



DEFEND  
ENGLAND



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# Generation Identity

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### Introduction

The social polarisation of a globalised world continues. Toxic discourse around ethnicity, identity, citizenship, belonging and nationhood has led to the fracturing of communities along the lines of skin colour and accents rather than shared values.<sup>1</sup> Although it seems that society has grown far more intolerant of racism, what is clear is that fear and suspicion still persist in breeding ignorance, prejudice and bigotry. They have become the stones that fuel xenophobic, populist movements rooted in reactionary politics.<sup>2</sup>

The far-right have returned to increasing prominence, with their racism masquerading as faux liberalism. Pulsing darkly through their movements remains a deep-seated dislike of whom they see as ethnically and culturally different.<sup>3</sup> With politicians increasingly unsure of how to defeat them, we risk veering towards the creation of right-wing, authoritarian societies devoid of empathy and founded upon a hostility towards those they perceive to be different.<sup>4</sup>

These movements are a sore test of the values cherished by Western liberalism. As this report will show, the far-right have tracked plenty of support that has frayed the social cohesion of different countries.<sup>5</sup> In a time when immigration and globalisation has created discontent and resentment, the far-right have provided misleading and simplistic answers to deeply complex problems that cannot be resolved simply by banning immigration and turning away all Muslims. As Jose Zuquete explained, "the threat that the Crescent will rise over the continent and the spectre of a Muslim Europe have become basic ideological features and themes of the European extreme right. Thus, the concept of 'Islam' galvanizes group action: as the group rallies a 'defence' against Islamisation."<sup>6</sup>

The focus of this report will be on Generation Identity, including who they are and what they stand for. In the wake of a global refugee crisis triggered by conflicts in the Middle-East, far-right groups such as Generation Identity have emerged portraying immigration and multiculturalism as physical and moral threats to their ways of life.<sup>7</sup>

This movement has cast its net far and wide; no longer merely confined to the continental Europe where it began, it has now spread to the UK and North America. Generation Identity embodies the trademark characteristics of the modern far-right in claiming to defend cultural values against Islam and immigration. In reality the movement is elementally rooted in a core premise that elevates the white ethnicity in terms of social importance. This report will look at the scale of the challenge presented by Generation Identity and the sincerity of their cultural protectionist rhetoric.

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<sup>1</sup> Sandel, Michael "Right wing populism is rising as progressive politics fails – is it too late to save democracy?" *New Statesman*, 2018

<sup>2</sup> Tisdall, Simon "Rise of xenophobia is fanning immigration flames in EU and US" *Guardian*, 2018

<sup>3</sup> Tenold, Vegas "The neo-Nazi plot against America is much bigger than we realise" *Guardian*, 2019

<sup>4</sup> Penny, Eleanor "This isn't how we defeat the far-right Hilary Clinton, this is how they win" *New Statesman*, 2018

<sup>5</sup> Meaney, Thomas "The dark European stain: how the far-right rose again" *New Statesman*, 2018

<sup>6</sup> Zuquete, Jose Pedro "The European extreme-right and Islam: New directions?" *Routledge Press*, 2008

<sup>7</sup> Ellis, Emma Grey "Your handy field guide to the many factions of the far-right, from the Proud Boys to Identity Evropa" *Wired*, 2017



At the time of writing this report, New Zealand was struck by a brutal terrorist attack in which a far-right white nationalist gunned down 50 worshippers in two mosques. He uploaded his video to Facebook and his manifesto was revealed to the wider world. The literature was embedded with a deeply anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric, reflecting the language of ethnic tribalism that Generation Identity have been associated with. The magnitude in the importance of weakening the power of the far-right Identitarian movement has never been greater.

### Who are they?

Generation Identity (GI), or the Identitarian Movement, is a far-right, white nationalist youth movement based in Europe and North America. It originated in France in 2012 as the youth wing of the group, Bloc Identitaire, when 73 protesters occupied a mosque for several hours before the police finally ejected them.<sup>8</sup> GI subsequently announced a “war on multiculturalism” and instituted a national referendum on Muslim immigration as a core aim of their movement.

It has since spread through Austria, Italy and Germany with attempted movements in the UK too.<sup>9</sup> Across these different locations, they have sought to whip up fear regarding immigration about the decimation of the local white population and sought to vilify Muslims.<sup>10</sup>

The organisation has attracted the attention and support of high-profile far-right individuals such as Tommy Robinson in their attempts to forge footholds in different countries.<sup>11</sup> They have focused on the lines of ‘parallel Islamic societies’ enabled by multiculturalism that would lead to the obliteration of the indigenous European culture. The group’s infrastructure is based on a mode of trust and secrecy, as participants are thoroughly vetted beforehand and required to explain their political beliefs, according to the Intercept. Prospective members must also insist that they’re not journalists or activists looking to record the meetings.

Their campaigns have been based on portraying minorities as threats to white culture. Their “Defend Europe” campaign, when they attempted to block refugee ships, became a slogan for their pan-European movement that regards the white identity as central to the concept of being European. This they believed was threatened by large-scale immigration.<sup>12</sup>

GI’s Twitter and YouTube accounts have been suspended; however, there is a “Defend Europe” Twitter account which currently has 29,000 followers.

#### **The influence of Alan de Benoist and ethnopluralism:**

One of Generation Identity’s ideological predecessors is Nouvelle Droite (ND) known as the New Right. The ND emerged in France during the late 1960s guided largely by prominent

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<sup>8</sup> “What is Generation Identity” *Al Jazeera*, 2018

<sup>9</sup> “Far-right ‘Identitarian Movement’ stickers are seen in multiple locations” *Tell MAMA*, 2017

<sup>10</sup> “Generation Identity England tried to intimidate Didsbury Mosque but got mocked instead” *Tell MAMA*, 2018

<sup>11</sup> Gallagher, Ryan “British neo-Nazis are on the rise – and they’re becoming more organized and violent” *Intercept*, 2018

<sup>12</sup> Ridel, Chloe “Europe is in the grip of a cult of identity. But we can fight back” *Guardian*, 2018

philosophers such as Alan de Benoist and others. De Benoist is credited as the intellectual forefather of far-right movements such as Generation Identity, laying down the seeds of their ideology through his rejection of mass immigration, multiculturalism, free markets and liberal democracy.<sup>13</sup>

De Benoist favoured what is known as 'ethnopluralism', in which regions are divided by ethnicity, to achieve the 'organic' growth of social groups.<sup>14</sup> This political and social philosophy leaned heavily into the idea of racial and ethnic separatism, that physical differences cast people into groups that should stay preserved as they were.

