

# Globalized Anti-Globalists. The Ideological Basis of the Internationalization of Right-Wing Extremism<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *This paper is an attempt to identify the ideological grounds of the contemporary right wing extremism seen as a global political phenomenon. I approach right wing extremism not as individual, isolated national movements, but as an international network of cooperating movements and organisations.*

**Keywords:** *right wing extremism, anti-globalism, globalisation.*

## I

Ultrationalism – e.g. if in the construction of national belonging specific ethnic, cultural or religious criteria of exclusion are reinforced, condensed to collective ideas of homogeneity and linked with authoritarian political models – doubtlessly is one of the ideological characteristics of right-wing extremism. This could lead to the conclusion that right-wing extremists for this reason do not tend to cooperate on a long-term basis with right-wing extremists from other countries. Especially in the 21st century that is absolutely incorrect. On the contrary, extensive international and transnational networking is taking place on the extreme right, which is more and more interlinked organisationally and ideologically.

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Extensive international and transnational networking is taking place on the extreme right, which is more and more interlinked organisationally and ideologically.

The conditions of context for right-wing extremists are favourable in the era of globalization. That globalization aids and abets the evolution and spread of right-wing extremism

has been shown repeatedly (see Stöss 2004; Grumke 2006). Globalization processes simply frighten many people: “Thus the fear of the seemingly unmanageable is transformed into fear of something that is not quite as hopeless to fight against, in fear of crime, the antisocial, of minorities and the like, or – what often amounts to the same – a structure is seen behind the threat” (Welzk 1998: 38).<sup>2</sup> The processes and impositions of globalization act as breeding ground of right-wing extremism nationally and internationally.

The 2010 electoral success of the right-wing extremist Jobbik party in Hungary may be seen as proof of the above said. In a message of greetings, the then leader of Germany’s far-right NPD, Udo Voigt<sup>3</sup> wrote on April 11, 2010:

Ideologically, there is much agreement between our countries and our two parties. [...] On this day the Hungarian people begins to defend itself effectively against the sell-out, the exploitation by globalization, imperialism, and against the “American Way of Life” with its planned multicultural fusion with strangers. [...] We stand by your side! For a free Hungary, Germany and Europe!<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, greetings were sent by the next head of NPD, Holger Apfel,<sup>5</sup> after the Greek Chrysi Avgi (Golden Dawn) won almost seven percent of the vote and 21 seats.<sup>6</sup>

The central themes of contemporary right-wing extremism and even the central ideological foundation for their international cooperation are mentioned here. Right-wing extremists have established their own definitions and thoughts, which will be briefly presented below in order to increase the basis for understanding the international networking of the scene. Structure follows ideology. In other words: it can not be assumed that right-wing extremists from different countries cooperate or organize meetings and only then start thinking about what their common goals and ideas would be. On the contrary, unless there are economic or other specific interests involved there will typically be cooperation only because of ideological consensus and/or common political goals.

Michael Kühnen, who like no other has influenced the German extreme right, coined the phrase: “The system does not have flaws, it is the flaw” as well as the demand for the “fight against foreign infiltration,”<sup>7</sup> the volkishly motivated “fight against environmental destruction” and for a “cultural revolution against Americanism” (Kühnen 1987). Here, Kühnen already formulated in the mid-1980s what are today central elements of internationally active right-wing extremists.

In his greetings for the book “Alles Große steht im Sturm“ [All great things are exposed to strong resistance], published for the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NPD and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Junge Nationaldemokraten (JN)*, the founder and then leader of the West Virginia based *National Alliance*, Dr. William L. Pierce,<sup>8</sup> set forth his ideological parameters for international cooperation:

Nationalists in Germany, in Europe and also in America are facing the common enemy of all people, the international monopoly capital that wants to deal the death blow to all historically grown nations in favour of a multicultural ‘melting pot’. Our fight against the attempts for world domination and economic imperialism by multinational corporations will be hard and full of privations – but the goal of *Volksgemeinschaft* finding back to its roots will be worth taking on this tough fight and all difficulties that come with it (Apfel 1999:23).

