

Ásatrú, Neo-Nazism, and Free Speech: Updates on Volkmom and the Farmers' Market Protests

Preface: "Just don't buy from them"

The bulk of this report concerns Ásatrú, a Neo-pagan religion based on Norse mythology that has, to the dismay of many adherents, been frequently appropriated by Neo-Nazis.¹ As we will show, Sarah Dye ascribes to a Neo-Nazi variant of this religion. Before we dive into this topic, however, we would like to address public concerns about protesting within the market space itself. We have too frequently heard people say: "Just don't buy from them," and we feel it is important to express once again why protest within the market is necessary both to get that message out to the public and as a moral obligation.

Under other circumstances, it is easier to recognize the validity of a boycott and to appreciate it as an expression of the public assembly and free speech that the First Amendment protects. Lots of people, from all political positions, support boycotting corporations that give money to harmful causes. Like many other businesses that underwrite hate groups, the money that Sarah Dye and Doug Mackey make at the market directly funds white nationalism. In addition to giving money to white nationalist organizations, Dye herself is an active, online white supremacist personality. She uses her persona as a farmer and stay-at-home Mom to peddle a rebranded form of Neo-Nazism to her supporters. The money they make is used to hurt people of color, LGBTQ+ people, the differently abled, and anyone who is not part of Dye and Mackey's "tribe."

Corporate boycotts may appear less intrusive because they are often organized on a national scale, and much of the consciousness raising around those movements happens online. However, while we do have an online presence, Facebook and Twitter are not as effective for spreading awareness about this issue than protesting inside the marketplace. Regrettably, most people do not know the people who grow their food very well, nor do they frequent Facebook to learn about them. For many, the only knowledge they have of their farmers comes from the interactions they have with them inside of the market. Thus, to inform these customers, we must have people spreading the message of the boycott inside of the market.

But there is another compelling reason to protest directly in the market space: Schooner Creek Farm hires American Identity Movement members to work as their stand assistants and farm hands, and every week, Dye and Mackey invite their supporters, who are mostly white nationalists, to congregate

¹ Thanks to many of our Neo-pagan followers whose generous counsel helped us better understand these issues.

at the market. When Dr. Caddoo was arrested, she was surrounded by armed militia members taunting her with sexually violent and derogatory words; these dangerous individuals came because Dye and Mackey sought support from sympathetic political forces and fellow Neo-Nazis through social media. By protesting in the market, we distract these dangerous individuals, keeping their attention away from other vulnerable members of our community.

Thanks to Mayor Hamilton's administration, armed white nationalists now have more freedom inside of our market than anti-racist protesters. Despite the fact that the City of Bloomington wishes to infringe upon our free speech, it is a public space, and City officials know that protesters have as much right to occupy it as white nationalists. However, what the City's response highlights is something that activists of color in Bloomington have been claiming for some time: the market is not safe for marginalized people.

As members of Bloomington Black Lives Matter have repeatedly said since Dye and Mackey were first exposed, the market space *has never been* a place that people of color have experienced as safe and welcoming. This is why so many members of BLM as well as other people of color and Jewish folks in the community have been calling for a full boycott of the market. Add to this exclusionary environment the presence of multiple American Identity Movement members, three percenters, "lone wolf" supporters, and other avowed racists, and it is clear that *anyone* who is a potential target of any of these individuals is neither safe nor welcome there. By ignoring this issue, the City is sending the message that it cares more about the rights of Neo-Nazis to be free from protest in public spaces than about the safety or well-being of marginalized people. By arresting protesters, they are demonstrating that they are willing to trample on the First Amendment in order to protect these white supremacists and support their business.

