes stated: "What everyone overlooked was that on the 6th of June, year 793, Lindisfarne in Britain was the site of the first known Viking raid in history, with Vikings from Hordaland, which is my county. Nobody, linked it to that – *nobody* (Moynihan & Søderlind, 2003, p. 93)." Moynihan and Søderlind (2003) used a quote from the *Terrorizer* magazine where Vikernes explained how the underlying themes of the Nordic religion always had existed in his work through song lyrics and album titles:

Take a look at me and Burzum. I have been accused of being a Satanist who suddenly turned Odinic. If the same fucks had the least knowledge about Odinism they would see it in Burzum a long time ago. On the debut we have the song "War," which hails the Odinic idea of dying in battle. "Ea, Lord of the Depths" is the Mesopotamian Aquarius, Odin is the Norse Aquarius. On *Det som engang var* (What Once Was) we start with a track called "Den onde kysten" ("The Coast of Evil") which hails all those who drowned while in Viking [on sea raids]. "En ring

til aa herske” (“One Ring to Ride”) talks about Germanic people and Draupnir, the ring of Odin. “Lost Wisdom” is obviously heathen, and “Han som reiste” (“He Who journeyed/Fared”) is dedicated to Odin when he hung himself as a sacrifice to himself. On *Aske* (Ashes) the title described Odin’s Reich today and “God’s tomorrow.” The first track, “Stemmen fra taarnet” (“The Call from the Tower”) is about a call from Odin on his throne called Hlithaskjálfr, and the newly released album has “Inni slottet fra droemmen” (“Into the Castle of the Dream”), which is about the [faring] to Valhalla. These are the most obvious Odinic lyrics, written over a period from ’90 to ’92. The one and only “Satanic” title is “Dominus Sathanas” on the *Aske* album, translated as “The Ruler Adversary” or something similar. So where the hell do they get the impression of my being a Satanist from. (p. 160)³⁸

Under his previous pseudonym, “Count Grishnack (Greven),” Vikernes created a character that gave the strong impression of “a perverse self-styled aristocrat, outside the law, who enacted his libertine fantasies of destruction with a belief in immunity from punishment for his crimes (ibid., p. 145).” Vikernes said that his character as a Satanist was fabricated by the media but that he also played along with it. Vikernes’ birth name is, in fact, Kristian, and when I asked him how he ended up with Varg he explained that Kristian means Christ or Christian, and it was most definitely not a name that he could identify with considering his innate distaste for this Jewish religion. Just as Greven created hysteria in the media, Varg has contributed to the commotion in his own way. *Varg* has great significance for Vikernes and if it is put in a diagram with the words *Amor* (the strongest feeling), *Roma* (center of the world), and *Grav* (grave) the combinations will horizontally and vertically become *Varg*. Essentially, though, he said, the word is derived from an old Nordic language and the word means wolf.

³⁸ For further reading on Varg Vikernes’ role in the Black Metal milieu, see Moynihan and Söderlind, 2003. For Varg Vikernes’ own story, see *Vargsmål*, 1997.

Odin in the Blood

Vikernes consequently does not use the term religion because Odinism is not faith, in his view, it is human nature. He explained using a metaphor with computers, where Odin is the software and the DNA or blood is the hardware. The software and hardware have to be compatible, that is why only the white race can be Odinists. Odin is what makes people strive to be good; it is the human creative power or spirit. Everything stems from a planet in the system named Sirius and all life mechanisms were sent to earth by UFOs. Our mission on earth, and in life, is to become as perfect as possible and it is only the DNA of the Aryan people that can improve and become better. Perfection is reached when we have become completely “racially hygienic.” Only the perfect human goes to heaven to be with the gods where eternal life is given. He believes, black people are genetic garbage and function as workers for the Aryan race. They are faulty products, side-effects of attempts to create the perfect Aryan human, and will be left on earth when the world goes under. I asked him if he really believed in the UFO theory; he answered: “What I believe is not essential, as long as other people believe it. Our culture needs it.” He said that many Aryans are lacking the spirit of Odin, but have the potential to get in contact with their innate spirit.

He held firm that intuition was important because logic alone was dangerous. Intuition is connected to DNA and also to the Aryan instinct of improvement and survival. He says, everyone has a predestined mission in life and there is no such thing as chance. It is the belief in one’s own power and strength that is important. When I asked him how his ideology and the consequences of his actions had affected his family and friends, he answered that this was unimportant in fulfilling one’s life mission. He said

that he was like the white blood cell; he has one function to carry out, everything else is insignificant. He showed no sign of remorse for the murder he had committed and did not see the big deal about taking lives of people who are weak – that is just doing society a favor in his view. The act of being considerate was not praiseworthy because it was a sign of weakness.

Odinism and the Individual: Pessimistic Enlightenment

Vikernes did not know other people that shared his beliefs until he was imprisoned. After his imprisonment, he read a lot and realized that everything that he ever felt was right. He was contacted by a Swede who shared his views. Through him, Vikernes got in contact with other likeminded souls. He launched the Norsk Hedensk Front in 1993 which evolved into a network of independent tribes called the Allgermansiske Heidnische Front (AHF). “In 2001 AHF claimed chapters in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Vinland (United States and Canada), Russia, and Flanders (Gardell, 2003, p. 307).” Advocating national socialism, anti-Semitism, eugenics, and racist paganism Vikernes, while being imprisoned, produced two records (1994, 1998) and several written works in both English and Norwegian. Much has been published in magazines, and some in book form. At the time of our meetings, he was in the process of translating “Germansk Mytologi og Verdensanskuelse (Teutonic Mythology and Worldview)” into English, and had just finished a piece called “Religion of Blood.” His writings and music have large audiences all over the world and he is admired for his extreme views. I asked him if he saw himself as a leader and he said both yes and no. He knew that he had a “leader status” as a cult figure, but it was not necessarily something he took to positively. He saw these people as disillusioned and

“worshipping” something for which there were no grounds to, something that was not there. He did see himself as a leader, only a leader for those who he, himself, decided to lead. He did not initiate networks for his own sake but because he saw it being a necessity for others. He stated that it was important that other people believed what he believed or else the Aryan race would go under, but that did not imply that he necessarily felt that he needed to be, or was, part of a group.

Vikernes said that members of NHF or AHF were, in general, students in their mid-twenties. The network was quite selective about their adherents and, first of all, did not let anyone under the age of twenty become a member. Teenagers were too immature and the goal was not to have a high number of members but to have resourceful and involved adherents. He did not know the actual number of members (or would not say) but said that they were not many. I asked him about the gender quota; he said that there were few women that showed interest. He assumed that many women found their views on women too traditional, but then again, women were not interested in things like culture. He said that feminism had replaced the good female qualities with men’s bad ones. Man and woman are to fulfill each other and no one is truly human until they have entered marriage. When asked about the activities of NHF, Vikernes said that he, obviously, did not partake in any of them, and even if he could, he probably would not. The group had international relations with Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany. He did say, though, that the next time he was on leave, he was getting visitors from Russia. Contact with organizations in the U.S. was unthinkable for Vikernes because the U.S.

represented the pinnacle of misery in the world and everything about it was repulsive. The only thing of interest from the U.S., in his view, were the writings of James Mason³⁹.

I asked him if he performed any rituals or ceremonies. He said he did not need to: “I am notoriously unreligious. The intention behind rituals is to get people to remember and understand what is important in our culture. It is an explanation of the intentions in such a way that people think carefully before they do something.” He said that the symbolic reminders that rituals provide were not necessary to him because he was already aware.

Vikernes is an individualist and does not feel alone, he liked being alone. Bearing in mind his strong criticism of today’s culture, I asked him if he did not see individualism as a product of our current culture, for example, capitalism. He explained that there were two kinds of individualism, the positive and the negative. Positive individualism was initiative and creative power, something that only the Aryan people had. Negative individualism was egoism and was related to phenomena such as capitalism. Vikernes stated that he was a cultural pessimist. When asked about what was wrong with our world and culture, he plainly stated: “Everything!” In his eyes, today’s culture was destructive but, in contrast, negativity was necessary to make us wake up and realize what was wrong and that something needed to be done. We need misery, Ragnarök, he said, evil is a must.