This statement, which can be seen as paradigmatic for internationally active right-wing extremists, shows clearly that the “fight” is no longer just for the defence of one’s nation from outside enemies, but for more. Crucial internationally operating activists like Pierce define nationality not by citizenship or geography, but by race. Worth defending and protecting is not the nation as such, but rather the seriously endangered “white race” (by “infiltration” and “race-mixing”), that is under massive attack in their ancestral nations by the “international capital” that has no traditions, history, or scruples. Openly or thinly veiled, this “international capital” is portrayed as Jewish dominated. The result is a brew of long-standing anti-Semitic or volkish theories and arguments as well as alternative ingredients like “international (racial) solidarity,” “anti-imperialism” and “foreigners out” that are hard to digest.

The result is a so-called pan-Aryan *Weltanschauung*, which – no longer slavophobic like Hitlerian NS-ideology – explicitly includes Eastern Europe and Russia as a part of the “white world.” Only with this in mind can the description of World War II as a “fratricidal disaster” be understood. David Duke even puts his hopes on Russia to prevent what he calls the “relentless and systematic destruction of the European genotype,” because “our race faces a world-wide genetic catastrophe. There is only one word that can describe it: genocide” (Duke 2004).

To repeat: internationally cooperating right-wing extremists are not flag-waving patriots, but markedly fundamental enemies of pluralism, free democracy and *all* its representatives. The idea of *ZOG* (= Zionist Occupied Government) meanwhile dominates the right-wing extremist discourse and is universally accepted as the description of what is seen as puppet governments of global (Jewish dominated) financial interests in Europe and North America. The principal goal is the preservation (or purity) of the “white race,” which consequentially results in the total rejection of any form of immigration, understood as “foreign infiltration” in a racial and cultural sense.

This falls in line with a virulent anti-Americanism, which indeed has to be described more accurately as anti-“American system” thought. The influence of American-based investment and media firms, including “Wall Street” is criticized as imperialistic and degenerating for the race and all nations. In Germany the right wing extremists view the country as weakened by the government’s *Überfremdungspolitik* “inundation policy” as well as by the demoralizing and humiliating references to the crimes of the past.

Anti-Semitism acts as the vital, internationally compatible ideological glue. The word Jew does not even have to be mentioned openly; right-wing extremists from both sides of the Atlantic know exactly who the “One Worlders” are and what “New World Order” or “East Coast” mean. This ideology is transported through internationally recognized and established codes, symbols and writings. This includes among other things the “14 words” of American right-wing terrorist David Lane (“We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children”) or William Pierce’s “Turner Diaries” (published under the pseudonym Andrew McDonald) from 1978, about which the author gloated after a trip through Europe: “Every nationalist in Europe has heard about *The Turner Diaries*” (National Alliance Bulletin November 1998) The book has been translated into many languages and is now also available in German under the title *Die Turner Tagebücher*, translated by “German enthusiasts” (Ibid. December 1998).

In this novel, which has rightfully been called a right-wing extremist bible, the “Aryan revolution” starts out with a bomb attack on FBI headquarters and climaxes in the so-called “Day of the Rope,” on which tens of thousands are hanged in the streets with signs around their necks saying “I betrayed my race.” After a nuclear civil war and a “mopping-up period” (i.e., the killing of all “non-whites”), the entire world at the end of the novel is “Aryan.” It is designative that violence is portrayed here more as the cure than as the malady and deliberately promoted and defended. This all-out positive position on political violence – as the only solution to the problem of what is seen as fundamental oppression of the “Aryan race” by *ZOG* – is inherent in a growing number of internationally active right-wing extremists. Violence is seen as no less than the forced last resource in the fight for survival.

“In this fight, every opponent of today’s America is objectively our ally, even if tomorrow he will become our enemy” writes the extremist Swiss veteran Gaston Armand Amaudruz in his preface to the *NPD*-volume “Alles Große steht im Sturm“ (Apfel 1999: 15). The former chairman of the *British National Party* (*BNP*), John Tyndall, writes in his preface in the name

of his party: “The same enemies, the same political and social problems, the same method of resolution for these problems and definitely also a common future. All this interconnects the nationalist parties of Europa” (Ibid.: 22).

