



THE (DEMOCRATIC) FOOTBALL LADS ALLIANCE

A FAR RIGHT ANTECHAMBER?



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***The (Democratic) Football Lads Alliance:
A Far Right Antechamber?***

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On Behalf of Faith Matters

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	2
Origins and formation of the FLA/DFLA	5
Links to the far right and “counter jihad” movement	10
Leadership of the FLA and DFLA	15
Organisation	18
An overview of FLA/DFLA street protests	20
Recommendations	23

Executive Summary

'The DFLA may yet prove to be another incubator group for the far right, like the defense leagues and other anti-Muslim groups before it. Still, it is not entirely there as yet. For this reason alone, and many others besides, simply branding the DFLA 'Nazis' or fascists both misses the point and does little to bring supporters back from the far-right brink.'

The Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA) like its predecessor, the Football Lads Alliance (FLA), is a street based, direct-action street group that staged several large-scale marches in 2017 and 2018. While different in some respects to the EDL and its kin over the last decade, pervasive anti-Muslim rhetoric aligns these 'football lads' with earlier casuals and hooligans from other defence leagues, and cognate groups like PEGIDA (short for Patriotic Europeans against the Islamicisation of the West) UK. Yet there are also important differences, as this report documents, with respect to the development of both the FLA and DFLA. Following a panoramic introduction, close attention is paid to the initial marches and ideological trajectory of: first, the FLA, and then its larger successor, the DFLA, over the initial eighteen months. Following this detailed narrative, a number of important connections with the wider anti-Muslim, so-called 'counter-jihad' movement are noted. Of particular relevance is the support given to the DFLA in recent months by the political parties, UKIP and For Britain. Profiles of leading figures are then provided, alongside several snapshots of supporters with fascist and even neo-Nazi relationships, with the latter underscoring the noxious elements these street-based groups attract. In fact, this was the very reason 'Tommy Robinson' gave in October 2013 for stepping down from the EDL he had founded four and a half years earlier: right-wing extremist entryism. This threat also squarely faces the DFLA at the time of compiling this report in early 2019, with final recommendations suggesting ways in which this danger can be mitigated. Sections on both the FLA and DFLA organisations, alongside a timeline of key events, are also included.

1. Introduction

This report on the DFLA comes almost exactly a year since the group's formation. Also significantly, it is released a decade since the emergence of the first anti-Muslim street movement in Britain, the English Defence League. Sparked by abuse from Islamist extremists in Luton on 10 March 2009 toward 200 parading Anglian regiment soldiers returning from Iraq, what became the EDL by the spring of that year took most observers completely by surprise. Looking back, the challenge the EDL and its successor movements – local and national variations, like the Scottish and Welsh defence leagues, through to PEGIDA UK and the Yellow Vests today have posed – is substantial, both in Britain and abroad. It has demanded fresh responses from civil society to policing agencies, and much else besides.¹ These direct-action social movements have even piqued more established far-right groups, such as the now-moribund British National Party (BNP), which banned members from attending EDL marches. In large measure, this was due to the EDL's initial novelty. Led by football casuals and (mostly) disaffected, white working-class Britons, the EDL offered an 'in your face' political challenge organised almost entirely via the internet and mobile phone. As is now clear, the street-based challenge it represents continues to be one of anti-Muslim hostility.

In no small part, the EDL was responsible for what one Conservative minister termed 'passing the dinner table test' of conversational anti-Muslim prejudice, or Islamophobia, in contemporary Britain.² It is precisely this 'mainstreaming' of anti-Muslim prejudice that is detectable in every march, and on every social media page affiliated with these groups. For a while, the EDL made half-hearted attempts to distinguish *Islamists* – who politicise, simplify and pervert the Muslim faith through ideological extremism – from Britain's Muslim communities, who comprise some 5% of the population. Yet these distinctions collapsed under the raucous weight of boozy confrontations and inflammatory speeches, which aligned *all Muslims* with militant jihadi perversions of their faith. The ringleader of this religious-based bigotry emerging from the EDL was a renowned bully and multi-convicted criminal, Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson), now considered "a bona fide superstar of the international far right" by the leading anti-fascist campaign group, Hope not Hate.³ Testifying to the nature of this conflation of terrorists and all Muslims in Britain, amongst the first academic studies of the EDL from as early as 2011, identified this example of anti-Muslim hostility by Yaxley-Lennon:

"EVERY SINGLE MUSLIM watching this on YouTube, on 7/7 you got away with killing and maiming British citizens, you got away with it. You had better understand that we have built a network from one end of this

¹ See Allchorn, W. (2019), *Anti-Islamic Protest in the UK: Policy Responses to the Far Right*. London: Routledge.

² Kelly, J. (20 January 2011), 'What is Baroness Warsi's "dinner table test"?', *BBC News Magazine*, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-12240315. See also Allen, C., (April 2013), 'Passing the Dinner Table Test Retrospective and Prospective Approaches to Tackling Islamophobia in Britain', *Sage Open* journal 3/2, online at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244013484734> (all websites last accessed 3 March 2019).

³ Murdoch, S. (February 2019), 'The Far Right Online', in '2018 State of Hate Report', p. 44, Hope not Hate, online at: www.hopenothate.org.uk/research/state-of-hate-2018/overview/.

country to the other end, and we will not tolerate it, and the Islamic community will feel the full force of the English Defence League if we see any of our citizens killed, maimed or hurt on British soil ever again.”⁴

Although Yaxley-Lennon has branched into broader far-right terrain since becoming a ‘grooming gangs’ advisor to Gerard Batten’s UKIP, he remains, first and foremost, a baiter and discriminator of Muslims, tarring millions through the actions of hundreds.

And let us be blunt: absolutely, the threat posed by jihadi Islamist terrorists and their ideological sympathisers is serious. Yet no one needs these bullies to tell us that. We can listen to the security services, or to politicians, or to virtually any media outlet to tell us that the conflict against Islamist extremism is a top priority. This is scarcely news, and is hardly being covered up or minimised. Above all, however, these are *separate* issues. Think of it this way: just as peaceable Muslims have been the greatest casualties at the hands of the totalitarian, nigh-genocidal Daesh occupiers in Iraq and Syria, their co-religionists were being accused in Britain by their fellow subjects of being different, or being closet extremists, or even being traitors to their country. In this way, the EDL and its many imitators since 2009 became aligned with the contemporary far right: through trafficking anti-Muslim hostility. This was classic prejudice, the superficial difference located in targeting by religion rather than race (or another protected category of minority group; such as those with disabilities, Jews or LGBT persons).

More to the point, these groups are deafeningly silent when far right terrorists are convicted, whether National Action militants or would-be ‘lone wolf’, self-directed terrorists, which comprise a substantial – and growing – proportion of terrorist plots, attacks, and convictions.⁵ Instead, this is an obsession with Muslims as the alleged ‘enemy within’ which motivates these street-based far right groups. Not only were Muslims, as an undifferentiated mass of ‘others’, accused of abetting terrorism and political violence; any and all grooming and CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) scandals featuring Muslim perpetrators – or any other stick emerging in the news to beat Muslim with, from eating Halal food to wearing religious dress – were cited as evidence that a deviant, suspect community of fifth columnists were living amongst Britons while, at the same time, trying to subvert their culture and society. Implicating all Muslims without distinction is the very hallmark of bigotry, and the EDL’s campaigns against CSE, ‘Sharia courts’ or ‘creeping Islamicisation’ do little to diminish this truth.

This was the wider context in which: first, the Football Lads Alliance (FLA), and then the Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA), emerged on British streets in June 2017. Yet are they simply the ‘new EDL’, as some commentators suggest?⁶ Saying so is not wrong, though

⁴ ‘Tommy Robinson’, cited in Paul Jackson et. al., (2011) ‘The EDL: Britain’s “New Far Right” Social Movement’, Radicalism and New Media Research Group, University of Northampton, quoted p. 63, online at: <http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/6015/7/Jackson20116015.pdf>

⁵ See a summary of the 2018 Global Terrorist Index by Osborne, S. (5 December 2018), ‘Number of far-right terror attacks increases as overall deaths from terrorism fall, report finds’, *The Independent*, online at: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/global-terrorism-index-far-right-attacks-increase-overall-deaths-fall-institute-for-economics-peace-a8667031.html.

⁶ Hughes, A. (17 September 2018), ‘Menace and aggression during ‘new EDL’ demo.’ Sky News, online at: <https://news.sky.com/story/menace-and-aggression-dfla-is-new-edl-11500806>. It is worth noting the EDL still exists, albeit as a shadow of their former self since Tim Ablitt took over from Tommy Robinson in October 2013. For instance, the EDL has a march planned in Wellington, Telford on 16 March 2019; see Robertson, D.

overly reductive. For one, football casuals are a driving force throughout all of these street-based groups. For another, the organising and street activism is similar, if on a much larger scale – the EDL has only ever turned out a fraction of the literally tens of thousands attending the first FLA rallies in 2017. Some of the FLA’s initial support doubtless came about in reaction to the appalling Islamist terrorist attacks witnessed earlier that year in London and Manchester. Some support is also owed to affiliations with more mainstream groups lending credibility, such as the campaign group Veterans against Terrorism; and more recently for the DFLA, the far right political parties, For Britain and UKIP. Yet these are differences in scale rather than type; for instance, the EDL once had the support of the miniscule Liberty GB party led by noted Islamophobe, Paul Weston.