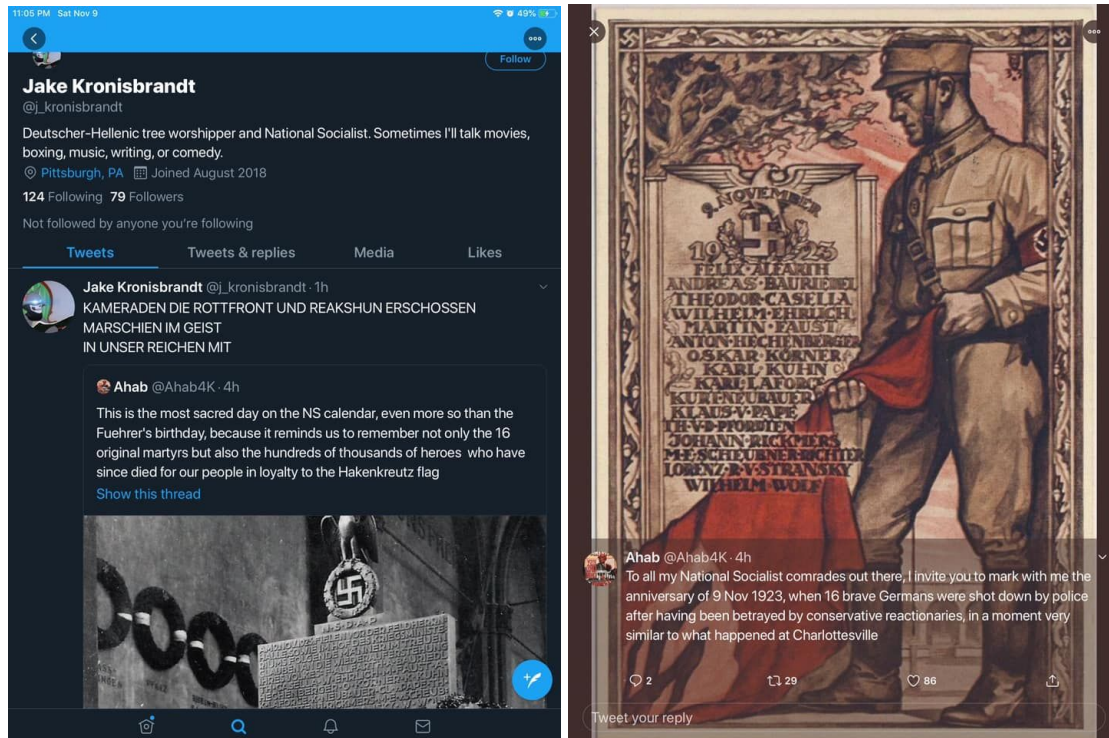
Neo-Nazism as a Term

Since our protests began, we have seen the same questions of terminology come up repeatedly. Specifically, people wonder whether "Neo-Nazi" is a technical or inflammatory term. Some people are under the mistaken impression that words like "Neo-Nazi" are labels that are almost always unfounded. There is also a general lack of awareness about why white supremacy is an inherently dangerous ideology. Some seem to think that holding a set of beliefs is not in and of itself an inherent threat.

It is easy to think of Nazism as an obscure set of ideas. The truth, however, is that it is a worldview that appeals to large numbers of people because Nazi literature is both conspiratorial and widely available. Moreover, hate group participation can be experienced as an addiction.² German Nazis produced

² Pete Simi et al. "Addicted to Hate: Identity Residual Among Former White Supremacists"
https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/1003_OPSR_TP_Addicted-to-Hate_2017-508.pdf).

millions of pages of texts and propagandistic images that remain in circulation today. While there is no longer a Nazi army in Germany, Nazism survives as a decentralized cult built around books, articles, and art. Most cults have texts at the center of their operations, and many ask their followers to consume large quantities of literature in order to indoctrinate them. The wide availability of literature from Nazi Germany through print and, especially, the Internet have allowed modern Nazism to flourish in ways that are neither hidden nor difficult to access.



Twitter account of Jake Kronisbrandt, modern "National Socialist" (synonym for Nazi) and co-host of Midgard Rising, the Podcast Volkmom regularly participated in

Nolan Brewer, the man who was arrested for defacing a synagogue in Carmel and whose FBI interview exposed Dye and Mackey, was very explicitly a Neo-Nazi, as we discussed in our first report. That report explains that he frequently wore swastikas in public and was arrested wearing a post-World War II German Army jacket from his grandfather, who appears to have been a Nazi sympathizer. Additionally, Brewer also discussed translations of *Mein Kampf* with the FBI agents during his interview. One of the agents asked him what kind of books he had access to through the servers he used, and Brewer responded, "Uhh rather than what typically people read in... school which is like the Manheim version of *Mein Kampf*, they would have the Ford translation."³ This type of literary

³ "Government Sentencing Memorandum," pg. 69
<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6027996-Defense.html#search/p1/NOLAN%20BREWER>

exchange is typical for modern Neo-Nazis, who form their online coalitions in large part through sharing Nazi and other white supremacist reading materials.

When our researchers are trying to determine whether someone is a Neo-Nazi, we ask, "Are they familiar with Nazi literature, and do they have beliefs based in that literature?" Those questions are easy to answer in Dye's case because she espoused her beliefs publicly. Why these questions about beliefs are important to considerations of public safety is discussed more below.

