
White Nationalism In The United States: History And Modern State

In today's world, the breaking news of twenty-two dead and thirty-six wounded is becoming more and more normal to see. Innocent people's lives are being taken just by going to the store or out in public. The shocking part for most people is that the shooter is typically white, and the victims are of another race. This is known as an act of domestic terrorism completed by a white nationalist. White nationalism is becoming an issue in the United States. The question is what started this all, how large is it really becoming, and what could be done about it.

Before addressing the details of how severe white nationalism is, what exactly is white nationalism or a white nationalist? The definition of a white nationalist from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is "one of a group of militant whites who espouse white supremacy and advocate enforced racial segregation" ("White Nationalism"). In other words, white nationalism is the belief that white people are better than all others and how the followers violently act to implement this belief. This is a form of racism that is increasing in the United States today. However, the cause of this group's creation turns back to the United States' history.

Racism has been a belief shown throughout the history of the United States. One major example of this is slavery. Slavery began in the year 1619, and along with this continued the idea of other races being inferior to whites. The African Americans, used as slaves, had their humanity taken from them by the whites (Smedley, Audrey). They were forced to follow the commands of the white men. Otherwise, they got whipped, beaten, and punished. The whites dehumanized them day by day. This is supported by the definition of dehumanize. Dehumanize means "to deprive someone of human qualities, personality, or dignity" ("Dehumanize"). Their human qualities were stripped away the moment they were sold to white families. They were not allowed to learn how to read and write, and their lives were shaped by the whites. Another example in United States history is the KKK. This group's main goal was to promote white supremacy. This was completed by bombing black schools and hurting anyone involved in helping blacks gain power. Both of these examples from the history of the United States created white nationalism. Whites have always had more rights or more power over other races, and this is what compels whites to believe they are superior.

This idea of being superior has caused issues in the United States. According to the FBI, there has been a major rise in the number of domestic terrorism cases involving white nationalists in the past months (Thomas, Elizabeth). The most recent, devastating event took place back at the beginning of August this year. A man by the name of Patrick Crusius walked into a Walmart in El Paso, New Mexico, with a gun. He took twenty-two people's lives while wounding more than twenty-four others solely because of the increase of Hispanics in the city. White nationalism was shown through Crusius's action as he believed the Hispanics would gain power over the whites if the population kept growing. According to an Anti-Defamation League study, in the past ten years alone, seventy-three percent of domestic extremist-related fatalities were caused by men like Patrick Crusius acting out (Rubin, Jennifer).

Another major incident happened not even five years ago. In Charleston, South Carolina, Dylann Roof shot and killed nine African American men while they were attending church. His

reasoning was to simply get back at them for killing the whites. He even specifically told police that whites are superior while being questioned (Sanchez, Ray, and O'Shea, Keith). Both of these events are included in the 16 plus attacks that have occurred in the United States since 2011 and brought attention to others. Within these 16 attacks, more than 175 people have lost their lives (Beckett, Lois, and Wilson, Jason). These facts go to show that white nationalism is not slowing down and not going to stop any time soon.

In order to slow down or get rid of white nationalism completely, there needs to be key actions implemented. First, the FBI should start being more concerned with these domestic terrorism acts. As of right now, the crimes of white nationalists are not being seen as domestic terrorism. Once the FBI starts classifying these crimes as such, the investigations will be prioritized to ensure they can catch the suspects before anyone is harmed. The FBI should also assign more agents to domestic terrorism instead of having eighty percent of agents working on international investigations (Fieldstadt, Elisha, and Dilanian, Ken). Having this implemented will decrease the overall number of attacks and lives lost from white nationalists or any hate group within the United States.

Another important action is to start teaching others about what is occurring and the consequences of it. Young children should be taught by their parents and their education system to accept and respect other races. Children also learn by looking up to role models which shows parents should be careful what they are saying. By not doing this, children can develop a sense that their race is superior to others. The internet and media play a role in this as well. They control what people hear and see on a daily basis. If these outlets stop displaying influential material, one race as superior, fewer people would stop believing this.

By taking action to stop white nationalism, the larger issue and causes of it will decrease over time, and innocent lives will be saved. Even though the United States history is the main cause of this group to believe whites are superior, their actions are not being stopped. The number of attacks in the United States keeps growing, and along with this comes the normalization of it. People are not surprised by news stories of these horrific acts of violence anymore. However, something does need to be done soon to slow or even stop white nationalism. One possible way this is possible is through the FBI, parents, and the education systems in this country. Acceptance is a key contributor. White nationalism is not going to stop itself.