To date, the key difference between the (now-dormant) FLA and DFLA on one hand, and the EDL and its progeny on the other, is that the former groups have made a greater attempt to veil Islamophobic sentiments through slogans like ‘Together We Are Stronger’ (usually shorthand TWAS) or again, ‘against all forms of terrorism and extremism’. Where this was merely a fig-leaf for anti-Muslim prejudice by the defence leagues, genuine campaigns against homelessness, IRA terrorism and Catholic child abuse scandals, for instance, are suggestive of a broader and less prejudicial agenda for both the DFLA and FLA. That said, there are also important differences between these two coexisting groups, as is made clear in Section 2 below. Yet the mask slips often enough for both to be considered anti-Muslim pressure groups – no matter how well ‘curated’ the Facebook and Twitter feeds may be in comparison to less media-savvy defence leagues. The same railing against ‘the left’, the familiar indulging in conspiracies about Islam and Muslims, as well as connections with established right-wing extremists means that, for the FLA and especially for the DFLA, the apple has not fallen far from the tree.⁷

At less than two years since the emergence of the FLA, then, it may be a bit hasty to describe this simply as a ‘far right movement’. But, only a bit. As this report emphasises, by drawing upon reportage and the limited academic analysis available, further rightward is the DFLA’s direction of travel. Recent violence and chaotic scenes at DFLA demonstrations; the latter’s connections with the far right figures like Tommy Robinson and groups such as Generation Identity, For Britain and, most troublingly, UKIP; and persisting rhetoric about a race or religious-based ‘civil war’ in Britain⁸ – all bode ill for the DFLA’s future. With marches planned for nearly every month, the DFLA promises to stay in the news, and on our streets,

(29 January 2019), ‘Police in pledge as EDL plans another march in Wellington’, *Shropshire Star*, online at: www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/telford/2019/01/29/police-in-pledge-on-edl-march/.

⁷ Examples of bigoted statements abound on the DFLA Facebook pages (www.facebook.com/thedfla/ and www.facebook.com/groups/2336692269897633/), while the Official DFLA website happily endorses ‘Tommy Robinson’, particularly around the latter’s most recent legal troubles: <http://dfla.co.uk/2018/10/25/tommy-robinson-trial-photos-videos-and-that-statement/>. For several examples of well-known right-wing extremists joining FLA and DFLA events, see ‘North East Football Lads Alliance (FLA) /Democratic Football Lads Alliance(DFLA) Neo-Nazi & Fascist links’, online at: https://northeastfascistsexposed.wordpress.com/2019/02/07/north-east-football-lads-alliance-fla-democratic-football-lads-alliancedfla-neo-nazi-fascist-links/?fbclid=IwAR0exmO_e3kUiFabMxq1lyOTMkAgw25--EaQ6F5OXuMVIQz6mcofCz8Ujss.

⁸ Bryant, B. and Frymorgen, T. (9 May 2018), ‘Football Lads Alliance: ‘We could have a civil war in this country’.’ BBC News, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/e5ee9e0a-18d7-49a4-a3c2-80b6b4222058.

during 2019.⁹ It is hoped that this first extended study of its development, organisation, connections and leadership profiles will equip interested readers with an overview of where the movement has come from, and where it might be headed. Concluding recommendations offer further suggestions of how to constructively engage this new iteration of a now-familiar pattern: threatening demonstrations, anti-Muslim prejudice, and a far right undertow that risks turning hostile currents against ethnic and religious minorities in Britain into a tsunami of hatred.

2. Origins and formation of the FLA/DFLA

Background

The Football Lads Alliance (FLA) was formed on 4 June 2017. Headed by property manager and Tottenham Hotspur supporter, John Meighan, the movement successfully hosted its first ‘Unite Against Extremism’ demonstration on 24 June 2017 in central London – rallying some 10,000 supporters at St. Paul’s Cathedral before marching to London Bridge.¹⁰ Chanting “FLA, here to stay”, marchers left wreaths in football club colours among the flowers and candles marking the spot where, three weeks previously, five people had been killed as a van careered into pedestrians.¹¹ Before the march, speeches were given in Hyde Park by a Sikh and former EDL activist, Mohan Singh, and founder of the anti-Muslim campaign organisation, Mothers Against Radical Islam and Sharia (“Marias”), Toni Bugle, highlighting ‘concern’ about recent terror attacks in London and Manchester.

The immediate stimulus for the formation of the FLA – a group that claims to be against all forms of extremism and terrorism – clearly emerged in reaction to several ISIS-inspired terror attacks that occurred from March to June 2017. The first of these took place in March 2017 when a 52-year-old man, Khalid Masood, drove through crowds of tourists on Westminster Bridge before entering the grounds of the Palace of Westminster and fatally wounding a police officer in what was described as a terrorist act.¹² The second of these came at the end of May when a young, twenty-two-year-old man of Libyan extraction, Salman Abedi, detonated an explosive vest at the end of an Ariana Grande pop concert at a large stadium in Manchester – killing twenty-two people and injuring one hundred and twenty.¹³ Continuing the horrific, ‘do-it-yourself’ nature of terrorist attacks around this period, the third came at the start of June when a van yet again mounted the pavement, this time near London Bridge – after which the attackers ran to a nearby restaurant and pubs in Borough Market to assault customers there.¹⁴

⁹ Democratic Football Lads Alliance, ‘Events’, Official DFLA page, online at: <https://officialdfla.co.uk/events/>.

¹⁰ Smith, M. and Shifrin, T. (24 June 2017), ‘Eyewitness report from first FLA demo: Football Lads Alliance puts thousands on the streets.’ *Dream Deferred*, online at: www.dreamdeferred.org.uk/2017/06/a-second-warning-thousands-on-the-streets-of-london-as-far-right-reorganises/ (all websites last accessed 25 February 2019).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Allen, E. and Henderson, B. (26 March 2017), ‘Westminster attack: Everything we know so far about the events in London.’ *The Daily Telegraph*, online at: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/22/westminster-terror-attack-everything-know-far/.

¹³ Evans et al (26 May 2017), ‘Everything we know about Manchester suicide bomber Salman Abedi.’ *The Daily Telegraph*, online at: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/26/everything-know-manchester-suicide-bomber-salman-abedi/.

¹⁴ BBC News (12 June 2017), ‘London attack: What we know so far’, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-40147164.

As expected, these appalling, frightening incidents gained significant pushback and reaction from both established and fringe figures on the UK far right. This is in no small measure due to the way far right activists and groups seek to use such outrages to further a political agenda; in this case, the scapegoating of more than 3.5 million Muslims living in Britain. For example, far right ideologue and former EDL leader, Tommy Robinson (aka Stephen Yaxley-Lennon) happened to be in London at the time of the Westminster attack – using it as a chance to claim that Britain was at “war” with “Islamic fundamentalists”.¹⁵ Moreover, the end of June 2017 witnessed a devastating instance of ‘tit-for-tat extremism’ when Darren Osborne responded to the London and Manchester terror attacks by ploughing into a group of Muslim worshippers at Finsbury Park Mosque.¹⁶ Finally, and returning focus upon the FLA, such attacks formed a “turning point” for the otherwise obscure leader of the FLA, John Meighan who, as he stated in an interview at the time, “really felt strongly that something needed to be done.” His initial aim for the group was first “bringing different [football] fans together” and second to put pressure on political elites to look again at “terror laws and preachers of hate”.¹⁷

The far right dynamics of the FLA therefore do not simply lie in retrofitting older (BNP or NF) or even the contemporary (EDL, PEGIDA UK, or UKIP) UK movements, but in swift, grass roots reaction to domestic terror attacks committed by ISIS-inspired Islamists. This gives rise to the notion that the starting point for the FLA was down to a process of cumulative extremism – sometimes, as above, called ‘tit for tat extremism’ – meaning “the way in which one form of extremism can feed off and magnify other forms [of extremism]”¹⁸ Moreover, and taking conscious learnings from media coverage of early EDL protest, the FLA made efforts early on to combat accusations of racism and violence—with demonstrators instructed to not carry flags, banners or engage in racist chants.¹⁹ Underscoring their similarities with the formation of the EDL, John Meighan set the FLA up as a private limited company in August 2017 in order to benefit financially from selling T-shirts, hoodies, caps and pin badges featuring poppies.

Organisationally separate from the established UK far right – while at the same time owing much to click-and-march organisation of earlier groups like the EDL and PEGIDA UK– the FLA can be more fruitfully aligned with the nationalistic and anti-establishment concerns of working-class football casuals in the UK. Indeed, the FLA was first set up to encourage rival ‘football firms’ to put aside their acrimonious hostilities and unite against extremism and the

¹⁵ Oppenheim, M. (22 March 2017), ‘Tommy Robinson condemned for ranting about Islamic extremism at scene of London terror attack.’ *The Independent*, , online at: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/tommy-robinson-london-terror-attack-islamic-extremism-westminster-bridge-a7644676.html.

¹⁶ Dearden, L. (2 February 2018), ‘Darren Osborne: How Finsbury Park terror attacker became 'obsessed' with Muslims in less than a month.’ *The Independent*, online at: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/darren-osborne-finsbury-park-attack-who-is-tommy-robinson-muslim-internet-britain-first-a8190316.html.