³⁹ James Mason, born in 1952, was a typical National Socialist of his time. He grew to despise the status quo with its prevalent Civil Rights movement. He was felt oppositional but did not really adhere to any specific ideology or movement until he saw a news report broadcasted about the American Nazi Party (ANP). He had then found a movement that was both oppositional and universally despised by Americans. Mason, like many other extremists, moved from one group to another but was visible in the milieu. He is well known in the right-wing extremist culture all over the world (Kaplan 2000). For further readings on Mason, see Kaplan and Weinberg, 1998.

Serving Time and Odinists in Prison

Vikernes was 20 years old when he was imprisoned and has served time in five different high security prisons. Vikernes stated that the trading culture within the prison was extensive. "Prison is like a networking body for criminals. One can get what one wants." I asked him if he had any contact with other Odinist prisoners and he said that he did not know of any. He said, though, that many were interested in his views and asked to borrow his books and he knew that many shared his opinions, "this interest is latent in everyone because it is our nature." His opinions on immigrants were shared by many, but this did not make them Odinists. He had never heard of Odinist prison-outreach programs and if there were any, he would not have used them because it was important to have faith in yourself and make it on your own. "That other people should fight for your cause is bullshit, you should do that yourself," he said.

He said a lot about his prison experiences prior to being moved to the minimum security unit at Berg. Prison culture had put its mark on him, but he acknowledged that wherever he was, his personal development would always develop in a positive way. If being in prison had done anything to him, it had make him stronger. After longer periods of isolation, he said that he had become more extreme in many ways. His racist attitudes had become more vehement and his willingness to commit extreme acts surfaced again, but this time more fervently. When he was in isolation, he noticed that he had manic tendencies and to avoid it he constantly moved belongings and furniture around his cell. When he had the opportunity, he read and took classes.

Vikernes would be done serving his time in prison in 2005, and the remaining of his sentence was being served at Berg Fengsel. Berg is an open prison where the

prisoners are allowed to go home on leave quite frequently; they are working; and are being reintegrated into the community. The prisoners are responsible for coming back on time and no one is checked when leaving or entering. He said that Berg was a good place to be but it was nothing like a prison, more like a military camp. When I asked if he thought that the system at Berg was a little naïve he said “no comment,” and gave me a cheeky smile. (For picture, see Appendix F)

The Lone-Wolf and the Prophet

At the end of my conversation with Tore W. Tvedt, I asked him if he knew of Odinists inside Norwegian penitentiaries, and whether or not Vigrid was active in prison-outreach programs for kindreds serving time. Tvedt stated that he was frequently contacted by imprisoned Odinists, but that he really did not want anything to do with criminals because he did not consider them recruitment material. I looked at him and raised my eyebrows, he realized what he had said and laughed a hearty laugh and he saw the irony in his statement considering that he actually makes his own money in illegal ways. I stated that the difference between him and them was the fact that he was lucky enough to not be caught for some of his more serious crimes. I asked if he knew of any groups that had outreach programs and he said that all the enquiries he got were forwarded to Gleipne, sub-division of Boot Boys, who operated as a support group for prisoners. As far as individual prisoners were concerned, he knew of Varg Vikernes and said that he was probably the most well-known. Tvedt suggested that if I was going to contact Vikernes that I should not imply that I had been in contact with him because he thought Vikernes disagreed with him on certain areas. He did not say which areas.

During my last conversation with Vikernes, I decided to ask him what he thought of Tvedt and his ways of working. Vikernes said that he found it absurd that Tvedt asked for money from his adherents and that he targeted such a young age group. In his view, it was the people on the top that should provide for finances for the group. The rituals performed by Tvedt were “bullshit” because they did not have anything to do with our culture, they were Jewish traditions. The large media exposure on Tvedt was wrong and he felt that Tvedt was exaggerating his own importance and that he probably did not have as many adherents as he intimated. But he did not question that Tvedt had positive motives and he did not doubt that Tvedt was a nice, talented, and smart guy.

On October 25th 2003, Varg Vikernes failed to show up after one of his periods of leave and was reported wanted by the police. After threatening a family to hand over their car on the 26th, the police followed lines of enquiry and caught Vikernes early in the morning of the 27th of October. His attempt to escape had failed and when he was captured he was in possession of an AG3 (automatic weapon), a smaller handgun, knives and other tools, a small GPS system, maps and compass, communication equipment, cell phones, a PC, camouflage clothes, gas mask, and a bulletproof vest (Nettavisen, 2003). His escape had been planned and the car he had initially used had been borrowed from a fellow prisoner. Vikernes spent 84 days in a minimum security prison and the likeliness of him returning to Berg is very small. He is currently serving time at a high security prison in Romerike.

Assessing the Danger

On the 29th of October, two days after Vikernes was arrested, I was contacted by the Norwegian counter-intelligence police (PST) who were interested to know what I

knew about Vikernes. At the time I was out of the country, so I was contacted again in December when I had returned and I had a longer conversation with an officer from PST. Not surprisingly, he was just as interested in my encounter with Tore W. Tvedt as he was in my conversations with Varg Vikernes, it seems to me that they he was trying to find connections between the two. One of the largest concerns for PST was most definitely the violent aspect to both Tvedt and Vikernes and the young crowds that Tvedt was recruiting. They had also become increasingly interested in learning about whether Tvedt was rallying support for an extreme-right wing political party (ERP). Not long after, Vigrid posted on their website that it was time for starting a political party with a simple manifesto at the minimum of the law (Vigrid, 2004).

An annual threat assessment is presented by PST. Their assessment is based on evidence gathered by PST's operational activities and information and analysis from cooperative services and other sources. They also utilize information from relevant public and private institutions. The threat assessment is then treated in an extended coordinative advisory committee for intelligence and security services (Polititets sikkerhetstjeneste, 2004). In their assessment for 2003, political extremism got a lot of attention even though they stated that the milieu was relatively stable. They noted that there was an increase in people being recruited through the internet and that right-wingers, to a large extent, were involved in various punishable activities. They also found that a large portion of the right-wing milieu were more likely to be involved in traditional crime and racially motivated crime in the future. The assessment states: "Many of the violent and criminal right-wing extremists have a very low threshold for exercising violence (ibid., 2004)." This, they assume, increases the likeliness of more

violence being event-related and not necessarily planned. PST delivered a press release on October 28th 2003, where they noted that they were launching a preventive offensive against Vigrid to forestall political motivated violence. They noted that there were reasons to believe that Vigrid was developing in order to become aggressively more violent (ibid., 2004). (For the press release in its entirety, see Appendix G) During my last conversation with PST (May 29th 2004), I was informed that they had not been able to locate Tvedt, and that Vikernes had refused to speak to anyone.

The Global Reality of Odinism in Prisons

It is not that the system of globalization explains everything happening in the world today. It is simply that to the extent that one system is influencing more people in more ways at the same time.

– Thomas Friedman

The speed and range of economic, political, environmental, and cultural global interconnections are increasingly affecting the everyday lives of people worldwide. Globalization is a non-linear system with powerful forces interacting; it creates complex and seemingly ever-changing realities where people often face immensely heterogeneous ecological, political, economic, and social problems. Social reactions to these strong interactions and entanglements are just as complicated as the realities faced by individuals. In fact, the reactions are just as much a part of these realities and serve to add further twists and new dimensions.

The social phenomenon of Odinism is a product of global dimensions and globalization. Its characteristics include rapid changes; cultural exchanges (for example through the internet, media, or by physical flows of people); religious secularization and religious revivalism; and the rise of Super-empowered individuals. Yet, Odinism is also

a reaction against characteristics of a globalized world such as international interdependence and “global culture”; drastic changes in social institutions like the family and education; free-market capitalism as the new global economy; and the global emphasis on individualism.

Transnational Flows and Influences: The U.S. Leading the Way?

Odinism is a transnational movement and the direction of the flow of information was originally from East to West. Now, the cultural and political circumstances in Western Europe act as limiting factors for right-wing political groups and organizations while the First Amendment in the U.S. acts as a protector for these movements stateside. This has led to a change in the direction flow of propaganda, and anti-Americanism and conspiracy theories have become ties that have strengthened connections across national borders.