Ásatrú and the American Nazi Movement

Recently, in building more connections with the local Grassroots Conservatives, Dye has passively allowed her following to assume that she is a Christian. At a GC meeting on September 26, GC members prayed over her, and since then we have seen more commentary from Christian supporters on SCF's Facebook page. However, she is not a Christian, and in fact, her religious affiliation has direct roots in Nazism and is explicitly hostile to Christianity.

Though we know from anecdotal accounts by former friends and associates of Dye and Mackey that both are white nationalists, we have more specific evidence of Dye's beliefs because of her online presence. Dye, and most likely Mackey though we are not certain, is a follower of a branch of Ásatrú that has roots in Nazi literature.⁴ Ásatrú is a religion based on Norse mythology that has many different permutations. While Ásatrú itself is not a Nazi religion, it has been adopted by white nationalists through organizations like the Ásatrú Alliance and figures like Steve McNallen. McNallen claimed that only people of Northern European ancestry could follow Ásatrú. After a group he founded called the Ásatrú Free Assembly disbanded, it was replaced by another group created by a member of the American Nazi Party:

Shortly after McNallen disbanded the Ásatrú Free Assembly, White supremacist Valgard Murray formed the Ásatrú Alliance (AA) to take its place. Murray was a former member of the American Nazi Party who, until the 1960s, signed his letters with the phrase "Heil Hitler!" He also had a history of violent rhetoric: Viking Brotherhood co-founder Robert Stine, a fellow member of the Ásatrú Free Assembly and former member of the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi Party, claimed that Murray once threatened to kill a gay man at an official Ásatrú Free Assembly gathering. While the current bylaws of the AA claim that the organization "do[es]

⁴ It is important to note that many followers of Ásatrú resoundingly denounce white supremacist manifestations of Ásatrú, and many have signed a document called "Declaration 127," which is an agreement to reject and denounce white supremacy in Ásatrú. <http://www.heathenhof.com/declaration127/>

not practice, preach, or promote hatred, bigotry, or racism,” Murray has served as its chief religious leader since 1997, as well as its treasurer and public contact.⁵

The essence of Ásatrú's appeal to Neo-Nazis is that the Nazis thought Aryans were Nordic. Heinrich Himmler, the leader of the SS, was an occultist who helped to craft Nazi religion on behalf of the Party, and he was instrumental in appropriating Nordic symbols for Nazi regalia and propaganda. Ásatrú is a white supremacist religion because of its associations with Nazism in particular. Prior research has already demonstrated the connections between Neo-Nazism and some Ásatrú organizations, including this piece from author Shannon Weber:

For many White supremacists, the ability to connect with a religious identity they see as indigenously White is alluring. Ásatrú, especially for men, is a celebration of virile Northern European hypermasculinity, a chance at re-enacting the glory of their presumed Viking ancestors. Followers in the U.S. take the idea of this legacy one step further through their notion of “Vinland,” the portion of North America (most likely eastern Canada) explored by Vikings prior to the conquest of Christopher Columbus. In Vinland they are able to envision a past in which they were both victors and victims, beating Columbus in the race for conquest yet not given their proper historical due.

Many “folkish” Ásatrúar, Odinists, and Wotanists defend their desire to restrict the religion to those with Northern European ancestry as akin to Native Americans practicing indigenous religious beliefs. The difference between the two groups, of course, is one of power. Native Americans strive to maintain their cultural and religious practices in the aftermath of centuries of colonization and genocide. White Odinists, by contrast, benefit from White supremacy and deny others membership out of concerns about White “purity” rather than cultural survival in the face of mass slaughter, forced sterilization, and the kidnapping, abuse, and cultural “reeducation” found at American Indian boarding schools.⁶

When Dye and Mackey connections to Nolan Brewer were originally exposed, one of the first people to come to her defense was a man named Brien James, who founded the Vinlanders Social Club. James himself has a violent record, having beaten a man nearly to the point of death. He is also a member of the American Guard, a group the ADL associates with nine murders.⁷ James attempted to organize a visit to the Farmers Market, a threat which many suspect resulted in the two-week market shut down.