The above mentioned central ideological elements of pan-Aryan racism, anti-Semitism and, (revolutionary) enmity towards the system in a political, cultural, social, and economic sense lead a growing number of top right-wing extremists to the conclusion: “Cooperation across borders will become increasingly important for progress – and perhaps survival – in the future.” (National Alliance Bulletin November 1998).

## II

Globalization is a central theme of propaganda and agitation for right-wing extremists world wide. In addition, extreme right critics of globalization intertwine social and cultural issues and in turn ethnicize them. Their counter-proposal is a re-nationalized, racial order – no less than the reconstruction of an ethnically defined national volkish community. Definitions from the *Little Dictionary of Basic Political Concepts*, (Deutsche Stimme Verlag 2006) which is widely circulated among right-wing extremists, can be used as examples. Under the entry “globalization,” we read: “Globalization is the tendency of international capitalism, if possible to create uniform conditions for profit-enhancing production of labor forces, exploitation of raw materials, and the monopolistic marketing of goods.” This development has “caused the destruction of independent regional and national life and business forms” (Deutsche Stimme Verlag 2006).

“Internationalism” is in turn seen as “the counterpart of nationalism.” It is the attempt to “dominate the world’s peoples, their economy and their traditional ways of life, to transform and exploit them for profit’s sake” (Ibid.). Globalization, as right-wing extremists understand it, is an instrument of domination of all nations with the goal to destroy their uniqueness and autonomy in the name of profit. A significant risk is seen as coming mainly from the U.S., which is seen as a kind of globalization center, for “internationalism and globalization, and the imperialism of the western ‘values’ in the wake of the U.S. threaten the sovereignty of nations to a great extent” (Ibid.).

To that extent, from an extreme right point of view not only the national economy, but more importantly, national culture, identity, and tradition are threatened by the process of globalization. MTV, McDonald’s and other “American pabulum” consumed by young people in the right-wing extremist thinking are instruments of a carefully planned controlled culture destroying internationalist “globalism.” This in turn is the opposite of the desired drive for self-sufficiency (Ibid.). In contemporary right-wing extremism, the term “globalism” plays a central role and stands for the power of a-historic and faceless big business, for “American cultural imperialism” and a “multi-racial genocide,” allegedly sought by Washington, Wall Street and Hollywood. At the same time the idea of a US monopoly “on the east coast” is a well-known code for an ostensible Jewish hegemony.

In terms of concepts and content one has to distinguish between the process of globalization and “globalism.” In the *12 Theses on Globalism* created by the “Nationaldemokratischer Hochschulbund” (NHB), the Student Association of the NPD, which is widely circulated in the right-wing movement, the differentiation is clear: “globalization is the process used by the globalists to achieve their goals.” More specifically: “The migration flows deliberately caused

by the globalists lead to the uniformity of the markets, their products and their communication as well as to the destruction of grown languages and cultures” (NPD 2006).

Right-wing extremists thus see the process of globalization as a deliberately controlled destruction of cultures, traditions and values (and, ultimately, of nations and peoples) by the above-described powerful “globalists.” In internationally understood right-wing extremist codes “globalists” are also “East Coast,” “globalism” is also “New World Order” (NWO), and governments and elites involved in this “globalization plan” are the “Zionist Occupied Government” (ZOG). ZOG, it is firmly believed, is a hidden Jewish world conspiracy, in which all democratic governments, banks, media and much more are secretly controlled by Jews and must be fought at all costs. And against such a powerful enemy, “white patriots” can only fight together.

Another bogeyman is the “One World” (or “New World Order”), which the *Little Dictionary of Basic Political Concepts* calls a “delusion,” that is “fed by the belief in a homogeneous humanity without ties and traditions” (Deutsch Stimme Verlag 2006). In this context, two more enemy provisions are made: the United Nations and human rights. “The tool of imperialism to create the ‘One World’ are the ‘United Nations’. The ideological limerick on the global enforcement of the ‘Western values’ are ‘human rights’” (Ibid.).