¹⁷ Smith, M. and Shifrin, T. (24 June 2017), ‘Eyewitness report from first FLA demo: Football Lads Alliance puts thousands on the streets.’ *Dream Deferred*, online at: www.dreamdeferred.org.uk/2017/06/a-second-warning-thousands-on-the-streets-of-london-as-far-right-reorganises/

¹⁸ Eatwell, R. (2006), ‘Community Cohesion and Cumulative Extremism in Contemporary Britain.’ *Political Quarterly*. 77 (2): 204-216, quoted p. 205.

¹⁹ Smith, M. and Shifrin, T. (24 June 2017), ‘Eyewitness report from first FLA demo: Football Lads Alliance puts thousands on the streets.’ *Dream Deferred*, online at: www.dreamdeferred.org.uk/2017/06/a-second-warning-thousands-on-the-streets-of-london-as-far-right-reorganises/.

perceived threat it poses to “Britain and its way of life”.²⁰ An example of this came at the group’s second major demonstration on 7 October 2017. Demonstrating the scale of this new far right street movement, more than 20,000 demonstrators gathered on Park Lane in London to hear John Meighan rail against Diane Abbott’s signing a petition tying the group to other far right outfits. Meighan also called for foreign-born terror suspects to be deported during any ongoing police investigations.²¹ Speaking to a mixture of football supporters and members of the Veterans Against Terrorism protest group, Meighan insisted the crowd was made of “normal people” who wanted to show concern at a “recent upsurge” in UK terrorist attacks.²² At first, this seemed more the case than did the EDL before it, with reports from early demonstrations suggesting that, on the whole, demonstrators had a “small-c conservative law-n-order agenda, mostly made up of middle-aged ‘common sense’ dads, with a few racists hanging around fringes”.²³

FLA – DFLA split: divergent paths

Harmony within the fledgling street movement was short lived, however. On 16 April 2018, John Meighan stepped down as leader of the FLA over a row concerning donations to the Royal British Legion. On 11 April 2018, the Royal British Legion had returned a £1,104 donation to the FLA – citing that the FLA “raised money for the donation through the inappropriate use of the poppy”, while “a small number of FLA supporters have expressed [racist and Islamophobic] views and opinions that are not compatible with the values of The Royal British Legion.”²⁴ More of how this saga affected the fledgling movement is explored below.

Such an episode was merely the tip of the iceberg in what was quickly becoming an increasingly fractious movement. In March 2018, an investigative report by *The Observer* newspaper found that violent, racist and misogynistic posts targeting Sadiq Khan and Diane Abbott could be found on the FLA’s 65,000-strong Facebook group.²⁵ Moreover, research by the counter-extremism think-tank, the Institute of Strategic Dialogue, found that the FLA’s social media posts had seen a noticeable shift to the right.²⁶ Less than a year since the group’s foundation, Christopher Stewart, a Project Coordinator at ISD, found that the sort of issues

²⁰ Allen, C. (13 April 2018), ‘The Football Lads Alliance: The Latest Far Right Street Movement?’ Centre for the Analysis of the Radical Right, online at: www.radicalrightanalysis.com/2018/04/13/the-football-lads-alliance-the-latest-far-right-street-movement/.

²¹ Chaplain, C. (7 October 2017), ‘Football Lads Association march: Thousands gather in central London in anti-extremism protest.’ *The Evening Standard*, online at: www.standard.co.uk/news/london/football-lads-association-march-thousands-gather-in-central-london-in-antiextremism-protest-a3652981.html.

²² Murphy-Bates, S. (8 October 2019), ‘Thousands of football supporters march against extremism in London to oppose ‘recent upsurge’ of UK terror attacks.’ *The Daily Mail*, online at: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4958848/Thousands-football-fans-march-against-terror-London.html.

²³ Poulter, J. & Childs, S. (23 March 2018), ‘Are the Football Lads Alliance Another Far-Right Street Movement?’ *Vice News*. Hyperlink: https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/kzx8jw/are-the-football-lads-alliance-another-far-right-street-movement.

²⁴ Bryant, B. and Frymorgen, T. (20 April 2018), ‘Leader of Football Lads Alliance resigns amid charitable donations row’ BBC News, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/e5ee9e0a-18d7-49a4-a3c2-80b6b4222058.

²⁵ Wall, T. (17 March 2018), ‘Secret Facebook page reveals violence at heart of forum for ‘football fans’.’ *The Observer*, online at: www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/17/football-lads-alliance-secret-facebook-page-racism-violence-sexism.

²⁶ Bryant, B. and Frymorgen, T. (1 May 2018), ‘Football Lads Alliance: ‘We could have a civil war in this country’.’ BBC News, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/e5ee9e0a-18d7-49a4-a3c2-80b6b4222058.

discussed on the FLA's Twitter and Facebook pages were "fairly similar" to that seen being pushed by direct action anti-Muslim group, Britain First, the far right For Britain party and the former leader of the EDL, Tommy Robinson; namely, that "Muslims are dangerous", "immigration is bad for Britain", and a "British identity needs saving". ISD's analysis of FLA Twitter followers and the group's Facebook page also found that supporters were largely male, over 35 and concentrated in Greater London.²⁷

Coming into the group's 24 March 2018 Birmingham protest, then, there was a febrile atmosphere around the future direction and leadership of the group. Typifying this was the creation of a separate True Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA) movement, who hosted their own demonstration in support for the families of the 1974 IRA pub bombings victims, at the Birmingham protests.²⁸ In total, only 5,000 FLA and DFLA supporters turned out for the Birmingham demonstrations which were less than a mile apart in Curzon Street and Victoria Square – but both with the square aim of campaigning against terrorism and extremism.²⁹ Reports suggest that the reason for the split was down to John Meighan's delay in transferring poppy donations to the Royal British Legion – with the DFLA taking with it many of the British Army veterans who had been involved in the group.³⁰ Adding to the toxic mix was the inclusion of more established anti-Muslim figures from the contemporary UK far right scene speaking at both demonstrations. With Tommy Robinson, For Britain leader, Anne Marie Waters and UKIP leader, Gerard Batten participating in the group's activities, it became increasingly difficult for the group to shake off its image as a new anti-Muslim actor on the UK's contemporary far right scene. It emerged shortly afterward that the new leader of the DFLA was Birmingham march organiser, Philip Hickin.³¹

Post-Birmingham, the activities of the FLA and DFLA took initially parallel and then tangential directions – each with their own campaigns, issue bases and set of supporters. The first protest to occur after the April 2017 split was the FLA's anniversary march in Manchester – commemorating the victims of the Arena bombings one year on.³² This saw a total of 2,000 protestors and counter-protestors turn out in the Castlefield Bowl and St Peter's Square areas of Manchester – with the family of victims vocally opposing the FLA's anniversary march. Insults of "EDL losers" and "Antifa, ha ha ha!" were traded, though no violence broke out.³³ A sign of the decline of the FLA was that many supporters took to social media after the demonstration to vent their disappointment – with some proclaiming

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Richards, H. (18 March 2018), 'Pub bombings campaigner to speak at huge football supporter demo in Birmingham.' *Birmingham Mail*, online at: www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/pub-bombings-campaigner-speak-huge-14427361.

²⁹ BBC News (24 March 2018), 'Birmingham Football Lads Alliance demo: Thousands march in city', online at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-43527109.

³⁰ Poulter, J. (26 March 2018), 'Two Different Football Lads Alliances Held Islamophobic Demos in Birmingham.' *Vice News*. Hyperlink: https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/xw7d43/two-different-football-lads-alliances-held-islamophobic-demos-in-birmingham/.

³¹ Socialist Worker (24 March 2018), 'Update - The FLA shows its true colours in Birmingham - racist and bigoted', online at: <https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/46333/Update+++The+FLA+shows+its+true+colours+in+Birmingham+++racist+and+bigoted>.

³² *ITV News* (19 May 2018), 'Hundreds of protesters and counter protesters gather in Manchester', online at: www.itv.com/news/granada/update/2018-05-19/hundreds-of-protesters-and-counter-protesters-gather-in-manchester/.

³³ Raymond, M. (21 May 2018), 'Manchester Spent the Weekend Telling the FLA to Fuck Off.' *Vice News*. Hyperlink: www.vice.com/en_uk/article/8xege3/manchester-spent-the-weekend-telling-the-fla-to-fuck-off.

that the formative part of the “movement was dead”.³⁴ A few weeks later, the DFLA hosted its own demonstration in Manchester on 2 June 2018 – 11 days after the anniversary of the Manchester arena bombings. Mainly protesting for the release of EDL leader Tommy Robinson after he fell foul of contempt of court charges in May 2018,³⁵ around 1,000 DFLA demonstrators turned out in the Castlefield Basin area of the city. In sharp contrast to the main movement’s original apolitical identity, reports of the demonstration suggest that flags were flown and “Make Britain Great Again” placards were also on display.³⁶ This echoed scenes in nearby Leeds, where another ‘Free Tommy’ protest saw fights break out and racist chants were heard.³⁷ In the case of the Manchester march, the day ended peacefully with no arrests or significant instances of disorder occurring.

