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# 1. 2016

## 1.1 April

### The 7th Century Khawarij (2016-04-04 04:00)

The Khawarij came into being less than 20 years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. They were spawned from the First Islamic civil war, between the fourth caliph Ali and a man named Mu'awiyah.

At one point, Ali and Mu'awiyah agreed on a ceasefire, and each sent arbitrators to negotiate a peaceful solution. However, among these was a group who disagreed with the notion of arbitration, and saw it as a sin. They saw arbitration as the duty of Allah, not of any man, citing Qur'an 6:57:

"The judgement is Allah's alone, He relates the truth and He is the Best of deciders."

Thousands of dissenters split from the rule of the 4th Caliph and formed their own tribe, and became known as the Kharijites, or the Khawarij. At first, Ali left them alone, not wanting to force people to reform their beliefs. As time went on, it proved more difficult to leave them be, as their extreme beliefs led them to constant conflict. Extreme beliefs such as:

- Seeking the death of anyone who committed a major sin such as sex or drinking alcohol
- A strong desire for martyrdom and dying for the sake of God
- The belief that they were on the correct path, and those who disagreed were disbelievers who deserved to be killed
- Seeking the deposition of anyone who they declared an unjust ruler

### Decline and Defeat

Their decline did not start with bloodshed, but with philosophy. Caliph Ali sent a the scholar Abdullah ibn Abbas to the Khawarij camp to debate with them. The main point of his debate was about the reason for their split in the first place. He pointed out theological errors made in their interpretation of Qua'an 6:57, stating that while judgement is Allah's alone, governance is not. In order for his judgement to be spread, there must be those who spread it. A great number of defectors returned to Ali after hearing this. Most of the remaining Khawarij were defeated by Caliph Ali in the Battle of Nahrawan. Some survived, but were scattered greatly.

Modern day Islamic extremist groups, namely al-Qaeda and ISIS, are compared to the Khawarij, and it is easy to see why.

"How The Khawarij Came Into Existence." *Al-Islam.org*. Web. 03 Apr. 2016.

"Who Were the Kharijjs?" *Lost Islamic History*. 2014. Web. 03 Apr. 2016.

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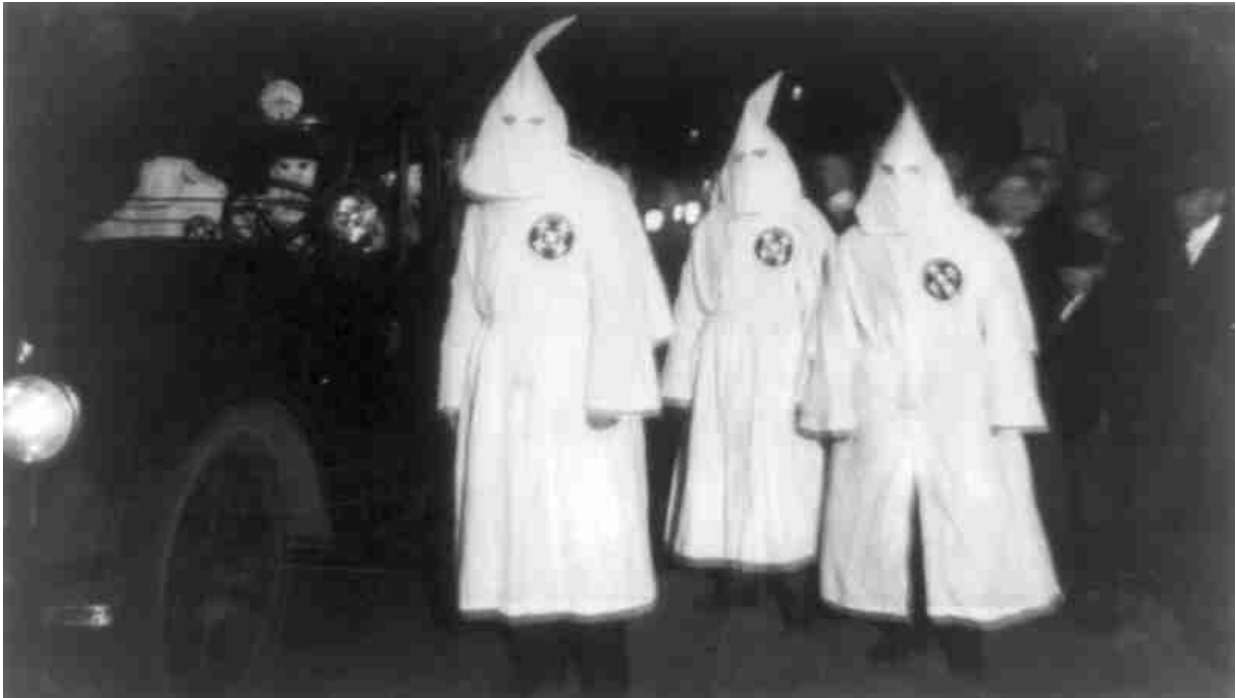
### **The Ku Klux Klan (2016-04-07 17:43)**