Even though De Benoist is regarded as the most prominent advocate of ethnopluralism, as a social philosophy it predated him. Carl Schmitt, a conservative German jurist, endorsed ethnopluralism as part of a democracy anchored in identity, which he saw as the greater alternative to universal human rights.<sup>15</sup>

Ethnopluralism in theory does not recognise disparities between races and opposes the concept of a racial hierarchy. Rather, it orbits around a belief that different cultures and nations exist but should stay separated rather than interconnected. Therefore, it rejects the idea of different cultures fused together in a melting pot, believing that globalism contradicts the natural social order and thus endorses a return to the organic community.<sup>16</sup>

Tamir Bar-On, an author and expert on the European New Right, said they "believe that liberalism and socialism emanate from the same logic of egalitarianism, and that logic of egalitarianism has its roots in what they consider the egalitarianism of the Judeo-Christian tradition."<sup>17</sup> Those influenced by De Benoist and the ND, reject this sort of egalitarianism and believe in the right of organic societies to flourish in a state of disconnect from other cultures and groups. This is their advocacy of the 'right to difference'.

Bar-On believes that under an ethnopluralist government the status of minorities such as immigrants and refugees would be threatened, through the use of referendums as a process of ethnic cleansing, in which the government would call referendums for the removal of those who were ethnically and culturally different. "If they valorise diversity in a worldwide sense, worldwide ethnopluralism, why not also valorise diversity within societies? They are these proponents of direct democracy, and they would say, you know what, finally the true values of the people have spoken against the elites, the political elites, the EU elites, that are imposing this fake multiculturalism on us, these open borders, valorisation of immigrants and refugees. So, what they say has happened is that ultimately the people have spoken, that is the titular majorities have spoken."

Although de Benoist did not necessarily allude to groups being superior to others biologically, it's believed his ideas were heavily influenced by Social Darwinism.<sup>18</sup> De Benoist regarded

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<sup>13</sup> Stuchbery, Michael "Should Germany be worried about the far-right 'identity movement'" *The Local*, 2019

<sup>14</sup> Bures, Elish "Germany's new politics of cultural despair" *Foreign Policy*, 2018

<sup>15</sup> Angelos, James "The Prophet of Germany's New Right" *New York Times*, 2017

<sup>16</sup> Zuquete, Jose Pedro "The Identitarians: The movement against Globalism and Islam in Europe" *University of Notre Dame Press*, 2018

<sup>17</sup> Cheung, Benson "Explaining the European New Right: Interview with Tamir Bar-On" *Political Capital*, 2018

<sup>18</sup> Vejvodova, Petra "The Identitarian movement – renewed idea of alternative Europe" *Department of Political Science, Masaryk University*, 2014

modernity as the cause of loneliness, by severing the ties of individuals to communal institutions such as family and the nation, and believed a return to an organic community would nurture that sense of belonging.

De Benoist argued that the 'natural' ethnic order of Europe was being diluted by immigration and advocated for a pan-European movement that focused on ethnic protectionism.<sup>19</sup> This idea, that decreed ethnicity was the determining factor for access to group membership became popularised by the far-right, who regarded immigration as threats against the native group.<sup>20</sup> As this report will show, there are obvious similarities between this and the modern Identitarian movement which believes European culture is besieged by Muslim immigration.

The ND opposed multiculturalism and liberal democracy, pushing for a more localised form of 'organic democracy' that prioritised the preservation of European ethnicity, identity and culture in areas where they lived. Many observers have drawn parallels between De Benoist's vision of an ethnonationalist state, and that of modern Identitarian movements such as Generation Identity or the prominent far-right American activist Richard Spencer.<sup>21</sup>

### **Bloc Identitaire:**

Generation Identity is the youth wing for the far-right nationalist movement known as Bloc Identitaire. The latter contains a mix of political ideologies, including regional decentralisation, greater direct democracy and regards both Islam and America as the twin imperialist threats to Europe. Bloc Identitaire borrows heavily from De Benoist's philosophy, adhering to an ethnopluralist vision of Europe, believing that Islam and globalism challenge this new Europe.

It began in 2003 when some former members of various groups, including Unite Radicale and anti-Zionist and National Bolshevik sympathisers, decided to join. Its movement has included members from the National Front and those inspired by the Nouvelle Droite movement. The ethnonationalist principles of ND are visible in Bloc Identitaire's pan-European ideology which rejects immigration and Islam. Such principles have led to the group being accused of trying to marginalise groups like Jews and Muslims, when they began offering pork soup to homeless people, knowing Muslims and Jews would be unable to eat this.<sup>22</sup>

In 2003 it organized a campaign against the rap group Sniper which led to several of their concerts being cancelled.<sup>23</sup>

Within France, the far-right have protested against what they see as the increasing influence of Islam, believing it to be a perversion of the country's celebrated secular culture. As Michel Gandilhon explained, this has been appropriated by National Front, and increasingly, Bloc Identitaire.<sup>24</sup> The latter saw signs of creeping Islamic culture in things such as halal food, mosques, open-air prayers, and regarded Islam as a distortion of French culture that needed to be reversed.

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<sup>19</sup> Buet, Pierre and Feder, Lester "They wanted to be a better class of white nationalists. They claimed this man as their father" *Buzzfeed*, 2017

<sup>20</sup> Rydgren, Jens "The sociology of the radical right" *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2017

<sup>21</sup> Williams, Thomas Chatteron "The French origins of 'You will not replace us'" *New Yorker*, 2017

<sup>22</sup> "French crackdown on 'racist soup'" *BBC*, 2006

<sup>23</sup> Gauthier, Nicole "Mulhouse: The extreme right torpedoes the group rap Sniper" *Liberation Cinema*, 2003

<sup>24</sup> Gandilhon, Michel and edited by Taylor, Max and Holbrook, Donald and Currie, P.M. "Extreme right wing political violence and terrorism" *Bloomsbury*, 2013



Within France, the Identitaire movement has thrived on depicting itself as a protector of French values of liberty, equality and secularism by protecting itself as the robust opponent of an illiberal and authoritarian ideological force in Islam. This has allowed Bloc Identitaire, arguably, to disguise its racism often to the masses by masquerading as defenders of French customs, rather than a group endorsing racial separatism.

Gandilhon explained that research illustrated a demographic shift as Europeans, increasingly averse to living with Muslim immigrant neighbours, were leaving cosmopolitan, globalised cities to move to rural towns or on the fringes of cities. This is known as 'white flight', and according to Generation Identity, is triggered by the erosion of social capital due to mass immigration.<sup>25</sup> Although it would be presumptuous to describe these groups as ethnopluralist in their thinking, what is clear is that the ideas of ethnic and cultural separatism is fuelled by the sense that those leaving areas of high immigration will be receptive to such proposals.