When launched in mid-2017, the FLA’s main aims revolved around the benign proposals of building a “safer community, inclusivity and acceptance of everyone, and holding politicians to account to change anti-terrorist legislation”.³⁸ Early on, however, the group’s more apolitical anti-terror message turned into appeals for internment and the ejection of terror suspects from the country. An early documentary of the group also saw a news reporter of Asian heritage being set upon by one female FLA activist – saying ‘Allahu Akbar is because of people like this’.³⁹ Since the FLA-DFLA splinter in April 2018, the rhetoric and group of actors within this new protest movement have seen the group move onto issues more customarily associated with the UK far right. A key example of this has been the championing of the protest against child grooming and taking an ultra-patriotic stance on veterans’ rights. This suggests that, months after their emergence, the DFLA has become an anti-Muslim protest movement that split from a more apolitical agenda with the FLA towards one more overtly mimicking the demands of ‘anti-Islamicisation’ championed by the EDL and Britain First.

As 2018 wore on, so it became apparent that – while the FLA had entered into a permanent decline – the DFLA’s identity has become less differentiated from the ideology and tactics of more established UK far right actors. At the DFLA’s October 2018 demonstration in London, for example, organisers stated before the demonstration that they were protesting against ‘AWOL migrants’, Asian “rape gangs and groomers” and “veterans treated like traitors”.⁴⁰ Moreover, at the DFLA’s September 2018 protest in Sunderland, a flashpoint between DFLA demonstrators and anti-fascists saw violent clashes that ended in three arrests.⁴¹ Finally, at the

³⁴ Bonnano, A. (20 May 2018), ‘Good Morning People’. Twitter, , online at: <https://twitter.com/AlfredoBonanno5/status/998103191819636736>.

³⁵ *ITV News* (27 September 2018), ‘Tommy Robinson contempt of court case adjourned’, online at: www.itv.com/news/2018-09-27/tommy-robinson-quietly-confident-ahead-of-contempt-of-court-case/.

³⁶ *Daily Star* (2 June 2018), ‘Tommy Robinson protests carry on for second day as more than 1,000 march in Manchester’, online at: www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/706934/tommy-robinson-march-manchester-arena-hull-prison-football-lads-edl-castlefield.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ *Football Lads Alliance*. ‘About Us’ page, online at: <http://footballladsalliance.co.uk/ABOUT%20US.html> (NB: No longer available online).

³⁹ *Vice* (12 October 2017), ‘Watch: Who are the Football Lads Alliance?’, online at: https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/i5g7px/watch-who-are-the-football-lads-alliance.

⁴⁰ Gayle, D. (13 October 2018), ‘Anti-fascists block route of Democratic Football Lads Alliance London march.’ *The Guardian*, online at: www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/13/anti-fascists-block-route-of-democratic-football-lads-alliance-london-march.

⁴¹ *Sunderland Echo* (15 September 2018), ‘Three arrested after demonstrations take place in Sunderland city centre’, online at: www.sunderlandecho.com/our-region/sunderland/three-arrested-after-demonstrations-take-place-in-sunderland-city-centre-1-9351213.

same demonstration, the DFLA invited UKIP leader Gerard Batten to speak to 700 of its supporters. As 2018 finished, therefore, some reporters started to question whether the DFLA had stuck to its original aims of anti-racism and anti-violence or was simply a reboot of the EDL.⁴² With the same activist base, propensity towards violent behaviour and opposition to Islamist extremism, the DFLA was emerging as a new actor within the UK's anti-Muslim scene.

3. Links to the far right and 'counter jihad' movement

Initially, the FLA and DFLA had largely tried to eschew relationships with established far right actors, purportedly standing instead against all forms of terrorism and extremism. Over time, however, the similarities between the DFLA and the UK far right have become more apparent. This section of the report focuses upon leading individuals who have either spoken for, joined or become part of the DFLA's leadership since its emergence in April 2018.

Tommy Robinson (aka Stephen Yaxley-Lennon)



Former leader of the EDL, PEGIDA UK and alt-right vlogger, 'Tommy Robinson' (real name: Stephen Yaxley-Lennon) has been seen participating in and speaking at several FLA demonstrations since its inception. Convicted for assault of an off-duty police officer, mortgage fraud and illegally entering the US using a false passport, Robinson has failed to find a political home since leaving the anti-Muslim street movement, the English Defence League, in October 2013. Robinson has extensive links to other counter jihad activists abroad

⁴² Hughes, A. (17 September 2018), 'Menace and aggression during 'new EDL' demo.' Sky News, online at: <https://news.sky.com/story/menace-and-aggression-dfla-is-new-edl-11500806>.

including the leaders of PEGIDA, Stop Islamisation of Nations and the Philadelphia based Middle East Forum. He has also paid membership dues to the British National Party and was involved in a short-lived anti-Muslim protest movement called 'Ban the Luton Taliban' back in 2004. Robinson was on the fringes reporting at some of the initial FLA demonstrations before joining DFLA protests in 2018. In late February 2019, Robinson's 1 million-strong subscription Facebook page was taken down, alongside an Instagram account of nearly 150,000, for "posting material that uses dehumanising language and calls for violence targeted at Muslims. He has also behaved in ways that violate our policies around organised hate."⁴³

Anne-Marie Waters



Former UKIP leadership hopeful and Parliamentary candidate, Anne-Marie Waters has also spoken at FLA demonstrations. She is currently leader of her own anti-Muslim political party *For Britain* which advocates an 'end of sharia law in the UK' and an 'end to police

⁴³ Wakefield, J. (26 February 2019), 'Facebook bans Tommy Robinson's page', BBC News, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-47371290.

prioritisation of so-called “hate crime””.⁴⁴ Documentaries have shown her speaking alongside ethno-nationalist Generation Identity group leader Martin Sellner at the Traditional Britain Group in London. Since 2014, she has also been director of Sharia Watch UK and has close ties with far right activist and former Liberty GB press officer, Jack Buckby. Waters has previously been quoted as suggesting that Islam is ‘evil’ – stating at the FLA’s Birmingham demonstration that “Millions of decent British people are offended by this religion and the poison it’s causing within our culture”.⁴⁵

Gerard Batten



Current leader of UKIP, Gerard Batten has attended and spoken at several DFLA demonstrations. Batten is credited with transforming UKIP away from hard Euroscepticism and into a more overtly anti-Muslim party,⁴⁶ Batten has previously likened Islam to a “death cult, born and steeped in fourteen hundred years of violence and bloodshed”.⁴⁷ He has

⁴⁴ Allchorn, W. (1 April 2018), ‘What next for the UK radical right? Electoral Misfortune and the Rise of New Actors.’ Centre for the Analysis of the Radical Right, online at:

www.radicalrightanalysis.com/2018/04/01/what-next-for-the-uk-radical-right-electoral-misfortune-and-the-rise-of-new-actors/.

⁴⁵ Bryant, B. and Frymorgen, T. (1 May 2018), ‘Football Lads Alliance: ‘We could have a civil war in this country’.’ BBC News, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/e5ee9e0a-18d7-49a4-a3c2-80b6b4222058.

⁴⁶ Allchorn, W. (5 October 2018), ‘Towards a new ‘populist’ party? UKIP’s interim manifesto and the future of the UK radical right.’ LSE British Politics & Policy Blog, online at: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/ukip-interim-manifesto/>.

⁴⁷ Walker, P. (18 February 2018), ‘Ukip's Gerard Batten reiterates his belief that Islam is a 'death cult'.’ *The Guardian*, online at: www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/feb/18/ukip-gerard-batten-islam-muslims-quran.

likewise described the Prophet Mohammed as “a paedophile who kept sex slaves”⁴⁸ He has prior links to other prominent far right politicians (such as the Dutch PVV leader Geert Wilders) and has upset UKIP activists by promoting former EDL and PEGIDA UK leader, Tommy Robinson, to the role of advisor on child ‘grooming gangs’ and prisons policy. At the DFLA’s September 2018 Sunderland protest, Batten accused the ‘political and media establishment’ of deliberately under-investigating ‘Muslim child grooming gangs’ – going on to suggest that “the age of consent for Islamic culture is a lot more elastic than it would be in western culture.”⁴⁹

Jacob Bewick



⁴⁸ Busby, E. (15 July 2018), ‘Ukip leader Gerard Batten calls Muhammad a paedophile at Tommy Robinson rally.’ *The Independent*, online at: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/gerard-batten-ukip-mohamed-paedophile-tommy-robinson-protests-muslims-a8447741.html.

⁴⁹ Farrell, J. (18 September 2018), ‘UKIP leader Gerard Batten criticised by Nigel Farage for endorsing anti-Muslim rally.’ Sky News, online at: <https://news.sky.com/story/ukip-leader-gerard-batten-criticised-by-nigel-farage-for-endorsing-anti-muslim-rally-11500884>.