Friedman (2000) believes that, in a globalized world, the only political-economic road that can be taken is the free-market economy, which he refers to as the Golden Straitjacket. One cannot avoid or resist it and if a country has not been “fitted” for it yet, it will not take long before it has been. When a country decides to abide by the rules of the free-market economy and says yes to wear the Golden Straitjacket, it becomes restricted by it. After it has put the jacket on, it cannot be taken off.

To fit into the Golden Straitjacket a country must either adopt, or be seen as moving toward, the following golden rules: making the private sector the primary engine of its economic growth, maintaining a low rate of inflation and price stability, shrinking the size of its state bureaucracy, maintaining as close to a balanced budget as possible, if not a surplus, eliminating and lowering tariffs on imported goods, removing restrictions on foreign investment, getting rid of quotas and domestic monopolies, increasing exports, privatizing state-owned industries and utilities, deregulating capital markets, making its currency convertible, opening its industries, stock and bond markets to direct foreign ownership and investment, deregulating its

economy to promote as much domestic competition as possible, eliminating government corruption, subsidies and kickbacks as much as possible, opening its banking and telecommunications systems to private ownership and competition and allowing its citizens to choose from an array of competing pension options and foreign-run pension and mutual funds. When you stick all of these pieces together you have the Golden Straitjacket. (p. 105)

Whereas the Golden Straitjacket of the U.S. is not noticeably tighter and increasingly restricting, most other countries in the West are still finding it somewhat loose and have not quite grown into it, they find that it challenges old ideas of how much the search for profit should control the operations of the society. Besides the Golden Strait Jacket will always be fitted differently for each and every country, for some it will always be some elbow room for others it will be too loose around the waist.

The number of openly Odinist convicts in the U.S. has tripled from 1996 to 2001. This prosperity of Odinism in the penitentiaries might not seem as complex as it is, but considering the fact that prisons also are a part of a rapidly changing global world it might not be as simple as it first appears. The modern prison system in the U.S. has become a product of an efficient, profit oriented, and individualistic society. The prison culture has become a reflection of the global societal forces acting in the free world. A marked difference between prison life and the free world is that the forces are amplified through the confines of a prison setting. With almost half a million convicts returning to society every year, and a high rate of recidivism, the permeability of the prison walls and the flow of information and people are definitely having a major effect on the larger society and prison culture.

Norway, with its population of 4.5 million people and strong traditions of socialistic values, has put on the Golden Straitjacket but is still probably finding it a little

too loose. The traditional values are being challenged but the jacket is slowly but surely being fitted. The U.S. has let the free-market economy pervade all parts of its social structure, including the criminal justice system. So far, the strive for economic growth in Norway has taken control over many, but not all, social institutions but it is probably only a question of time before the global profit-oriented attitude seeps in and gains the upper hand on many more, such as the criminal justice system.

Globalization as a process should serve as a heads up on how to learn more about social phenomenon and what to expect with the furtherance of global attitudes and related phenomena. The ongoing development of transnational movements, for example ERPs working through a globalized system, should make us aware of the range, speed, and direction of flow of information and the complex dimensions of these rapidly evolving movements. The Odinist culture in the U.S. is visible for those who are aware of it. But just because the presence of this transnational movement in Norway is on a smaller scale, it does not mean that we cannot gain knowledge from “the Big Brother” in the West, particularly knowing that the global flows in that area are going from the U.S. to Europe. Knowledge of the U.S. prison and criminal justice system added to a greater understanding of the Odinist milieu outside and inside U.S. penitentiaries could help us appreciate the social forces working in Norwegian society and predict the developing direction we are heading.

In an Attempt to Procure Knowledge

In an attempt to tackle and understand better the social phenomena that are part of a perplexing non-linear system, one has to study each aspect and study the very strong interactions between them through a multilens perspective. Because you cannot explain

one aspect without reference to the others, it has to be seen and understood through the complex reality we live in.

In order to reach this level of explanatory and evaluation research, it is important first to explore and try to understand what Odistic convicts themselves lay behind their actions and what issues concern them. In an attempt to procure such knowledge, a group of scholars advocate a “new criminology” called Convict Criminology initiated by ex-convicts who are now academic faculty. This new approach was first articulated at the American Society of Criminology’s (ASC) annual meeting in 1997. Its leading and initiating theorists are scholars such as John Irwin, Stephen C. Richards, and Jeffrey Ian Ross. The primacy of ethnographic methods including speaking, observing, or interacting with prisoners are strongly advocated for. Emotional involvement with convicts is encouraged based on the reasoning that objectivity is an illusion. By being emotionally involved, there is the notion that one has a real chance of learning to understand the convict. They are critical of the traditional focus of scholars that has, in general, been on crime, crime causation, police work, recidivism, and juvenile delinquency. This untraditional group of scholars within criminology, criminal justice, and penology seem increasingly critical to the current prison system of the U.S. They emphasize the need for reform in the system as a whole and express the need for change in areas of focus in the world of academia. They question how it is possible that very little research has been done on the prisons and prisoners themselves when we consider the explosion in numbers of prisoners since the 1980s. This enormous expansion has affected prison conditions, convict social organizations, parole, and after-prison experiences (Ross & Richards, 2003). While Convict Criminology covers many areas,

Ross and Richards (2003) emphasize three main themes in the exploratory research of convicts: forming the convict experience and identity; understanding special populations in jails, prisons, and other correctional facilities; and critiquing corrections.

The ethnographic methods used by Convict Criminologists are applicable in studying Odinism in the prisons of Norway. As a researcher, entry into Norwegian penitentiaries is easier than gaining admittance to the highly secure and technologically advanced prisons in the U.S. In studying Odinism in the U.S., it is important to consider the high number of successful prison-outreach programs, their similarly high prisoner recruitment activities and the strong emotional impact and connections they establish with the convicts. The return of the Odinist convict to conventional society is an important factor. In an attempt to understand Odinism in prison, it is also important, therefore, to study and understand the forces working outside of the prison walls. Whereas many Odinist prisoners in the U.S. are spending the rest of their lives behind bars, prisoners in Norway are spending less time confined behind prison walls and will return to conventional society. The flows of information and people are not controlled to the same extent as they are in the U.S.; it is also important, therefore, to study the Norwegian Odinist milieu in the free world. The Odinist ideology encourages violent behavior and, according to their latest assessment, PST notes that criminal activities will probably be prominent amongst the right-wing milieu in Norway of which Odinism is an integral part. This illegal behavior will give them a place in the Norwegian correctional system.

In essence, studying Odinism as a religion is to comprehend and convey the believer's experience of devotional acts – whether ritualistic or expressions of violence.

This exploratory research could give information to people dealing with these groups, in the first instance, correctional officers, parole officers, and police. Furthermore, this knowledge could also shed light on the broader societal forces working behind the religious experiences of the devoted Odinist; in this way, the causes and effects of this social phenomenon could be further identified. If we consider that Odinists in prison are as much a product of the prison system as a product of their own personal experiences, exploratory and explanatory research on prisoners could lead to more information about the prison or criminal justice system itself. This might explain how current policies and programs lead to an increase in Odinist adherents within the penitentiaries. And, ultimately, lead to fresh consideration of those policies and programs.

Do We Dare Not to Learn?

Odinist prisoners are part of a counterculture that sees a world in crisis. Their radical right-wing ideology stands forcefully and proud in a fight against the genocide of the Aryan race. “Their purpose is not to seek compromise or even find their own enclave in a pluralistic environment. The purpose of the extremist right is to destroy the opposition. This becomes the basis for a call to arms (White, 2001, p. 948).” The warrior ideals in Odinism are a justification for violent behavior and violence is seen as a religious practice of necessity. The ranges of milieus where one can find racist pagans or Odinists are shown to be many. In combination with the strong influence of Odinism in general right-wing culture, this means that increasing numbers are becoming aware of this religion. Whether the perceived enemy is the government, ZOG, or individuals of other races, their criminal and violent behavior is unpredictable. This unpredictability can create fear in larger parts of conventional society. Because Odinists are, in essence,

tribal-oriented, they are expected to work in groups, but the lone-wolf ideal should be taken into consideration and desperate acts of the lone-wolf are never predicable.

In terms of violence, Odinists present a threat to individuals and groups in multicultural societies. In countries like Norway, where they can initiate political parties, they might be able to rally enough support to gain political influence. Even though, in general, extreme right-wing groups have a hard time recruiting and keeping their members, the spiritual aspects connected to religion bind groups closer together. When religion is then connected to race or DNA, the bonds which are created are powerful. Not only does the cause they are fighting for become divine, the individual adherent might also see him or herself as divine, and thus untouchable.

