Gideon Botsch

Taking Nativism to the Streets

Historical Perspectives on Right-Wing Extremist Protest Campaigns against Immigration in Germany

Abstract

In this article, I give an overview on nativist street protests in Germany from the early nineteenth century to the present from an historical perspective. In a preliminary remark, I will reflect on some recent developments in Germany, where nativist protest campaigns against immigration took place in the streets when voters were turning towards the populist radical right party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD). In the first section, I will outline an older tradition of anti-immigration protest in nineteenth and early twentieth century Germany, which is closely connected to modern antisemitism. In sections two and three, I will retrace how, from the late 1960s onward, the far right in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) discovered concerns about immigration in the German population, addressed them in protest campaigns and developed narratives to integrate such sentiments into a broader right-wing extremist ideology, itself deeply rooted in antisemitism. Studying nativism and the radical right from an actor-oriented perspective, I will focus on traditionalist movements, including the *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (NPD) and neo-Nazi groups.

Keywords: *Antisemitism*; *racism*; *nativism*; *radical right parties and movements*; *protest*; *violence*; *terrorism*; *Germany*; *nineteenth and twentieth century*; *history*

In the last decade, different newly formed actors of the radical right surfaced in Germany.[1] Most notable is the rise of the *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Ger-

---

1 See Helmut Kellershohn/Wolfgang Kastrup (eds.): Kulturkampf von rechts. AfD, Pegida und die Neue Rechte Münster 2016. I will not use the terms 'radical right' and 'extreme right' with the sharp distinction Cas Mudde has introduced in his recent works (see for example: Cas Mudde: The Far Right Today, Cambridge 2019). In this essay, 'radical right' refers to a broader spectrum of the far right, covering both extremist and non-extremist varieties. See: Michael Minkenberg: Demokratie und Desintegration. Der politikwissenschaftliche Forschungsstand zu Rechtsradikalismus, Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Gewalt, Berlin 2005; idem: The radical right in Europe. An Overview, Gütersloh 2008; idem: Was ist Rechtspopulismus? In: Politische Vierteljahresschrift (PVS) 59 (2018), pp. 337–352. See

many, or AfD). Up to the foundation of this political party in 2013, radical right parties frequently failed to establish themselves as a political factor in Germany, but already in 2015, observers asked if there is "finally a right-wing populist movement in Germany."[2] In earlier times, Germany followed more or less a Western European pattern of "interaction between radical right parties and movements":

> Movements endure where radical right parties remain marginal. In other words, to the extent that radical right parties maintain their movement qualities and become electorally successful, movement mobilization on the far right is inhibited.[3]

This pattern is contrasted with an Eastern European one, where "more porous borders between radical right parties and movements exist along with symbiotic interactions."[4] But the AfD established, from 2015 up to 2018, a specific relationship to other manifestations of the new radical right movement, including street campaigns, activism, and a media scene with both classical print- and new online-formats. This relationship can be analyzed as a form of division of labour and "strategic policy of alliances."[5] In particular, the campaigning platform *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlands* (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident, or PEGIDA) from Dresden attracted a considerable amount of attention, and its name soon became emblematic.[6] The multi-facetted movement, of which AfD and

also Jens Rydgren: The Sociology of the Radical Right, in: Annual Review of Sociology 33:1 (2007), pp. 241–262.

2   Nicole Berbuir/Marcel Lewandowsky/Jasmin Siri: The AfD and its Sympathisers. Finally a Right-Wing Populist Movement in Germany? In: German Politics 24:2 (2015), pp. 154–178. See Kai Arzheimer/Carl C. Berning: How the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and their voters veered to the radical right, 2013–2017, in: Electoral Studies 60 (2019), pp. 1–10. For comparative perspectives on populist radical right parties, see: Cas Mudde: Populist radical right parties in Europe, Cambridge 2007.