A former member of the proscribed neo-Nazi terrorist group National Action, Jacob Bewick has been active within the FLA – attending the group’s October 2017 London demonstration. While not a leader within the protest organisation, Bewick (pictured above with former BNP activist, Jack Buckby) demonstrates the attraction of a new anti-Muslim group for more extreme white supremacist activists. Writing under the pseudonym ‘English Patriot’ on Twitter, for example, investigations by Hope not Hate have found Bewick sharing numerous neo-Nazi and pro-National Action posts – making references to the infamous fourteen words and glorifying Hitler’s treatment of the Jews.⁵⁰ He has also been active in the pan-European ethno-nationalist group, Generation Identity – engaging in prominent publicity stunts by the group.⁵¹

Gary Crane



Another former far right activist to cleave to the DFLA is Gary Crane, former leader of the neo-Nazi Right-Wing Resistance movement (RWR). In March 2017, it was reported that Crane was jailed for his part in a 2016 demonstration in Dover that ended in arrests and widespread violent disorder.⁵² More recent reports suggest that he played a prominent role in the FLA’s October 2017 demonstration, which included being present on the main bus which

⁵⁰ Cahill, D. (12 March 2018), ‘Exposed: Generation Identity Activist was member of Nazi Terror Group.’ Hope not Hate blog, online at: www.hopenothate.org.uk/2018/03/12/exposed-generation-identity-activist-was-member-banned-nazi-terror-group/.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Archibald, S. (21 March 2018), ‘Resistance is useless as Crane sent Down.’ Hope not Hate blog, online at: www.hopenothate.org.uk/2017/03/21/resistance-is-useless-as-crane-sent-down/.

formed the speaker's stage at the demonstration.⁵³ His former involvement in the Right Wing Resistance movement is particularly worrying – recruiting young people from vulnerable backgrounds to serve as 'foot soldiers' within RWR and encouraging others to join his 'resistance' on social media.⁵⁴

4. Leadership of the FLA and DFLA

John Meighan



A Tottenham Hotspur supporter and property manager, John Meighan emerged as the 33 year old leader of the FLA in June 2017. Initially lending the group with an apolitical 'neither left nor right' image, tensions emerged over Meighan's banning of flags and racist language.⁵⁵ Meighan's initial inspiration for the group emerged from a personal longing to see something being done after the 2017 terror attacks as well as his own children's fears at attending a Summertime Ball event in Manchester shortly after. When interviewed early on, however, it was not clear what the demands or aims of the movement were beyond uniting football fans against extremism and terrorism – and initial talk of a Football Family Alliance & Football

⁵³ Archibald, S. (24 February 2018), 'Crane adds Himself to Football Lads Alliance Team Sheet.' Hope not Hate blog, online at: www.hopenothate.org.uk/2018/02/24/crane-adds-football-lads-alliance-team-sheet/.

⁵⁴ Turbett, L. (29 March 2018), 'Unmasked: Neo-Nazi racist brainwashing young Scots in bid to lure them into his sick gang of hate.' *Daily Record*, online at: www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/unmasked-neo-nazi-racist-brainwashing-7652460.

⁵⁵ Shy Society (27 June 2017), 'Meet the man behind Britain's new street movement (with a difference)', online at: <https://shysociety.co.uk/2017/06/27/meet-the-man-behind-britains-new-street-movement-with-a-difference/>.

Ladies Alliance.⁵⁶ At early rallies, advocacy of policies relating to internment of terror suspects and some more authoritarian measures were advocated, yet no overall strategy of how these demands would be achieved or met were floated. In April 2018, Meighan stood down from the leadership of the FLA in order to “re-focus [his] energies into [his] personal and professional life”.⁵⁷

Philip Hickin



A key demonstration organiser under John Meighan’s early leadership of the FLA, Philip 'Hicko' Hickin led the DFLA split from the FLA – based on financial, political and organisational differences with Meighan.⁵⁸ A Tottenham Hotspur fan, Hickin has taken the DFLA in a more radical and nominally democratic direction – advocating issues like child

⁵⁶ Poulter, J. & Childs, S. (23 March 2018), ‘Are the Football Lads Alliance Another Far-Right Street Movement?’ *Vice News*, online at: www.vice.com/en_uk/article/kzx8jw/are-the-football-lads-alliance-another-far-right-street-movement.

⁵⁷ Bryant, B. & Frymorgen, T. (30 April 2018), ‘Leader of Football Lads Alliance resigns amid charitable donations row.’ *BBC Three*, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/c92aa56d-bbaf-4bcb-b717-9e3cb8f74847.

⁵⁸ Shifrin, T. (22 February 2018), ‘Joint liaison group brings together FLA, Tommy Robinson, EDL, hardcore nazis and a UKIP MEP.’ *Dream Deferred*, online at: www.dreamdeferred.org.uk/2018/02/revealed-joint-liaison-group-brings-together-fascist-and-far-right-groups/.

grooming, freedom of speech and tackling ‘social, economic and political injustice’.⁵⁹ He has therefore expanded the group’s issue agenda beyond anti-terrorism and anti-extremism and placed the group firmly on the territory of the established contemporary far right. Reports by the FLA opposition organisation, Football Lads Against Fascism (FLAF), suggest that Hickin has also been trading in white supremacist and violent rhetoric online – posting a picture of a Combat 18 member beating up an anti-fascist and allegedly threatening Spurs fans who join FLAF.⁶⁰

Pamela Brannigan



A former Sunderland EDL activist, Pamela Brannigan emerged as one of the leaders of the FLA after its founder John Meighan stepped down in April 2018. Like Meighan, anti-fascist charity, Hope not Hate, have found Brannigan to have allegedly committed charity fraud in 2013 – setting up a charity shop for Help the Heroes without consent from the charity as well

⁵⁹ DFLA (4 August 2018), ‘About the DFLA.’ Democratic Football Lads Alliance, online at: <http://dfla.co.uk/2018/08/04/about-the-dfla/#more-146>.

⁶⁰ Football Lads Against Fascism (27 September 2018), Facebook post, online at: www.facebook.com/FootballLadsAgainstFascism/posts/542651506196701.

as using it as a base for local EDL activists.⁶¹ Holding links to several more radical EDL offshoots (North West Alliance & South West Alliance) and neo-Nazis in Blackpool, Brannigan has sworn that the FLA and DFLA will remain separate outfits and became a key organiser after the FLA's first post-Meighan demonstration.⁶² Brannigan has been involved in several localised anti-Muslim campaigns in Sunderland – against a proposed mosque in the city's Millfield area and as part of an anti-Muslim Facebook group called 'Angel Unites Patriots'.⁶³

5. Organisation

Reports initially compiled around the emergence of the FLA suggested that its main mode of organisation was through Facebook and press releases.⁶⁴ Like the EDL initially and later defence leagues like the Scottish and Welsh iterations, social media provided a useful platform to bring like-minded football fans together, organise demonstrations and mobilise support for the group's anti-Muslim campaigns. In particular, football fan chatrooms and forums were also used at the start of the FLA in order to generate increased attendance at the group's demonstrations.⁶⁵ Building on the lessons of the EDL and Britain First, FLA Facebook admins also fiercely policed the group's initial private page – kicking out racist and Islamophobic members in order not to dissuade potential recruits from joining the group's demonstrations and actions.⁶⁶ Early on, the FLA also sought more traditional forms of promotion and advertising – flying its banners and handing out leaflets at football matches. In addition, it allied itself with other anti-terror protest groups, such as Veterans Against Terrorism, MARIAS against Sharia, Justice 4 the 21, Justice for the Women and Children and the more extreme Anti-Terror Alliance.⁶⁷

Meighan, Brannigan, and Hickin aside, the leadership of the FLA and DFLA is still highly secretive and unknown. In February 2018, reports emerged that a closed Facebook group under the title 'UK Freedom Marches' was being used by key personnel within the FLA leadership (including Meighan) to coordinate their activities and to seek a 'political direction'.⁶⁸ This appeared to also include former EDL activists, neo-Nazis and a UKIP MEP,

⁶¹ Cahill, D. (30 March 2013), 'Exclusive: Sunderland charity shop used as a front for racists.' Hope Not Hate *Insider* blog, online at: www.hopenothate.org.uk/2013/03/30/exclusive-sunderland-charity-shop-used-as-a-front-for-racists/.

⁶² Archibald, S. (17 April 2018), 'Charity Cheat Brannigan takes Football Lads Managerial Role.' Hope Not Hate blog, online at: www.hopenothate.org.uk/2018/04/17/charity-cheat-brannigan-takes-football-lads-managerial-role/.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Pearly Dean Marketing (12 October 2017), 'FLA – Football Lads Alliance Attract over 40,000 Marchers Through London on 7th October 2017', online at: <https://pressreleases.responsesource.com/news/94165/fla-football-lads-alliance-attract-over-marchers-through-london-on/>.

⁶⁵ Smith, M. and Shifrin, T. (24 June 2017), 'Eyewitness report from first FLA demo: Football Lads Alliance puts thousands on the streets.' *Dream Deferred*, online at: www.dreamdeferred.org.uk/2017/06/a-second-warning-thousands-on-the-streets-of-london-as-far-right-reorganises/.

⁶⁶ Poulter, J. & Childs, S. (23 March 2018), 'Are the Football Lads Alliance Another Far-Right Street Movement?' *Vice News*, online at: www.vice.com/en_uk/article/kzx8jw/are-the-football-lads-alliance-another-far-right-street-movement.

⁶⁷ Archibald, S. (24 February 2018), 'Crane adds Himself to Football Lads Alliance Team Sheet', online at: www.hopenothate.org.uk/2018/02/24/crane-adds-football-lads-alliance-team-sheet/.