### **Martin Sellner:**

Although Generation Identity began in France, it has expanded to numerous countries including Italy, the UK, Germany and Austria. Its success is primarily due to its call for a pan-European movement that resists outside immigration, and Islam.<sup>26</sup> The appeal of GI comes from its insistence that the challenges facing on European country are challenges facing the others too, and thus they are one people, who need a fortified and unified stance against the threat of Islam and cultural assimilation.

One of the important figures in this is an Austrian called Martin Sellner. He has become widely popular within the European far-right circles, with the BBC describing him as their poster boy.<sup>27</sup> Sellner has become the face of the Austrian far-right and Generation Identity across Europe, accused of stirring bigotry through his aggressive opposition to Muslim immigration and acts of public disruptions.

During his youth he joined nationalist movements and became involved in Austria's neo-Nazi causes. Sellner insisted that this was because of the dearth of right-wing groups in Austria, but admitted he was unsure if this made him a racist or not.<sup>28</sup> However in an undercover documentary by ITV, Sellner was exposed for discussing contacts between Generation Identity and American white supremacist groups, and made troubling remarks about Jews, including that they were a problem in the 1920s.<sup>29</sup>

In the video, Sellner warned that whites would become an "endangered minority", alluding to the theory of 'great displacement' and 'white genocide' which claim that white people are being erased through the process of mass immigration and multiculturalism.

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<sup>25</sup> "Debunking the dogma of diversity – in theory and practice" *Generation Identity*, 2018

<sup>26</sup> Knight, Ben "German right-wing 'Identitarians becoming radicalised'" *DW*, 2017

<sup>27</sup> Cox, Simon and Meisel, Anna "Martin Sellner: the new face of the far right in Europe" *BBC*, 2018

<sup>28</sup> Cox, Simon and Meisel, Anna "Martin Sellner: the new face of the far right in Europe" *BBC*, 2018

<sup>29</sup> "Undercover: Inside Britain's New Far-Right" 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IM4wtEr4No>

Furthermore, in 2008, he helped leading members of the Austrian neo-Nazi movement disrupt demonstrations by liberal and left-wing activists and made travelled to memorial services for Wehrmacht soldiers.

In April 2016, Sellner and GI protesters interrupted a play by asylum seekers from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, some of whom had fled ISIS, by invading the stage, unfurling a banner criticising the audience and hurling fake blood at them. This led to a fight breaking out in a bid to eject the GI protesters. In response to one of the refugees saying her experiences in fleeing had been traumatic, Sellner dismissed this, refusing to believe anyone was traumatised.

In 2017, he was banned from carrying weapons after an incident in Vienna where he pepper sprayed people he deemed to be far-left activists.<sup>30</sup> In March 2018, he and his fiancée, Brittany Pettibone, were barred from visiting the UK after they planned to attend a far-right event in Hyde Park.<sup>31</sup>

In March 2019, his home was raided as part of financial investigations, during which it was uncovered that he received a substantial amount of money from the New Zealand terror suspect. In light of this revelation, he was banned from entering America, where he was due to get married to Brittany Pettibone.

News emerged that in 2006, Sellner had placed a swastika on a synagogue.<sup>32</sup> It was reported that Sellner and a companion had carried out the act after British Holocaust denier David Irving was arrested in Austria in 2005 and jailed. Denying the Holocaust is illegal in Austria. Sellner had also provided a badge saying "aryan youth" and an anti-Turkish poster.

## Setbacks

Following pressure to clamp down on their spread of ethnopluralist messaging, Facebook banned Generation Identity in 2018.<sup>33</sup> The group protested this as an attack on free speech. However, Martin Sellner's Twitter profile remains active; their campaign 'Defend Europe' also has an active Twitter account.

Sellner was banned from entering the UK and deported from the airport along with his fiancée.<sup>34</sup>

Although they have denied such parallels, there are clear allusions to Nazism in how the modern Identitarians believe in a society of ethnic purity. Unsurprisingly, many of their members have been involved with neo-Nazi groups. In France, the branch plunged into controversy

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<sup>30</sup> Sellner, Martin "Pepper Spray and Irony – Antifa Attack in the Subway" *YouTube*, 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDPaZtPn-n8>

<sup>31</sup> Strickland, Patrick "Austria cracks down on far-right Identitarian Movement" *Al Jazeera*, 2018

<sup>32</sup> "Austria far-right activist condemned over swastika" *BBC*, 2019

<sup>33</sup> Bailey, Luke "Far-right group Generation Identity have been banned from Facebook across Facebook" *I news*, 2018

<sup>34</sup> Townsend, Mark "Anti-Muslim campaigners denied entry to UK at border" *Guardian*, 2018

when it was revealed that one of the members had neo-Nazi ties and had been involved in racist attacks, leading to the prominent British member Tom Dupre resigning.<sup>35</sup>

The Identitarian movement's Austrian branch was damaged by a raft of charges against seventeen members and sympathisers of the cause in 2018.<sup>36</sup> The charges included forming a criminal organisation, hate speech, property damage and coercion. Among those who were arrested was the GI ringleader, Martin Sellner. This led to speculation that the movement's infrastructure could be seriously weakened, as its Austrian link is one of the movement's more established branches. However, they were found not to be guilty.

## What makes Generation Identity so dangerous?

The cosmos of Western politics has been in a state of constant flux for the past decade. The financial crash in 2007 marked the beginning of a new wave of populist politics that often found its solutions for the crash by focusing on migrants. In this climate, Western societies have been unsettled by a wave of right-wing populism disrupting the political consensus of liberal centrism that had been established since the nineties in countries such as the UK and USA.<sup>37</sup>

In Britain, Brexit was the culmination of years of cultural and economic anxiety about globalisation and immigration. In the same year, Donald Trump rode on a wave of populist anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric to win the US presidential race. Europe has witnessed the spectacular rise of the far-right across France, Germany, Italy, Hungary and other countries.<sup>38</sup> It is within this social climate that Generation Identity have thrived. Globalisation has created an insecurity about the status of cultures and local identities, and GI have successfully exploited these anxieties through ethnopluralist rhetoric of white displacement.<sup>39,40</sup>

There are two recurring themes that have underpinned the European Identitarian movement. The first is the theory of white displacement packaged in the broader context of fears about possible dissolution of local cultures.<sup>41</sup> This has fuelled populist right-wing surges across a variety of countries, often piggybacking off the cultural protectionist language of the mainstream right to enshroud itself in political legitimacy.