One of the most recognizable extremist groups, especially in the United States, is the Ku Klux Klan. Calling for the "purification" of American society, this right wing extremist group was originally founded in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1865 by former soldiers of the Confederate army. They hoped to restore white supremacy through threats of murder and kidnapping, targeting freedmen and Republicans.

However, this group is not the group that people think of when hearing "Ku Klux Klan", these words conjure images of white robes and burning crosses. This is because that first group of insurgents fizzled out, and the Ku Klux Klan did not reappear until 1915. The releasing of the movie *The Birth of a Nation*, which idealized and glorified the Ku Klux Klan, prompted its resurgence shortly afterwards.

### **The Second Klan, 1915-1944**

The second Klan, founded at Stone Mountain by William Joseph Simmons, borrowed many things from *The Birth of a Nation*, including the white robes and burning crosses.



As for what they stood for, their ideals and goals expanded from just wanting the return of white supremacy. A pamphlet titled *ABCs of the Invisible Empire*, published by Simmons in 1917, stated the Klan's goals as follows:

"to shield the sanctity of the home and the chastity of womanhood; to maintain white supremacy; to teach and faithfully inculcate a high spiritual philosophy through an exalted ritualism; and by a practical devotedness to conserve, protect and maintain the distinctive institutions, rights, privileges, principles and ideals of a pure Americanism."

The Klan grew rapidly after Simmons handed off day-to-day activities to two professional publicists. They energized it, appealing to new members based on social tensions. They preached anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant, and later anti-communist views. It was promoted as a fraternal and patriotic organization.

#### Decline

Many people and groups spoke out against the Klan, and actively worked against them; either by educating the masses on the activities of the Klan, or by penetrating their secrecy and publishing membership lists. Or even by finding out which politicians were members and voting them out of office.

The media took to very loudly denouncing the Klan, calling them "un-American" and publishing editorials attacking their practices and ideals. This was extremely effective, and helped in the decline of the KKK.

In 1920, there were an estimated 4 million people in the Ku Klux Klan, by 1924 that number increased to 6 million. In 1930, thanks to efforts from groups and individuals all over the country, there were only an estimated 30,000 members.

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## **The Islamic State (2016-04-16 23:30)**

The most relevant extremist group in relation to current events is the Islamic State, also known as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), and Daesh (acronym devolved from its Arabic name). I debated writing a post about the Islamic State because while they are undoubtedly an extremist group, they have been denounced by many public and religious leaders across the globe. They claim they act in the name of Islam, however true that may be, so I found it relevant enough.

On June 19, 2014, The Islamic State proclaimed itself to be a worldwide caliphate, claiming religious, political, and military authority over all Muslims worldwide. They gained prominence when they drove Iraqi government forces out of key cities in Western Iraq, and captured Mosul.

The Islamic State is notorious for using social media to recruit, as well as share videos of atrocities committed by its members, namely executions. Because of the unorganized movement, and guerrilla fighting tactics of IS, their strength in number is unknown, ranging from 52,600-258,000.

