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Games Elevate Hate to Next Level

Julia Scheeres 02.20.02

Hate groups are increasingly using racist and anti-Semitic computer games to recruit young people, the Anti-Defamation League charged in a report released Tuesday.

Ethnic Cleansing, Shoot the Blacks and Concentration Camp Rat Hunt were some of the titles studied by the group. The objective of these first-person shooters are predictably similar -- to kill as many non-whites, Jews and everyone else they hate as possible.

The proliferation of so-called "white power games," which can be bought or downloaded online, is part of a larger strategy by extremists to recruit younger members, said Abraham Foxman, the national director of the ADL.

"These games use modern technology to seduce young people who are attracted and addicted to games, into bigotry, prejudice and anti-Semitism," Foxman said. "They piggyback on the popularity of games and are a perversion of a well-meaning entertainment vehicle."

The most sophisticated of these new games is Ethnic Cleansing, which was produced by National Alliance and sold on a CD-ROM for \$14.88 a pop. It is promoted by the group as the "most politically incorrect video game ever made."

The game -- which is based on the Genesis 3D open-source software -- takes place in an urban setting where the protagonist kills Blacks and Latinos on city streets before descending into a subway to slay Jews, and ultimately Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. When a dark-skinned player is killed, a monkey sound is played; Jewish characters shout "oy vey" when they are shot.

Racist rock music, with hate-filled lyrics, blares on the soundtrack and National Alliance posters with the group's URL are plastered on the virtual walls. The game was released on Jan. 21, Martin Luther King Day.

"This is the first game I've seen using such sophisticated technology that's geared specifically toward spreading a message of hate," said ADL Internet researcher Brian Marcus.

National Alliance chairman William Pierce said that computer games are just another advertising vehicle for his group, which started out publishing racist tabloids in Washington, D.C. in 1974.

"From the very beginning we have been a multimedia organization, interested in using communication, using every medium that we can to reach the public effectively," said Pierce, who is featured in a video clip in the game talking about the "upcoming white revolution."

National Alliance has several components, including Resistance Records, a recording label for "white power" bands, the racist *Resistance* magazine and Resistance Radio, which streams racist rock and philosophy over the Internet.

Pierce said a "couple thousand" copies of the game have been sold since its debut last month and that 90 percent of the buyers were white teenage boys.

"The younger the better," said Matt Hale, the head of the white supremacist World Church of the Creator, which features several free racist games on its website. "We mean to utilize whatever means we can to achieve our goals and bring new faces to our church."

One of the games offered on Hale's site is a modified version of Escape from Castle Wolfenstein, where players shoot black characters: the words "Dead N-----" appear over the corpses. The site also offers Doom patches of SS uniforms, exploding watermelons and black characters wearing gang-style apparel.

Hale, who refers to non-whites as "mud people," said the games are good propaganda because they help his group appear more mainstream.

"We want people to recognize we're average people," Hale said. "If we can influence video games and entertainment, it will make people understand we are their friends and neighbors.... As long as it doesn't denigrate white people or have pornography in it, it's OK with us."

Renowned neo-Nazi Gerhard Lauck offers five free games on his site, including SA Mann, a spin-off of PacMan, and "concentration camp rat hunt" where the player shoots Jewish "rats" inside the Auschwitz death camp.

Lauck said the games were downloaded over 12,000 times in January.

"Basically they're free advertising for us," Lauck said. "Young people get these games because they're entertaining and they're not supposed to have them. They get them and spread them all over the place."