The second is the belief that Islam is incompatible with the West, and that Muslims are taking over the Western world, aided by the liberal class, media and politicians.<sup>42</sup> This has both fuelled

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<sup>35</sup> Townsend, Mark "Senior member of European far-right group quits over neo-Nazi link" *Guardian*, 2018

<sup>36</sup> Strickland, Patrick "Austria cracks down on far-right Identitarian Movement" *Al Jazeera*, 2018

<sup>37</sup> Henley, Jon "How populism emerged as an electoral force in Europe" *Guardian*, 2018

<sup>38</sup> Bell, Matthew "Meet the Identitarians, Europe's 'new right'" *PRI*, 2016

<sup>39</sup> Huetlin, Josephine "Europe's 'alt-right' back from the dead with fresh young face" *Daily Beast*, 2017

<sup>40</sup> Williams, Thomas Chatteron "The French Origins of 'you will not replace us'" *The New Yorker*, 2017

<sup>41</sup> Blow, Charles "White extinction anxiety" *New York Times*, 2018

<sup>42</sup> Kleinfeld, Philip "Meet the French far-right who will try to capitalise on the terrorist attacks" *Vice*, 2015



a surge in anti-Muslim hatred and been fuelled itself undeniably by consistent failures to deal with violent Islamism.<sup>43</sup>

Through both these themes, Generation Identity across Europe has pushed a strongly ethnic-rooted concept of the native community, one that excludes immigrants, refugees and Muslims and believes in the return to organic European societies. As Jose Pedro Zuquette explained, Identitarians who were opposed to the "steamroller of globalism, communities and cultures" believed that their identities needed to be robustly defended.<sup>44</sup> In an increasingly globalised world, coupled with the European Union's Freedom of Movement rule, the GI's pan-European nationalism ideology has swelled across numerous borders.

An article in the New York Times explained that the movement had "purged their language of crude racism."<sup>45</sup> Instead they argued for remigration, sending immigrants and refugees back to their ancestral homes and arguing that the prosperity of cultures depended on remaining broadly homogeneous. They have accused liberal politicians of allowing white Europeans to be supplanted by Muslims.

Young people are often vulnerable to radical ideas at a time of when their socio-political worldview is still developing. This makes them particularly susceptible to GI who exist as a youth movement and hold numerous activities that are communal, almost militaristic, and breed a sense of fraternity.

### **White nationalism and ethnopluralism:**

Generation Identity, like their adult wing Bloc Identitaire, strongly adhere to many of the ethnopluralist ideas previously laid out by Alain de Benoist, whether openly or discreetly.<sup>46</sup> Just as de Benoist argued in the 'right to difference' and opposition to forces that erased schisms between ethnic identities, today, the Western Identitarian movements have also echoed this argument.

An article in BuzzFeed noted that this argument "caught the eye of a new generation of white nationalists, in whose hands ethnopluralism became a kind of upside-down multiculturalism. They were not white supremacists, they claimed, but they believed that everyone was better off in a world where ethnicities were separate but — at least theoretically — equal."<sup>47</sup>

GI's ideology is strongly influenced by Alain de Benoist here, who criticised liberalism for its various sprawling ideas around democracy, immigration and the economy. This ethnic nationalism of GI is anchored heavily in a nostalgic yearning for the supposed certainty of the past, prior to immigration and globalisation. It has formed the moral framework of alt-right groups such as Generation Identity who regurgitate these arguments through the lens of cultural anxiety during a time of sweeping globalisation. GI believe that immigration and

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<sup>43</sup> Nilsson, Per-Erik "Unveiling the French Republic: National identity, secularism and Islam in contemporary France" p.71, *Brill*, 2018

<sup>44</sup> Zuquete, Jose Pedro "The Identitarians: The movement against Globalism and Islam in Europe" *University of Notre Dame Press*, 2018

<sup>45</sup> Bennhold, Katrin "Germany's far-right rebrands: friendlier face, same doctrine" *New York Times*, 2018

<sup>46</sup> Stuchbery, Michael "Should Germany be worried about the far-right 'Identity Movement'?" *The Local*, 2019

<sup>47</sup> Buet, Pierre and Feder, Lester "They wanted to be a better class of white nationalists. They claimed this man as their father" *Buzzfeed*, 2017

multiculturalism has undermined the fabrics of European civilisation and endangered white people as a group.<sup>48</sup>

The ethnopluralist ideals of the Identitarian Movement are identifiable in its recognition of every nation being as equal but different. This separation of nations is shaped by a ethnic-centric view of the national community, and thus their concept of Europeans is regimented often to the white race. Due to this, the GI rejects transnational movements and institutions and regards supranational infrastructures such as the European Union as a threat to European people by imposing multiculturalism and immigration.

Although the Identitarian Movement does reject what it regards as American imperialism, it is also apparent that the surge in white nationalism in America has greatly impressed the Generation Identity activists, particularly the likes of Martin Sellner and Robert Timm, who is a spokesperson for the movement in Berlin. In particular, the phrase "Make America Great Again" coined by Donald Trump appealed to the GI activists in Germany, stoking the idea that immigration had robbed them of their national virtues.

Despite clear evidence of GI's white nationalist beliefs, the legacy of Nazism has meant that many GI activists such as Robert Timm were keen to avoid nationalist sentiments that they felt could draw parallels to the past. But they have repeatedly demonstrated that they will echo racist tropes and have associations with neo-Nazis. And as de Benoist was deeply sceptical about the merits of cultural assimilation, so are GI, whose insistence that European culture and its peoples should be protected can instantly be decoded as opposition to immigration that they feel threatens white people.<sup>49</sup>

So, what are the policies and ideas of GI that should concern us? Its key idea is "remigration", which is the removal of non-Europeans to their countries of origins, or that which their ancestors are from.<sup>50</sup> In the eyes the ethnopluralist, this would include the removal of asylum seekers and refugees as well as second or third generation home nationals as they are not of pure European heritage. In France, this was central to Generation Identity's concept of the national state, in a policy document the group released during the 2017 presidential campaign.

In conversation secretly filmed by Al Jazeera, Jean-David Cattin, the GI leader in France, said that development aid could be conditioned by the forced expulsion of migrants back to former colonies. "We are France. We have nuclear weapons. We give them hundreds of millions in development aid," he said. "We'd say: 'Listen, we'd love to help you out financially, but you've got to take back your guys.'"<sup>51</sup>

This is a chilling admission of support for a process of ethnic cleansing that can be compared with Nazi views of a racially pure society. Mathias Destal explained that, "It would mean deporting thousands and thousands of people to countries which are supposedly their countries of origin because their ancestors might have lived there or because the colour of their skin or their culture are associated with countries which are not France ... so it would practically be ethnic cleansing."<sup>52</sup> In 2016, Generation Identity's Austrian leader Martin Sellner

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<sup>48</sup> Parrinello, Antonio and Scherer, Steve "Far-right millennials set out to sea to 'defend Europe' from migrants" *Reuters*, 2017

<sup>49</sup> Bennhold, Katrin "Germany's far-right rebrands: friendlier face, same doctrine" *The New York Times*, 2018

<sup>50</sup> "Generation Hate: French far-right's violence and racism exposed" *Al Jazeera*, 2018

<sup>51</sup> "What is Generation Identity?" *Al Jazeera*, 2018

<sup>52</sup> "Generation Identity: French far-right's violence and racism exposed" *Al Jazeera*, 2018

said in an interview that Europe needed the creation of migrant-only zones to be populated by refugees. Aware that this sounded like both ethnic cleansing of local areas and segregation, fellow member Phillip Huemer added that they should be defined as 'safe zones'.<sup>53</sup>

This policy would create a huge social upheaval in uprooting entire communities and leaving behind a thoroughly disfigured society. It also rests on the idea that citizenship and nationality is ordained by ethnicity rather than cultural acceptance of the land. Other groups such as refugees and asylum seekers, often fleeing war and persecution, would be expelled as not being European.