The Odinist's relationship to the gods of the blood "is less one of creator to creation or of distant, all-knowing, and all-powerful spirit to weak, mortal flesh than it is one of father to child or of tribal elder to youthful warrior. Ásatrúers do not bend the knee even to Odin. (Kaplan, 1997, p. 72)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTERS FROM STAFF AND PRISONERS AT THE FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL
INSTITUTION ENGLEWOOD IN LITTLETON, COLORADO,
REGARDING ODINIST ACTIVITIES AND KINDREDS

26 YULE, 2245

RAGNAR STORYTELLER
WORLD TREE PRISON OUTREACH MINISTRY
P.O. BOX 961
PAYSON, AZ. 85541 USA

Hailsa Ragnar:

I recieved your letter just prior to leaving Terre Haute. I've been here at Englewood about a weak now. so I will bring you up to date on whats been happening.

First I want to thank you for getting back to me, it sounds like you've been pretty busy. There is a Kindred here with about ten people meeting once a week in a room at the chapel. Duane Nyquist is running the group here, he was having problems contacting anyone out their in the world that would offer any support, the administration here is getting ready to shut us down, so they were glad when I pulled up with some books, literature, you and the worldtree prison outreach ministry.

To answer some of your questions, yes we have access to a copier and type-writers. As far as sending money, the easiest way for us would be to send books of stamps, the process of sending money off of our books could take some time, we can purchase stamps in the store here and mail them out. Let me know if that will work. I have been selected as the Tribal Godi for a term of six months because my time is short it will give the kindred time to select someone else before I leave. I will include on a seprate list the names + numbers of the kindred and a list of the books and literature we now have avialable.

I am real interested in the "Spirit Warrior", I have practiced some Eastern meditation in the past, the Spicit Warrior would seem to be a more natural way to practice meditation. I have mentioned it too a few of the Kindred here that I thought would be interested and told them to contact you about it. Well I am sorry it took so long to get back to you, now that I've landed I will keep in contact I would like to thank you again for your support and we would appreciate any literature or books you can help us with.

Hail the Holy Aesir and Vanir
Mr. John [REDACTED]

F.C.I. Englewood
9595 W. Quincy Ave.
Littleton, Co. 80123

Colorado Tribe
Englewood Clan
Mountain Ravens Kindred

KINDRED MEMBERS

Joe	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Duane	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
George	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Ron	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
James	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Jason	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Rick	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Bill	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Michael	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Robert	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Eugene	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

PRISON STAFF

W.A. Ferrill	Warden
D.J. Fitzgerald	Ass. Warden
Fr. Ascencio	Chaplain

LIST OF LITERATURE

Teutonic Religion
 Poetic Edda
 Rites and Rituals 3vols.
 The Odin Brotherhood
 The World Tree, a introduction

13 OCT 95.

MOUNTAIN THUNDER
1630 30TH ST. #266
BOULDER CO. 80303

SIRS.

MY NAME IS DUANE NYQUIST, AND I ~~REPRESENT~~ ^{REPRESENT} A GROUP OF LIKE MINDED PEOPLE WHO HAVE JOINED TOGETHER TO FORM A ASATPH KINDRED. WE ARE ALL, AT THE PRESENT TIME, INMATES ^{INCARCERATED} ~~INCARCERATED~~ AT F.C.I. ENGLEWOOD, LITTLETON CO. THIS IS A PROBLEM IN THAT WE ARE LIMITED IN OUR RESOURCES AND THE ABILITY TO MAKE CONTACT WITH OUT SIDE ^{ORGANIZATIONS} ~~ORGANIZATIONS~~. WE ARE SEEKING GUIDANCE AND MATERIAL TO HELP US FOLLOW THE PATH, AND WISH TO ESTABLISH TIES TO A EXISTING KINDRED ~~TO~~ THAT IS WILLING TO ACT AS A MENTOR FOR A YOUNG ^{OUT} HIGHLY DEDICATED GROUP. WE HOPE THAT IN THE NEAR ^{FUTURE} ~~FUTURE~~ WE CAN ARRANGE TO HAVE SOMEONE ~~FROM~~ THE OUT SIDE COME IN TO INSTRUCT AND GUIDE US IN OUR BEGINNING PHASE. WE REALIZE THESE ARE NOT LIGHT ~~RE~~ REQUESTS, AND THAT WE HAVE LITTLE TO OFFER IN RETURN EXCEPT FOR OUR WILLINGNESS TO LEARN, BUT OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE FAITH AS OF NOW, INDICATES TO US THAT HELP WILL BE OFFERED AND GUIDANCE WILL BE GIVEN.

IF YOU CAN IN ANYWAY BE OF ASSISTANCE PLEASE RESPOND TO ME AT THE GIVEN ADDRESS, WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO REQUEST A PHONE NUMBER THAT WE CAN CALL AS THE NEED DEMANDS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

TOGETHER IN FAITH.

DUANE ~~NYQUIST~~

18-12-95

Ring Of Troth
P.O. Box 25637
Tempe, Arizona 85285-5637

Esteemed Elders:

My name is Duane Nyquist, I am currently incarcerated within the Federal Prison system, at F.C.I. Englewood, where we have established an Odinist Kindred. At this time I am doing my best, with what little material we have to organize our study meetings and religious rites. At this time I feel that we are missing alot of the finer aspects of the faith.

After long deliberation and soul searching I find that I am filled with the need to gain every morsel of knowledge and wisdom that my ancestors have to offer, and to use that knowledge to help others better understand themselves. This is my reason for writing, I have a great deal of interest in your Godman and Elder training. I believe this is a personal calling from my bloodline .

Even though the situation I am in may make the program more difficult, I welcome the challenge, and feel that I have more than enough dedication and ability to complete the task. All that I'm lacking is an Elder who is willing to share this gift with me. I have a very strong positive feeling about this Quest, and believe that by contacting you I have moved in the right direction. Please consider my request a sincere one. Thank you for your time.

Yours in Faith

Duane [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
F.C.I. Englewood
9595 West Quincy Ave.
Littleton, Colorado 80123

12-18-95

Odinist Prison Project
PO. Box 6088 c/o W.H.N.
Harrisburg, PA. 17112-0088

Greetings Kindred:

Our Odinist Kindred has written you in the past with happy news regarding us establishing a Kindred here at F.C.I. Englewood. Now it is sad news that I send along with a plea for aid in a battle that we must win. It seems that the administration here has caved into pressure from several other religious groups, primarily the ("Nation of Islam") and has stated that we are not a recognized religion. Therefor we will not receive the same assistance as other groups, to obtain study materials and religious items needed to perform our sacred rites. We have also been warned that we may not even be permitted to gather for study, if we try to gather on our own without official approval we will face disciplinary action and sanction's for gang related activities and threatening the security of the institution.

We have submitted copies of your booklet "Our Hammer" to the administration in the hopes that they would realize that we offer a positive and beneficial program for prisoners. We believe this is where the majority of our opposition is coming from. The fact that we are instilling in young men a sense of who we once were and who we could become again if we return to the values of our esteemed ancestors. Truth, Honor, and family values are all stressed and it appears that the prison administration does not want our young men to possess any of these traits, and are doing all they can to discredit us as a legitimate organization.

This is far too important for us to lie down and let our dreams fade away. We want a future for our children. We are willing to fight for our beliefs and will face the battle proudly, but if we stand alone we will be destroyed no matter how fiercely and cunningly we fight. Thus we are seeking aid, we know of the great works you have done to help prisoners who wish to follow the path. Any assistance you can

01-26-2003 10:00

FROM-SACRAMENTO INTELLIGENCE UNIT

+9188510210


T-351 P.032/036 F-412

offer in this matter is greatly needed. Time is running against us.

In a closing note if at all possible I would like a phone number and the name of a contact person at your location so that direct contact can be made as the need requires.

Yours with Thanks

ONE PEOPLE, ONE PURPOSE



Duane G. [redacted]
[redacted]
F.C.I. Englewood
9595 West Quincy Ave.
Littleton, Colorado 80123

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MEMORANDUM
FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
ENGLEWOOD, LITTLETON, COLORADO

DATE: January 25, 1996.