⁵ Shannon Weber, “White Supremacy’s Old Gods: The Far Right and Neo-Paganism”
https://www.politicalresearch.org/2018/02/01/white-supremacys-old-gods-the-far-right-and-neopaganism?fbclid=IwAR1ccVaA-GCx4g7-reoIT8Xcvgid1hVzNmoWCZzdFwzpp_oAJ0q2ZbtXEU

⁶ Weber, “White Supremacy’s Old Gods”

⁷ Anti-Defamation League, “Behind the American Guard: Hardcore White Supremacists”
<https://www.adl.org/blog/behind-the-american-guard-hardcore-white-supremacists>

Dye's online persona, "Volkmom," is one indication of her beliefs in white supremacist Neo-Paganism. White supremacist branches of these religions call themselves "Neo-Völkisch." According to the SPLC, "Neo-Völkisch adherents base their spirituality on the survival of those descended from white Europeans and the preservation of what they claim are dead or dying cultures. Such individuals and groups use a variety of terms to describe their spirituality such as Odinism or Wotanism, and Odalism, but sometimes they co-opt other non-racist denominations such as heathenism, Ásatrú or even paganism. Qualifiers like 'Norse tradition,' 'Germanic' or 'proto-Germanic' are sometimes attached to those terms." (<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/neo-volkisch>)

Dye is savvy enough to only present the most sanitized versions of her beliefs to the public, and her role in the movement is to offer a wholesome vision of white supremacy. However, now that we are aware of her adherence to Ásatrú, it sheds some light on one of her overtly bigoted statements that emerged in the first Discord leak:

"They [Native Americans] can't use the term 'genocide,'" Volkmom posted Jan. 20.
"Technically we have created conditions for them to prosper, although they do not today for other reasons." (Quoted from the IDS)⁸

As Shannon Weber points out in one of the passages cited above, white supremacist branches of Ásatrú are especially hostile to indigenous people. Adherents of these branches claim to be "Native" white Americans themselves, believing that many white Americans descend from Viking colonizers.

In addition to her handle, we have direct confirmation of Dye's Ásatrú beliefs through her regular participation in a podcast called "Midgard Rising," which promotes and teaches a Neo-Nazi variation of Ásatrú. On Midgard Rising, co-hosts "League of the North," Jake Kronisbrandt ("Jake Korwinner" on MGR), and Julian Olson discussed such topics as the inherent superiority of white parents, the great legacy of William Pierce (author of a book about race war that inspired the Oklahoma City bombing), feminism as a Jewish conspiracy, reasons to vote for Roy Moore despite his being a "Neo-Jew" (their word for a Christian), the 88 precepts (a manifesto written by an American Neo-Nazi), and other such topics. We've compiled the episode listings from their site, and you can find them here: <https://docdro.id/649hWT7>

Volkmom's YouTube channel, which was pointed to as evidence of her views in the early phases of the protest, is comprised of videos that were originally segments on MGR. The Volkmom persona is a mixture of "Neo-Völkisch" and agrarian views, offering parenting tips, home remedies, farming techniques, and other apparently salubrious topics. Her MGR personality provided a vision of white supremacy as a natural, healthy, beneficial, and family-oriented lifestyle. In addition to racism, MGR

⁸ Ellen Hine "Letter alleges white supremacists sell at farmers' market"
<https://www.idsnews.com/article/2019/06/letter-alleges-white-supremacists-sell-at-farmers-market>

also espoused beliefs and viewpoints that are highly sexist and patriarchal. Kronisbrandt spoke primarily to and for white men; Volkmom played the complementary part of subservient female supporter. Between her mostly unobtrusive and approving presence and her "homesteading" tips, the Volkmom persona facilitates the fantasy of a return to a domestic bliss through quiet subservience to white male authority. It should be noted that offline, Dye departs from her persona, especially in that she does not appear to be subservient to anyone. Her online identity is carefully crafted to appeal to white nationalist men in the movement.

Dye was a follower of Ásatrú before she became a member of Identity Evropa, but she's not the only one to participate in both. Another individual who goes by "Odin010" is also an IE member who made regular appearances on MGR. While this suggests an affinity between MGR/white nationalist Ásatrú and IE/AmIM, the affinity is not rooted in logic but in a Nazi heritage. Ásatrú is an attempt to create a folk religion, and IE/AmIM is a response to modernity and globalism, and for these reasons, they are often not complementary. On the one hand, Ásatrú followers believe in white American nativism by way of an imaginary Nordic heritage. On the other hand, IE members hold that classical and European cultural roots are the essence of white superiority. However, they do mirror different aspects of Nazism, which included both folk religion and anti-modern discourse.⁹ What we are seeing, in fact, are two worldviews that are most similar in that they represent different aspects of Nazism.