This was evident in their "Defend Europe" campaigns when they hired boats to disrupt NGO ships trying to aid refugees out in sea.<sup>54</sup> Given the sheer number of refugees who have died at sea, which is a well-documented atrocity, the callousness of this cannot be understated. Generation Identity's belief in ethnopluralism overrides a fundamental principle of humanitarian aid born from a sense of empathy. This campaign raised \$200,000 from over three thousand contributors.<sup>55</sup>

A GI activist who participated in the campaign said it was part of a mission to prevent the dissolution of Europe's distinct culture by enabling multiculturalism.<sup>56</sup> He explained that the mixture of cultures will lead to a 'monoculture'. He compared the EU to the mixing of beer, apple juice, water, cherry juice and Prosecco, explaining that although they might be individually pleasant "you would never mix them all together in a big glass and drink it because it would taste bad."

Although Generation Identity's membership is not particularly large, and nor have they conjured the level of support that groups like Pegida did, what is apparent is their potency in recognising the cultural and economic grievances felt by European citizens and then ruthlessly exploiting them.<sup>57</sup> Sweeping changes induced by globalisation to national economies, such as industrial decline in some states, and exacerbated levels of inequality at a time of relatively fast-paced immigration have created the sense of a Europe in rapid change.

There is unquestionably a degree of anxiety surrounding this feeling of great change which the far-right have thrived on by attributing the blame to the migrant, a fluid and malleable Other for the GI who can be anyone from Turkish to Arab to Nigerian or Asian.<sup>58</sup> By essentially othering the immigrant and projecting all national deficiencies and cultural concerns onto them, the far-right can create the idea that the ideal, civilised European society is being undermined by the moral corruption of the foreigners.

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<sup>53</sup> Kirby, Will "Newsnight shock: far-right group calls for 'migrant only zones' to be created in Europe" *Daily Express*, 2016

<sup>54</sup> Scherer, Steve and Parrinello, Antonio "Far-right millennials to 'defend Europe' from migrants" *Reuters*, 2017

<sup>55</sup> Farrell, Jeff "Defend Europe: anti-immigrant ship trying to block refugees from crossing Mediterranean has funding cancelled" *Independent*, 2017

<sup>56</sup> York, Chris and Anselmi, Paco "I met Defend Europe to try and work out what the hell they're doing" *HuffPost*, 2017

<sup>57</sup> Poulter, James "Meet the snowflakes who are the new face of the race hate" *Vice*, 2018

<sup>58</sup> Chessum, Michael "The far-right is marching for Brexit. Will the left stand against it?" *Guardian*, 2018



This also emboldens their perception of citizenship orbiting around ethnicity. Not only does this lead to racial discrimination against citizens with immigrant roots, it is the catalyst to the demonisation of refugees, the idea that they are external cultural threats who will threaten their people and ways of life, that they can never become part of the national family.<sup>59</sup>

The challenge in defeating far-right movements is rebutting their myths around a supposed hostile immigrant takeover both eroding local cultures and contributing to a supposedly dwindling white population, known as 'white genocide'.<sup>60 61</sup>

Fortunately, most Europeans do not endorse the 'white genocide' theory, whatever their view on immigration itself.<sup>62</sup> But challenging Generation Identity also requires a proactive and empathetic approach to cultural anxieties rather than idly allowing them to fester and then be exploited by the far-right. Perceived inaction on immigration challenges can breed resentment which is swelled by the far-right's shameless scaremongering.<sup>63</sup> Action against this could involve funding projects and schemes for cultural assimilation, helping migrants to embed themselves within local communities and prevent the sort of social atomisation that the far-right excel in. It would create local communities built upon culturally reciprocal foundations, where contact between migrants and locals exists and prevents the formation of prejudices and stereotypes whipped up by white nationalists.

### **Anti-Muslim bigotry:**

A key tenet of the European Identitarian movement is the fear and prejudice towards Muslims. A fear of 'Islamisation' – the idea that a veil of Islamic influence is falling over Europe – is central to the European Identitarian movement's messaging that European culture is under attack. This was at the heart of their 'Defend Europe' campaign.<sup>64</sup>

The view of Islam as incompatible and alien to the West has created the opinion that Muslims are destroying local culture. Generation Identity are one such group who have exploited and whipped up this anxiety, feeding false information about Muslims. However, even the more mainstream politicians have argued that Islam is incompatible with German culture. The Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said Islam "doesn't belong to Germany" and unveiled a raft of tougher immigration policies in an interview.<sup>65</sup> Although he would later roll back this comment, it highlighted how deeply penetrative the edifice of anti-Muslim opinion had gotten.

A YouGov poll commissioned by the Muslim Council of Elders of a thousand people in Germany found that 47% believed their national values were in direct conflict with that of Islam's, while nearly half would have an issue with someone they know marrying a Muslim.<sup>66</sup> At

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<sup>59</sup> Trilling, Daniel "The irrational fear of migrants carries a deadly price for Europe" *Guardian*, 2018

<sup>60</sup> Kahn-Harris, Keith "'White supremacy' is really about white degeneracy" *Guardian*, 2018

<sup>61</sup> Valencia-Garcia, Louie "Generation Identity: A millennial fascism for the future?" *EuropeNow*, 2018

<sup>62</sup> Stuchbery, Michael "Should Germany be worried about the far-right 'Identitarian Movement'?" *The Local*, 2019

<sup>63</sup> Calamur, Krishnadev "Why Sweden's far-right is on the rise" *Atlantic*, 2018

<sup>64</sup> Wildman, Sarah "A European alt-right group wants to take to the sea to stop rescuers from saving migrants" *Vox*, 2017

<sup>65</sup> Wrobel, Aleksandra "Islam is 'part of Germany,' says German president" *Politico*, 2018

<sup>66</sup> De Waal, Joel Rogers "Western/MENA attitudes to religion portray a lack of faith in common values" *YouGov*, 2019 <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/international/articles-reports/2019/02/03/westernmena-attitudes-religion-portray-lack-faith->

least 46% of French polled similarly believed there was a direct conflict with Islam, and 47% would have an issue with marriage with a Muslim. Britain shows a bit more tolerance but still had 38% in the commissioned poll saying they believed Islam was incompatible with the West. Only 20% and 22% of Germans and French in the poll believed there was such cultural compatibility.