REPLY TO *W. A. Perrill*
ATTN OF: W. A. Perrill, Warden

SUBJECT: Religious Practice Request

TO: [REDACTED] George
Reg. No. [REDACTED]

I have had the opportunity to review your packet and attached material regarding your request to practice Odinism. Per Program Statement 5360.5, Religious Beliefs and Practices of Committed Offenders, it is my decision you will be permitted to meet weekly for 1 hour in the Chapel classroom to practice Odinism. In addition, you will be provided with a vessel to contain water, a table, and a green sprig. I will not at this time approve your additional requests.

Please work with Associate Warden Dan Fitzgerald and Father Ascencio to clarify any further issues.

APPENDIX B

88 PRECEPTS

This edition of 88 PRECEPTS, written by David Lane, is found in his *Deceived, Damned & Defiant; The Revolutionary Writings of David Lane*.

Until the White race realizes there is only one source from which we can ascertain lasting truths, there will never be peace or stability on this earth. In the immutable Laws of Nature, are the keys to life, order, and understanding.

The words of men, even those which some consider “inspired,” are subject to translations, vocabulary, additions, subtractions, and distortions of fallible mortals. Therefore, every writing or influence (ancient or modern) must be strained through the test of conformity to Natural Law.

The White Peoples of the earth must collectively understand that they are equally subject to the iron-hard Laws of Nature with every other creature in the Universe, or they will not secure peace, safety, nor even their existence.

The world is in flames because Races, Sub-races, Nations, Cultures are being forced to violate their own Nature-ordained instincts for self reservation.

Many men of goodwill (but little understanding) are struggling against symptoms which are the result of disobedience to Natural Law. As is the Nature of Man, most take narrow provincial stances predicated on views formed by immediate environment current circumstances, and conditioned dogma.

This encouraged by that powerful ruthless Tribe which has controlled the affairs of the world for untold centuries by exploiting Man’s baser instincts. Conflict among and between the unenlightened serves as their mask and shield. A deeper understanding of the Fundamental laws that govern the affairs of Men is necessary if we are to save civilization from its usurious execution.

These few pages are not intended to provide a detailed system of government, but as PRECEPTS which, when understood, will benefit and preserve a People as individuals and a Nation.

1. Any religion or teaching which denies the Natural Laws of the Universe is false.

2. Whatever a people’s perception of God, or the Gods, or the motive force of the Universe might be, they can hardly deny that Nature’s Laws are the work of (and therefore, the intent of) that Force.

3. God and religion are distinct, separate, and often conflicting concepts. God is the personification of Nature proved perfect by the evidence of Natural Law. Religion is the creation of mortals, therefore predestined to fallibility. Religion may preserve or destroy a People, depending on the structure given by its progenitors, the motives of its agents, and the vagaries of historical circumstances.

4. The truest form of prayer is communion with NATURE. It is not vocal. Go to a lonely spot, if possible a mountain top, on a clear star-lit night, ponder the majesty and order of the infinite macrocosm. Understand that you are on the one hand inconsequential beyond comprehension in the size of things, and on the other hand, you are potentially valuable beyond comprehension as a link in destiny’s chain. There you begin to understand how pride and self can co-exist with respect and reverence. There we find harmony with Nature and with harmony comes strength, peace, and certainty.

5. Secular power systems protect and promote religions which teach of an after-life. Thus People are taught to abandon defenses against the predators of this life.
6. History, both secular and religious, is a fable conceived in self-serving deceit and promulgated by those who perceive benefits.
7. Religion in its most beneficial form is the symbology of a People and their culture. A multi-racial religion destroys the senses of uniqueness, exclusivity, and value necessary to the survival of the race.
8. What men call "supernatural" is actually the natural not yet understood or revealed.
9. A proliferation of laws with the resultant loss of freedom is a sign (and directly proportional to) spiritual sickness in a Nation.
10. If a Nation is devoid of spiritual health and moral character, then government and unprincipled men will fill the vacancy. Therefore, freedom prospers in moral values and tyranny thrives in moral decay.
11. Truth requires little explanation. Therefore, beware of verbose doctrines. The great principles are revealed in brevity.
12. Truth does not fear investigation.
13. Unfounded belief is a pitfall. A people who do not check the validity and effect of their beliefs with reason will suffer and/or perish.
14. No greater motivating force exists than the certain conviction that one is right.
15. In accord with Nature's Laws, nothing is more right than the preservation of one's own race.
16. Discernment is a sign of a healthy people. In a sick or dying nation, civilization, culture, or race, substance is abandoned in favor of appearance.
17. Discernment includes the ability to recognize the difference between belief and demonstrable reality.
18. There exists no such thing as rights or privileges under the Laws of Nature. The deer being stalked by a hungry lion has no right to life. However, he may purchase life by obedience to nature-ordained instincts for vigilance and flight. Similarly, men have no right to life, liberty, or happiness. These circumstances may be purchased by oneself, by one's family, by one's tribe, or by one's ancestors, but they are nonetheless, purchases and are not rights. Furthermore, the value of these purchases can only be maintained through vigilance and obedience to Natural Law.
19. A People who are not convinced of their uniqueness and value will perish.
20. The White Race has suffered invasions and brutality from Africa and Asia for thousands of years, for example, Attila and the Asiatic Huns who invaded Europe in the 5th century raping, plundering, and killing from the Alps to the Baltic and Caspian Seas. This scenario was repeated by the Mongols of Genghis Kahn 800 years later. (Note here that the American Indians are not "Native Americans," but are racial Asians.) In the 8th century, hundreds of years before the Crusades and 8 centuries before Blacks were brought to America, the North African Moors of mixed-racial background invaded and conquered Portugal, Spain, and part of France. So, the attempt guilt trip placed on the White Race by civilization's executioners is invalid under both historical circumstances and the Natural Law which denies inter-specie compassion. The fact is all races have benefited immeasurably from the creative genius of the Aryan people.

21. A People who allow others not of their race to live among them will perish because the inevitable result of racial integration is racial inter-breeding which destroys the characteristics and existence of a race. Forced integration is deliberate and malicious genocide, particularly for a people like the White Race who are now a small minority in the world.

22. in the final analysis, a race or species is not judged superior or inferior by its accomplishments, but by its will and ability to survive.

23. Political, economic, and religious systems may be destroyed and resurrected by men, but the death of a race is eternal.

24. No race of people can indefinitely continue their existence without territorial imperatives in which to propagate, protect, and promote their own kind.

25. A people without a culture exclusively their own, will perish.

26. Nature has put a certain antipathy between races and species, to preserve the individuality and existence of each. Violation of the territorial imperative necessary to preserve that antipathy leads to either conflict or mongrelization.

27. It is not constructive to hate those of other races, or even those of mixed races. But a separation must be maintained for the survival of one's own race. One must, however, hate with a pure and perfect hatred those of ones' own race who commit treason against one's own kind and against the nations' of one's own kind. One must hate with a perfect hatred all those people or practices which destroy one's people, one's culture, or the racial exclusiveness of one's territorial imperative.

28. The concept of a multi-racial society violates every Natural Law for specie preservation.

29. The concept of "equality" is declared a lie by every evidence of Nature. It is a search for the lowest common denominator, and its pursuit will destroy every superior race, nation, or culture. In order for a plow horse to run as fast as a race horse, you would first have to cripple the race horse; and conversely, in order for a race horse to pull as much as a plow horse, you would first have to cripple the plow horse. In either case, the pursuit of equality is the destruction of excellence.

30. The instincts for racial and specie preservation are ordained by Nature.

31. Instincts are Nature's perfect mechanism for the survival of each race and specie. The human weakness of rationalizing situations for self-gratification must not be permitted to interfere with these instincts.

32. Miscegenation, that is race-mixing, is and has always been, the greatest threat to the survival of the Aryan race.

33. Inter-specie compassion is contrary to the Laws of Nature and is, therefore, suicidal. If a wolf were to intercede to save a lamb from a lion, he would be killed. Today, we see the White man taxed so heavily that he cannot afford children. The taxes raised are then used to support the breeding of tens of million of non-whites, many of whom then demand the last White females for breeding partners. As you can see, man is subject to all the Laws of Nature. This has nothing to do with morality, hatred, good or evil. Nature does not recognize the concepts of good and evil in inter-specie relationships. If the lion eats the lamb, it is good for the lion and evil for the lamb. If the lamb escapes and the lion starves, it is good for the lamb and evil for the lion. So, we see

the same incident is labeled both good and evil. This cannot be, for there are no contradictions within Nature's Laws.

