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Jesus & George Lincoln Rockwell: Religion in the American Nazi Party (1959-1967)

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Abstract

This paper aims to show that in spite of American Nazi Party founder George Lincoln Rockwell's public statements insisting that his American Nazi Party (ANP) was entirely secular and had no religious underpinnings, the ANP ethos, public-facing elements, and recruitment materials were replete with Christian imagery, biblical imperatives and Christian nationalist themes. For some reason, historians of the ANP and Rockwell biographers alike have taken Rockwell at his word on his claimed secularism. However, when Rockwell's speeches, statements, writings and especially recruitment materials are analyzed, appeals to Christianity, the Bible, and Christian nationalism are so abundant that this impulse of Christian nationalism seems integral to his extremist movement. Using newly opened archives at Augustana College in Illinois and Yale University in New Haven Connecticut, this paper will argue that Christianity represents an overlooked cohesive element in one of the unseemliest political movements in modern American history. Ramifications for current Christian Nationalism in the USA will be discussed.

Keywords: Nazism; American Nazi Party; George Lincoln Rockwell; Christian Nationalism; extremism