The poll also showed that 72% of the polled Germans and French were either fairly or very concerned by the rise in Islamic extremism (this is unsurprising given the rise of ISIS and the spate of terrorist attacks in Europe inspired by it), while 66% of Britons shared these concerns. However, according to the Daily Express, the YouGov poll also showed that only 7% of Germans were familiar with the teachings of Islam.<sup>67</sup> This shows that misconceptions about Islam can be significantly behind the underlying fears of cultural tensions and extremism regarding the religion.

The anti-Muslim language is the centrepiece of the modern far-right ideology. It is known as 'Counter-Jihad', which centres around the idea that the Western world is being taken over by Muslims.<sup>68</sup> The suspicion that Islam is antithetical to the Western world and is trying to oppress it through a soft power takeover is a historic fear. This is highlighted in the conspiratorial nature of vehement disagreements with halal slaughter, the hijab, local mosques and refugees from Muslim populations.<sup>69</sup>

Counter-Jihad as a specific ideology dates to the eighties, owing to writers and commentators such as Daniel Pipes of Middle East Forum. It gained momentum after the 9/11 terrorist attack which fuelled a far-right paranoia that Muslims were plotting against the West.

Adherents to the counter-Jihad ideology subscribe to the assumption behind Islamophobia that Muslims are planning to impose the Sharia Law on the West, aided by supposedly unchecked levels of growth in a Western Muslim population that would exist as a fifth column in the West.

Many counter-Jihad ideologues believe that violence is theologically enshrined in Islam and is therefore an intrinsic feature of the religion.<sup>70</sup> The Counter-Jihad movement is global, crossing borders in a transatlantic alliance between European and American far-right writers and activists with a mutually shared obsession and contempt towards Muslim immigration.<sup>71</sup>

This was arguably the ideological motivations of the Christchurch mosque terrorist who mowed down worshippers inside two mosques.<sup>72</sup> At the time of writing this report, New Zealand was struck by a mass shooting terrorist attack after an Australian-born white supremacist, Brenton Tarrant. This attack left 50 people dead. It was an incident that brought to the surface, a belated understanding of the far-right terror threatening Western civilisation. It also brought

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<sup>67</sup> Perring, Rebecca "Nearly half of France and Germany believe Islam clashes with society values – shock poll" *Daily Express*, 2019

<sup>68</sup> Lee, Benjamin "A Day in the 'Swamp': Understanding discourse in the online counter-Jihad nebula" *Democracy and Security*, 2015

<sup>69</sup> Hakim, Yalda "Migrant crisis: 'Hipster right group' trying to stop rescue ships" *BBC News*, 2017

<sup>70</sup> Beirich, Heidi "Hate across the waters: the role of American extremists in fostering an international white consciousness" *Bloomsbury Publishing*, pp.91-92, 2013

<sup>71</sup> Huetlin, Josephine "Europe's alt-right back from the dead with fresh young face" *Daily Beast*, 2017

<sup>72</sup> Martin, Lisa "Far-right ideology detailed in Christchurch shooting 'manifesto'" *Guardian*, 2019

into focus, the bone-chilling white Identitarian manifesto of the terrorist.<sup>73</sup> What was apparent, was that the terrorist's ideological hatred of Muslims was spawned by the belief in a civilisational clash, to reverse the process of 'Islamisation' which has come in the number of mosques, halal shops, Muslim population growth and terrorist atrocities.

One subtheme of significance is the idea that Western women are threatened by Muslim men of migrant backgrounds. This stereotype of migrant men raping local Western women has long been a part of Western folklore; it evokes the notion of the "Other" where foreign cultural and ethnic groups are portrayed as inherently deficient, both morally and intellectually.<sup>74</sup> During the medieval period, many Christian writers referred to Muslims and Arabs as 'Saracens', a term unknown in its meaning but thought to be a Latin expression for 'plunderers', 'thieves' or 'robbers'. This term had a negative association with a Saracen deemed to be an opponent of Christianity.

Some writers, such as John of Damascus, criticised the Saracens as followers of a false prophet and "forerunner to the Antichrist."<sup>75</sup> This terminology framed Muslims as a threat to the moral and religious foundations of Western civilisation. Western literature heavily racialised Islam during the Middle Ages, with medieval writing and art casting Saracens as being black-skinned, while Christians were written as light-skinned. Western literature was notable in both exoticising foreign lands but also portraying their men as moral dangers.

This orientalist thought is also rooted in sexism in treating women as properties of men and needing of a tough white male protector against the horde of Muslim savages. This depiction of Muslim men has been deeply embedded into Western literature and political thought, known as Orientalism.<sup>76</sup> The writer Edward Said, who coined this, described this as "enables the political, economic, cultural and social domination of the West, not just during colonial times, but also in the present." It's unsurprising that Brenton Tarrant subscribed to these views, particularly in his belief that Muslim migrants threatened white women. His manifesto included deeply harrowing promises to murder those he considered responsible for the sexual exploitation of the indigenous women and children of the Western nations.

In the aftermath, the UK branch of Generation Identity was invited onto BBC Newsnight, something that was heavily criticised.<sup>77</sup> Although GI were not mentioned in Tarrant's manifesto, the theme of "great replacement" and the belief in organic societies divided upon ethnic lines was clear. Tarrant spoke of his belief in a diversity of nations and societies but not diversity within them. He railed against what he saw as Western institutions giving way to mosques, and labelled Muslims as "invaders" and "colonisers". These are the undeniable hallmarks of GI's ideology, one that centres around the belief that Islam is incompatible with Europe, and therefore Muslims will always be an alien presence. The 'Islamisation' of Europe and the wider West manifested itself throughout Tarrant's views.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Debney, Ben "Christchurch, white victim complex and savage capitalism" *Counterpunch*, 2019

<sup>74</sup> Gupta, Rahila "Taking a flawed stand against orientalism" *Open Democracy*, 2012

<sup>75</sup> Block, Jonn "The Quran in Christian-Muslim Dialogue" *Routledge*, 2014

<sup>76</sup> Said, Edward "Orientalism" *Vintage Books*, 1979

<sup>77</sup> Giordano, Chiara "Shami Chakrabarti attacks BBC live on air over Newsnight platform for far-right Generation Identity" *Independent*, 2019

<sup>78</sup> Lowles, Nick "The terror in New Zealand is borne of the same far-right ideology taking hold in Europe" *New Statesman*, 2019

It's also worth noting that, just as Tarrant believed he was participating in an ageless war between Europe and Muslims, Generation Identity in 2012 targeted a mosque that had been the site of a clash between Europeans and the Muslim Moors many centuries prior. The sense of being part of a great ethnic and cultural war amongst the far-right is both striking and alarming.<sup>79</sup> In 2017, it was uncovered that Generation Identity were recruiting British members and sending them to militaristic training camps overseas; it is believed that they were trained in fitness and unarmed combat.<sup>80</sup> Although GI have not openly incited a race war, a combination of training camps and a rhetoric of the 'great replacement' alludes to as much.

