



SIEGE CULTURE AND ACCELERATIONISM IN THE UK

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OVERVIEW

This guide provides an introductory overview of Siege Culture, also referred to as accelerationism, as it has manifested in the UK from 2016 onwards. Although it is a fringe set of beliefs, Siege Culture has underpinned many of the recent counter terrorism cases linked to the extreme-right in the UK. This guide does not assume any specialist knowledge beyond a broad understanding of the far-right.

The guide sets out key beliefs in the Siege Culture subculture, before providing an overview of how the subculture is organised and has evolved over time. The guide goes on to consider the relationship between Siege Culture, violence, and offending, before speculating about potential future developments.

KEY BELIEFS

Siege Culture takes inspiration from **Fascism & National Socialism**. Siege Culture supporters have an anti-democratic, anti-enlightenment, racist and white supremacist worldview. They believe they are Aryans, a specific and superior group at the top of a racial hierarchy. They are hostile towards non-whites, non-heterosexuals, Jews, and governments. Siege Culture includes the idea of a **The System**, which is a conspiracy of the government, Jews, capitalists, and all other forces acting against Aryan interests.

Within Siege Culture Fascism is treated as a **higher truth** and a natural state in which Aryans will dominate all others. As a result, Siege Culture advocates believes that any softening of their message to increase their appeal is impossible, and that any form of politics or

KEY BELIEFS

compromise is inherently flawed. Siege Culture is critical of other right-wing actors who are seen as being insufficiently committed, resulting in a form of **elitism** and a belief that they represent a revolutionary **vanguard** with access to special truths unrecognised by others.

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

Accelerationism refers to a violent strategy in which terrorism is used to hasten societal collapse by provoking reactions from authorities and exacerbating existing social tensions. The term has come to be closely associated with Siege Culture to the extent that Siege Culture inspired groups are often referred to as accelerationists. However, accelerationism has also been a feature in the ideology of right-wing terrorists such as Brenton Tarrant and Peyton Gendron, who are less clearly related to Siege Culture.

Accelerationism has its origins in philosophy where it originally encompassed a range of beliefs centred on the desire to speed up technological progress, in some cases for benign ends. It is not clear how accelerationism came to be used to refer to a specific terrorist strategy or entered Siege Culture.

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

of these ideas has been divisive and caused splits within Siege Culture online and in groups.

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

Key texts associated with Siege Culture include:

- *Siege* by James Mason, originally composed in the 1980s *Siege* was re-popularised through the web forum Iron March and has been re-published multiple times.
- Several works published via Iron March or by key influencer Alexander Slavros including: *The American Futurist Manifesto*, *Next Leap*, *Zero Tolerance*, and *A Squire's Trial*.
- Material produced by online outlets which have included Noose, Siege Culture, and The American Futurist.



ORGANISATION & DEVELOPMENT

Siege Culture is not a single ideology with a uniform set of beliefs. There are some important influencers such as James Mason and Alexander Slavros, but there is no acknowledged leader or single dominant personality.

The subculture is loosely organised. Some activists have founded small groups (sometimes referred to as groupuscules) which may meet in-person as well as having an online presence. Example of groups that have been active in the UK include Sonnenkrieg Division and Feuerkrieg Division.

Despite this, the centre of the subculture is online. At various times this has included some key web forums (Iron March, Fascist Forge) and websites (Siege Culture, Noose, American Futurist). More recently Siege Culture persists on Telegram and other encrypted applications as well as less moderated platforms such as Odysee and Internet Archive. Online participation is far larger than offline participation and group membership.

The importance of online organising for Siege Culture contributes to the lack of a uniform ideology as individual participants can integrate key ideas into their own worldviews (syncretism).

Online organising also contributes to a strong transnational perspective. Ideologically a great deal of focus has been on the United States, but Siege Culture has been influential in the UK, Canada, Australia, and Eastern Europe and Russia.

Siege Culture in the UK is not static and has evolved over time.

National Action was founded in the UK in 2013 and remained legal until proscription in December 2016. There is evidence that National Action members networked with others via the web forum Iron March as well as in person.

Siege, and author James Mason were promoted heavily on Iron March from 2016 onwards. This included the publication of an interview with James Mason carried out by members of Atomwaffen Division.