According to right-wing extremist logic, “the individual stands above a specific group in the name of human rights, selfish self-interests trump the alleged interests of the ethnic community” (see Pfahl-Traugher, 2006: 41ff.). “The need of the hour,” says Karl Richter, since 2009 Deputy NPD national chairman and member of the Council of the City of Munich, “is a sustained and resolute stance against everything that is currently praised by the big brothers: globalization, human rights, multiculturalism, the liberalization and atomization of all areas of life” (Richter 2002: 1).

Who these “big brothers” are remains unclear, of course. Much more informative on this are the submissions in the NPD brochure *Arguments for Candidates and Officials: A Handout for Public Debate*, in which the question “Why does the NPD so strongly reject globalization?” is answered as follows: “Globalization is the planetary spread of the capitalist economic system under the leadership of Big Money. Despite by its very nature being Jewish-nomadic and homeless, it has its politically and militarily protected location mainly on the East Coast of the United States.” (NPD 2006: 19). And moreover: “Encouraged by modern communication technologies and mass media, cultural Americanization attacks the organically grown identities of peoples and aims to create a consumerist and uniform people.” (Ibid.).

Globalization in a right-wing extremist context in sum stands for the power of international big business, for American cultural imperialism and for a “multi-racial genocide” or a “race destroying debris field,” sought by “Washington, Wall Street and Hollywood,” as the chairman of the British National Party (BNP), the MEP Nick Griffin, put it in an interview with the NPD paper “Deutsche Stimme” in 2002 (Deutsch Stimme March 2002:3).

### III

In the 21st century, a transnational network of right-wing extremists is forming, which is supported by a collective identity and an internationally compatible ideology. The collective identity is a) that of a white man in the sense of ethnicity and b) in terms of cultural belonging to a decidedly Western culture. The compatible ideological elements are the re-nationalization and re-ethnicizing of politics and the volkish opposition to a parliamentary-democratic system (see above; in greater detail: Grumke 2006).

If right-wing extremists want to be more than the sum of national rallying points of protest against social change, progressive discourse and multiculturalism, if they really want to achieve their fundamental objectives politically, then they must also think and act globally and appear as a transnational actors. Richard Stöss rightfully notes: “The degree of interconnection of national right-wing extremists, the question in particular, whether they manage to overcome national and international conflicts, can be an important indicator of political viability, and thus the potential threat right-wing extremists actually pose” (2001: 2). Although often marginalized in their own countries, at least on an ideological level something like a transnational extreme right has evolved – more to the point: an *international* of nationalists. Agreement about their common enemy, a more and more defined infrastructure with regular events, fixed communication platforms, and a lively exchange of goods and ideas have developed over recent years.

There is now an ideological foundation for a transnational cooperation of the extreme right. Irrespective of the different context structures, mobilization, and agitation strengths of each national right-wing scene, cross-border networking of the extreme right has even reached the European Parliament in recent years. On November 17, 2004 the NPD chairman Udo Voigt visited the European Parliament in Strasbourg on the invitation of then-MEP Alessandra Mussolini. He also came to other meetings and informal discussions with the Chairman of the National Front, Jean Marie Le Pen, Forza Nuova and the Lega Nord. Apart from the usual slogans, a press statement about these meetings included the strict rejection of EU membership of Turkey and the summoning of an international solidarity of the nationalists:

There was agreement on the political struggle against alienation, globalization and the mitigation of the American economic imperialism, as on the rejection of an accession of Turkey to the EU. After intensive discussions, we came to an agreement to cooperate more intensively in the future in particular in Europe. The MEP Alessandra Mussolini assured the party leader of the NPD her support for national German concerns in the European Parliament (NPD November 2004).

What seemed at that time still the exception, has now become the rule. Today it has become routine that regular right-wing dates such as the *Rudolf Hess Memorial*, May 1<sup>st</sup>, or the commemoration of the bombing of Dresden take place with massive international participation. German right-wing extremists have also become regular participants in events, demonstrations and concerts of their “comrades” abroad.

Today, all right-wing extremists in Western industrialized countries are facing almost identical challenges. Their “enemy” is not organized nationally, but globally. Accordingly, more and more right-wing extremists are looking to a trans-national network to fight against what they view as the overwhelming (Jewish) conspiracy. In the course of this development networking has become tighter, contacts abroad have intensified, communication channels have improved, altogether making for a permanent exchange of information and a vital event tourism. The number of internationally attended right-wing meetings, events and demonstrations are on the rise. This results in a complex web of cooperation, which is illustrated in the examples highlighted in this paper.