3   Michael Minkenberg: Between Party and Movement: Conceptual and Empirical Considerations of the Radical Right's Organizational Boundaries and Mobilization Processes, in: European Societies 21:4 (2019), pp. 463–486, p. 464. See also: Swen Hutter/Endre Borbáth: Challenges from left and right. The long-term dynamics of protest and electoral politics in Western Europe, in: European Societies 21:4 (2019), pp. 487–512, who conclude for Western Europe that the more successful a populist radical right party is "in electoral terms, the less its related positions are promoted by protest activities" (p. 508).

4   Michael Minkenberg: Between Party and Movement, p. 464.

5   Michael Minkenberg/Teresa Sündermann: Das Verhältnis von AfD und rechtsradikalen Bewegungen in Brandenburg. Der Fall Zukunft Heimat in Cottbus, in: Gideon Botsch/Christoph Schulze (eds.): Rechtsparteien in Brandenburg. Zwischen Wahlalternative und Neonazismus 1990–2020, Berlin 2021, pp. 245–269, p. 263: „strategische Bündnispolitik".

6   With regard to its role in the public discourse on immigration in Germany, PEGIDA has even been called an "empty signifier." See: Timo Heim (ed.): Pegida als Spiegel und Pro-

PEGIDA were parts, mobilized its followers by addressing widespread sentiments against immigrants, *Asylanten*,[7] and people with a background in Islamic cultures. Therefore, the movement can, to a certain extent, be labelled as nativist. According to Cas Mudde, nativism is defined as an ideology "which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ("the nation") and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state."[8]

While these substantial changes of the German radical right in the last decade must be noted and understood, this should not lead historians to a preoccupation with the current events. For a better historical understanding, it is advisable to look back on the longer history of the interconnection between right-wing extremist activism and nativist street campaigns against immigration in modern German history. By doing so, I will focus on agency and on organized actors in different arenas.[9] This does not mean that other aspects are irrelevant. On the "demand side," changing public opinion is of particular interest. Also of relevance is the influence of opportunity structures, i. e. the "set of opportunities and constraints that are offered by the institutional structure and political culture of the political system" in which the radical right groups operate.[10] However, it is not possible to give a full picture within the limited space of this essay. In the first section, I will outline an older tradition of anti-immigration protest in Germany, starting in the early nineteenth century and stretching up to the years after the First World War, which is closely connected to the development of modern antisemitism at that time. In sections two and three, I will retrace how the far right in the FRG discovered, well before 2013, concerns about immigration in the

jektionsfläche. Wechselwirkungen und Abgrenzungen zwischen Pegida, Politik, Medien, Zivilgesellschaft und Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2017, p. 5. See: Lars Geiges/Stine Marg/Franz Walter: Pegida. Die schmutzige Seite der Zivilgesellschaft? Bielefeld/Berlin 2015; Fabian Virchow: PEGIDA: Understanding the Emergence and Essence of Nativist Protest in Dresden, in: Journal of Intercultural Studies 37:5 (2016), pp. 541–555; Maik Herold: Fremdenfeindlichkeit im rechtspopulistischen Protest: das Beispiel Pegida, in: Totalitaritarismus & Demokratie 15 (2018), pp. 13–25.

7   *Asylant* is a pejorative German word referring to refugees and asylum-seekers.

8   Cas Mudde: The Populist Radical Right. A Pathological Normalcy, in: West European Politics 33:6 (2010), pp. 1167–1186, p. 1173.

9   See on actor-oriented approaches: Matthew J. Goodwin: The Rise and Faults of the Internalist Perspective in Extreme Right Studies, in: Representation 42:4 (2006), pp. 347–364; Jens Rydgren: The Sociology of the Radical Right; Gideon Botsch: Rechtsextremismus als politische Praxis. Umrisse akteursorientierter Rechtsextremismusforschung, in: Christoph Kopke/Wolfgang Kühnel (eds.): Demokratie, Freiheit und Sicherheit. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Hans-Gerd Jaschke, Baden-Baden 2017, pp. 131–146.