34. The instinct for sexual union is part of Nature's perfect mechanism for specie preservation. It must not be repressed; and its purpose namely reproduction, must not be thwarted either. Understand, that for thousands of years, our females bore children at an early age. Now, in an attempt to conform to, and compete in, an alien culture, they deny their Nature-ordained instincts and duties. Teach responsibility, but, also have understanding. The life of a race springs from the wombs of its women. He who would judge must first understand the difference between what is good and what is right.

35. Homosexuality is a crime against Nature. All nature declares the purpose of the instinct for sexual union is reproduction and, thus, preservation of the specie. It is unnatural and, therefore, a suicidal perversion.

36. Sexual pornography degrades the Nature of all who are involved. The woman is reduced to an object and sex to animal coupling.

37. That race whose males will not fight to the death to keep and mate with its females will perish. Any White man with healthy instincts feels disgust and revulsion when he sees a woman of his race with a man of another race. Those who today control the media and affairs of the Western World, teach that this is wrong and shameful. They label it "racism." As any "ism;" for instance the word "nationalism," means you promote your nation, racism merely means you promote and protect the life of your race. It is, perhaps, the proudest word in existence. Any man who disobeys these instincts is anti-Nature.

38. In a sick and dying nation, culture, race, or civilization, political dissent and traditional values will be labeled and persecuted as heinous crimes by inquisitors clothing themselves in jingoistic patriotism.

39. A people who are ignorant of their past will defile the present and destroy the future.

40. A race must honor above all earthly things, those who have given their lives of freedom for the preservation of the folk.

41. The folk, namely the members of the Race, are the Nation. Racial loyalties must always supersede geographical and national boundaries. If this is taught and understood, it will end fratricidal wars. Wars must not be fought for the benefit of another race.

42. The Nation's leaders are not rulers, they are servants and guardians. They are not to serve for personal gain. Choose only a guardian who has no interest in the accumulation of material things.

43. Choose and judge your leader, also called guardians, thus: those who seek always to limit the power of government are of good heart and conscience. Those who seek to expand the power of government are base tyrants.

44. No government can give anything to anybody without first taking from another. Government is, by its very nature, legalized taking. A limited amount of government is a necessary burden for national defense and internal order. Anything more is counterproductive to freedom and liberty.

45. The organic founding Law, namely the Constitution of a nation must not be amendable by any method other than unanimous consent of all parties thereto, and with

all parties present; otherwise the doors are open for the advent of the most dangerous and deadly form of government, namely democracy.

46. In a democracy, those who control the media (and thus the minds of the electorate) have power undreamed by kings or dictators.

47. The simplest way to describe a democracy is this: three people form a government, each having one vote. Then two of them vote to steal the wealth of the third.

48. The latter stages of democracy are filled with foreign wars because the bankrupt system attempts to preserve itself by plundering other nations.

49. In a democracy that which is legal is seldom moral, and that which is moral is often illegal.

50. A democracy is always followed by a strongman...some call him a dictator. It is the only way to restore order out of the chaos caused by a democracy. Pick your strongman wisely! He must be a guardian in his heart. He must be one who has shown that his only purpose in life is the preservation of the folk. His ultimate aim must be to restore the rule of Law based on the perfect Laws of Nature. Do not choose him by his words. Choose one who has sacrificed all in the face of tyranny; choose one who has endured and preserved. This is the only reliable evidence of his worthiness and motives.

51. A power system will do anything, no matter how corrupt or brutal, to preserve itself.

52. Tyrannies cannot be ended without the use of force.

53. Those who commit treason disguise their deeds in proclamations of patriotism.

54. Propaganda is a major component in all power systems, both secular and religious; false propaganda is a major component of unprincipled power systems. All power systems endeavor to convince their subjects that the system is good, just, beneficent and noble, as well as worthy of perpetuation and defense. The more jingoistic propaganda issued, the more suspicious one should be of its truth.

55. Political power, in the final analysis, is created and maintained by force.

56. A power system, secular or religious, which employs extensive calls to patriotism or requires verbosity and rhetoric for its preservation, is masking tyranny.

57. Propaganda is a legitimate and necessary weapon in any struggle. The elements of successful propaganda are: simplicity, emotion, repetition, and brevity. Also, since men believe what they want to believe, and since they want to believe that which they perceive as beneficial to themselves, then successful propaganda must appeal to the perceived self-interest of those to whom it is disseminated.

58. Tyrannies teach what to think; free men learn how to think.

59. Beware of men who increase their wealth by the use of words. Particularly beware of the lawyers or priests who deny Natural Law.

60. The patriot, being led to the inquisition's dungeons or the executioner's axe, will be condemned the loudest by his former friends and allies; for thus seek to escape the same fate.

61. The sweet goddess of Peace lives only under the protective arm of the ready God of War.

62. The organic founding Law of a Nation must state with unmistakable and irrevocable specificity the identity of the homogeneous racial, cultural group for those

welfare it was formed, and that the continued existence of the Nation is singularly for all time for the welfare of that specific group only.

63. That race or culture which lets others influence or control any of the following will perish:

- 1) organs of information
- 2) educational institutions
- 3) religious institutions
- 4) political offices
- 5) creation of their money
- 6) judicial institutions
- 7) economic life

64. Just Laws require little explanation. Their meaning is irrevocable in simplicity and specificity.

65. Men's emotions are stirred far more effectively by the spoken word than by the written word. This is why a ruling tyranny will react more violently to gatherings of dissenters than to books or pamphlets.

66. The organic founding Law of the Nation, or any law, is exactly as pertinent as the will and power to enforce it.

67. An unarmed or non-militant People will be enslaved.

68. Some say the pen is more powerful than the sword. Perhaps so. Yet, the word without the sword has no authority.

69. Tyrannies are usually built step by step and disguised by noble rhetoric.

70. The difference between a terrorist and a patriot is control of the press.

71. The judgments of the guardians, the leaders, must be true to Natural Law and tempered by reason.

72. Materialism is base and destructive. The guardians of a Nation must constantly warn against and combat a materialistic spirit in the Nation. Acquisition of wealth and property, as is needed for the well-being of one's family and obtained by honorable means, is right and proper. Exploitation, particularly through usury, is destructive to the nation.

73. Materialism leads men to seek artificial status through wealth or property. True social status comes from service to Family, Race, and Nation.

74. Materialism ultimately leads to conspicuous, unnecessary consumption, which in turn leads to the rape of Nature and destruction of environment. It is unnatural. The true guardians of the Nations must be wholly untainted by materialism.

75. The function of a merchant or salesman is to provide a method of exchange. A merchant who promotes unnecessary consumption and materialism must not be tolerated.

76. The only lawful functions of money are as a medium of exchange and store of value. All other uses including social engineering, speculation, inflation and especially usury are unlawful. Usury (interest) at any percentage is a high crime which cannot be tolerated.

77. A nation with an aristocracy of money, lawyers or merchants will become a tyranny.

78. The simplest way to describe a usury-based central banking system is this: The bankers demand the property of the Nation as collateral for their loans. At interest, more

money is owed them than they created with the loans. So, eventually, the bankers foreclose on the Nation.

79. Usury (interest), inflation, and oppressive taxation are theft by deception and destroy the moral fabric of the Nation.

80. Wealth gained without sacrifices or honest labor will usually be misused.

81. Nothing in Nature is static; either the life force grows and expands or it decays and dies.

82. Respect must be earned; it cannot be demanded or assumed.

83. Avoid a vexatious man, for his venom will poison your own nature.

84. Self discipline is a mark of a higher man.

85. One measure of a man is cheerfulness in adversity.

86. A fool judges others by their words. A wise man judges others by their actions and accomplishments.

87. In our relationships or interactions, as in all of Nature's Laws, to each action there is a reaction. That which we plant will be harvested, if not by ourselves, then by another.