A cornerstone of the broader white nationalist movement is the appeal to follower's desire for intellectual discussion and esoteric knowledge (what is called "red pilling"). Yet as we can see in this instance, white nationalists do not think critically about the latent incompatibilities between their different branches. Instead of logic, what does unite these beliefs, and what seems to be a feature of nearly all white nationalist movements, is the desire to piece together some kind of historical narrative linking white heritage to white superiority. In this, they have a great deal in common with Nazism as well.¹⁰ Moreover, Nazi literature, however "un-American," provides historical evidence of white supremacy in a position of immense power, and is therefore very appealing to white supremacists, even though they sometimes downplay its influence. Despite recent efforts to sanitize their image, Patrick Casey and most of the Charlottesville organizers used anti-Semitic language and Neo-Nazi concepts at some point in the past, and often in the forums where they planned the event.

⁹ See Mark Roseman below on anti-rationality in Nazism, especially pgs. 695-697.

¹⁰ According to historian of the Holocaust Mark Roseman, "The ideologies and energies on which the Nazis drew often had little to do with rationality. It is clear that they were inspired by and gained traction from the reaction against rationalization as much as they sought to implement social rationalization." "National Socialism and the End of Modernity," *American Historical Review* (2011): 695.

https://www.academia.edu/5201690/National_Socialism_and_the_end_of_Modernity



Reinhard Wolff

2017-08-06 23:28:45 UTC [Charlottesville 2.0 #general_1] 🔍 🔗

Regarding underestimating antifa, I'm reminded of Hitler's thoughts in *Mein Kampf* on Germany's shit-tier propaganda in WWI.

Patrick Casey, aka Reinhard Wolff, referencing *Mein Kampf* in a thread for Charlottesville organizers

Why is Neo-Nazism inherently dangerous?

White nationalist ideology is always inherently dangerous, and ignoring such beliefs is about as productive for the movement as holding them. History shows that violence comes from these ways of thinking. The Final Solution was not a foreseeable possibility in the early stages of the Nazi overthrow of German government. Many scholars hold that the Final Solution was incremental and the march toward genocide evolved out of everyday Nazism.¹¹ Having seized control of most aspects of the management of daily life, Nazism proceeded toward a natural conclusion of mass murder to end the "Jewish conspiracy." The Final Solution was an outgrowth of Nazi ideology that became a material reality in large part because people either supported Nazism or stayed silent. The Holocaust shows that the complicity of bystanders in the spread of Nazi ideology leads to violence. There is no question about what we must do now that Nazism has taken root in our community: We must resist it loudly, publicly, and relentlessly. We must not allow our neighbors to become complicit in its spread, and we certainly won't denounce history in the name of poorly defined notions of civility.¹²

Instead of taking white nationalism seriously, the City of Bloomington has decided to treat the spectre of "controversy" as if it were the only serious concern. There are other, far more pressing threats, and the city could do something about them. The City has been given a variety of options for moving forward by several experts, but they have not pursued them. They need pressure to act. Please join us in asking the City to take a stand against hate by writing or calling the Mayor's office and Paula McDevitt of the Parks and Recreation Department to express your concerns about the City's approach to this issue:

¹¹ Scholars like Peter Longerich and Ian Kershaw have synthesized earlier debates between "Functionalism," the view that progress toward the Final Solution was incremental, and "Intentionalism," the view that genocide was intended from the very beginnings of Nazi rule. What this showed was that the Final Solution was an outgrowth of both Hitler's political intentions alongside the public being conditioned to Nazism and the idea of redemptive violence. See Daniel Snowman, "Ian Kershaw," from *History Today* 51.7 2001; and Peter Longerich, "Policy of Destruction: Nazi Anti-Jewish Policy and the Genesis of the 'Final Solution'" (Washington, D.C.: USHMM, 2005)

<https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20050726-longerich.pdf>

¹² Please see the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website for more on genocide prevention:

<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention>

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In addition, we can also ask City Council to pass a resolution condemning white supremacy. This has been done in other cities, and we have obtained a copy of one such Ordinance from Boise, Idaho that we are sending to City Hall. We need your voice in this. We have to insist that the City do the right thing. Contact your City Council representative to ask about a resolution to reject hate:
<https://bloomington.in.gov/council>

For More Information

To hear excerpts from MGR, check out this video on our YouTube channel:
<https://youtu.be/E1JVSJ84Bhk> While MGR episodes are still available online, they can be difficult to locate, so please email No Space For Hate at nospace4hate@protonmail.com if you would like copies of any of the episodes included in the summary list.

To access our previous reports on Volkmom, please visit our website: nospace4hate.btown-in.org