10   Manuela Caiani/Donatella della Porta: The Radical Right as Social Movement Organizations, in: Jens Rydgren (ed.): The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right, New York 2018, pp. 327–347, p. 330. See also: Cas Mudde: Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe.

German population, addressed them in protest campaigns and developed narratives to integrate such nativist sentiments into a broader right-wing extremist ideology, itself deeply rooted in antisemitism.

Antisemitic Campaigning and Nativism: The Legacy of the Nineteenth Century

In the one hundred years between the Hep-Hep riots of 1819 and the pogrom in the Berlin *Scheunenviertel* of 1923, labelling Jews as foreigners, strangers and immigrants was a strong element in antisemitic street mobilizations. It was during that period of time when traditional anti-Judaism underwent a process of transformation, resulting in what Klaus Holz identifies as "national antisemitism."[11] While antisemitism meant much more than nativism or xenophobia, an anti-immigration stance was one important feature of the antisemitic complex, at least throughout nineteenth century Germany.

The Hep-Hep riots[12] refer to a series of pogroms and loosely organized attacks against Jews and Jewish-owned shops which took place in 1819 in different regions of Germany. The starting point was the Franconian city of Würzburg. This diocesan town used to have a strict ban on Jewish settlement since the seventeenth century, but with the beginning of the nineteenth century, and especially after it became part of the Kingdom of Bavaria, some Jewish families settled and opened businesses. On 2 August 1819, rioting began, and the odd (and until now unexplained) antisemitic battle cry "Hep Hep" was probably heard for the first time. An early report in a contemporary newspaper, dated 7 August 1819, provided the following xenophobic interpretation of the Würzburg incident:

> For a long time already a dull dissatisfaction has prevailed here regarding the considerable increase in the number of local Jews. In the past, none were tolerated here, until finally, like a volcanic eruption, a full popular outrage burst out.[13]

---

11   See: Klaus Holz: Nationaler Antisemitismus. Wissenssoziologie einer Weltanschauung, Hamburg 2001. See also: Shulamit Volkov: Antisemitism as a Cultural Code, in: Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook 23:1 (1978), pp. 25–46.

12   See: Eleonore Sterling: Anti-Jewish Riots in Germany in 1819. A Displacement of Social Protest, in: Historia Judaica 12 (1950), pp. 105–142; Rainer Erb/Werner Bergmann: Die Nachtseite der Judenemanzipation. Der Widerstand gegen die Integration der Juden in Deutschland 1780–1860, Berlin 1989, pp. 218–241; Stefan Rohrbacher: The "Hep Hep" Riots of 1819. Anti-Jewish Ideology, Agitation and Violence, in: Christhard Hoffmann/ Werner Bergmann/Helmut Walser Smith (eds.): Exclusionary violence. Antisemitic riots in modern German history. Ann Arbor 2002, pp. 23–42.

13   „Schon lange herrschte hier eine dumpfe Unzufriedenheit über die bedeutende Vermehrung der hiesigen Juden, von welchen in der Vorzeit gar keine hier geduldet waren, die endlich,

The metaphor of a natural catastrophe—here: a volcanic eruption—is characteristic. A local native population is portrayed by this anonymous author having a "dull dissatisfaction," which from a certain point on becomes unbearable, thus turning spontaneously into condemnable yet understandable, if not unavoidable, violence. According to this argumentation, antisemitism was justified as a sort of instinctive behaviour. This is exactly how Heinrich von Treitschke argued in his infamous essay *Unsere Aussichten* (Our Prospects) in November 1879. The historian called the growing hostilities against Jews in the German *Kaiserreich* "a brutal and vicious, but natural reaction by the Teutonic national sentiment against an alien element."[14] Hence, he framed the Jewish-German confrontation as a problem of immigration:

> Year after year a flock of eager trouser selling young men penetrates our Eastern border from the inexhaustible Polish cradle whose children and children's children shall once rule Germany's stock markets and newspapers; immigration is growing visibly, and the question of how we can melt this alien nationality with ours becomes ever more serious.[15]

A remarkable aspect of this re-framing of the "Jewish question" as a question of immigration and integration is the fact that the number of Jewish immigrants from abroad was rising in total modestly, yet by a consistent percentage at the end of the nineteenth century, and was by no means very high.[16] An interesting detail is the reference to the "Polish cradle," since the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth had been destroyed and partitioned already a century ago with the help and to the profit of the Prussian State.