Pan-Aryanism, the ideological basis for this network, is essentially a modern anti-modern ideology. Guided by the internationally famous “14 Words” of the American right-wing terrorist David Lane (“We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children”)

and the fundamental opposition to ZOG, right-wing extremists globally have a common counter-myth, which overrides all other ideological differences. Trans-nationally co-operating right-wing extremists are not simply flag-waving patriots, but very fundamental enemies of pluralism, parliamentary democracy, and its representatives. This identity-oriented resistance is de facto the globalization of hatred, and not only in Europe is it a battle for the parliaments and civil society.

The re-nationalization and re-ethnicization propagated by the extreme right is both a fundamental alternative to the dominant neo-liberal globalization as well as to the social-ecological version (“Global Governance”) and must be taken seriously. The increasing reflexive modernity, i.e. the quickening pace of social and political change, also benefits the mobilization of the extremist right. In the 21st Century, a deeper internationalization – or better, transnationalization – of right-wing extremism, especially in an ideological but also in a structural sense, is apparent. It may seem paradoxical, but the “nationalist resistance” is not necessarily from one’s own country. Right-wing anti-globalists “globalize” – and to make it even more complicated: a unifying ideological element is the struggle against “globalism.”

The extreme right responds to the danger of “globalism,” as they define it, where “the trend towards liquefaction [...] is met with a re-homogenization of identity and a reaffirmation of supposed certainties” (Scharenberg 2003: 663). “Globalism” and the related social question have become new campaign and propaganda issues for right-wing extremists. At the same time, right-wing extremists see themselves as executors of the will of the people, who are irritated by how quickly the processes of globalization progress.

It should be noted in conclusion:

- Today, right-wing extremism can be described as an international, modern and multi-faceted phenomenon (see Minkenberg 1998; see Greven / Grumke 2006);
- Opposition to globalization and the defence of social justice – however understood – per se is owned by neither the political left nor the right in the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- Right-wing extremists react “to the loss of traditions and boundaries of identity, accelerated by globalization and de-nationalization” (Scharenberg 2003: 662);
- The right extremists are not just regular critics of globalization, but anti-globalists, their approach is not progressive-democratic, but volkish-extremist;
- The ideological arsenal of the People (the Volk) and the nation is extended by the extreme right by ideas such as globalization, (anti-)capitalism, imperialism and identity, and thus made compatible internationally (see Grumke 2006);
- Both because of their internal structural conditions as well as external factors – particularly a “cultural resonance” with parts of the population (see Grumke 2008: 488ff.) – the right-wing extremist movement cannot be marginalized simply by external repression or the hope that it will one day implode. Unlike suspected by some authors, the right-wing extremist movement in Germany is not a “painful episode” (Ohlemacher 1994), but rather a “normal pathology of Western industrial societies” (Scheuch / Klingemann 1967: 12ff.).
- Right-wing extremists live, like all fundamentalists, in a hermetically sealed ideological counter-world. So the question is: How can a free society accept a declaration of absolute enmity without betraying its own liberal democratic ideals?

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This article is a slightly amended version of an earlier article published in *Globalized Anti-Globalists - The Ideological Basis of the Internationalization of Right-Wing Extremism*, in: Sabine v. Mering/Timothy Wyman McCarthy (Hrsg.): *Right-Wing Radicalism Today. Perspectives from Europe and the US*, London and New York (Routledge), 2013, p. 13-21.

<sup>2</sup> All translations of quotes are mine, T.G.

<sup>3</sup> Udo Voigt was leader of the NPD from 1996-2011 and is a Member of the European Parliament since 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Press release of the NPD of April 11, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Holger Apfel was leader of the NPD from 2011-2013 and today has left the party to run a pub on the Spanish island of Mallorca.

<sup>6</sup> Press release of the NPD of May 7, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> The original phrase is "Kampf gegen die Überfremdung" which is to be understood both in a cultural and a biological/racial sense.

<sup>8</sup> William Pierce died on July 23, 2002 at the age of 68 from cancer.

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