⁶⁸ Shifrin, T. (22 February 2018), 'Joint liaison group brings together FLA, Tommy Robinson, EDL, hardcore nazis and a UKIP MEP.' *Dream Deferred*, online at: www.dreamdeferred.org.uk/2018/02/revealed-joint-liaison-group-brings-together-fascist-and-far-right-groups/.

and shows wider co-ordination by the UK far right behind grievances of freedom of speech and victimisation.⁶⁹ The Football Lads Alliance Supporters page currently has 10,533 followers but has not posted any new content since 26 October 2018 – a sign of the group’s decline and waning fortunes.⁷⁰ By contrast, the DFLA’s two main Facebook pages – one closed (Official DFLA: Unity in the Community) and one open (The Official DFLA – Democratic Football Lads Alliance) – have 13,150 and 13,882 followers, respectively.⁷¹ Admins on the main DFLA Facebook page have been much more active since October 2018 than the FLA – with large quantities of campaign material, news stories and internal DFLA content cross-posted from the DFLA’s Twitter page also.⁷²

While it is hard to dispute that the FLA and DFLA are symptomatic of a social media revolution within the far right,⁷³ their use of new media platforms is less slick and professional in comparison to other contemporary far right groups. The UK chapter of the ethno-nationalist, pan-European group, Generation Identity, for example, displays professionally produced images, memes and icons on their webpage – with the use of more overtly anti-migrant and anti-Muslim messages such as ‘ethnomasochism’, ‘great replacement’ and ‘Islamisation’.⁷⁴ This has resulted in a higher number of followers (7,441 in December 2018) compared to the DFLA (4,170 in December 2018) – despite low levels of offline support (30 in January 2018).⁷⁵ Moreover, effective use of social media to drive online followership has come from (the now largely defunct, anti-Muslim BNP spinoff) Britain First. Alongside professionally edited footage of their direct action campaigns, Britain First’s use of innocuous posts around the themes of tradition, the army, and the Royal Family have proven successful in persuading members of the public to ‘like’ and ‘follow’ their Facebook page – with nearly double the ‘likes’ when compared to the UK Labour Party at its peak in mid-2014.⁷⁶ Organisationally, then, it is possible to say that the FLA and DFLA’s use of online platforms is more underdeveloped and less strategic – with a more moderate frontstage message – when compared to similar contemporary far right groups.

Turning to the offline space, the FLA and DFLA have been busy organising at football grounds across the country. In March 2018, an investigation by *The Times* newspaper found that several Premier League and non-Premier League clubs had seen FLA banners displayed during matches – including Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur, Newcastle United and Crystal

⁶⁹ Allchorn, W. (13 June 2018), ‘Tommy Robinson and the UK’s post-EDL far right: how extremists are mobilising in response to online restrictions and developing a new ‘victimisation’ narrative.’ *Democratic Audit* blog, online at: www.democraticaudit.com/2018/06/13/tommy-robinson-and-the-uks-post-edl-far-right-how-extremists-are-mobilising-in-response-to-online-restrictions-and-developing-a-new-victimisation-narrative/.

⁷⁰ Football Lads Alliance. Facebook page, online at: www.facebook.com/pg/FootballLadsAlliance/community/?ref=page_internal.

⁷¹ The Official DFLA – Democratic Football Lads Alliance. Facebook post, online at: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/thedfla/>, while the closed group, Official DFLA: Unity in the Community, is online at: www.facebook.com/groups/2336692269897633/.

⁷² See the DFLA: Democratic Football Lads Alliance. Twitter, online at: <https://twitter.com/truefla?lang=en>.

⁷³ Copsey, N. (October 2010) ‘The English Defence League: Challenging Our Country and Values of Social Inclusion, Fairness and Equality.’ London: Faith Matters, p. 25.

⁷⁴ Generation Identity, online at: www.generation-identity.org.uk.

⁷⁵ Hope Not Hate (21 December 2018), ‘2018 State of Hate Report: Far Right Terrorism on the Rise.’ London: Hope not Hate, p. 38.

⁷⁶ Whelan, B. (19 June 2014), ‘Britain First: inside the extremist group targeting mosques.’ *Channel 4 News*, online at: www.channel4.com/news/britain-first-far-right-anti-muslim-extremists-mosques.

Palace.⁷⁷ *Times* journalists also reported threatening behaviour towards Asian and Muslim bystanders by fans aligned with the group – with one FLA Twitter post complaining about a ‘Muslim invasion’. In response to the report, the Premier League has warned clubs about the FLA banners and spoken to police chiefs about the possible public order implications of their presence. While the Premier League cannot ban political banners, it has outlined concerns about hosting such groups at clubs and the potential fallout from their presence at match days. Infiltrating football terraces is a well-used tactic by the traditional UK far right – with both the neo-fascist British National Party and National Front recruiting from football grounds in the 1970s and 1980s. In response to this, Football Lads Against Fascism (FLAF) formed in summer 2018 in order to set up club level groups, conduct leafleting campaigns and oppose the FLA and DFLA at football grounds.⁷⁸ This quickly received opposition from the (more radical) DFLA’s main organiser, Philip Hickin, who wrote in September 2018 that “the net is closing on” Spurs’ chapter of FLAF and that “your [sic] in f*****g trouble”.⁷⁹

6. An overview of FLA/DFLA street protests

Early FLA demonstrations were largely sedate affairs usually involving a silent march, the laying of wreaths and a few speeches at the end. This was a clear and conscious break from other contemporary far right organisations and included the bearing of banners stating ‘no racism, no violence: together we’re stronger’. Helped by this was a lack of anti-fascist presence, something that had been problematic at demonstrations by the EDL and Britain First. As time progressed and with the splintering of the FLA in March 2018, however, there was a radicalising of the group’s message – with the DFLA’s September 2018 demonstration being particularly aggressive.

Another trend since the splintering of the group has been declining demonstration activity and turnout – as often befalls social movements – with the FLA ceasing protest activity in May 2018 and DFLA demonstrations never attracting the sort of numbers that the group had received in autumn 2017. Placing this in perspective, however, recent demonstrations have seen an upturn in attendance for the DFLA; for instance, with 3,000 attendees at a recently co-organised Brexit Betrayal Rally. Moreover, in general, attendance figures since the group’s inception have been relatively buoyant when compared to the EDL and Britain First who would only be able to muster 2,000 and 500 demonstrators respectively at their peak.

Figure 1: DFLA-related protests: June 2017- December 2018

Date	Location	Event	Attendance Estimates (FLA/DFLA)	Counter-Protests	Arrests
24 June 2017	London	FLA	10,000	Unopposed	0

⁷⁷ *The Times* Investigation (30 March 2018), ‘Premier League clubs warned over “far-right” Football Lads Alliance.’ *The Times* online at: www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/sport/premier-league-clubs-warned-over-far-right-football-lads-alliance-0mgq2lppv.

⁷⁸ Keoghan, J. (21 December 2018), ‘The far-right is attempting to return to football. These are the fans fighting it.’ *The New Statesman* online at: www.newstatesman.com/politics/sport/2018/08/football-lads-alliance-far-right-extremism-fighting-islamophobia.

⁷⁹ Football Lads Against Fascism (27 September 2018), Facebook post, online at: www.facebook.com/FootballLadsAgainstFascism/photos/pcb.542651506196701/542650916196760/?type=3&theater.

	Bridge				
7 October 2017	London Park Lane	FLA	30,000	Stand Up To Racism	0
24 March 2018	Birmingham	FLA/DFLA /Justice 4 the 21	5,000	Unopposed	0
19 May 2018	Manchester	FLA	2,000	Unite Against Fascism & Manchester Stand Up to Racism	0
2 June 2018	Manchester	DFLA	1,000	Stand Up to Racism	0
15 September 2018	Sunderland	DFLA/Justice for the Women and Children	700	Sunderland Unites & Stand Up To Racism North East	3
13 October 2018	London	DFLA	2,000	Stand Up To Racism and Unite Against Fascism	1
9 December 2018	London	DFLA/Generation Identity/For Britain/UKIP	3,000	Stand Up To Racism & Momentum	3

Interestingly, most demonstrations have been London based. Since its first June 2017 demonstration in London, both factions of the FLA have hosted eight demonstrations in total – with Manchester providing an obvious and key focus for each group’s supporters outside of the capital. The DFLA’s Sunderland demonstration, therefore, appears to be an outlier but can be explained by the DFLA’s movement beyond the single-issue focus of the FLA’s strict anti-terrorism focus – with Sunderland’s September 2018 demonstration held in opposition to so-called ‘grooming gangs’ in the city as part of the group’s broader campaigns against child sexual abuse. Maximum attendance (30,000) was seen at the FLA’s second London Park Lane demonstration before declining to 5,000 in Birmingham and 2,000 in Manchester. The DFLA, by contrast, have never exceeded 2,000 attendees in a solo sponsored protest.