88. These are sure signs of a sick or dying Nation. If you see any of them, your guardians are committing treason:

- 1) mixing and destruction of the founding race
- 2) destruction of the family units
- 3) oppressive taxation
- 4) corruption of the Law
- 5) terror and suppression against those who warn of the Nation's error
- 6) immorality: drugs, drunkenness, etc.
- 7) infanticide (now called abortion)
- 8) destruction of the currency (inflation or usury)
- 9) aliens in the land, alien culture
- 10) materialism
- 11) foreign wars
- 12) guardians (leaders) who pursue wealth or glory
- 13) homosexuality
- 14) religion not based on Natural Law

APPENDIX C

Utah draws white supremacists

Ex-convicts join forces and settle where they have been tolerated

BY NICK MADIGAN
New York Times

ROY, Utah — In the cold months, the stark tattoos of white supremacy are concealed beneath layers of clothing, but the ex-convicts and parolees who wear them are becoming known by their faces.

Law-enforcement officials here and in other towns in northern Utah say they are grappling with a marked increase in crimes committed by men who joined white supremacist gangs while in prison and who, once released and bound by ideology and kinship, have settled in the area to pursue lives of crime.

"They're connecting with people of like mind," said Greg Whinham, the police chief in Roy, an Ogden suburb of about 35,000 residents between the Wasatch Mountains and the Great Salt Lake. "The mentality of white supremacy is rampant in the prison system, and now we're seeing it in the streets."

In response, the Roy Police Department joined forces with nine other law enforcement agencies in Weber County to track gangs and individuals who espouse white supremacist creeds as well as other fringe philosophies, many of them promoted and learned in the Utah State Prison and other penal institutions.

"We're just getting flooded with these guys," said Lt. Loring Draper, a gang task force leader in Ogden, who recalled first noticing the white supremacists in late summer 2001. Since that time, Draper said, about 65 parolees identified as white supremacists have been arrested in the area, mostly for drug

offenses, and 86 were returned to prison for parole violations.

On March 6, the police in Ogden made nine arrests in a sweep aimed at a white supremacist ring that specialized in vehicle and residential burglaries and strong-arm robberies, the police said. At least one of the arrested men was carrying a handgun and methamphetamine, a drug that the police say many white gang members produce and sell.

Altogether, the task force is tracking 132 known white supremacists in Weber County, and there are more who have not been identified, Draper said. About 2,000 parolees and probationers, 31 percent more than in any other region in Utah, live among the 300,000 residents of Weber County and adjacent Morgan County.

The officials say that after being released from prison, some of the supremacists may be attracted to northern Utah by a relatively low police presence and generally tolerant neighbors.

"They're pretty prevalent," John Erickson, a paint contractor in Roy, said of the supremacists, whose graffiti he often sees sprayed on store walls around town. "You just look at their faces, and you know they're trouble."

Kirk Egan, the intelligence chief for the Utah Department of Corrections, tracks gang members among the system's approximately 6,000 inmates. "White supremacy has absolutely exploded within our prison system since the mid-1990s," he said. "And it's growing all over the nation."

Gangs on the rise include the Aryan Circle and the White

Aryan Resistance, in Arkansas; the Southern Brotherhood, in Alabama; the Nazi Low Riders, in California and Nevada; and Soldiers of the Aryan Culture, in Utah. One of the largest white prison gangs, World Church of the Creator, founded in Illinois and active here and in other states, has been tough to control, the authorities say, because of its religious underpinnings, which allow its members to gather for meetings in prison.

"Once they're in prison, they join up with groups like this, and once they come out, they stick together," said Vern Hairston of the Ogden-Weber Metro Gang Unit, which leads the 10-agency task force. "They're out of prison, so how are they going to make some money? They turn to crime."

Members of the antigang unit reel off the names of other groups active in Utah: the Fourth Reich, National Alliance, Hammerheads, Krieger Verwundt, Arizona Hammerheads, National Socialist White People's Party and Silent Aryan Warriors.

"Every time you look at someone's tattoo, you can determine how violent these guys are going to be," Draper said.

Traditionally conservative, independent and avowedly religious, many Utahns have long tolerated what some people elsewhere consider to be extreme points of view, including the perspectives of conspiracy theorists and opponents of a so-called world order. The right to bear arms is revered, and government is often viewed with suspicion.

Two years ago, in La Verdin, in southern Utah, officials approved a law that forbade

entry to anyone associated with the United Nations. Another southern Utah town, Virgin, passed a measure requiring every household to have at least one firearm. Efforts to pass a hate-crimes law in the Utah Legislature have failed for four consecutive years.

Some of the supremacists, while rejecting the label, have no qualms about stating their beliefs.

"White people just want to have pride in who they are without being called a racist," said Troy Eck, 37, who sported a tattooed "A" on his neck that he said stood for "anarchy."

Sitting in a rundown house off Ogden Avenue, Eck's friend Dennis West, 55, said he had served 28 years in California prisons for "murder, kidnapping and mayhem." In prison, he said, joining a gang meant survival.

"You were either with them or against them," said West, who emerged from incarceration with the words "white power" inscribed on his stomach. "I don't discriminate; I hate everybody equally."

Early last year, detectives were told by an informant that two supremacist parolees in Weber County were hatching a pipe-bomb plot against Jewish sponsors and participants at the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. The police arrested two men, Robert Tarpley and Doc Knipe, just before the Games. No bombs were found, but the two were charged with aggravated assault and robbery in a separate case. The charges against Tarpley were dropped, but he was sent to prison for associating with criminals, a parole violation.

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Chris Larson 218-847-1881

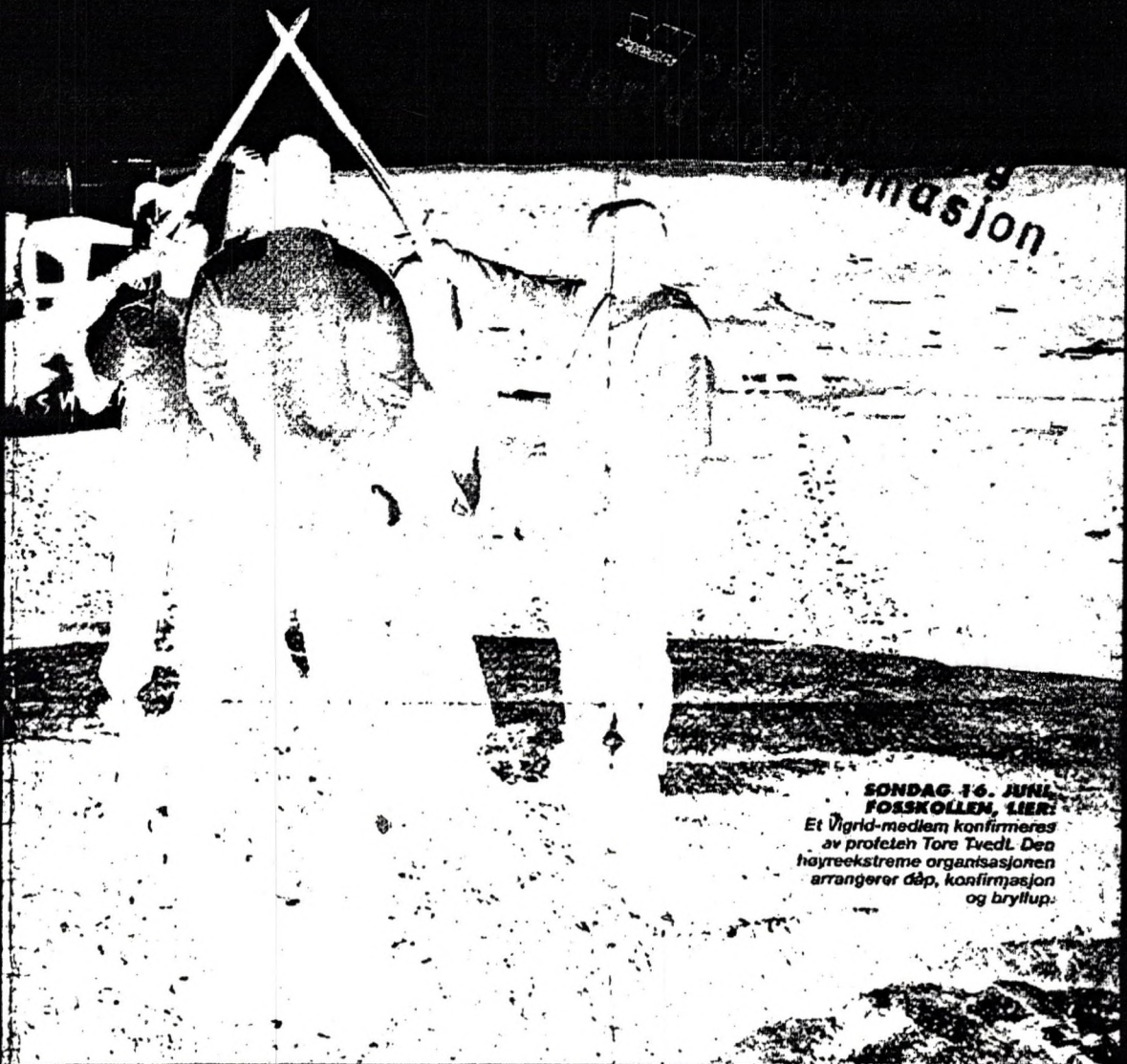
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APPENDIX D