---

wie der Ausbruch eines Vulkans, in eine volle Empörung gegen dieselben ausbrach", quoted in Jacob Katz: Die Hep-Hep-Verfolgungen des Jahres 1819. Berlin 1994, p. 15 (translated by the author).

14   "[E]ine brutale und gehässige, aber natürliche Reaktion des germanischen Volksgefühls gegen ein fremdes Element," quoted in: Karsten Krieger (ed.): Der "Berliner Antisemitismusstreit" 1879–1881. Eine Kontroverse um die Zugehörigkeit der deutschen Juden zur Nation. Kommentierte Quellenedition, München 2003, pp. 6–16, p. 14 (translated by the author).

15   "[Ü]ber unsere Ostgrenze […] dringt Jahr für Jahr aus der unerschöpflichen polnischen Wiege eine Schar strebsamer hosenverkaufender Jünglinge herein, deren Kinder und Kindeskinder dereinst Deutschlands Börsen und Zeitungen beherrschen sollen; die Einwanderung wächst zusehends, und immer ernster wird die Frage, wie wir dies fremde Volksthum mit dem unseren verschmelzen können," quoted in: ibid, p. 11 (translated by the author).

16   See: Trude Maurer: Ost-, ostmittel- und südosteuropäische Juden in Berlin vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis in die 1930er Jahre, in: Klaus J. Bade/Pieter C. Emmer/Leo Lucassen/Jochen Oltmer (eds.): Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart, Paderborn 2008, pp. 825–828; Massimo Ferrari Zumbini: Große Migration und Antislawismus. Negative Ostjudenbilder im Kaiserreich, in: Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung 3 (1994), pp. 194–226. Besides the Jews, nativist anti-immigration campaigns in the Kaiserreich targeted Slavic immigrants, especially those of Polish origin.

So if Eastern European Jews moved West, they were in many cases not "penetrating" the Eastern border, but just crossing the river Oder, hence domestic German territory. Treitschke coined, in the context of this essay, the well-known phrase "*Die Juden sind unser Unglück*" ("The Jews are our misfortune"), but like the anonymous newspaper reporter sixty years before, he distanced himself from the rough and brutal language by using the sentence as if it was an indirect quote. He pretended that this parole was being uttered in unison ("*wie aus einem Munde*"[17]) by a broad public in the centre of the society. By doing so, the most prominent historian of Prussia legitimized the antisemitic campaigns of the following years, sometimes referred to as the *Berliner Bewegung* (Berlin Movement), which included street rallies and anti-Jewish mobs and lead to a series of pogroms in Pomerania and Western Prussia in 1881.

Another important protagonist in those "foundation years of antisemitism"[18] was the orientalist Paul de Lagarde. Like Treitschke, he spoke of an instinctive reaction by the German people against the Jews. He fiercely avowed these hostile feelings, pretending that the Germans saw the Jews as

> antipathetic guests with whom one cannot come to terms since one consistently wishes to get rid of them. We Germans know that we are of Indo-German, Aryan ancestry […]. If we […] all of us reject the Jews not as Jews, but as Semites […], the expression [antisemitism] implies the reason why we are doing so: the instinct of the nation has, without knowing what it achieved, coined the word, and therefore the assumption behind the word is correct: it emerged from the psyche of the people.[19]

This manifestation of antisemitism is clearly an expression of the new, racist worldview, since Lagarde saw the root cause of their antagonism in the ancestries of Aryans and Semites. It is, however, at the same time an expression of nativism since in the

---

17   Quoted in: Karsten Krieger (ed.): Der „Berliner Antisemitismusstreit" 1879–1881, p. 14 (translated by the author).

18   See: Massimo Ferrari Zumbini: Die Wurzeln des Bösen. Gründerjahre des Antisemitismus: von der Bismarckzeit zu Hitler, Frankfurt a. M. 2003.

