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'The Transnational Far Right'

The transnational far right is currently flourishing. The unexpected election of the racist, nationalist and isolationist Donald Trump as president of the United States has galvanised far right groups across the world. In Europe, the rise of Trump combined with an increase in Jihadi Islamist terrorism and an influx of refugees escaping Middle Eastern war has led to a resurgence of far right activity. Politically, the far right has become mainstream in many countries, for example France, Germany and Austria, and far right themes (racism, xenophobia, anti-liberalism, nationalism and social conservatism, amongst others) are gaining traction with the European electorates at an alarming rate. Beyond the confines of the nation-state, moreover far right movements are also scoring victories and mobilising activists, as this report will emphasise.

In considering the 'transnational' far right in Europe, this report examines the contemporary movements across several spheres. Firstly, the intriguing relationships between European far right political parties and Vladimir Putin's Russia are analysed. Secondly, the emergence of the influential and now international (and emphatically pro-Trump) alt-right will be explored alongside an overview of recent European far right conferences and rallies attracting speakers and attendees from the continent and beyond. Thirdly, a case study of the hatred directed at the wealthy Jewish Hungarian-American business tycoon George Soros will be developed in order to consider the increasingly linked-up messaging of the transnational far right. Among other charges - such as the slur that, as a boy, he collaborated with the Nazis in Hungary - Soros is accused of acting as a kind of puppet master, undertaking plots to overthrow national governments and to 'flood' Europe with migrants. For these reasons, he has been met with particular scorn by Hungary's 'illiberal democratic' leader, the Fidesz Party's Viktor Orbán. Under Orbán, Hungary has become a magnet for adherents to the far right. Fourth and finally, a more cultural dimension of far right activism will also be investigated here: from the fascist Identitarian movement and their 'Defend Europe' antics to the current state of the European neo-Nazi scene.

Over recent years, the European far right and Russia have developed close relationships based on both ideology and strategy. Ties between the two have burgeoned since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Opinion leaders such as Alexandr Dugin and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, both hard line Russian nationalists and recent allies of Putin, have forged links with the fascist European Nouvelle Droite (New Right) movement, for decades headed by the 'metapolitical' philosopher Alain de Benoist. Since the global financial crisis, which began in the US in 2007, but especially as a result of the refugee crisis and the rise of Jihadi Islamist terrorism, far right parties have gained significant ground in many European countries. For

example, building on its 2012 success, the French Front National (FN) achieved its best ever presidential electoral performance in 2017, making it into the second round of voting only to be beaten by Emmanuel Macron of En Marche. (A previous run-off election in 2002 saw Marine Le Pen's father, Jean-Marie, receive a derisory 16% of the vote against Jacques Chirac; that is, roughly half the Front National's percentage in 2017.)

In 2014, the party finished first in the European Parliamentary election (winning 24 of France's 74 seats). The FN's success marked the first time an anti-immigrant and anti-EU party had won a national election in its four-decade history. Similarly, in Germany, the populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) has just celebrated its historic third place success in the national election (94 seats), marking the first time that a far right party has entered the Bundestag for half a century. In some parts of eastern Germany the party beat the Social Democrats into second place with more than 20% of the vote share. More startlingly still, late last year, the Austrian Freedom Party's (FPÖ) leader Heinz-Christian Strache was defeated by some 350,000 votes in a re-run presidential election. Other electorally successful or influential European far right parties include Jobbik (Hungary), Sweden Democrats, the Danish People's Party, the Swiss People's Party, and Lega Nord (LN). As will be detailed below, most of these groups have worked together across national lines, as in the short-lived 'Identity, Sovereignty, Tradition' group in the European Parliament.

Interestingly, despite the many differences between them, the afore-mentioned parties (and others) have a strong affinity towards an increasingly anti-Western Russia. From them, Russia is typically seen as a bulwark against Western decadence powered by Anglo-American globalism, liberalism and multiculturalism. By contrast, Putin is admired as a defender of Europe's spiritual and cultural (and in some cases religious) heritage and an upholder of socially conservative values. Marine Le Pen, for example, has lauded the Russian leader as a guardian of 'the Christian heritage of European civilization', while her party's 2014 programme, *Our Project*, advocated 'restarting the Franco-Russian cooperation'. The Hungarian leader of Jobbik, Gábor Vona, similarly referred to the US as a 'deformed offspring of Europe' and insisted that the continent 'rearrange [their] relationship with other traditional cultures that only exist in the East now'. He proclaimed that 'Euro-Atlantism must be replaced by Eurasianism' - the latter a phrase associated with Dugin.¹ Jobbik's 2010 election manifesto, *Radical Change*, called for a 'partner relationship with Russia, which should bring our homeland positive economic and national-political benefits' (p.20). The more overtly neo-fascist Golden Dawn likewise declares itself 'a natural ally of Russia [against] American expansionist policies'.² According to Paul Jackson, post-Soviet Russia has become 'a beacon of hope' for Europe's far right.³

¹ In other words, an alliance with the east instead United States.

² 'Gábor Vona: Euro-Atlanticism must be replaced by Eurasianism (10 May 2013)', *Jobbik*, online at: www.jobbik.com/g%C3%A1bor_vona_euro-atlanticism_must_be_replaced_eurasianism, accessed 25 September 2017; and 'Gábor Vona had a lecture at Lomonosov University in Russia (24 May 2013)', *Jobbik*, online at: www.jobbik.com/g%C3%A1bor_vona_had_lecture_lomonosov_university_russia, accessed 25 September 2017. See also, Cas Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe* (Abingdon, 2016), p.26; A. Polyakova, 'Strange Bedfellows: Putin and Europe's Far Right', *World Affairs Journal* (September/October 2014).

³ Paul Jackson, 'Moscow's Mates', *Searchlight Magazine* (Summer 2017), p.29.

Without doubt, the relationship between the European far right and Russia is mutually beneficial. Far right actors promote Russian perspectives through the institutions of the European Union, which is contested by them both.⁴ These groups support Russian foreign policies, most notably its invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea. European far right parties often vote against policies perceived to be hostile to the Kremlin, such as the implementation of sanctions by the EU. In a bid to portray herself as a stateswoman capable of leading France on the international stage – and with the likely intention to extract funds – Marine Le Pen visited the Kremlin in March this year to meet Putin. While in Moscow, she endorsed Putin’s annexation of Crimea; voiced her opposition to EU sanctions on Russia; and, while speaking with the Russian leader, stressed her desire to renew their cultural, economic and strategic relationships.⁵

Only the previous month, the ex-AfD leader,⁶ Frauke Petry, travelled to Moscow to hold talks with Russian MPs said to be close to the Russian President. Putin acknowledged this support by duly describing his backers as ‘promising leaders in the EU’.⁷ Furthermore, the Russian state gives far right figures specific roles as ‘independent’ election observers. This is a fruitful arrangement for both Russian and far right parties to its west, as it helps to legitimise Russia’s pseudo-democratic practices (both at home and abroad) while allowing the far right greater international visibility and potential influence. Several far right leaders, such as the Dutch PVV’s Geert Wilders, Bulgarian Attack’s Volen Siderov and Jobbik’s Gabriel Vona, are frequent guests on the state-run television network, Russia Today (RT) and, the Russian-controlled news agency, Sputnik.⁸ A specialist on the European radical right and, in particular, its alleged connections to Russia, Anton Shekhovtsov, argues that: ‘For the Russian audience, Western far-right commentators successfully play an allotted role of white European “experts” on the alleged normalcy of the Kremlin’s policies at home and in international relations.’ He further explains that they ‘help to create a comfortable feeling that Russia is not a “lonely state” and that it has allies in Europe and the West in general.’⁹

With the intention of advancing Russian interests and influence in Europe (and beyond), Putin continues to deepen ties with European far right movements. Over recent years, Russia has financed the FN (and has allegedly funded others). Since 2014, Russian banks and individuals with links to the Kremlin either loaned or donated the FN over ten million euros towards Marine Le Pen’s unsuccessful presidential campaign.¹⁰ Russian state intelligence has

⁴ The EU, together with NATO, is despised by Russia because it has welcomed countries once dominated by Russia, such as the Baltic and Poland. To Putin, this serves as an obstacle to the reassertion of Russian hegemony. In turn, the European far right often argues that EU integration weakens the nation state.

⁵ ‘Marine Le Pen Promises Putin to Recognize Crimea as a Part of Russia’, *YouTube*, online at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sre-YbT5vCY, accessed 25 September 2017.

⁶ Petry, rather bizarrely, quit the party only hours after their historic electoral success, securing more than 13% of Germany’s national vote in September 2017.

⁷ ‘Russia’s Far Right and Far Left in Europe’, *Wilson Centre*, online at: www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Russia's%20Far%20Right%20and%20Far%20Left%20Friends_summary_formatte d.pdf, accessed 30 September 2017.

⁸ See Antonis Klapsis, ‘An Unholy Alliance’, Wilfred Martens Centre for European Studies (Brussels, 2015), online at: www.martenscentre.eu/sites/default/files/publication-files/far-right-political-parties-in-europe-and-putins-russia.pdf, accessed 30 September 2017.

⁹ See the conclusion into Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir* (Routledge: London, 2017).

¹⁰ ‘Putin’s Friends in Europe’, *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 19 October 2016, online at: www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_putins_friends_in_europe7153, accessed 25 September 2017.

also been accused of hacking, her rival, Macron's email server and En Marche's website. The hacking groups known as Pawn Storm, Fancy Bear, Cozy Bear or APT 28 are thought to have carried out some 160 registered attacks on the now-French president. Staff working on Macron's campaign were sent 'phishing emails', which encouraged users to click on links to fake websites where their login credentials would be captured thus allowing hackers to access staffers' accounts.¹¹ This same technique is believed to have been used to attack Hillary Clinton's US Presidential Campaign last year. Within the last year, both Italy's Lega Nord and Austria's Freedom Party have signed official 'cooperation agreements' with Putin's United Russia party. Under the guise of fighting global terrorism, these agreements are likely to result in the strengthening of ties in the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) while also promoting business links.¹² Financial packages similar to those obtained by Le Pen are also a possibility. In addition, far right youth wings are continuing to build relationships with Putin's United Russia party. The far right publication National Vanguard, for example, reports that the AfD's youth wing has formally linked up with the youth wing of Putin's party.¹³ Accordingly, a very clear pattern exists whereby the Russian government supports far right European parties and candidates.

Although not political parties seeking election other more ideologically driven far right groups are also transcending national boundaries. The well-known American alt-right movement, which gained notoriety for their support of Donald Trump's presidential campaign – and which continues their close relationship with him since his taking presidential office – now operates globally. The website www.altright.com, founded in January 2017, 'brings together the best writers and analysts from the Alt-Right, in North America, Europe, and around the world.'¹⁴ This new international organisation, revealingly, was announced at a far right conference in Stockholm, Sweden. The event, titled Identitarian Ideas IX, was organised by the prominent alt-right publisher Daniel Friberg.¹⁵ It attracted over 300 people from across the world (including UK, Sweden, Estonia, Germany, Poland, Finland and the Netherlands).¹⁶

The neo-fascist alt-right claims that the white race has abrogated its superior culture and identity, therefore leaving white people 'rootless' and 'wonderers':

We are often told that being an American, a Briton or a German or any European nationality is about being dedicated to a collection of abstractions and buzzwords: democracy, freedom, tolerance, multiculturalism. But a nation based on freedom is just another place to go shopping. It's a country for everyone and thus a country for no one. It's a country where we

¹¹ 'Le Pen at the polls', *Searchlight Magazine* (Summer 2017), pp.14-15.

¹² 'Putin's party signs deal with Italy's far-right Lega Nord (6 March 2017)', *Financial Times*, online at: www.ft.com/content/0d33d22c-0280-11e7-ace0-1ce02ef0def9, accessed 26 September 2017.

¹³ 'AfD-Putin Youth Linkup', *National Vanguard*, online at: www.nationalvanguard.org/2016/04/afd-putin-youth-linkup/, accessed 25 September 2017.

¹⁴ 'About Altright.com', *Altright.com*, online at: www.altright.com/about-altright-com/, accessed 27 September 2017.

¹⁵ Friberg is the founder and European editor of Altright.com, CEO of the far right British company Arktos and vice-chair of the Swedish Nordic Alternative Right.

¹⁶ 'New international alt-right movement formed', *Hope Not Hate* [UK based magazine] (Mar-Apr 2017), pp.44-45.

ourselves have become strangers... For what our ancestors took for granted, we must discover, we must renew. Are we ready to become who we are?¹⁷

Besides being anti-democratic, anti-immigrant and anti-multicultural, the alt-right is anti-LGBT, anti-equality (including between the sexes) and anti-non-white including particular hostility towards Jews and Muslims.¹⁸ One of their solutions to alleged western 'decadence' is to eugenically increase the 'native' white birth rates. The regular writer for www.altright.com, Vincent Law, proposes five 'realistic steps short of racial holy war to improve the situation'. These are to include no longer taxing white people; encouraging a mass exodus of cities because they supposedly lower birth rates; banning all female contraceptives; removing no-fault divorces as they 'incentivize bad behaviour...[and] it gives men pause'; and finally, starting a new all-white economy protected with tariffs and trade barriers.¹⁹ The alt-right's white nationalist ideology owes much to European New Right movements that emerged from the post-1968 French ND, despite rejecting the latter's metapolitical orientation. Perhaps above all, the alt-right shares many principles and strategies with the recent Identitarian transnational movement (see below) in Europe.²⁰

Events such as conferences and rallies are a regular feature of today's international far right. In July 2017, to take but one prominent example, the Scandza Forum organised an event in Oslo called 'Globalism vs. The Ethnostate'. This new venture, led by the Icelandic militant and former member of the National Socialist Front Frodi Midjord, hosted a number of lectures from influential far right figures hailing from across Europe and the US. These included the white supremacist and anti-Semitic Scottish blogger Colin Robertson who runs a video channel entitled Millennial Woes, boasting some 20,000 viewers. He has posted around 600 videos on YouTube, which have received 2.1 million views. Other speakers included the American white nationalist ideologues Greg Johnson and Mike Enoch, the former's website, *Counter Currents*, registered 187,296 unique visitors in March 2017. Other speakers included a PhD. candidate from Norway and an alt-right podcaster from Sweden.²¹ Videos of the lectures have been uploaded on the white nationalist internet station Red Ice (based in Sweden).²² Furthermore, the Scandza Forum is hosting another event in October 2017 in Bergen Norway.²³

To the west, Britain has a racial nationalist group called The Forum Network, which is organised by radical right activists and fanatics Jeremy Bedford Turner, Stead Steadman and Mick Brooks. Like the Scandza Forum, the Network invites influential far right ideologues to speak at their conferences. Arguably the most notable international figure to speak was the

¹⁷ 'About', *Altright.com* [see video].

¹⁸ On *Altright.com*, see articles under the headings 'News', 'Perspective', 'Media' and 'Culture'.

¹⁹ '5 Ways To Increase Native White Birth Rates', *Altright.com*.

²⁰ 'The "alt-right"', *Hope Not Hate* (2017 – special report), pp.42-43.

²¹ The event has a Facebook page, see: www.facebook.com/events/202982143552419/permalink/246527335864566/; 'Greg Johnson & Mike Enoch to Speak in Oslo, July 1', *Counter-Currents*, online at: www.counter-currents.com/2017/06/greg-johnson-mike-enoch-to-speak-in-oslo-july-1/, accessed 28 September 2017; 'Investigation: Northern White', *Searchlight Magazine* (Summer 2017), pp.16-17.

²² 'Scandza Forum', *Red Ice*, online at: www.redice.tv/red-ice-tv/tags/tag/scandza-forum/, accessed 28 September 2017; 'Red Ice TV', *YouTube*, online at: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpAn3IQAM1ougpgP9Ys1fMRDwpf2f-hUI, accessed 28 September 2017.

²³ See: www.facebook.com/ScandzaForum/posts/1693760284266140.

chairman of the US-based white nationalist Traditionalist Worker Party, Matthew Heimbach, a devotee of the interwar fascist, Corneliu Codreanu.²⁴ In the event, the British government refused Heimbach entry on account of his ‘neo-Nazi’ remarks.²⁵

A similar gathering took place in February 2017, at the French Forum de la Nation. This can draw crowds of up to 500 ‘antisemites and Holocaust-deniers [who took] their turn on stage [to] denounce “Jewish” conspiracies against the White race’.²⁶ These anti-Semites included French journalists Jérôme Bourbon and Hervé Ryssen (the former is editor of a far right weekly magazine, and the latter an author of hate-filled books on Jews). Also participating was one of the UK’s most offensive anti-Semitic bloggers, Alison Chabloz.²⁷ Additional overseas guests included leading figures from the Spanish Democracia Nacional and La Phalange; Romanian Iron Guardist Fondation Ogoranu; and the Swiss Résistance Helvétique.²⁸

As this suggests, anti-Semitism remains widespread across the far right scene. Holocaust deniers, such as David Irving, Michele Renouf, Vincent Reynouard, Horst Mahler and Nicholas Kollerstrom have no shortage of avenues to disseminate their messages – increasingly online, but not only there. Conferences such as the London Forum are one such physical platform.²⁹ Irving now makes a living from escorting ‘international guests’ on a ‘Real History tour’ of World War Two sites in Poland and Latvia.³⁰ He also maintains a ‘Fan Page’ on Facebook with nearly 8,000 followers.³¹ Several international publishing houses continue to promote and sell a variety of Holocaust denial literature over the web; often via outlets in the US, due to the latter’s nearly-unrestricted free speech laws.

As noted above, the far right have recently come together to rally against the successful financial investor, George Soros. A wealthy Jewish business magnate, Soros is a prominent international funder of democratic and liberal ideas via his Open Society Foundation, supporting democratisation and human rights in over 100 countries.³² Encouraged by Trump’s victory in the US,³³ the ‘near right’,³⁴ Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has

²⁴ See: www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/romanian-fascism-inspires-us-white-nationalists-08-15-2017).

²⁵ ‘Theresa May bans US segregationist from UK for ‘neo-Nazi’ remarks (4 November 2015)’, *The Guardian*, online at: www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/04/theresa-may-bans-us-segregationist-from-uk-for-neo-nazi-remarks, accessed 28 September 2017.

²⁶ ‘Fascist meeting in Lyon draws speakers from across Europe’, *Hope Not Hate* (Mar-Apr 2017), p.42.

²⁷ See, ‘Blogger, 52, “who posted a grossly offensive and anti-Semitic song on YouTube” denies hate crime charge brought by a Jewish charity in a private prosecution’, *Mail Online*, online at: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4036710/Blogger-52-posted-grossly-offensive-anti-Semitic-song-YouTube-denies-hate-crime-charge-brought-Jewish-charity-private-prosecution.html, accessed 28 September 2017.

²⁸ ‘Fascist meeting in Lyon draws speakers from across Europe’.

²⁹ ‘Undercover at a secret ‘neo-Nazi’ meeting with Holocaust denier David Irving (7 May 2017)’, *Independent*, online at: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/david-irving-holocaust-denial-neo-nazi-alt-right-london-forum-meeting-auschwitz-hitler-revisionist-a7719291.html, accessed 28 September 2017.

³⁰ For example, see ‘September 2017 - The Real History Tour of the Wolf’s Lair’, *Focal Point Publications* (Irving’s own company), online at: www.irvingbooks.com/xcart/product.php?productid=17559, accessed 28 September 2017.

³¹ See, www.facebook.com/David-Irving-Official-Fan-Page-343659606556/.

³² ‘Home’, *George Soros*, online at: www.georgesoros.com/, accessed 28 September 2017.

³³ Orbán called it the end of ‘liberal non-democracy’ and said that the West was now able to ‘break free from the confines of an ideology’, see ‘Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán celebrates Donald Trump victory as end of liberal non-democracy (November 2016)’, *Independent*, online at: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/donald-trump-us-election-win-hungarian-prime-minister-viktor-orban-end-liberal-non-democracy-a7413236.html, accessed 28 September 2017.

³⁴ For a discussion on the ‘alt-right, far-right, near-right’ with Matthew Feldman, see: <https://vodmanager.coe.int/coe/webcast/coe/2017-04-28-2/lang>, accessed 01 October 2017.

singled out Soros as a ‘large-bodied predator...swimming in Hungarian waters.’ In his annual state address for 2017, Orbán asserted, in a thinly veiled anti-Semitic attack: ‘It is George Soros’s empire; with a lot of money [and] international heavy artillery’ that is letting in ‘the hundreds of thousands of migrants in Europe.’ He then stated that Soros and his activists are ‘working against the Hungarian Government’.³⁵ Szilárd Németh, vice president of Orbán’s ruling Fidesz party, insisted that the government would ‘use all the tools at its disposal’ to ‘sweep out’ Soros-funded NGOs. Németh also continued: ‘I think they should get out of here [and] I feel that there is an opportunity for this, internationally’.³⁶ In April 2017, the Hungarian Parliament passed an amendment to its education bill with the intention of closing the university Soros founded and financed, the world-renowned Central European University.³⁷

Today, Soros is ‘Public Enemy Number One’ among the far right.³⁸ American right wing populist media outlets such as InfoWars and Breitbart, along with the latter’s UK branch, Breitbart London, have regularly and aggressively attacked Soros. The founder of InfoWars, Alex Jones, recently proclaimed that Soros ‘is behind the Muslim takeover of the West’.³⁹ The British anti-Muslim activist, Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) similarly tweeted that ‘George Soros is the new Hitler and he declared a genocidal war against us’; he later added, ‘George Soros has declared war on the world’.⁴⁰ Yaxley-Lennon’s fellow countryman, the far right blogger, Paul Joseph Watson, tweeted Donald Trump that ‘George Soros is a financier of domestic terrorism. Arrest him, confiscate his wealth.’⁴¹ A provocative ‘Stop Operation Soros’ conference was held in Budapest in March 2017 by the Hungarian Identitesz movement – an offshoot of the Identitarian groups that are currently springing up across Europe – and attracted far right speakers from across Europe. The British neo-fascist Nick Griffin opened up proceedings by declaring: ‘What liberals would like to describe as a conspiracy theory, is actually backed up fact[s]. Let me take you through some key facts about George Soros’. Amongst other allegations, Griffin claimed that Soros was using his considerable wealth to undertake a ‘huge Jewish plot’ to ‘replace us in our own homelands’, labelling the philanthropist a ‘dirty old man’. In his speech, Identitesz chairman and founder, Balázs László, declared that Soros was a danger to ‘our civilization’ – by which he presumably meant white Europeans. Vice president of the convicted Italian terrorist Roberto Fiore’s Italian fascist group Forza Nuova, Angelo Baletta, attacked Soros for funding both

³⁵ See imbedded video on ‘Juncker and Soros hold Brussels meeting to plot legal action against Hungarian government (21 April 2017)’, *Express*, online at: www.express.co.uk/news/politics/794729/Jean-Claude-Juncker-EU-chief-meet-George-Soros-discuss-Hungary-legal-action, accessed 28 September 2017.

³⁶ ‘Hungary Plans to Crack Down on All Soros-Funded NGOs’, *Bloomberg*, online at: www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-01-10/trump-s-win-prompts-hungarian-call-for-crackdown-on-soros-groups, accessed 29 September 2017.

³⁷ ‘Hungary passes bill targeting Central European University (4 April 2017)’, *BBC News*, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-39493758, accessed 28 September 2017.

³⁸ See, ‘George Soros Public Enemy Number One’, *InfoWars*, online at: www.infowars.com/george-soros-public-enemy-number-one/; ‘“The George Soros File” Public Enemy Number One! His plan to destroy Western civilization.’, *YouTube*, online at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rxz4tBh_qbk, both accessed 29 September 2017.

³⁹ See, Jones interview at: www.facebook.com/anpworldnews/videos/1717415881888579/; ‘Soros Behind Muslim Takeover Of The West’, *YouTube*, online at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3ZukzWJ4wo, both accessed 29 September 2017.

⁴⁰ ‘Tommy Robinson (30 April and 20 August 2017)’, *Twitter*, online at: www.twitter.com/TRobinsonNewEra?lang=en-gb, accessed 29 September 2017.

⁴¹ ‘Paul Joseph Watson (2 February 2017)’, *Twitter*, online at: www.twitter.com/PrisonPlanet?lang=en, accessed 29 September 2017.

the gay lobby and the ‘refugees welcome’ organisations, as well as for promoting abortion through pro-choice groups. Ljupcho Zlatev, of the Macedonian chapter for ‘Stop Operation Soros’, alleged that Soros also undermines the Macedonian government and national identity.⁴²

Under Orbán, Hungary has become a second home for far right leaders and activists from across Europe and beyond. British fascists Griffin and Jim Dowson have relocated to Budapest to continue the ‘fight’ from there after declaring that, unlike elsewhere in the West, the Hungarian government ‘doesn’t want to commit national suicide’.⁴³ Griffin lauded Orbán’s party for allowing Hungary to become a ‘nationalist émigré community’, one where soon ‘Marxists will have to flee ... Their politics and their place on the spectrum have been superseded by single interest groups. They have been forced to abandon class politics for “binary” issues’.⁴⁴ The Swedes Tor Westman, the marketing head of the neo-fascist Arktos Books, and its owner Daniel Frieberg also currently reside in Budapest. So does the French white supremacist Willem Nassau; the American white nationalists Paul Ramsey and Matthew Forney; and the German anti-immigrant activist Mario Ronsch.⁴⁵ Yet Griffin and Dowson’s time in Hungary appears to have been short-lived as the authorities there recently ordered them to leave. According to security sources cited in the Hungarian weekly newspaper, *Magyar Narancs*, the pair are considered by the government to be ‘national security threat[s]’.⁴⁶ Griffin has appealed the decision, and a decision is pending at the time of writing.⁴⁷

However, the political sphere of Europe’s far right is not the only one buzzing with transnational activity. The more extreme group that is currently gaining the most attention across Europe is the Identitarian movement. While divided into national chapters, the group is pan-European, with an earlier iteration launched in France in 2002 under the name Génération Identitaire, at the time a youth wing of the Bloc Identitaire. Following the refugee crisis and the persistence of Jihadi Islamist terrorism within Europe, the movement has become more visible, even emboldened. Affiliated groups now operate in Germany, Italy, Austria, Flanders, Hungary, France and, most recently, the UK and Ireland.⁴⁸ According to the movement’s website, this ‘non-violent youth movement’ aims to ‘preserve the ethnocultural identity of Europe.’ To achieve this, the group claims that three requirements must be met: stopping ‘the Islamisation of Europe’; halting the effects of globalisation; and reversing what they term ‘the Great Replacement’; that is, replacing white Europeans with non-whites.⁴⁹ They claim to operate in the arena of ‘metapolitics’ – an attempt to indirectly

⁴² ‘Stop Operation Soros—Anti-Globalists Meet In Budapest’, *Alright.com*, online at: www.altright.com/2017/03/19/stop-operation-soros-anti-globalists-meet-in-budapest/, accessed 29 September 2017; ‘Operation Stop Soros Exposed’, *Hope Not Hate* (Mar-Apr 2017), pp.30-32.

⁴³ ‘British right wing leader Nick Griffin is moving to Hungary’, *YouTube*, online at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=nfukqU90Afc, accessed 29 September 2017.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*; Interview given to Hope Not Hate: ‘Budapest: The centre of a new rebellion’, *Hope Not Hate* (Mar-Apr 2017), p.33.

⁴⁵ ‘Far right homeland’, *Hope Not Hate* (Mar-Apr 2017), pp.34-35.

⁴⁶ ‘Far right leader Nick Griffin banned from Hungary (29 May 2017)’, *Shropshire Star*, online at: www.shropshirestar.com/news/politics/2017/05/29/far-right-leader-nick-griffin-banned-from-hungary/#SC4y8qaAh1uvQqIz.99, accessed 29 September 2017.

⁴⁷ ‘Nick Griffin (26 May 2017)’, *Twitter*, online at: www.twitter.com/NickGriffinBU?lang=en, accessed 29 September 2017.

⁴⁸ ‘Home’, *Generation Identity*, online at: www.identitarian-movement.org/, accessed 26 September 2017.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*.

influence politics and society via cultural critique and grassroots changes of mindsets – arguing that ‘political change is not only possible in the parliaments and party politics, but also in cultural activities, public debates, the media and on the streets.’⁵⁰ One of the group’s key activists, the Austrian Markus Willinger, declares that their enemy, ‘the Left’, are ‘idiots’ apparently desperate to ‘destroy European identity’. He argues that, through institutions such as the EU and the media, a broadly conceived ‘Left’ is in the process of creating a European super-state in place of the traditional national and local heritage. This super-state, together with mass-immigration (also encouraged by the left), is depriving ‘every village of its own history’.⁵¹ His message to these opponents is simple: ‘Your politics disgust us. Your scramble for power and influence repels us. You repel us.’⁵²

The Identitarian movement has even started its own ‘university’, Université d’été identitaire, which teaches students their vision of politics and history, traditions, self-defence, teamwork, media training, as well as photo and video-making. Physical exercise appears to be another key aspect of the course.⁵³ What is particularly interesting is how well-educated the leaders (all of whom are men) of this cross-European youth movement are. Willinger is studying History and Political Science at the University of Stuttgart. The Identitarian heads of the German and Italian branches, Daniel Fiss and Lorenzo Fiato, are also students of Political Science. The leaders of the Austrian branch, Patrick Lenart and Martin Sellner, both study Philosophy and Law.⁵⁴

In an attempt to halt the flow of refugees to Europe, the Identitarian movement, headed by Sellner, recently took part in an unprecedented mission. Under the banner ‘Defend Europe’, the anti-immigrant group, made up largely of Identitarians from across Europe,⁵⁵ acquired a boat, named C-star, and sailed to the Mediterranean Sea with the explicit goal to block search-and-rescue vessels from saving the lives of refugees at risk of drowning while attempting to cross the water from Libya to Europe. On their website, ‘Defend Europe’ claim: ‘Right now so called “humanitarian” NGOs smuggled hundred thousands [sic] of illegal migrants to Europe and endangered the security and future of our continent. They are the ones who are responsible for the mass drowning of thousand [sic] of Africans in the Mediterranean. But we are no longer looking away. We do something against it.’ They have branded these NGOs corrupt criminals, who are allegedly working with human traffickers for financial gain.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ ‘Frequently Asked Questions’, *Generation Identity*, online at: www.identitarian-movement.org/generation-identity-faqs/, accessed 26 September 2017.

⁵¹ ‘Markus Willinger - A Europe of regions and identity’, *YouTube*, online at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRfbU0VxSk, accessed 26 September 2017.

⁵² Markus Willinger, *Generation Identity; a declaration of war against the ‘68ers* (London, 2013), online at: www.endchan.xyz/.media/0679a7c668e36a987eaceae95447818c-applicationpdf, accessed 26 September 2017

⁵³ ‘Université d’été identitaire 2017’, *YouTube*, online at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9MJDENgZZQ, accessed 26 September 2017.

⁵⁴ ‘Key Defend Europe Activists’, *Hope Not Hate* (May-July 2017), p.15; ‘Markus Willinger’, *Arktos*, online at: www.arktos.com/people/markus-willinger/, accessed 26 September 2017.

⁵⁵ With few exceptions, including the Canadian alt-right journalist Lauren Southern; to ‘meet the team’, see Defend Europe’s Twitter page (3 August 2017), online at: www.twitter.com/DefendEuropeID.

⁵⁶ ‘Home’, *Defend Europe*, online at: www.defendeuropa.net/, accessed 26 September.

The xenophobic Identitarian mission has identified, often by livestream, various NGO boats to target. One such vessel is Aquarius,⁵⁷ operated by the NGO SOS Méditerranée and including an on-board medical team. On its website, the NGO explains that their reasons for undertaking these lifesaving efforts are because of the ‘dramatic increase of boats in distress and the insufficiency of existing measures’ to manage the migrant crisis.⁵⁸ Contrary to ‘Defend Europe’s’ accusations, SOS Méditerranée insists that its aim is to ‘save individuals who have embarked on the dangerous crossing ... in overloaded boats unfit for the high seas’.⁵⁹ According to the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, some 5,000 people died across the Mediterranean Sea during 2016; an average of 14 a day, the highest number of casualties ever recorded.⁶⁰ ‘Defend Europe’s’ tactics have included lighting distress flares to alert rescue boats and, when nearby, the crew begin chanting ‘illegal immigration, no more, no more’. This clearly hinders the lifesaving work of effected NGOs.⁶¹ Although the group claim their first mission on the high seas was a success,⁶² on 12 May 2017 three of its members were arrested by the Italian coast guard for attempting to disrupt a rescue boat from travelling to Libya from Sicily. Moreover, the group have been plagued by problems in their continuing attempts to raise funds for the project.⁶³ ‘Defend Europe’s’ first mission ended in failure when an alliance of NGOs had its vessel banned from Maltese ports, while the Libyan coastguard refused the boat access to its waters – therefore preventing it from refuelling, and leaving it stranded 15 miles offshore.⁶⁴ Despite these clear setbacks, the group promises to carry on with these provocative activities in future.⁶⁵

Events of a more extreme kind are also increasing to develop networks internationally. The lucrative neo-Nazi music scene is a case in point. The music is an essential ingredient of neo-Nazi skinhead propaganda. Unsurprisingly, it has much the same racist undertones in whichever country or region it is made. This Oi! scene presents an attitude of anger and aggression, rage and hatred, stressing the need for white survival, racial pride and ‘Aryan’ supremacy. It also comes with a message of celebration for white violence against minorities and Jews. Although 30 years old, the music promotion network first launched in Britain, Blood and Honour (B&H), dominates this international genre of racist music, attracting fascists from across the globe. It is now active in seventeen countries across Europe, plus

⁵⁷ ‘Lauren Southern and Generation Identity vs Migrant Boats’, *YouTube*, online at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAV0eI6MnrA, accessed 26 September 2017; See, Paco Anselmi’s Twitter page (6 August 2017), online at: www.twitter.com/PacoHansel84.

⁵⁸ ‘Who We Are’, *SOS Mediterranee*, online at: www.sosmediterranee.org/about-us/who-we-are/?lang=en, accessed 26 September 2017.

⁵⁹ ‘SOS Mediterranee’, *SOS Mediterranee*, online at: www.sosmediterranee.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/SOSM-Folder-EN-3.pdf, accessed 26 September 2017.

⁶⁰ ‘Mediterranean Sea’, *UNHCR*, online at: www.unhcr.org/uk/news/briefing/2016/12/585ce804105/mediterranean-sea-100-people-reported-dead-yesterday-bringing-year-total.html, accessed 28 September 2017.

⁶¹ ‘Lauren Southern and Generation Identity vs Migrant Boats’.

⁶² Defend Europe’s Twitter page (27 August 2017).

⁶³ ‘Far right takes to the wave’, *Hope Not Hate* (May-July 2017), pp.12-15.

⁶⁴ Defend Europe’s Twitter page (22 and 23 August 2017); ‘Far-rightists take C-star crew to pose for photos outside shuttered PM’s office (27 August 2017)’, *Malta Today*, online at:

www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/80026/cstar_crew_pose_for_photos_outside_auberge_de_castille#.WcqmlrJ97IU, accessed 27 September 2017.

⁶⁵ Defend Europe’s Twitter page (29 August 2017).

Australia and both North and South America, making it the largest international neo-Nazi structure in the world.⁶⁶

Founded in 1987 by Ian Stuart Donaldson, who headed the notorious racist band Skewdriver, B&H initially grew out of the British fascist political party, National Front. The group took its name from the motto of the Hitler Youth '*Blut und Ehre*', as inscribed on daggers given to 14-year old boys, and different chapters frequently use symbols relating to Nazi Germany.⁶⁷ B&H currently organises concerts and events across Europe. These range from 'Summerfest' in Sweden, a 'Day of Honour' in Hungary, the 'Summer Solstice' in France, 'Defend Europe' in Bulgaria, to '15 Years' in Slovenia and others. In 2016, UK B&H hosted six gigs that attracted between 150 and 600 people for each event (others were cancelled due to protests). Furthermore, many attendees were from Europe, most notably Poles and Italians. One of the biggest international concerts in 2016 was the 'Europe Awake' event in Milan, Italy, organised by B&H and another popular neo-Nazi music promotion label, Hammerskins.⁶⁸ B&H 'worldwide' also has an operational website selling merchandise, books and magazine subscriptions, while hosting its own radio show and forum. The site attracted 4,000 views in September 2017 alone.⁶⁹ Although not organised by B&H, the largest ever European neo-Nazi concert was held in Switzerland this summer. A reported 6,000 visitors paying €35 per ticket, attended *Rock Against Überfremdung* ("Überfremdung" roughly translated means to be "swamped by foreigners").⁷⁰

Germany is particularly popular and active in the sphere of right wing extremist music. Although B&H has been banned there since 2000, new structures are both appearing and flourishing. Germany currently houses some 180 hate bands which, as with many mainstream bands, mainly disseminate their music online via MP3 downloads and streaming links. Yet between them, these German groups also released nearly 100 CDs during 2016. Meanwhile, the sale of band merchandise (such as T-shirts) has risen substantially. While the amount of concerts and 'song evenings' held in the country number over 150 per year, German bands appeared in no fewer than 63 gigs outside of their country.⁷¹ According to the German investigative journalist, Jan Raabe, 'German bands perform at almost all major European far right rock concerts.'⁷² With future events being increasingly organised across the globe, the neo-Nazi music scene shows no sign of slowing down.⁷³

This string of events on both sides of the Atlantic is archetypal of a burgeoning international cooperation between like-minded activists around the world. The recent electoral successes of the far right in Europe may well mark the beginning of a wider shift away from liberalism

⁶⁶ 'State of Hate: Music Scene', *Hope Not Hate* (2017 – special report), pp.30-31.

⁶⁷ 'Blood and Honour', *Anti-Defamation League*, online at: www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/blood-honour/, accessed 27 September 2017.

⁶⁸ 'State of Hate: Music Scene'.

⁶⁹ See, www.bloodandhonourworldwide.co.uk/bhww/.

⁷⁰ The festival's organisers will make over €200,000 in ticket sales alone. 'This Is What Happens When 6,000 Neo-Nazis Get Together', *Vice*, online at: www.vice.com/en_uk/article/mba43x/this-is-what-happens-when-6000-neo-nazis-get-together, accessed 27 September 2017.

⁷¹ 'Dimensions of Hate', *Hope Not Hate* (2017 – special report), pp.72-73.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ 'Axis', *Blood and Honour Worldwide*, online at: www.bloodandhonourworldwide.co.uk/bhww/axis/, accessed 27 September 2017.

toward a more nationalistic and intolerant continent. Putin's involvement in European politics is unlikely to cease, although whether this will be a help or hindrance to the electoral ambitions of his European allies remains unclear. Beyond European party politics, an unashamedly and increasingly confident far right has many ready platforms to openly spread their messages, such as can be seen in attacks upon avowed nemeses like George Soros. The future of the far right, however, remains difficult to predict. The movement as a whole is currently riding on the crest of a wave. Both in and outside of party politics, they are mostly well organised and appear to have access to funds. However, their fortunes will not rise by their own actions and rhetoric alone. Events often outside of their direct control will dictate whether wider society fully embraces their ideals, including future Jihadi Islamist terrorism and increased immigration to Europe. Most pressingly, a strong and inclusive counter-narrative must be adopted if Europe and the wider world are to see the decline of the far right.

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