Thus far, the provocation and targeting of local Muslim communities has not entered either group’s repertoires of action. This has kept civil disturbances and arrests low – with a total of

seven in the first year and a half of the DFLA's existence. Recent demonstrations by the DFLA have, however, seen an uptick in violence and arrests. This is mainly attributable to the group's more radical protest identity and increased presence of anti-fascist opposition. The group's September 2018 Sunderland demonstration was particularly violent, with demonstrators, anti-fascists and police officers involved in scuffles. Upsurges in violence at recent demonstrations appear to result from DFLA protestors getting into the line of sight of anti-fascists protestors. Drawing upon past lessons identified in the scholarly literature, it is advisable that such mutually hostile groups are out of sight of each other at all times in order to avoid potential flashpoints as seen with the EDL.⁸⁰

In terms of chants, these have largely stuck to the FLA's core protest narrative of anti-terrorism but have strayed into the more ultra-patriotic and anti-Muslim flavour of the EDL with the DFLA. At the FLA's March 2018 Birmingham demonstration, for example, chants of "we want our country back" and "I'm England till I die" rang out as FLA marchers filled the streets, joining a chorus of Islamophobic chants.⁸¹ Moreover, the DFLA's October 2018 demonstration saw the familiar chants of 'Whose streets? Our streets?' and 'Who are you?' to anti-fascist activists.⁸² More worrying, however, are some the signs used by protestors at FLA and DFLA marches – while loud spectacles have been largely discouraged by the protest movement's leadership, for example, placards at the FLA/DFLA Birmingham 2018 demonstrations included pleas for 'No to Sharia'⁸³, 'Deport All Terrorists and Child Groomers Now!', 'Rapefugees not welcome'⁸⁴ and another calling out the Koran for advocating 'Terrorism, Sex Slavery, Death to Apostates and Cruel Punishments'.⁸⁵

Common media reporting has revolved around characterising the FLA as a working class street movement – addressing uncomfortable issues not represented by traditional middle class elites.⁸⁶ Looking at the makeup of FLA and DFLA demonstrations, this stereotype does certainly ring true – with a 'small-c conservative law-n-order agenda, mostly made up of middle-aged "common sense" dads, with a few racists hanging around fringes' attending demonstrations.⁸⁷ Reflecting on the above chants, we can ascribe support for both the FLA and DFLA not just to a broader antipathy towards Islamist extremism but also to a sense of alienation, loss of national (as well as working class) identity and discomfort with quick

⁸⁰ See Busher, J. (2015), *The Making of Anti-Muslim Protest: Grassroots Activism in the English Defence League*. London: Routledge.

⁸¹ Bryant, B. and Frymorgen, T. (1 May 2018), 'Football Lads Alliance: "We could have a civil war in this country"'. BBC News, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/e5ee9e0a-18d7-49a4-a3c2-80b6b4222058.

⁸² Patel, B. (13 October 2018), 'Nazi salutes in the heart of London: March by 'far-right anti-Muslim football supporters' turns violent as dozens fight with officers and marcher yells 'I'll kill you' at police.' *Daily Mail*, online at: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6272589/March-Democratic-Football-Lads-Alliance-turns-violent-marcher-yells-kill-you.html.

⁸³ Alamy (24 March 2018), 'Birmingham, UK - Saturday 24th March 2018 - Protesters with No To Sharia Law placard', online at: <http://bit.ly/2Lu3RCO>.

⁸⁴ Shutterstock (24th March 2018) 'Birmingham, UK: March 24th 2018: The Democratic Football Lads Alliance and FLA', online at: <http://bit.ly/2Gzfb1Q>.

⁸⁵ Alamy (July 2018), 'The far-right "Football Lads Alliance" Pro-Trump and Free Tommy Robinson held a protest with thousands of supporters in central London 14 July 2018', online at: <https://bit.ly/2V2o9rm>.

⁸⁶ O'Neil, B. (9 October 2017), 'The Football Lads Alliance is a working-class movement – and the political class wants to ignore it.' *The Spectator* Coffee House blog, online at: <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2017/10/the-football-lads-alliance-is-a-working-class-movement-and-the-political-class-wants-to-ignore-it/>.

⁸⁷ Poulter, J. & Childs, S. (23 March 2018) 'Are the Football Lads Alliance Another Far-Right Street Movement?' *Vice News*, online at: www.vice.com/en_uk/article/kzx8jw/are-the-football-lads-alliance-another-far-right-street-movement.

cultural transformation too. Chants about ‘England’ and ‘We Want Your Country Back’ suggest a look back before modern times pre-dating mass migration patterns in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to a period of more fixed cultural markers and identities. From the viewpoint of the FLA/DFLA, opposition to terrorists and advocating strong remedies against them involves standing up for working class communities around issues related to ethnic diversity when elites are apparently silent. This explains the strong advocacy of Tommy Robinson by the DFLA who is seen by the group as embodying some of the struggles against political correctness, ‘Islamisation’ and Muslim migration that are faced by working class communities. The FLA and DFLA therefore serve as a lightning rod for broader anxieties around place, identity, and political representation—providing a reactionary, populist vehicle for such anxieties.

7. Recommendations

Too often, policy recommendations are easily crafted, yet difficult to implement. Barriers to the latter not only include pragmatic implementation, but there are also challenges in getting relevant agencies and institutions to accept key findings; and perhaps, above all, in providing evidence for the benefits of specific policy solutions. In this vein, comparatively fewer but deeper, more expansive and *actionable* policy suggestions advanced here on the FLA and DFLA may represent a helpful way forward. With this in mind, the following three recommendations are aimed at policy makers and key stakeholders alike, with an emphasis placed upon overcoming barriers to enactment. To this end, the following policy recommendations are advanced in order of challenges to be taken up, ranging from more straightforward to more complex implementation.

1) In countering the rise of street-based anti-Muslim groups – and the far right more generally, amongst any one of any number of cognate phenomena – joined up thinking is essential. Practical solutions exist, and our digitally interconnected world is able to swap good ideas as never before, since the far right is now more transnationally linked than previously; correspondingly, international partnerships should be so too. Thus, ahead of a June 2017 Britain First rally in the UK and beyond, nationalists abroad travelling to the event were interdicted by Britain’s border police. In one case, the ‘Christianist’ Jacek Miedlar, described as a ‘fanatical hate preacher’ was detained upon arrival at Birmingham International Airport – thanks to the collaboration between Polish and British security services.⁸⁸ In this way, when it comes to far right extremism, ‘best practice’ must be more than just a buzzword. Sharing what works is more important than ever.

When it comes to Britain, this can take the form of local, regional or national success stories, which need to be embedded and widely disseminated. At the top-down level, for instance, putting anti-Muslim prejudice on the same unacceptable footing as BAME racism and anti-Semitism – as well as other forms of scapegoating minorities, which remains the *sine qua non* for far right activism – is a particularly welcome step forward. In the wake of the Finsbury Park terrorist attack last year, Prime Minister Theresa May gave a ground-breaking speech in June 2017 identifying anti-Muslim prejudice, that new “lowest common denominator” of

⁸⁸ Wright, P. (24 June 2017) ‘Dutch and Polish far-right activists detained at UK airports ahead of Britain First rally in Birmingham’. *IB Times*, online at: www.ibtimes.co.uk/dutch-polish-far-right-activists-detained-uk-airports-ahead-britain-first-rally-birmingham-1627609?utm_campaign=socialflowtwitter&utm_source=socialflowtwitter&utm_medium=articles.

radical right prejudice, as a form of unacceptable ‘extremism’ in contemporary Britain.⁸⁹ She was right to do so, and more such leadership is needed from political elites – and not just them. Indeed, celebrities, sporting heroes, and other public figures can all play a role in marginalising extremism nationally, using their substantial clout to put far right groups and militants on notice: they will be closely held to the laws and norms that are part and parcel of liberal democracy.

Yet approaches to the DFLA need more than top down policies. A fresh look at what works in different geographical contexts is no less worthwhile. One example is provided by responses to the EDL by policing bodies in Britain. The most important lessons learned were by the police. The evolution of ‘public order management’ in respect of street groups included ensuring counter-protestors are kept at distance – and preferably out of sight – in order to staunch confrontations. With the vast majority of arrests coming from counter-protesters, keeping rival groups apart is may be in their interests also, irrespective of how inflamed activists or the local community may feel. Working with march organisers to identify routes and trouble spots, and ideally placing these areas outside of town centres, has clearly worked in the past. In particular, “more consensual, low-key approaches which engage in negotiations with protesters and communities both on the day and in the lead up to anti-Islamic demonstrations have seen disorder drop dramatically.”⁹⁰ To do so, despite a scarcity of resources, high turnout by front-line police is also necessary at demonstrations. Video and pictures of police battling DFLA activists in London on 13 October, frankly, made no one look good.⁹¹ Ensuring that demonstrations are closely policed while allowing for free speech and expression is a difficult but necessary path to chart. Avoiding widespread disorder and extensive arrests are presumably at the top of everyone’s agenda – counter-protestors, the state, and the DFLA alike – and policing bodies should take the lead in applying hard-won lessons from earlier anti-Muslim protest groups to ensure the safety of the public around demonstrations, first and foremost.

2) Greater attention placed upon far right development and tactics is needed, by both media and government. American researchers recently found that, in the US, jihadi Islamists committed 12.4% of the attacks between 2011 and 2015, but received 41.4% of media coverage on terrorist attacks; put another way, “there was a 449 per cent increase in media attention when the perpetrator was Muslim”.⁹² As with terrorism, so too with other forms of extremism beyond the US, including by the far right in the UK. In Britain, it is clear that disproportionate attention was initially placed upon jihadi Islamism; in fact, the initial version of Prevent (2006) as well as the wider ‘Contest’ strategy of which it forms one of four

⁸⁹ Travis, A. (19 June 2017) ‘May says Islamophobia is a form of extremism, marking shift in rhetoric’. *The Guardian*, online at: www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jun/19/may-says-islamophobia-form-extremism-marking-shift-rhetoric.