19   "[Sie wirken auf uns wie] antipathische Gäste, mit denen man nicht zu einem Benehmen kommt, weil man fortwährend sie los zu sein wünscht. Wir Deutsche wissen, daß wir indogermanischer, arischer Abstammung sind […]. Wenn wir […] alle mit einander die Juden nicht als Juden, sondern als Semiten […] ablehnen, so liegt in diesem Ausdrucke zugleich der Grund angegeben, warum wir es thun: der Instinkt des Volkes hat, ohne zu wissen was ihm gelang, das Wort geprägt, und darum ist auch die dem Worte zu Grunde liegende Anschauung richtig: sie ist aus der Psyche der Nation hervorgegangen." Quoted in: Paul de Lagarde: Juden und Indogermanen: eine Studie nach dem Leben, Göttingen 1887, p. 330 (translated by the author).

same essay of 1887, Lagarde blames the Jews for "their addiction to install their fellow countrymen wherever possible."[20]

The antisemitic events of 1879–1881 were embedded in increased organizing and propaganda by antisemitic groups, who began producing a flood of printed matter including books, periodicals, brochures, leaflets and stickers. On the organizational side, antisemitic parties were formed. Although they had not been very successful in street campaigning, organizing or in the polls, they were the earliest forerunners of radical right parties and organizations in Germany, including the groupings of the *Völkische Bewegung*[21] and—decades later—the National Socialist Workers' Party (NSDAP).[22] In early documents, particularly in the Party Programme of 1920,[23] xenophobia and nativism are present.

After the First World War, the campaign against the immigration of *Ostjuden* (Jews from the East) escalated, but this time against the background of growing numbers of immigrants coming to a country shaken by turmoil, civil war and economic hardship.[24] Like in the 1880s, street activism, accompanied by an ever-growing flood of printed matter, was accompanied by violent assaults as well as by the foundation of new parties and organizations. The radical right in the early years of the Weimar Republic was successful in spreading their antisemitic message amongst broader parts of the German public by putting the '*Ostjudenfrage*' on the political agenda. The "Jewish Question" was thus successfully established as a general framework for the interpretation of current political and social developments.[25] A few days before Hitler attempted his Beerhall Putsch in Munich in 1923, a mob of destitute people in front of an employment office in central Berlin was agitated to storm the nearby *Scheunenviertel* area. Bordering the streets where most well-established Jewish institutions were situated, including the New Synagogue in the *Oranienburger Straße*, the *Scheunenviertel* quarter was in contrast notorious for prostitution and crime. In the aftermath of the

20   "[I]hre Sucht, Landsleute anzubringen, wo es irgend geht." Quoted in: Paul de Lagarde: Juden und Indogermanen, p. 335 (translated by the author).

21   See: Stefan Breuer: Die Völkischen in Deutschland. Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik, Darmstadt 2008; Uwe Puschner: Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich. Sprache—Rasse—Religion, Darmstadt 2001.

22   This has already been noted by Ernst Ottwalt in a remarkably perceptive chapter of his *history of National Socialism*, first published in 1932. See: Ernst Ottwalt: Deutschland erwache! Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus (reprint), Berlin 1978, pp. 21–85.

23   For an English translation, see: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/1708-ps.asp (last accessed on 12 June 2020).

24   See: Trude Maurer: Ostjuden in Deutschland. 1918–1933, Hamburg 1986; Trude Maurer: Ost-, ostmitteleuropäische und südosteuropäische Juden in Berlin.

25   See: Mike Schmeitzner: "Wühler," "Schieber" und "Putschisten"? Bolschewismusfurcht und "Ostjudengefahr" in Sachsen 1921. Eine Landtagsdebatte als Lehrstück, in: Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft (ZfG) 66:9 (2018), pp. 734–755.