### **Goals**

Their goals are simple: "terrorize, mobilize, polarize". They terrorize in order to intimidate civilians and force governments to make rash decisions. They mobilize their supporters by motivating them with deadly attacks on enemy soil, such as the bombings in Paris in 2015. They polarize by driving Muslims (especially in the west) away from their governments, thus increasing the appeal of IS's caliphate; they also eliminate neutral parties, by either "absorption or elimination". It is with this strategy that they will achieve their ultimate goal: establishing themselves as a worldwide caliphate.

### **International Relations**

The Islamic State has been officially classified as a terrorist organization by both the UN and the EU, as well as 16 separate nations. IS has also been denounced by many religious leaders across the world, as not being representative of the Islamic faith, and twisting it for selfish reasons.

Many other extremist/terrorist groups have expressed support, or even pledged allegiance, to IS; including Boko Haram, an Islamic extremist group based in Nigeria since 2002.

In the middle east, the war against the Islamic State continues to be fought, with 37 nations offering military support, and another 25 offering humanitarian support.

Gude, Ken (November 2015). [1] *Anti-Muslim Sentiment Is a Serious Threat to American Security* (PDF). Center



for American Progress. p. 3 . Retrieved 16 April 2016

1. <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/25074358/ISISTrap.pdf>

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## **Haredi Judaism (2016-04-18 05:48)**

Finally, a fundamentalist group! This post will discuss Haredi, or "Ultra-orthodox" Judaism. Haredi Judaism came about the same way that many fundamentalist groups come about: sticking to tradition as opposed to changing with the times. Sweeping changes brought on by the modern era inspired the emergence of Haredi Judaism, changes such as:

- Secularization - loss of social and cultural significance of a religion over time
- Emancipation - the process of being set free from social or political restrictions
- Acculturation - the process of adopting the culture traits and social patterns of another group
- Zionism - political movement supporting the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland

While Modern Orthodox Judaism sought to rapidly embrace modernity, Haredi Judaism chose instead to remain adherent to Jewish religious law, by way of segregating itself from society.

Practices and Beliefs

Lifestyle

The Haredi lifestyle is one centered around the family. When it comes time for schooling, boys and girls are separated into different schools, and between the ages of 13 and 18, they move on to a yeshiva or seminary, respectively. It is there that they learn more about the Torah. Many men remain in the yeshiva until marriage, when they continue Torah study in a kollel.

Haredi Jews are opposed to the watching of television and film, as well as reading secular newspapers and books. However, they are allowed to use the internet for business purposes as long as there are special filters in place.

Dress

The dress code is different depending on what sect of Haredi Judaism you look at. The Lithuanian stream from

Eastern Europe details the standard dress as black suits with a white shirt for men, as well as a black fedora or Homburg hat and a beard; women wear long skirts and sleeves and a hair covering if they are married.

Non-Lithuanian stream Jews have a much more specific dress code, including a full length suit jacket on weekdays, and a fur hat and silk caftan on the Sabbath.

## Neighborhoods

Haredi Jews live in closed neighborhoods, hoping to protect themselves from outside influence. In Israel, some of these neighborhoods have "modesty patrols", and people dressed in ways thought to be immodest could suffer harassment. Members of these neighborhoods also fight to keep out any immodest advertising, through campaigning and public lobbying. In honor of the Sabbath, most state-run buses in Israel do not run on Saturdays.

## Haredi Jews in Israel

Israel has the largest Haredi population, at 750,000 out of the 7.5 million Israeli citizens.

The Haredi Jews have an interesting relationship with the military in Israel. Thanks to the Torato Omanuto agreement, yeshiva students are officially granted deferred entry into the IDF, and in practice allow them to sometimes completely bypass military service. At the time of the agreement, only about 400 males were affected. Now however, the Haredim are estimated to make up about 10 % of Israel's population, causing some tension between the Haredi community and the secular majority. However, in recent years there have been a few Haredi Jews enlisting into the IDF willfully.

Wertheimer, Jack. [1]"What You Don't Know About the Ultra-Orthodox." *Commentary Magazine*. 1 July 2015. 18 April 2016.

Gordon-Bennett, Chaviva. "Who Are the Haredim." *About Religion*. About.com, 16 June 2015. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

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1. <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/what-you-dont-know-about-the-ultra-orthodox/>



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<https://www.blogbooker.com>

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