⁹⁰ Allchorn, W. (2019), *Anti-Islamic Protest in the UK: Policy Responses to the Far Right*. London: Routledge, p. 179.

⁹¹ O’Donoghue, R. (14 October 2018), London resembles WAR ZONE as anti-Islam Football Lads clash with police. <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/736316/london-football-lads-march-antifa-police-anti-fascism>.

⁹² Kentish, B. (3 July 2017), Terror attacks receive five times more media coverage if perpetrator is Muslim, study finds’. *The Independent*, online at: www.independent.co.uk/news/world-0/terror-attacks-media-coverage-muslim-islamist-white-racism-islamophobia-study-georgia-state-a7820726.html.

counter-terrorism pillars), completely failed to address far right extremism. Given the appalling bombings in Britain on 7 July 2005 – which killed 52 innocents in London, sending shockwaves through the country – this is quite understandable as a CVE reaction to jihadi Islamism. Yet the policy diverted resources from other forms of extremism; above all, changing far right rhetoric and strategies, particularly regarding Muslim minority communities.

To some extent, more recent iterations of Prevent (notably in 2011) have corrected this error; it now explicitly engages with all forms of extremism in the UK, including that of the far right. Yet this CVE programme has not avoided charges of remaining “toxic” in the words of the recently installed Mayor of Manchester, Andy Burnham.⁹³ More to the point, has the Prevent strategy, in the words of Diane Abbott MP, the shadow Home Secretary, “failed to change the attitudes of those on the far right”?⁹⁴ The increase in far right referrals to Prevent, as well as to the UK’s deradicalisation programme, the Channel Project, would suggest that, at the very least, this has been the case until recently. In terms of Prevent, for example, far right referrals surged by fully 30% in 2016/7 – and in some regions of Britain, represented more than half of all Channel interventions.⁹⁵ Continuing this trend in 2017/18 was a decrease of 14% in Islamist extremist referrals and a 36% jump in far right cases.⁹⁶ While this better reflects the threat picture in contemporary Britain, greater understanding of far right narratives and how to counter them is necessary. This is especially the case with street-based movements like the DFLA, which invariably contain right-wing extremists at the margins, but also the more recent Yellow Vest phenomenon. Although these two groups do not (as yet?) have formal or public connections, the prospect of street-based anti-Muslim groups causing disorder and distress on Britain’s streets should be seen as part of a wider far right challenge. In short, when it comes to Britain’s far right, more still needs to be done.

Yet reinventing the wheel is unnecessary, and greater and more visible use of existing legislation is strongly recommended. Given the pervasive nature of both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia across the far-right, recourse to racial and religious hatred statutes is surely a no-brainer. Examples of ringleaders should be made in a legal context and chances taken with prosecutions of borderline cases. Moreover, the preponderance of minorities abuse could effectively be addressed by greater recourse to aggravated harassment laws already on the books, while the 1936 Public Order Act could also be expanded. With respect to the latter, in fact, in January 2015 Britain First co-leader Paul Golding was convicted under this legislation, and in November 2016, Jayda Fransen; the movement’s other leader, was convicted under the same legislation. On the whole, laws exist to combat a resurgent far right,

⁹³ *The ‘i’ Team* (4 July 2017). *The Independent*. ‘Prevent: time for a radical rethink of our counter-extremism strategy?’, online at: <https://inews.co.uk/news/prevent-time-radical-rethink-counter-extremism-strategy/>.

⁹⁴ Khomami, N. (21 November 2016). *The Guardian*, ‘Prevent strategy failing to rein in rise of UK’s far right, says Diane Abbott’, online at: www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/21/prevent-strategy-failing-to-rein-in-rise-of-uks-far-right-says-diane-abbott?CMP=share_btn_tw.

⁹⁵ Pasha-Robinson, L. (19 June 2017). *The Independent*, ‘Number of far-right extremism flagged to Government terror unit soars 30% in a year’, online at: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/finsbury-park-attack-far-right-extremist-rise-year-statistics-prevent-terrorism-scheme-referrals-a7798231.html.

⁹⁶ Casciani, D. (13 December 2018), ‘Prevent Scheme: Extreme Right-Wing Referrals up 36%’, BBC News, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-46556447.

and this should be very publicly enforced. Such initiatives would have the effect of both reassuring minority communities in Britain – the disproportionate victims of far right aggression – while at the same time taking a firm stand against all forms of illegal bigotry and extremism. One specific suggestion, therefore, is to publish and widely circulate an open source dossier on media and governmental initiatives aimed at combating far-right extremism, including a description of laws that could be deployed as well as workable intervention scenarios for encouraging specific projects and/or highlighting deradicalisation successes.

3) Finally, it bears reiterating that the future remains unwritten for the DFLA. As this report has stressed, the group is not (as yet?) part of the fully-fledged far right sphere. This is due in part to the group's explicit stand against all forms of extremism although, as identified above, this is overwhelmingly aligned with jihadi Islamism, and too often extended to all Muslims in Britain. This goes equally for so-called 'grooming gangs' and CSE, which is typically aligned by the far right with Islam in general, and Muslims in particular. The DFLA should put serious effort into campaigns, whether combatting homelessness or non-Islamist forms of terrorism (such as the 'Justice for the 21' campaign against a 1974 IRA bombing in Birmingham⁹⁷), to avoid the sense that they are a single issue, anti-Muslim group. If it wishes to avoid the stigma of being labelled 'far right' or 'racist', the DFLA should do more to monitor its social media pages, engage in campaigns that differentiate it from the far right – including the targeting of black Labour MPs such as Diane Abbott and David Lammy, which looks suspiciously familiar on the group's Facebook pages – and above all, take serious care to differentiate the vast majority of Muslims in Britain from the tiny amount of extremists perverting the message of Islam for ideologically extreme ends.

The company the DFLA chooses to keep will be critical in this endeavour. As early as May 2018, cohorts of DFLA activists were already lining up behind the toxic figure of Tommy Robinson, after the latter was kicked off Twitter.⁹⁸ In June 2018, a similar 'Free Tommy' protest – after the latter jeopardised an ongoing CSE case – in the words of the Director of the pressure group Hope not Hate, Nick Lowles, witnessed "at least 500 demonstrators manag[ing] to chase police out of Trafalgar Square".⁹⁹ Worse still, at that demonstration and others more recently, the DFLA has shared a platform not only with UKIP, but with the racist and extremist militants of Generation Identity. Invariably, these groups and ideologues bring with them unsavoury characters at the fringes – sometimes even fascists and overt neo-Nazis. If the DFLA wishes to avoid being tarred with the 'far right' brush, it should avoid these connections; and similarly, it should redouble efforts to shun right-wing extremists attempting to attach themselves to events and social media platforms.

⁹⁷ For example, see Democratic Football Lads Alliance, 'DFLA Demo #1: Birmingham, 24 March 2018', online at: <http://dfla.co.uk/2018/07/31/dfla-birmingham-first-demo/>.

⁹⁸ For example, see Wright, M. (7 May 2018), 'A snowflake crowd at the "Day of Freedom" protest'. *GQ*, online at: www.gq-magazine.co.uk/article/day-for-freedom-tommy-robinson; and Gayle, D. (6 May 2018), 'Thousands march in "free speech" protest led by right wing figures'. *The Guardian*, online at: www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/06/thousands-of-far-right-protesters-march-in-london-in-support-of-free-speech.

⁹⁹ Lowles, N. (18 Feb. 2019). 'Far right hate is spiralling out of control – and politicians aren't doing enough to stop it'. *The Independent*, online at: www.independent.co.uk/voices/far-right-extremism-racism-islamophobia-antisemitism-hope-not-hate-politics-report-a8784946.html.

As this trajectory suggests, the DFLA may yet prove to be another incubator group for the far right, like the defence leagues and other anti-Muslim groups before it. Still, it is not entirely there as yet. For this reason alone, and many others besides, simply branding the DFLA ‘Nazis’ or fascists both misses the point and does little to bring supporters back from the far right brink. While it is understandable that impassioned counter-protestors – whether by community locals, Stand Up To Racism or Unite Against Fascism – may wish to physically contest their presence, the effects may be counter-productive. As noted above, those arrested at disorderly demonstrations are usually there to counter ‘defence leagues’ like the DFLA, and are likely to only add to a sense of victimhood by protesters. Such confrontations also run the risk of ‘tit-for-tat’ escalation of abuse and even violence, and are therefore best avoided. More constructive ways of addressing the DFLA and other street-based movements are needed, and here too grass-roots organisation and community knowledge should be at the fore. Clearly, those in the firing line often know best how to defuse potentially violent situations. During 2013, for example a local mosque faced down an EDL protest with tea, biscuits and a football kick-about in mixed groups.¹⁰⁰ This kind of creative thinking helped to defuse a potential flashpoint in York that day, and underscores that emphasising shared values goes much further than widening divisions through belligerence, abuse, or harassment – let alone violent confrontations. Amplifying voices that seek commonality and understanding is sensible and easy; it also works. In these days of political rancour, listening to local peacemakers may also provide a template to be applied more widely in Britain.

¹⁰⁰ BBC News (28 May 2013) ‘York Mosque praised for offering EDL protesters tea’, online at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-22689552.



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