

Patriot movement

The **patriot movement** is a collection of various conservative, independent, mostly rural, small government,^[1] American nationalist social movements in the United States that include organized militia members, tax protesters, sovereign or state citizens, quasi-Christian apocalypticists/survivalists, and combinations thereof.^[2] Adherents describe the movement as centered on a belief that individual liberties are in jeopardy due to unconstitutional actions taken by elected government officials, appointed bureaucrats, and some special interest groups outside of government, to illegally accumulate power. Journalists and researchers have associated the patriot movement with the right-wing militia movement^[3] and some in the movement have been associated with illegal acts of violence.^{[1][4]} United States law enforcement groups "call them dangerous, delusional and sometimes violent"^[5]



The "Betsy Ross" flag one of the symbols of the Patriot movement.

Major events in America which alarm or inspire the patriot movement include the 1992 Ruby Ridge siege, the 1993 Waco siege and the 1996 Summer Olympics. After declining from 1996 to 2008, the number of patriot groups has increased dramatically following the election of Barack Obama to the presidency.^[6] The movement's iconography centers on themes relating to the American Revolution, such as the colonial Minuteman, the 13-star Betsy Ross flag, Thomas Jefferson, and the Archibald Willard painting "The Spirit of '76".

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History

Some date the movement back to the 1950s. The reformist wing of the patriot movement is considered to have begun in 1958 with the formation of the John Birch Society and opposition to communism, the United Nations and the civil rights movement.^{[7][8]} An insurgent wing has been traced in origins to the Liberty Lobby active in the 1950s with promotion of themes of White supremacy and antisemitism.^[9]

In the early 1990s, the patriot movement saw a surge of growth spurred by the confrontations at Ruby Ridge and Waco.^[1] The 1995 Oklahoma City bombing was carried out by two patriot movement members, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols.^{[10][11]} During the 1990s the movement organized using "gun shows and the Internet".^[12] The movement was highly active in the mid-1990s, and at a peak in 1996 contained around 800 separate groups.^[10] It saw decline in the late 1990s.^{[6][13][13][14]}

In 2009, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) expressed concern about a resurgent patriot movement,^{[15][16]} and the United States Department of Homeland Security issued a report warning of heightened "Rightwing Extremism".^[1.7] The SPLC attributed this growth to "an angry backlash against non-white immigration and ... the economic meltdown and the climb to power of Barack

Obama.^[18] It reported that the number of patriot groups grew from 149 in 2008, to 824 in 2010, to 1,274 in 2011^[19] and 1,360 in 2012.^[20] According to the SPLC, "That explosive growth seems to have been driven by the election of our first black president and the approaching loss of a white majority in the U.S. that he represents. Another driver is the crash of the economy, which coincided neatly with the rise to national power of President Obama."^[20]

The SPLC found that while "there are many people" in the patriot movement "that aren't engaged in illegal activity," the "normalizing of conspiracy theories"—such as the belief that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is building concentration camps; rumors of covert plans by Mexico to repatriate parts of the Southwest; and concerns about Muslim Sharia law becoming part of the US court system—has played into the growth of the group.^[19]

An extremist member of the patriot movement carried out the 2009 anti-abortion murder of George Tiller,^{[21][22]} and some extremists within the movement also have expressed support for Joseph Stack's 2010 plane crash into an Internal Revenue Service office.^[23]

The movement was connected to, and received a boost in profile from, the 2014 Bundy standoff and 2016 Occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Two members of the movement, Jerad Miller and Amanda Miller, killed two police officers and a civilian during a violent shooting rampage in Las Vegas after leaving the Bundy standoff; they pinned a note to one of their victims saying "This is the beginning of the revolution."^[6]

Views

Various patriot movement aligned groups have frequently been described as racist, extremist, anti-semitic, and violent by groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center,^{[24][25]} Anti-Defamation League,^[26] and the FBI.^[27]

Descriptions of the patriot movement include:

- A diverse movement with as its common thread a growing dissatisfaction with and alienation from government, the willingness to use military force to defend their rights, and a conspiratorial scholology.^[2]
- A brand of politics historically associated with paleoconservatives, paleolibertarians, militia groups, anti-immigration advocates, and those who argue for the abolition of the Federal Reserve.^[28]
- A movement outspoken regarding the U.S. Constitution, particularly the Second and Fourteenth Amendments^[29] as a result, some members refuse to pay their income taxes,^[29] and some groups operate their own common-law legal system.^[12]

In addition, the patriot movement has been associated with the following views:

- Support of the paramilitary militia movement, such as the Michigan Militia.^{[1][4][10][12]}
- Religious views focused on finding "signs of the end of times".^[1]
- Suspicion regarding surveillance.^[29]

Elements of the patriot movement have expressed support for various conspiracy theories

- Federal government involvement in the Oklahoma City bombing^{[30][31]} (Convicted bomber Timothy McVeigh was "heavily involved in the patriot movement" and the bombing was modeled after one of the missions in a white supremacist novel The Turner Diaries, "one of McVeigh's favorite books"^[2])
- Federal government involvement in the John F. Kennedy assassination.^[30]
- 9/11 conspiracy theories.^[32]
- Numerous Sandy Hook conspiracy theories.^[33]
- A New World Order,^{[1][29]} possibly in the form of a United Nations takeover.^[30]

In addition to the militia movement, which is said to have come out of the patriot movement, the patriot movement is often associated with the sovereign citizen movement, whose adherents believe that "most US law doesn't apply to them."^{[2][19]}

Groups

Groups that have been mentioned in association with the patriot movement include

- Idaho Light Foot Militia
- John Birch Society
- League of the South^[19]
- Militia of Montana^[2]
- Michigan Militia^[1]
- "The Oath Keepers" was founded in March 2009 by Stewart Rhodes in Lexington, Massachusetts. The organization consists of current and former U.S. military personnel and law enforcement officials who have taken an oath to refuse to obey and/or enforce orders and/or federal laws which they deem unconstitutional. The Oath Keepers as a group have grown to include chapters in many states across America.^[34]

See also

- All-American Protectorate, Inc.
- Christian Patriot movement
- Constitutional militia movement
- Domestic terrorism in the United States
- List of organizations designated by the Southern Poverty Law Center as hate groups
- Militia organizations in the United States
- Oath Keepers
- Radical right
- Second American Revolution
- Sovereign citizen movement
- Tea Party movement

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External links

- [Active groups listed by Southern Poverty Law Center](#)
- [Patriot Movement page](#) on the Southern Poverty Law Center website.

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