

# Mystical, neo-Nazi, and explicitly malevolent: the Order of Nine Angles

By Shanon Shah, 26 June 2020

A US soldier has been accused of plotting an attack on his own unit by giving information to a right-wing satanist organisation called the Order of Nine Angles (ONA or O9A).

Last week, federal prosecutors in the United States described the ONA as “an occult-based neo-Nazi and racially motivated violent extremist group”.

Private Ethan Melzer, 22, from Louisville, Kentucky, has been charged with conspiring and attempting to murder US nationals; conspiring and attempting to murder military service members; providing and attempting to provide material support to terrorists; and conspiring to murder and maim in a foreign country.

Audrey Strauss, the acting US attorney in Manhattan, said Melzer had tried “to orchestrate a murderous ambush on his own unit by unlawfully revealing its location, strength and armaments to a neo-Nazi, anarchist, white supremacist group”. Melzer was described as “the enemy within”.

## BACKGROUND

- The Order of Nine Angles (ONA or O9A) is a secret religious movement that originated in Britain in the 1970s.
- It combines elements of occultism, satanism and [mysticism](#) in its beliefs and practices.
- In the late 1990s, it became associated with neo-Nazi violence and then, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, with militant Islamism.
- The ONA’s unusual blend of satanism, mysticism and purported neo-Nazi sympathies has attracted growing academic and political interest, including the anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigning group HOPE not hate’s campaign in early 2020 for the UK government to proscribe it.

## TIMELINE

- In the 1970s, Anton Long — a pseudonym — formed the Order of Nine Angles by merging Camlad, an underground tradition, with the Noctulians and Long’s own Temple of the Sun.
- Little is known about these three movements — they were probably influenced by the 19th-century western occult revival and incorporated some satanic aspects.
- The first phase of the ONA’s development involved the publication of its foundational texts in the 1970s which were intended to appeal to a broad range of followers.
- During the second phase, from the 1990s and the early 2000s, the ONA was less visibly active, focusing less on recruitment and more on refining its teachings.
- A connection between the ONA and neo-Nazism came to prominence after the 1999 London nail bombings in Brixton Market, Brick Lane, and the Admiral Duncan pub in Soho, which targeted the city’s black, Bengali and LGBT populations, killing three and

injuring up to 140. The bomber, David Copeland, was a neo-Nazi militant who was allegedly inspired by the *Practical Guide to Aryan Revolution*, a 1997 pamphlet written by [David Myatt](#), founder of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement.

- In 1998, the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight* claimed that David Myatt was, in fact, Anton Long. That year, detectives raided Myatt's Worcestershire home and he was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to murder and incitement to racial hatred but the charges were dropped. Myatt then pursued the study of Islam and is believed to have converted to a militant interpretation of the religion soon after this.
- The third, current phase then followed, in which the ONA started to establish a more active presence on social media, promoting itself on YouTube, Facebook and on other online discussion forums.
- The bulk of the ONA's philosophy was developed by Long in his writings between 1984 and 2011, when he officially retired as "extant magus". Long's identity remains a mystery, but from his writings we know that he was born a British citizen who, as a youth, travelled to Africa, Asia and the Middle East. It appears that he later studied classical languages as well as the occult and the paranormal.
- The ONA's publications are easily available on the internet and have been adopted and appropriated freely by offshoots around the world, including the Tempel ov Blood in the US and the Temple of THEM in Australia.

## BELIEFS

- The ONA's blending of satanism, neo-Nazism and elements of western esotericism is unique, but the selective combining of seemingly contradictory elements is not unprecedented in modern satanism.
- The ONA identifies as part of the Left-Hand Path, conventionally associated with "evil" or "black" magic, as opposed to the Right-Hand Path, which is seen as "good" and practises "white" magic.
- The Left-Hand Path also contains a variety of satanisms – for example, the Church of Satan's beliefs are atheistic or "rational" in that they take Satan to be purely symbolic and practise magic as a form of psychodrama, while the ONA is theistic, believing in the actual existence of Satan and the "dark gods" and for whom magic directly influences human history.
- The "Nine Angles" in the order's name could refer to seven celestial bodies (as seven "angles") — the Moon, Venus, Mercury, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn — plus the entire system as a whole (the eighth "angle") and the mystic as the ninth angle. The nine angles could also refer to seven "normal" alchemical stages, in addition to two processes that involve esoteric time, or it could refer to the nine emanations of the divine as recorded in ancient Sufi texts.
- According to the ONA, civilisations emerge, advance and decay in aeons, or historical periods lasting 1,500 to 1,700 years. Civilisations achieve greatness because of a successful opening of a nexion (channel) enabling the causal realm (this world, where

the laws of physics and cause and effect apply) to be influenced by supernatural forces from the acausal realm.

- For the ONA, the current aeon should rightfully see the ascendancy of western, European civilisation, but this has been disrupted by Judeo-Christian influences.
- To remedy this disruption, the ONA advocates the practice of magic as well as direct political action. For example, the ONA encourages “culling” to remove human “dross” or “scum”: this amounts to human sacrifice, achieved either through magic or direct murder. According to the ONA’s interpretation, direct killings or assassinations were a reality within historical “satanism” but “are no longer undertaken” and are described in their manuals “for historical interest” only.
- The ONA also teaches that individuals can become channels of the acausal realm through *pathei mathos* (the Greek for learning through adversity, or suffering). *Pathei mathos* is part of the ONA’s philosophy of initiation, which includes the adoption of “insight roles”, in which adepts (skilled apprentices) are pushed out of their comfort zones for an extended period, perhaps by joining violent criminal or underground organisations, including neo-Nazi or militant Islamist groups or, as recommended in some ONA writings, by adopting Buddhist monasticism.
- While the ONA has repeatedly made favourable references to “national socialism” in its manuscripts, there is no conclusive evidence of its systematic influence in neo-Nazi circles. Neither is there evidence that it is significantly recruiting members from neo-Nazi ranks.

## IN THE NEWS

- The ONA has, however, been associated with individuals who have committed, or planned, neo-Nazi violence. While the ONA might not be directly responsible for the recruitment and radicalisation of these individuals, its symbols and publications remain potent sources of inspiration for these new groups. Often ONA symbols are associated with a consumption of a wider range of materials, including popular culture references and other neo-Nazi literature.
- In March 2020, ONA attracted attention because UK-based HOPE not hate (HnH) published a report describing ONA as an “incubator of terrorism” and called for it to be proscribed. HnH also raised concerns that the ONA was spreading its influence on alternative social media channels such as the messaging app Telegram.
- Interest in the ONA has grown in the wake of terrorism-related prosecutions of teenagers in the UK who have purportedly been influenced by the group, most notoriously the Sonnenkrieg Division’s Michael Szewczuk, 19, and Oskar Dunn-Koczorowski, 18. After their sentencing in June 2019 for terror offences, HnH mapped the connection between the two teenagers and the ONA.
- In January 2020, a Durham teenager was jailed for six years and eight months for planning terror attacks. The prosecution stated that he had been influenced by the ONA, which it described as a “self-consciously, explicitly malevolent” satanic organisation. The boy had contributed to the Fascist Forge online platform.

## EXPERT COMMENTATORS

Dr [Jacob Senholt](#), independent Danish religious studies scholar

[Connell R Monette](#), associate professor of Islamic and Religious Studies, al-Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco

Dr [Massimo Introvigne](#), founder and director of the Center for Studies on New Religions (Cesnur)

[Absjörn Dyrendal](#), professor of religious studies, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

[James R Lewis](#), professor of religious studies, the Arctic University of Norway

[Jesper AA Petersen](#), associate professor at the programme for teacher education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology