

## **Trans-European Trends in Right-Wing Extremism**

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### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the effects that the easing of Europe's borders and the development of information and communications technologies are having on the outlook and activities of right-wing extremists. It will argue that these developments are the new 'enablers' allowing white supremacists and neo-Nazis to connect and move closer to the cooperation that earlier extremists argued for, but failed to accomplish. Of course right-wing extremists are not the only political activists who benefit. The extreme left has always been internationalist, and anti-globalization protestors communicated and organized across borders to stage demonstrations and riots in Gothenburg (2000), Genoa (2001) and elsewhere. The extreme right, however, has not, and attempts to create enduring international collaboration have been less successful.

The chapter's focus is on white supremacists, neo-Nazi groups and the youth cultures they frequently recruit from, rather than parties, although there may be links between them. Their lifestyles are a consequence of easier movement and the adoption of contemporary cultures, most notably music and clothing. A trend towards focused terrorist violence is also emerging.

### **European Collaboration**

In 1997, Leonard Weinberg cautioned that the danger posed by the extreme right should not be minimized, notwithstanding its lack of enduring political success in

Western Europe. He noted its dynamism and suggested that extremists' exploitation of popular nationalist sentiment is limited and declining, and their concerns now focus on the presence of large numbers of non-European immigrants whose presence is perceived to be an economic and cultural threat. He observed that 'in some cases the rightists depict themselves as the defenders of European civilization now threatened by Ottoman or Moorish invaders.' He also observed the growing animus toward the United States: 'Not uncommonly these extreme rightists use the United States as a negative reference point. It is precisely America's evolving multiculturalism that they wish to avoid for their own countries' (Weinberg 1997: 279).

In 1995, Peter Merkl suggested that the contemporary extreme right in Europe is largely new, and should be investigated accordingly. He noted the readiness with which many young right-wing activists, and even politically unconnected skinhead gangs and soccer hooligans, reached for the old Nazi or fascist labels and utilized their flags and symbols while representing a new entity. Young people, particularly in post-Communist states, have grown up in a state of confusion amid collapsing political and social values. They have therefore eagerly seized on ready-made images of ethnic identity, especially in an extreme form (Merkl 1997: 23).

Anthony Smith suggested that it is the ethnic vision that now underpins Europe's nationalisms. He noted that ethnicity fills up the 'nationalist concept space' in a manner that leaves little room for other looser conceptions or discourse of the nation. The idea that nations may be plural rather than culturally homogeneous still makes little headway among Europe's extreme right. It is the French concept of *ethnie* that predominates with its basis in common racial, cultural, religious and historical experience (Smith 1995: 23). This leaves no room for new immigrants, particularly those who openly preserve their religion and culture.

We therefore see an emerging pan-European extreme-right identity, which claims to be based on common European histories, identities and cultures in reaction to the increasing presence of new migrants and which is at times attracted to and influenced by the American extreme right, but also repelled by American cultural and economic hegemony.

The extreme right failed to establish trans-European institutions before the War. Italian and British fascists attended an International Conference of Fascist Parties in 1932, and representatives from France, Norway and Ireland attended the 1934 Fascist International Congress in Montreux (Bar-On 2003: 233). During the Spanish Civil War, British and other European sympathizers joined the Friends of National Spain, and members of the Irish Blue Shirt Movement joined the Spanish Foreign Legion to fight against the Republic (Keene 2001: 2–7). But nothing enduring was created and the Axis alliance was primarily a strategic one.

Further attempts to collaborate were made after 1945 when former Nazis and neo-Nazis sought to build a new Europe. Unlike the political unity sought by Western powers, theirs was a unity based on pan-Europeanism in the face of an ethnic, rather than a strategic threat. For a few, the idea of uniting with the Soviet Union against China also proved attractive. Latterly the preoccupation has been to unify against the U.S. and globalizing influences and to remove immigrant (particularly Muslim) communities.

European collaboration among extreme-right groups after the Second World War was particularly driven by the concern to unite against the nationalisms that had long torn it apart, and as a reaction to the mounting threat from the Soviet Union. Its proponents were former Nazis and their sympathizers. Among them was Francis Parker Yockey, the American lawyer seconded to the war crimes trials who fled to

Ireland after he openly sympathized with those he was prosecuting. He argued in *Imperium* that the age of narrow nationalism was dead and that the organic development of a new Europe was necessary to save western civilization. He wrote that:

This is addressed to all Europe, and in particular to the culture bearing stratum of Europe. It summons Europe to a world-historical struggle of two centuries' duration. Europe will partake in this struggle either as a participant or as the booty for marauding powers from without. If it is to act, and not merely suffer in this series of gigantic wars, it must be integrated and there is only one way this can occur (Yockey 1948).

In 1947 Yockey joined Sir Oswald Mosley's attempt to build a covert European network, but broke away in 1949 to establish the European Liberation Front (ELF) with the aim of building an authoritarian united European state. Over the next three years he travelled between Europe and America, but the differences among the groups, and their often contradictory aims, led him to abandon the effort and to move to Egypt in 1953 where he joined forces briefly with former SS Colonel Otto Skorzeny and former Nazi Major General Ernst Otto Remer (Lee 1997: 87–97).

Whereas the ELF sought a pan-European front of Western states, Skorzeny and other former Nazi officials strove to build links with the Arab world and Latin America. He influenced the formation and development of the Spanish Circle of Friends of Europe (Circulo Espanol de Amigos de Europa – CEDADE), the neo-Nazi group that continues to host European neo-Nazis at its annual gatherings. The motivating impetus here was to build a worldwide neo-Nazi international network

together with potential allies in the Arab world, brought together by their shared hatred of communism and Jews (Lee 1997: 156; Michael 2006).

A third collaborative attempt was initiated by former Belgian Nazi collaborator Jean Thiriart who established the Jeune Europe movement in the 1960s to unite European nationalists, but with the realization that the trappings of Nazism had to be discarded if the young were to be attracted. In particular he advocated a white Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals but without the U.S. He forged an alliance with Adolf von Thadden, the German National Democratic Party (NDP) leader, and with Juan Peron, the exiled Argentinian dictator, then living in Madrid. Both urged the militarization of the white struggle against communism and non-European migration into Europe. Thiriart also incorporated elements of leftist thinking into his evolving ideology and adopted the Palestinian cause. Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) were seen at that time as the vanguard of the left struggle against U.S. imperialism, and indeed neo-Nazis, as well as leftists, went to Lebanon and Syria for terrorism training in Palestinian camps (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1976). Thiriart's works were also translated into Russian and influenced the post-War redevelopment of National Bolshevik ideology that re-emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Whereas the earlier proponents of pan-Europeanism excluded Russia from their plans, later activists sought to incorporate it. The Danish neo-Nazi, Povl Riis Knudsen, who succeeded George Lincoln Rockwell in 1967 as leader of the World Union of National Socialists, wrote after his 1978 visit to Russia that:

The racial consciousness of the Russians, who are the dominant nation in the Soviet Union, definitely promises a better prospect for the survival of the

Aryan race than the visions of liberal and conservative American politicians ... It is true, of course, that Communism does not support racial principles in theory – but with Communism theory and practice are very different things Lee (1997: 167).

By 1983, Remer who had returned to Germany, began to advocate collaboration with Russia to counter the threat from Asia. He too argued that communism should be no impediment, and in doing so influenced later generations of neo-Nazi ideologues seeking a united Europe. This younger generation, however, were also influenced by the anti-Americanism and anti-capitalism of the emerging new left Lee (1997: 209–11).

Latterly it has been the Italian Roberto Fiore of the New Force (*Forza Nuova*) and German NDP leader Udo Voigt who have promoted European and European–Russian cooperation. In a spring 2008 joint press statement, they hailed former President Putin’s muscular Russian nationalist policies. This followed Fiore’s invitation to representatives of the Russian extreme right to meet in Rome in November 2007, to assist in ‘choosing the guidelines of international politics for the next few years ... and the end of American unipolarism and the birth of a European pole’. Fiore added that ‘for those who have eyes to see, it is clear that it is in Moscow reside our hopes for a new Europe’ (Bernabei 2008).

Some Russian extreme-right groups promote ties with Europe based on perceived shared racial and cultural identities, and there has been an increasingly apparent ideological transfer from East to West and evidence of national Bolshevik influences on European groups (Mathyl 2002). They stand in contrast to the Eurasianism of Aleksander Panarin and Aleksander Dugin. The former rejected cross-

fertilization between Europe and Russia, while the latter additionally seeks alliances in the Middle East to offset American unipolar domination (Peunova 2008; Stack 2008).

The 'Ideological Principles' of the Northern Brotherhood sum up the views of those seeking ties.

By positioning ourselves as pragmatic defenders of Russian nation interests, we can't skip consideration of more general context. And in this context we are identically determined as white racists ... Therefore, in being developed now world fight of continents, races and civilisations, we support the fight of white humanity for survival, for the saving of white mankind which is now under the threat of elimination or dissolution of its identity in the mainstream of Southern colourful invasion (Northern Brotherhood 2007).<sup>1</sup>

Jaroslav Krejci noted in the early 1990s that extreme-right groups were cultivating friendly and mutually supportive contacts, as they were becoming racially rather than ethno-linguistically oriented. In this way he suggested they are now making common cause.

They therefore pose as determined defenders of the purity of European culture, a culture the very spirit of which they fail to understand ... The new emerging identities have similar but also different roots to the class and identification politics that gave rise to Fascism and Nazism. Identity and exclusion feed on each other, even as social and economic pressures move Europe towards a more plural type of society (Krejci 1995: 17).

The political and class struggles of communists and fascists, the pursuit of strong totalitarian states and the reaction to mass unemployment is not what now unites contemporary right-wing extremists. They are motivated more by the negative economic and political effects of globalization and the prospect of unemployment brought about by the transfer of economic activity to low cost producers, reaction to a U.S.-dominated uniform culture, and the presence of new migrants whose cultures and religions are seen as alien to Europe.

Despite some diminution of American extreme-right influence, it is worth recording that some streams maintain a foothold. Christian Identity retains offshoots in Sweden, Belfast and London, as does the Church of the Creator in Sweden.<sup>2</sup> Two Americans who have worked to strengthen transatlantic links are the late William Pierce, founder of the National Alliance, who encouraged links with the BNP and NDP, and who told the NDP youth congress in October 1999 that ‘it is essential – not just helpful, but necessary – for genuine nationalist groups everywhere to increase their degree of collaboration across national borders’ (Pierce 2002, n.d.). The other is former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, whose appeal to the American and European right to join together in his booklet *Is Russia the Key to White Survival*, was a product of his visits there and to Ukraine, which began in 1995 (Duke 2000). These led him to establish groups to encourage transatlantic cooperation, the most recent of which is the European-American Unity and Rights Organization (EURO) (Anti-Defamation League 2001; Lee 2003).

Changing social and economic conditions and these personal initiatives are promoting a convergence of right-wing activity and many groups are beginning to look and sound similar. Merkl noted in 1997 that ‘the new radical right (on both sides



of the Atlantic) voice opposition to the rule of unresponsive Eurocrats in exactly the same way as the American right voices opposition to the decision makers of Washington' and that 'If a Euro American radical right has not emerged as yet, one certainly appears on the horizon' Merkl (1997: 25–29). However, for many European right-wing extremists the United States is a negative reference point and it is precisely America's evolving multiculturalism they wish to avoid for their own countries.

### **Enabling Processes**

I now turn to the processes that are enabling collaboration. In previous publications, I have indicated that elements within the American extreme right had been the first to use the Internet to enable communication across vast distances, and at about the same time the German extreme right sought to use it to organize events and to evade scrutiny by law enforcement. I had also noted that the Internet enhanced capacity to unify disparate groups advocating violent extremism (Whine 1999, 2000, 2007; BfV 2000).

According to the German security service:

The Internet has become the most important medium of communication for right wing extremists, who use it to present themselves, make verbal attacks, carry on internal debates, and to mobilise attendance at their rallies and demonstrations (BfV 2003: 24).

The Dutch *Monitor Racism and Extremism* notes that

Many (Internet) forums form collaborative networks, some tighter than others, often with a hierarchical structure, in which all sorts of activities are undertaken or initiated, just as in 'real' organisations. These activities can be exclusively digital, but they can also take place in the real world or in a combination of the two (van Donselaar and Rodrigues 2006).

In the twenty-first century the static medium of websites is increasingly being replaced by interactive e-mailing lists, discussion forums and the Web 2.0 social networks, such as MySpace, Facebook and the YouTube video-sharing site. Researchers on both sides of the Atlantic are now noting that neo-Nazis are increasingly using social networking platforms to infiltrate and recruit the next generation. Chris Wolf of the American Anti-Defamation League has commented that

In today's Web 2.0 world with user generated content, social network sites like Facebook and MySpace, mobile computing and always-on connectivity, every aspect of the Internet is being used by extremists of every ilk to repackage old hatreds and to recruit new haters ... The emergence of new Internet technologies and their adoption by online haters is much more pernicious than the static websites most of us have been focussing on over the years (Wolf 2008).

The first interactive extreme-right website was established by the American Stormfront in 1998, and in 2000, 'Stormfront Nederland en Vlaanderen' was established to link Dutch and Belgian neo-Nazis and, although it never achieved the importance of its American originator, it has served as a forum for promoting hate

speech (van Donselaar and Rodrigues 2006). Redwatch and similar sites are the cause of mounting concern in Europe. They name anti-Nazi opponents and journalists and publish their home addresses with the implicit expectation of them being physically attacked as has happened in the U.K., Poland and the Czech Republic.<sup>3</sup>

In Spain, complaints by a human rights organization that one of its leading officials, and his home address, were listed on the site of the National Alliance again led to a police investigation, though no charges have been brought to date (Alianza Nacional 2008). In Russia, similar websites have circulated the names and home addresses of judges, prosecution service officials and public figures, causing the General Prosecutor's office to initiate a criminal investigation into their activity in March 2008 (SOVA Centre 2008).

Many of these sites are sophisticated, hosted abroad and mirrored elsewhere to avoid legal sanctions. One US-hosted Russian site, vdesyatku.net, was closed after complaints, but others, nordrus.org and nordrus.info, for example, are mirrored in both the U.S. and in Singapore, and are now believed to be working on yet another fall-back site.<sup>4</sup>

The second enabling process flowed from the Schengen agreements of 1985 and 1990. These abolished checks at the internal borders of five of the initial signatory states (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) and created a single external border. Common rules regarding visas, right of asylum and checks only at external borders were adopted to allow the free movement of persons within them. A further eight states (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) signed the agreements between 1990 and 1996. The UK and Ireland are now also party to some aspects of the agreements (Europa 2009). The net effect of Schengen has been to allow Europeans to travel around, and to work

within, the area without border checks or other restrictions, as the architects of the agreements planned. Coupled with substantially cheaper travel costs, Schengen has facilitated trans-European migration and short-term visits in a way that was inconceivable to previous generations. Fans now think nothing of crossing Europe to watch a football match or a concert.

## **Trends**

The most obvious manifestations of these currents and enabling processes are: international gatherings, clothing, music and violence. Pan-European associations also promote closer contact. One, the European National Front was founded in 1999, and named after Yockey's organization. It claims Bulgarian, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian and Spanish affiliates and in August 2006 mobilized up to 10,000 supporters for the Deutsche Stimme festival in Sachsen, Germany (Southgate 1999; European National Front 2006; AIVD 2004).

Meetings to mark historic anniversaries, such as Hitler's birthday, attract international participants. The annual August Wunseidel memorial march in Bavaria to commemorate Rudolf Hess started in 2001 and attracted over 4,500 international participants in 2004. In 2005 it was banned on the basis that the organizers' intention was to glorify Nazism (Klein 2005; Taschel 2007). The annual Dresden march commemorating the Allied bombing, organized by the German NPD attracted over 3,000 in 2005, up to 6,000 in 2008, and thousands were again expected in 2009. Participants include skinheads and neo-Nazis from all over Europe. The annual December march through the Stockholm suburb of Salem commemorating the murder of White Power supporter and skinhead Daniel Wretstrom in 2000, acted both as a unifying point for the Swedish extreme right, and attracted participants from

elsewhere in Europe (*The Local* 2007). But the numbers of foreign participants in national manifestations may now be falling because of exclusions by national law enforcement agencies. However, parade bans in one country can lead to their transference elsewhere, allowing neighbouring groups to link. German neo-Nazis marched with the Dutch People's Union (Nederlandse Volks-Unie, NVU) through Dutch towns and cities in 2001 and 2002, enabling them to evade a ban in Germany (AIVD 2001, 2002; van Donselaar and Rodrigues 2006).<sup>5</sup>

Mass movement from east and central Europe into the European Union, however short-lived and temporary, has also encouraged right-wing extremists to establish liaisons and bases beyond their national boundaries, as happened when Polish extreme-right groups held meetings in London in 2007 and 2008.

The transnational clothing brands adopted by skinheads and neo-Nazis such as Lonsdale, Pit Bull and Thor Steinar, promote a common identity within the extreme right. Groups using these brands, sometimes referred to as 'Lonsdale youth' (or Gabbers in the Netherlands) were not initially a target for recruitment by neo-Nazi groups, in part because of their drug use (van Donselaar 2004; AIVD 2004).<sup>6</sup> The German security service describes the relationship between skinheads and neo-Nazis as an ambivalent one; the immediate attraction for skinheads is a lifestyle based on action and spontaneous violence, with easy access to drugs and music. Only rarely did they develop firmly held ideological views or target their political efforts in any more specific sense. But the picture has changed in recent years as more have become radicalized and they now constitute an important recruitment arena (BfV 2003: 41; BfV 2005: 51-53; van Donselaar and 2006). Therefore at a local level, skinhead clothing and music provides a route into neo-Nazism and a transnational identity. According to a German security service assessment, they now play 'an important role

in consolidating groups of right-wing youth willing to use violence' in the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany (BfV 2004: 23).

There is no suggestion that the clothing brands' owners are complicit in the promotion of right-wing extremism. Their sales strategies, however, clearly recognize potential markets, and rely on accepted neo-Nazi and Norse symbols. For this reason Mediatex, the German manufacturer of Thor Steinar, successfully resisted a lawsuit brought by the Norwegian government which sought to ban their promotional use of the Norwegian flag, although the company later decided not to use the national symbol of Norway (Wroe 2008; Thor Steinar 2007).

The third trend, skinhead or white power music, provides a unifying ideology, a common language, and a perfect example of globalisation. Developed in 1980s Britain, white power music has grown into a multi million Euro industry, and helps to fund violent extremist groups. According to Interpol the industry was worth £3.4 million a year in 1999, and it certainly grew for some years thereafter (White Pride Worldwide 2001; BfV 2005: 58–69).<sup>7</sup> Devin Burghardt has noted that 'the music scene has created international ties where there were none, and has inspired an ideological pan-Aryanism that has broken down the walls between racist groups' (Burghardt quoted in White Pride Worldwide 2001). The Swedish security service likewise regards music as 'one of the most important tools when it comes to spreading the movement's ideas' (SAPO 2002; see also Glaser and Pfeiffer 2007). Disks are recorded in one country, pressed in a second and retailed in a host of others and concerts attract international audiences. For example, Hammerfest 2000 organized near Atlanta, NJ by Panzerfaust Records and Resistance Records, drew fans from Austria, Canada, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain, and bands from the U.K. (White Pride Worldwide 2001).

The transnational nature of the production and distribution processes was revealed in February 2003 when a shipment of inflammatory CDs was seized at Frankfurt airport. They had been produced by a German neo-Nazi domiciled in Thailand who had sent them to Sweden for distribution in Germany and elsewhere (BfV 2003: 46). William Pierce recognized the transnational possibilities of attracting young alienated racists and neo-Nazis, and the money-making potential of music. In 1999 he purchased the Swedish Nordland Records and merged it with his successful Resistance Records. During 2000, he sought a business deal with Hendrik Mobus, a German neo-Nazi. In a radio broadcast on 9 September 2000, Pierce stated that they had planned to 'establish new outlets in Europe' for (Pierce's) records and were discussing 'the role of music in our overall effort'. Their grand plans, however, were never properly realized and Pierce died shortly thereafter (White Pride Worldwide 2001).

The progenitor of the White Power music scene, Blood and Honour (B&H), founded by the late Ian Stewart Donaldson in the late 1980s, has grown from its U.K. origins into a trans-European and transatlantic movement with offshoots in the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, U.K. and the U.S. (Lowles 2001). Recent internal schisms, however, have now resulted in two B&H international associations: one aligned to the traditional skinhead network; the other closely aligned to the political and more extreme Combat 18, Terrormachine and the Racial Volunteer Force (RVF). Although their activities take place in a mostly non-political twilight zone, some adherents moved into overt political activity in spring 2006, when Dutch and German members attempted to lay a wreath at the German military cemetery in Ysselsteyn near Limburg, prior to a concert organized by B&H Flanders. Arrests of Belgian

B&H members in the same year reportedly averted a planned terrorist attack (Renard 2008; see also AIVD 2006: 53).

According to Merkl,

There is little doubt that the vast majority of new recruits to the various European radical right groups is male, lower class and very young. (Merkl 1997: 36)

In the case of East Germany, the extreme youth of many extreme-right activists makes them more vulnerable to anti-foreigner rock music. Helmut Willen's 1,400 person case study noted that over 75 per cent of skinheads are under 21 years and that 50 per cent of these are under 18 years. The lack of education as well as the extreme youth of violent racists in Germany appears to be replicated in Sweden and the Netherlands (Merkl 1997: 27).

Realization at government levels that rock music events were acting as an incubus for racist violence has led to police action, and in recent years their number has declined and the number of concerts played by foreign groups in Germany, for example, has fallen (BfV 2003: 45). However, there has been no diminution in the number of concerts played by German groups in Germany itself, despite large-scale banning of CDs and skinhead literature (Raabe 2007).

### **Street Violence to Terrorism**

The fourth by-product of these processes is the trend to violence. Street violence has always been part of the neo-Nazi scene: it provides a focus for hatred and thereby draws in new adherents, but the emerging trend involves a move beyond the anti-



foreigner street violence of the 1990s towards a more focused violence, which includes terrorism, and which is spurred by different reasons (Merkl 1997: 17).

Tore Bjorgo noted in 1995 that the increasing support for xenophobic and radical-right parties enabled the growth of militant neo-Nazi organizations and networks which targeted asylum seekers and visible minorities within Europe. He further observed that groups perceived as 'right wing' or 'racist' often turned out to have no connections with extreme political organizations, and only a rudimentary idea of any ideology. He suggested that defining the essence of right-wing extremism in terms of one single issue, value or philosophical idea would prove to be a frustrating exercise. Rather, he suggested, that theirs 'is an anger against perceived outsiders, or the state, which could take a violent path' (Bjorgo 1995: 2).

At the same time, the late Ehud Sprinzak suggested that violent, extreme right-wing groups are organized around the belief that the object of their intense opposition is *a priori* illegitimate, that they do not belong to the same humanity as themselves, and should therefore be kept in an inferior legal state, expelled or even eliminated. He further observed that their violence may be directed towards the 'inferior' group, or it may be directed against the political authority which has allowed such a situation to develop (Bjorgo 1995: 4).

Evidence in recent criminal trials and security services' reports suggests that elements within the extreme right are preparing and training for what they perceive to be a coming war for 'white survival'. Few criminal justice agencies publish data on this specifically, or differentiate it from other forms of violent crime, but the exceptions are the Swedish and German security services (BfV various years; SAPO various years; for background, see Bjorgo 1995). Their reports note that within established extreme-right bodies there are now individuals, or small groups, who are

planning and preparing for acts of terrorism using firearms and improvised explosive devices that are more sophisticated than petrol bombs or other forms of missile previously associated with extreme-right violence. This new trend stands in stark contrast to earlier perceptions when several European security services reported an ambivalence towards the use of violence.

The move to terrorism is not perceived to be a substantive challenge to the state, but rather an attack on symbols of the state and a reaction to the influx of migrants, particularly Muslims. In Sweden, for example, four neo-Nazis were charged in early 2005 in connection with a terrorist plot to attack the parliament building and schools, but for evidentiary reasons were convicted only of causing criminal damage (SAPO 2005: 5). The Swedish security police therefore noted in 2006 that

Both the White Power scene and the autonomous scene contain actors who have shown that they are prepared to use threat, violence or force to attain their political objectives. In some cases their actions are directed against authorities or political parties represented in parliament (SAPO 2006: 23).

This new trend is neither widespread nor does it involve large numbers, but is the consequence of a small minority acting out their extreme ideology. It is, however, planned and coordinated at a national and an international level, and it is the Internet that enables and strengthens the processes. A Europol report noted in 2006 that

Although violent acts perpetrated by right-wing extremists and terrorists may appear sporadic and situational, right-wing extremist activities are organised and transnational (Europol 2007, p.4).<sup>8</sup>

The inspiration for many is the ‘leaderless resistance’ model of small cells or single individuals (‘lone wolves’) using terror tactics to resist central government suggested by U.S. extreme-right theoretician Louis Beam, and the messages contained in *The Turner Diaries* and *Hunter*, two novels written by William Pierce, under the pseudonym of Andrew Macdonald. The former depicts a violent revolution to overthrow the U.S. federal government and to exterminate Jews and non-whites; the latter describes a targeted assassination campaign of couples in inter-racial marriages and civil rights activists carried out by a Vietnam War veteran who is drawn into a white nationalist group planning insurrection (Beam 1992; Macdonald (1978, 1989).

The murder of Theo van Gogh, and the 7 July London bombings galvanized neo-Nazi groups around Europe although the immediate reaction did not lead to the extreme violence that security agencies predicted. There was, however, an increase in low-level violence, and anti-Muslim demonstrations in many countries, especially in the Netherlands and the U.K. The Dutch security service and the annual Dutch *Racism and Extremism Monitor* both reported a discernible move by activists to ‘tougher, violence-prone neo-Nazi groups’ which are ‘just a fraction removed from terrorism’ (AIVD 2005, 2006, 2007; van Donselaar and Rodrigues 2006). The acquisition of arms, bomb-making materials and military manuals has been noted in several states, although the degree to which they will use them is another matter, and their possession may be more apparent than their willingness and capability to deploy them. During April and July 2005, the German authorities confiscated large caches of arms and explosives in raids on the homes of neo-Nazis, but commented afterwards that the intention appeared to have been to stockpile arms rather than use them immediately. They also noted that some right-wing extremists reject terrorist activity

which could lead to increased surveillance by the state (BfV 2005: 50). In the U.K., the police also foiled a succession of terrorist plots initiated by extreme-right activists.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the German authorities report that extreme-right activists are increasingly prepared to resort to violence, to obtain weapons and to engage in paramilitary exercises, as training for terrorism (BfV 2004: 39–41; BfV 2005: 49–50).

The willingness to employ extreme violence in defence of European ‘values’ is apparent in the ideology of several groups, among them the British Patriots of the White European Resistance (POWER), which emerged in 2006, and which claims supporters in Croatia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Switzerland, Slovenia and Sweden. The British police have reported

There is no intelligence to suggest that POWER is instrumental in influencing known or alleged ‘Lone Wolf’ operatives. However POWER is a relatively new group who are difficult to regionalise and who have links to continental Europe (Association of Chief Police Officers 2008).

The POWER website states that

We began in Great Britain but are a pro European movement with members in all European countries ... We were formed as a last chance movement to preserve our individual nations and to unify Europe and build the great nations and Europe we once had ... We are not a Political party, and would consider ourselves freedom fighters, not the left wing version of the term freedom fighters. Which are called Terrorists, we are defenders of the European culture. However we urge people to support National Socialism ... We are

firm believers in the policies of Oswald Mosley and strongly support all of his theories on the state of Europe

(<http://www.14power88.com/vonherman/vwar/page.php?id=6>).

POWER identification of the enemy is shared with like-minded groups:

The western world we feel is under threat from not only Jewish corruption but also from mass immigration, drug imports, religious divide, gun crime, Islamic hatred and multiculturalism in general, we firmly support all of Europe but refuse to accept that we owe any African anything ... We stand alongside every European nation that wishes to remove non whites from their land

(<http://www.14power88.com/vonherman/vwar/page.php?id=6>).