National Action were the precursors to the emergence of Siege Culture in the UK. Many of the groups that followed National Action in the UK such as Sonnenkrieg Division, and Feuerkrieg Division were much closer ideologically and aesthetically to the ideas in *Siege* and on Iron March. They also borrowed heavily from aesthetics and naming conventions established by Atomwaffen Division in the United States.

A similar pattern of spread can be observed in the emergence of esoteric beliefs, including Satanism, in UK groups. These trends primarily originated online and in the United States before being adopted by UK groups. These ideas were disruptive causing splits. As an example, Sonnenkrieg Division in the UK was spun out of an earlier group known as System Resistance Network as a result of a split over the role of Satanism.

Following a series of proscriptions and trials, Siege Culture activity has superficially died down in the UK, although there is little reason to think that the networks and beliefs that underpinned these groups have disappeared.

Recent publications such as *Militant Accelerationism* suggest there is a concerted effort to circumvent convoluted ideological disputes and place offline organising and direct action at the centre of Siege Culture. The evidence so far is limited as to the effectiveness of these efforts.

RELATIONSHIP TO VIOLENCE & OFFENDING

The relationship between Siege Culture and violence is complex. Militancy is a key element of how Siege Culture presents itself. To-date, clearly identifiable terrorist attacks associated with Siege Culture have been extremely rare.

In the US, the Siege Culture group Atomwaffen is linked to a series of murders, but these were of people already known to group members. In one case a former member killed two current members, and another member killed his girlfriend's parents. The 2018 murder of gay Jewish student Blaze Bernstein by Sam Woodward may have been ideologically motivated but there is little sign of attempting to use the murder for propaganda.

In the UK, Zack Davies' attempted murder of Dr Sarandev Bhambra may have been for a clear political motive and design to induce terror, but Davies' attack pre-dates the rediscovery of Siege and his relationship to Siege Culture and National Action is unclear. Davies erroneously believed Dr Bhambra was a Muslim.

Siege Culture has produced some planned terror attacks in various stages of maturity. In the UK, Jack Renshaw a former National Action member developed a plot to kill his local MP and a police officer investigating him. Jack Coulson, a member of National Action posted pictures of a pipe bomb online in 2017 and subsequently convicted of possessing a document for terrorist purposes. Members of the Siege Culture-influenced cell Oaken Hearth have attempted to manufacture 3D printed firearms.

Overall, plotting activity, and actual violence coming from Siege Culture have been far outstripped by online rhetoric and overall presentation. Siege Culture has however contributed to the large upsurge in right-wing terrorism offending in the UK. The proscription of National Action in 2016

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was a watershed moment and the numbers of right-wing terrorist offenders in prison, many convicted of membership offences, began to rise from 2017 onwards. Members of successor organisations such as Sonnenkrieg Divison have been convicted of terrorism offences including encouraging terrorism.

NEXT STEPS

Siege Culture has largely been suppressed in the UK. Several branded groups connected to Siege Culture have been proscribed and the large number of cases linked to this subculture has diminished. A similar picture can be seen in the US, where Atomwaffen and The Base have both been dissolved or weakened.

Despite proscription, the online subculture and networks that underpin Siege Culture are persistent. Over time, new formations influenced by Siege Culture may emerge: Oaken Hearth is a key example of this in the UK.

There is also a persistent effort within Siege Culture to re-orientate activism away from branded groups vulnerable to counter-terrorism disruption, and towards more local and offline organising.

Ideological introspection became a key feature of Siege Culture as debates over the role of Satanism and the fall out of increased state pressure took their toll. This may have contributed to the overall inertia of Siege Culture and recent publications have sought to place renewed emphasis on direct action.

CONCLUSIONS

Siege Culture is the most extreme interpretation of fascism and national socialism yet seen.

Militancy and 'edginess' are a core part of the scene's aesthetic.

The militant presentation of Siege Culture has drawn focus and scrutiny. However, the rhetoric has outstripped the violence emanating from the scene so far, especially compared with the more terroristic chan/alt-right inspired lone actors, such as Brenton Tarrant, internationally.

The decentralised nature of Siege Culture has left it vulnerable to ideological drift and introspection, including rifts caused by the influence of occultism. Recent efforts have attempted to correct this by

de-centring ideology and emphasising the need for offline organising and direct action. It is currently not possible to say if these efforts have been successful at encouraging more direct action.

About the authors

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This guide is an output from the Constraining Violence project. You can see more from this project on our website: <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/projects/constraining-violence/>

READ

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