First World War, a considerable number of *Ostjuden* found themselves constrained to live or trade in the poverty-stricken, run-down houses and shops of *Scheunenviertel*. During the pogrom of November 1923, radical right and ultra-nationalist agitation, antisemitism and a nativist anti-immigration stance culminated in violent and murderous rioting.[26]

With the rise of the Nazi movement, a more radical form of antisemitism dominated the right-wing radical campaigns. Of course the Nazi propaganda did utilize xenophobic and nativist anti-immigration stances in combination with its anti-Jewish campaigning whenever it seemed to be possible and opportune, but it did not rely on them. From the mid-1920s to the end of the Second World War, the combination of anti-immigration propaganda and antisemitism was much less important compared to the overall racist policy the Nazis envisioned and implemented first in Germany, then on the whole European continent.[27] The ultra-nationalist ideology of the Nazis cannot be labelled as nativist, since its aim was a European *Lebensraum* ruled by the Aryan or Teutonic race—an ideology labelled as "racial imperialism" by Franz L. Neumann.[28]

Immediately after the end of the war in 1945, the specific combination of nativism with modern antisemitism regained momentum for a few years, when some hundreds of thousands of Jewish Displaced Persons (DP) lived in camps all over Germany.[29] They had survived the concentration camps and forced labour camps, and a considerable number also had been through pogroms and hostilities in Eastern European countries. Occasional clashes between the German "native" population and the inmates of the DP camps occurred, and attacks were sometimes fought back by the Jews. When an antisemitic letter-to-the-editor was published by the liberal newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in 1949, between 1,000 and 2,000 Jewish DPs took to the streets of Munich. After heavy force was used by the authorities, rioting broke out, with police vehicles attacked and partly burned by enraged survivors of the Shoah.[30] Throughout the 1950s, the majority of DPs had been resettled to Israel and other countries and the remaining tried to integrate into the post-war German society.

---

26   See: David Clay Large: "Out with the Ostjuden": The Scheunenviertel Riots in Berlin, November 1923, in: Christhard Hoffmann/Werner Bergmann/Helmut Walser Smith (eds.): Exclusionary violence, pp. 123–140; Trude Maurer: Ostjuden in Deutschland.

27   See: Cornelia Essner: Die "Nürnberger Gesetze" oder die Verwaltung des Rassenwahns 1933–1945, Paderborn 2002.

28   Franz L. Neumann: Behemoth. The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933–1944, New York 1966 [reprint of the edition from 1944], p. 184.

29   See: Frank Caestecker: 'Displaced Persons' (DPs) in Europa seit dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs, in: Klaus J. Bade et al. (eds.): Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa, pp. 529–535.

30   See: Ronen Steinke: Die Affäre Adolf Bleibtreu. Wie ein antisemitischer Leserbrief in der Süddeutschen Zeitung 1949 eine Straßenschlacht auslöste, in: Münchner Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur 12:1 (2018), pp. 52–63.

While antisemitism remained an important, if not the basic element of right-wing extremist ideologies and politics, a specific connection with nativism, as outlined here from the nineteenth century up to 1923, faded into the background in the following years.[31] Only with the arrival of the so-called *Kontingentflüchtlinge*—Jewish migrants from the collapsing Soviet Union who started to arrive in Germany from 1990 on and were entitled to stay due to a regulation issued by the last government of the GDR,[32]—the right-wing extremist campaigning against immigration of the early 1990s (to be discussed later in this article) coalesced with post-Shoah antisemitism in some very specific settings and locations. From the 1950s on, and for almost two decades, right-wing extremist parties—including the *Sozialistische Reichspartei* (Socialist Reich-Party or SRP), banned in 1952, and the *Deutsche Reichspartei* (German Reich-Party or DRP)[33]—did not, in general, utilize nativist xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiments.