The Racial Volunteer Force (RVF) is a second trans-European group which emerged from the UK-based Combat 18, with branches in the UK, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, and which declares itself to be an international 'militant Pro White Organisation', with its own European council. It hints that it will resort to violence and warns its members that they must think long and hard before joining (<http://wwwrvfonline.com/house.htm>). The Dutch security service identified its members as 'strongly ideologically developed' capable of playing an important role in furthering and cementing contacts (AIVD 2006: 52). The terrorist threat is not perceived to be a substantive challenge to the state, but rather an attack on the symbols of the state and a reaction to the influx of migrants, particularly Muslims. It is not a widespread trend, nor is it coordinated and planned at any central point. Rather, it is the consequence of small groups acting out their extreme ideology.

The 2008 Europol report on terrorist threats within the European Union identified an increasing number of extreme-right terrorist plots in the U.K. during the past ten years by individuals classified as ‘lone wolves’ who share ‘an ideological or philosophical identification with an extremist group, but do not communicate with the group they identify with’ (Europol 2008: 39). They follow the models proposed by Beam and Pierce.

### **Conclusions**

Contemporary cultural, economic and racial challenges within Europe have allowed extremists to become more active once again. They have particularly spurred the growth of extreme nationalism and closer trans-European cooperation among extreme-right groups. These processes are enabled by the growth of ICTs and the ease of travel, and their outward manifestations are seen in the meetings, rallies and clothing adopted by many. The enabling mechanisms also allow the move to violence. In these developments the European extreme right has been influenced by, and has copied, its counterparts in the U.S. Yet at the same time they have also opposed the globalizing and Americanizing influences on Europe which were regarded as a danger to European ethnic and cultural identity.

The outward manifestations of youth cultures should not be seen as a threat in themselves. The disparate and often confrontational nature, and historical tendency to splinter within the extreme right, reduces any political impact, but their violence is real and growing and does not involve large numbers, only isolated individuals or small cells. This is emerging as a clearly defined trans-European threat. In these activities the extreme right is achieving some of its goals and developing the realities that early proponents sought, but failed to realize.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See also Northern Brotherhood (n.d.).

<sup>2</sup> Belfast published books promoting the U.S. Christian Identity Movement were on sale at the Orange Street Congregational Church, Leicester Square, London in September 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Redwatch – the site the traitors love to hate, <http://www.redwatch.org/index2.html>. See also Taylor (2006) and ATL (n.d.).

<sup>4</sup> Private communication between SOVA and author, 25 April 2008.

<sup>5</sup> For continuing liaison between German extreme right groups and others, see International Connections section in successive BfV annual reports.

<sup>6</sup> For background on the origins and international connections of the skinhead movement see *Anti-Defamation League* (1995).

<sup>7</sup> For useful background, see also Ware and Back (2002).

<sup>8</sup> See also PET (2006).

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<sup>9</sup> The Turner Diaries were a formative influence on former BNP and Combat 18 member David Copeland, the London Nail Bomber, who was imprisoned for life in 1999 for planting three bombs in London which killed three and injured over 200. Lance Crossley, a Nazi sympathizer from Manchester, was imprisoned for six years for possessing an arsenal of guns and explosives in 2001; David Tovey, BNP sympathizer, was imprisoned for eleven years for possessing weapons in 2001; Alan Boyce, a former BNP and NF member was convicted of planning a bombing campaign against a local immigrants hostel in 2006; Robert Cottage, a former BNP local election candidate was imprisoned in 2007 for stockpiling bomb-making chemicals for what he perceived to be the imminent war between British citizens and foreign migrants; Nathan Worrell, a far right sympathizer, was imprisoned in 2008 for amassing bomb-making chemicals; Martyn Gilleard, the British People's Party leader was imprisoned in 2008 for making nail bombs and possession of ammunition for a firearm. It was stated that his computer password was 'Martyn1488', the 14 being a reference to the far right slogan 'We must secure the existence of our race and a future for the white people' coined by the late David Lane, an American white supremacist. Police found that he had researched bomb making techniques on the Internet, bought explosives materials and made four nail bombs with the intention of bombing mosques (BBC News 25 July 2008).