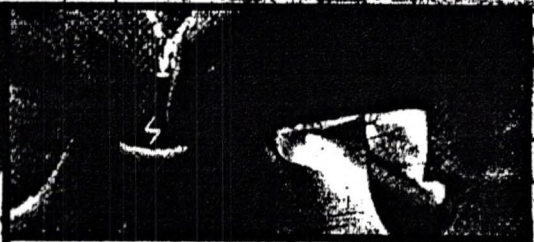
TORRE W. TVEDT PERFORMING CONFIRMATION RITUAL WITH MJÖLNIR.
THE TEXT READS: "NIGGERS ARE GOOD DANCERS AND BASKET BALL
PLAYERS, BUT THE WHITE MAN IS BETTER THAN A NIGGER TO RULE."



”Negre
er flinke til
å danse
og spille
basket, men
enhver
hvit mann
er bedre til
å styre
enn en
neger”



**SONDAG 16. JUNI
FOSSKOLLEN, LIER:**
Et Vigrid-medlem konfirmeres
av profeten Tore Tvedt. Den
høyreekstreme organisasjonen
arrangerer dåp, konfirmasjon
og bryllup.



NORRØNT:
"Symbolbruken er sterk i Vigrid. To's hammer er sentral
i alle seremonier. Også som tatovering."

5 M

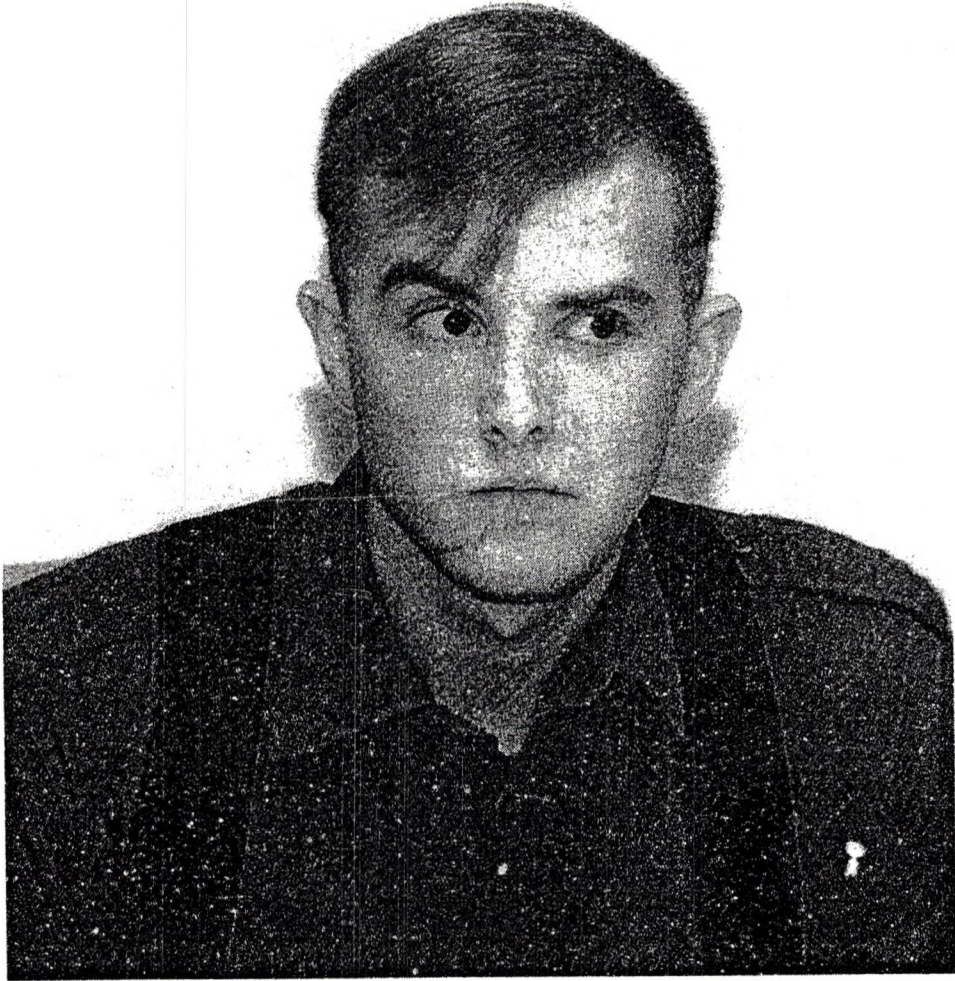
Tore W. Tvedt performing confirmation ritual. Photo by Per Henrik Stenstrøm (VI Menn)

APPENDIX E



Tore W. Tvedt of Vigrid. Photo by author

APPENDIX F



Varg Vikernes. Archive photo Scanpix.

APPENDIX G

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE NORWEGIAN COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

POLICE (PST) REGARDING VIGRID AND THE PREVENTIVE

OFFENSIVE LAUNCH AGAINST THE GROUP

PRESSEMELDING
Politiets sikkerhetstjeneste 28.10.03

FOREBYGGENDE OFFENSIV MOT VIGRID

Politiets sikkerhetstjeneste (PST) har iverksatt en forebyggende offensiv mot Vigrid-miljøet i Norge. Offensiven har vært planlagt i lengre tid, og ledes av Den sentrale enhet for Politiets sikkerhetstjeneste (DSE) i nært samarbeid med politidistrikter rundt om i landet.

I løpet av de nærmeste dagene og ukene vil PST og det øvrige politiet som ledd i denne offensiven gjennomføre samtaler med personer som er knyttet til Vigrid-miljøet.

PST har som en av sine hovedoppgaver å forebygge politisk motivert vold. I Justisdepartementets prioriteringer for 2003 er PST også pålagt å bidra til å få enkeltpersoner til å ta avstand fra voldelige ekstreme miljøer.

Vigrid har på landsbasis, til tross for sin relativt korte virketid, knyttet til seg mange personer. Rekrutteringen har den senere tid rettet seg spesielt mot unge jenter og gutter - helt ned i 14-årsalderen. PST har fulgt denne utviklingen nøye, og har gjennom et nært samarbeid med den øvrige politiet fått en god oversikt over miljøet.

Det er grunn til å frykte at Vigrid-miljøet er i ferd med å utvikle seg i en mer voldelig og aggressiv retning enn man har sett hittil. Offensiven som PST nå har iverksatt, har som mål å motvirke denne utviklingen. Dette er viktig både av samfunnsmessige hensyn og av hensyn til de barn og unge som Vigrid har knyttet til seg eller er i ferd med å knytte til seg. Vigrid-miljøet representerer en ekstremt rasistisk og voldelig ideologi, og flere personer i miljøet har tidligere vært involvert i grov voldskriminalitet. Risikoen for at stadig flere barn og unge skal bli dratt inn i dette miljøet har vært sterkt medvirkende til PSTs beslutning om å intensivere sin forebyggende virksomhet overfor Vigrid gjennom den nå iverksatte offensiven.

Dette er ikke første gang PST gjennomfører offensiver i forebyggende øyemed. Resultatene av de tidligere offensivene viser at dette er en effektiv metode for å oppnå at personer trekker seg ut av voldelige ekstreme miljøer.

Arnstein Øverkil
Sjef for Politiets sikkerhetstjeneste

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