Here are some of the examples that emphasise how the Identitarian movement has sought to weave the narrative of "Islam versus the West" into their ideology.

In 2010, the adult wing of Generation Identity, Bloc Identitaire, staged a protest in the 'resistance to the Islamisation of France' at the Arc de Triomphe, where people would eat pork and drink grape juice or wine.<sup>81</sup> As mentioned before, in 2012, Generation Identity occupied a mosque that was the site of where Charles Martel defeated a Muslim Moorish force that had invaded in 732.<sup>82</sup> Following this, they demanded a referendum on immigration and the construction of future mosques.

In 2018, members of GI were caught attacking Muslims in Lille. One of the leaders of their local branch, Aurelien Verhassel, explained that "the advantage is that we're in a violent environment and everyone accepts that," thereby implying that hate crime assaults would be a facet of the GI tactics if necessary.<sup>83</sup> This included assaulting migrant youth repeatedly and terrorising them.

The group has repeatedly shown that it regards Muslim immigration and Islamic institutions as antithetical to what Europe represents. Their ideology has stoked violence both on a small scale through hate crime, but also on a larger scale, seen through its underpinning in the violent terrorist atrocity in New Zealand. Their ideological premise of Muslims being intrinsically an alien to the West only demonises Muslims and encourages a portrayal based on hostility, suspicion and deep hatred.<sup>84</sup> The logical endpoint of radical white ethnopluralist Identitarian thought can only ever be violence towards Muslims and minorities.

## Taking the far-right Identitarian threat seriously

If we were not taking seriously the threat of the radical far-right ethnopluralist movements, we must do so now.<sup>85</sup> The focus on violent Islamism as the only form of terror has provided a cover

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<sup>79</sup> Dearden, Lizzie "Far-right extremists preparing for 'war against Islam', report warns after terror plots exposed" *Independent*, 2018

<sup>80</sup> Dearden, Lizzie "Generation Identity: far-right group sending UK recruits to military-style training camps in Europe" *Independent*, 2017

<sup>81</sup> Gay, Mara "Paris Facebook group throws anti-Muslim booze and pork-sausage party" *Politics Daily*, 2010

<sup>82</sup> "French far-right group storms site of new mosque" *France 24*, 2012

<sup>83</sup> "What is Generation Identity?" *Al Jazeera*, 2018

<sup>84</sup> "New Zealand mosque shooter: what we know" *Hope Not Hate*, 2019

<sup>85</sup> Meaney, Thomas "The dark European stain: how the far-right rose again" *New Statesman*, 2018

for these groups to grow and develop their ideas, relatively unchallenged. But the chilling terrorist attack in New Zealand has underlined the critical urgency for a robust conversation on how to deal with this threat.

In the weeks following the Christchurch terror attack, the Austrian chancellor Sebastian Kurz confirmed that there was a financial link between the New Zealand terror suspect and Generation Identity.<sup>86</sup> Police had raided Martin Sellner's home to investigate his electronic devices after tracking a disproportionately high donation from Brenton Tarrant. It's believed that Sellner, the head of the movement's Austrian chapter, received a figure of £1300 from Tarrant in early 2018.

It was reported that this revelation was unearthed from financial investigations into Sellner regarding possible offences, at which this discovery was made.<sup>87</sup> "Any connection between the Christchurch attacker and members of the Identitarians in Austria needs to be comprehensively and ruthlessly investigated," Mr Kurz said. It is already known that Tarrant had met far-right extremists in Europe, and it is now highly possible that he did meet some Identitarian members during his visit. The ideological overlap regarding 'Great Replacement' and the 'white genocide' means it's not difficult to understand why Tarrant would want to donate to the Identitarian movement.

This does, however, reinforce how critically important it is that the threat of Generation Identity is taken with extreme attention by policymakers. The fight against extremism must be one waged on two fronts, both against Islamist extremism but also the vicious bigotry of far-right movements determined to ethnically cleanse Europe. The financial link between GI and the New Zealand terrorist should not have been the first signal to us, that there could be some connection there. The ideas that GI advocate were glaringly apparent in Tarrant's manifesto. This is a movement which has sent its recruits on a military training exercise and has whipped up incredible hate towards minorities. The link is there but what is lacking is the political will to do something about it.

Governments should seriously explore banning the Identitarian movement in Europe as an extremist organisation. Though GI do not explicitly express violence, their beliefs are rooted in it towards minorities, and chillingly believe in ethnically cleansing Europe. These are undoubtedly extreme views that lead to intense discrimination, and as we have tragically seen, violence towards other groups. Therefore whilst it would be wrong to classify GI as a terrorist group, they are an extremist movement and should be seen as such.

This would also necessitate more responsible reporting from news organisations, depicting them as the dangerous extremists that they are, rather than "hipsters" as some, inexplicably, have chosen to do so.<sup>88</sup> This runs the risk of sanitising the danger of GI and normalising them as a movement as legitimate as others, and not one that is capable of radicalising young people against minorities.

Tackling the Identitarian movement requires tackling the negative connotations associated with Muslims and migrants. The importance of ethnicity in a multiracial society must be diminished, as it incites racial violence over meaningless difference. Cultural dissolution is a

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<sup>86</sup> Baynes, Chris "New Zealand terror attacker had financial links with European far-right group Generation Identity, Austrian chancellor reveals" *Independent*, 2019

<sup>87</sup> O'Grady, Siobhan "Austrian police raid home of right-wing activist Martin Sellner alleging link to suspected New Zealand shooter" *National Post*, 2019

<sup>88</sup> Tell MAMA Twitter, 2019 <https://twitter.com/TellMamaUK/status/1110866046733508608>



concern, but a strong cultural identity is not separate to a warm approach towards migration and Muslims. This simply plays on the false dichotomy between Muslims and the West.<sup>89</sup> Governments must address the racism that lurks within their societies, and – how stereotypes anchored in centuries of Western thought – have been recycled by the far-right to create fear, panic, suspicion and hate of Muslims.<sup>90</sup> Generation Identity have preyed on these myths and rejuvenated them within our societies on a shocking scale.

The far-right Identitarian myth of a decaying West must be dismantled. Panic about the 'Great Replacement' based on speculative research on future demographic populations and current birth rates have been used to perpetuate the myth that Muslim migrants are taking over. Generation Identity, across different countries, have spread this to stir panic over immigration. This combined with hostility towards increasing provisions towards the freedom of worship for Muslims, such as mosque constructions and halal slaughter, has entrenched far-right viewpoints that there is indeed a Muslim takeover, and that Europe is on the edge of a cultural abyss, because that the Saracens are finally coming.<sup>91</sup> This should not be regarded merely as racism of the old either, despite these being old-fashioned stereotypes. GI is a youth movement and has endeared itself to young men and women who object to immigration and multiculturalism.

Dealing with far-right Identitarian movements also requires those with power to wield more responsibility and awareness about the content that is being produced under their watch.<sup>92</sup> The internet and social media have radicalised the far-right and bred a dark corner in the online world where violent hate has festered, unchecked and unchallenged. When it has manifested itself, we have been too slow to confront it, because we have been oblivious to its rise. The social media giants have often been painstakingly slow when dealing with the proliferation of far-right content, and Brenton Tarrant was able to upload his sickening massacre on Facebook without it being instantly removed. YouTube has also failed in dealing with far-right ideologues who don't explicitly incite violence but dehumanise groups enough to create conditions for it. Social media platforms were slow in removing the online accounts of Generation Identity, individuals linked to them, such as Martin Sellner remain on such platforms.

Politicians must exercise more care in how they address topics regarding Muslims and be guarded against playing into old-fashioned prejudices. Demonisation of Muslims for electoral gain has only served to heighten the air of hostility around Muslim communities in the West, be it through Donald Trump in America or Boris Johnson in Britain referring to women in niqab as "letterboxes".<sup>93,94</sup> When confronting sensitive issues, such as grooming gangs or terrorism, politicians have often used deeply careless language that has generalised Muslims. Today, many Muslims are tarred with hate crime insults such as 'paedo' in reference to the grooming gang scandal in Rotherham and other areas.

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<sup>89</sup> Holleran, Max "The opportunistic rise of Europe's far-right" *New Republic*, 2018

<sup>90</sup> "Islamophobia behind far-right rise in UK, report says" *BBC*, 2019

<sup>91</sup> Peled, Daniella "UK's ritual slaughter debate reeks of prejudice" *Haaretz*, 2014

<sup>92</sup> Grierson, Jamie and Dodd, Vikram "Systematic Islamophobia fuels terror attacks, say Muslim leaders" *Guardian*, 2019

<sup>93</sup> Bayoumi, Moustafa "White nationalism is on the march, and Donald Trump is at least partly to blame" *Guardian*, 2019

<sup>94</sup> "Letterbox insults against Muslim women spike in wake of Boris Johnson comments" *Tell MAMA*, 2018

This also requires the media to behave more introspectively and understand its role in facilitating hatred against Muslims.<sup>95</sup> Whilst it would be wrong to argue that the media has created far-right hatred, as white nationalist prejudices have predated modern newspaper rhetoric, it should be argued that anti-Muslim hatred has been magnified by large parts of the media's deeply cynical representation of Muslims, often with false or exaggerated stories.<sup>96</sup>

Furthermore, several prominent writers have unquestionably given a microphone to many terrible far-right Identitarian assumptions.<sup>97</sup> This has included calling for the racial profiling of Muslims at airports and suggesting a cultural crisis in France because of Muslim immigration.<sup>98</sup> It has also included well known writers producing books discussing Europe's cultural decay brought about by mass immigration.<sup>99</sup> A lot of these ideas have been championed by far-right governments such as Hungary's Viktor Orban.<sup>100</sup>

What must also be addressed is exploring how much importance we attach to the value of Muslim integration. We have often seen arguments that failure to integrate is the main rise behind far-right prejudice; and certainly, the breakdown of communities does contribute to the reinforcement of stereotypes. Initiatives to foster genuinely cohesive, multiracial and multifaith local communities deeply embedded in their towns can be a powerful antidote to the rise in extremism.

However, it won't convince the far-right to stop seeing Muslims as the enemy. On the contrary, an integrated, liberal Muslim is their worst fear because it is the successful embodiment of everything they oppose. There is a reason why the far-right have deeply loathed Sadiq Khan, and why American congresswoman Ilhan Omar has been relentlessly bullied. Demanding integration from Muslims as a way of combating two-pronged extremism ignores that racism of white nationalists fears that very same thing.

The importance of defeating the white Identitarian far-right movement has never been greater. After the Christchurch shooting, it is evident that there is proof of individuals being radicalised by the ethnopluralist ideology. It is critical that Western societies defend the safeties, freedoms and dignities of their minority populations and defeat the demonisation of refugees before they are allowed to coalesce into something very sinister. Those in power must show more care in their language towards groups with very little power, voice or representation in society, and therefore are usually most vulnerable to acts of discrimination.

It is vital that the West societies confront the anti-Muslim hatred bubbling in their societies and understand its links to centuries of suspicion and dislike of Muslims. We should look no further than New Zealand itself in terms of how to respond to Islamophobia; in the wake of their tragedy, the Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern gave a series of heartening speeches that showed

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<sup>95</sup> Subramanian, Samanth "One man's (very polite) fight against media Islamophobia" *Guardian*, 2018

<sup>96</sup> Wilson, Jason "Islamophobia is practically enshrined as public policy in Australia" *Guardian*, 2019

<sup>97</sup> Liddle, Rod "Here's everything Islamophobic I have to say all at once" *Spectator*, 2015

<sup>98</sup> Hussain, Murtaza "New Zealand suspect's actions logical conclusions of calling immigrants 'invaders'" *Intercept*, 2019

<sup>99</sup> Hinsliff, Gaby "The Strange Death of Europe by Douglas Murray review – gentrified xenophobia" *Guardian*, 2017

<sup>100</sup> Prime Minister Viktor Orbán met with several speakers of the conference "The Future of Europe", 2018 <http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/prime-minister-viktor-orban-met-with-several-speakers-of-the-conference-the-future-of-europe/>

the power of compassion. New Zealanders rallied around their Muslim neighbours and used their local cultural traditions and customs to display love and solidarity, something which was greatly appreciated by Muslims.<sup>101</sup> There can be no stronger rebuttal to a violent ethnopluralist who believed local cultures were being threatened by Muslims, than a western country offering its solidarity to Muslims hurt by his actions through their local norms. Out of the darkness, came a moment of light that can be a way forward for the rest of us.

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<sup>101</sup> Clifton, Katy "Mongrel Mob biker gang turns up to guard New Zealand mosque during Friday prayers – and are cheered as they perform haka outside" *Evening Standard*, 2019



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