Gastarbeiter and the Emergence of the Antisemitic *Volkstod* Narrative

When the *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (National Democratic Party of Germany or NPD)[34] was founded in 1964, it first acted as a party of the traditional German radical right. Its main concerns had been connected to the "German question": to re-establish a sovereign status for the country, to end German division and to regain the territories lost after two World Wars. In its successful election campaigns in seven German federal states, it attracted more and more followers to join party rallies and meetings. Throughout the 1960s, NPD campaigners—as well as critical onlookers—made the observation that two issues were of the highest concern for the party supporters: the compensation to Israel and the *Ausländer-Frage* (question of foreigners). When the speakers addressed negative sentiments against *Gastarbeiter* or *Fremdarbeiter*—as immigrants were called in those years—they received the most enthusiastic response from their audiences. By 1967, the party organ *Deutsche Nach-*

31   For right-wing extremism and ultra-nationalism in the early years of the FRG, see: Kurt P. Tauber: Beyond eagle and swastika. German nationalism since 1945 (2 vols.), Middletown 1967; Gideon Botsch: Die extreme Rechte in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. 1949 bis heute, Darmstadt 2012.

32   See: Paul A. Harris: Osteuropäische Juden in Deutschland seit 1990, in: Klaus J. Bade et al. (eds.): Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa, pp. 822–825.

33   See Gideon Botsch: Continuities within Germany's "National Opposition." From the Deutsche Reichspartei to the Nationalsdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, 1949–2010, in: Nicola Kristin Karcher/Anders G. Kjostvedt (eds.): Movements and Ideas of the Extreme Right in Europe. Positions and Continuities, Frankfurt a. M. 2013, pp. 183–208.

34   See Botsch, Continuities.

richten had intensified the agitation against foreigners, who were blamed for being communists, a threat to German women, and criminals:

> The majority of the […] Italian foreign workers are organized communists. More and more frequently it can be noted that these red functionaries, who have become fluent in the German language, also try to influence their German co-workers and the foreign workers from other nations.[35]

The NPD also complained about the "danger to our national identity as a necessary result of the presence of too many, usually young, men of alien nationality."[36] The party paper pretended that

> ten per cent of the criminals investigated in Bavaria in 1967 were foreigners […]. Robbery, rape, homicide, procuration, sex crimes, trafficking of marihuana and of counterfeit money are the preferred fields of work of our 'guests.'[37]

And in the election campaign for Rhineland-Palatine in 1967, the NPD warned that the federal state should not become a European "hotspot for roaming international crime, procuration and prostitution."[38]

   This was, by and large, the chorus of NPD election rallies when the topic of immigration was addressed.[39] Up to that point, the meetings were held mostly indoors. After their extremely successful election campaign in Baden-Württemberg in 1968, the NPD started its campaign for the national elections of 1969 and changed their mode of operation. Party leader Adolf von Thadden organized a well-planned and

---

35   "Ein Großteil der […] italienischen Gastarbeiter ist kommunistisch organisiert. Immer häufiger wird festgestellt, daß die inzwischen der deutschen Sprache mächtigen roten Funktionäre auch Einfluß auf ihre deutschen Arbeitskameraden und die Gastarbeiter anderer Nationen zu nehmen versuchen," quoted in: Reinhard Kühnl/Rainer Rilling/Christine Sager: Die NPD. Struktur, Ideologie und Funktion einer neofaschistischen Partei, Frankfurt a. M. 1969, p. 187 (translated by the author).

36   "Die Gefährdung unseres Volkstums, welche aus der Anwesenheit vieler, meist jüngerer Männer fremder Nationalität erwachsen muß", quoted in: Reinhard Kühnl/Rainer Rilling/Christine Sager: Die NPD, p. 187 (translated by the author).

37   "Zehn Prozent der ermittelten Verbrecher in Bayern waren 1967 Ausländer […] Raub, Notzucht, Totschlag, Zuhälterei, Sexualverbrechen, Haschisch-Handel und Falschgeldverbreitung sind bevorzugte Arbeitssparten unserer 'Gäste.'" Quoted in: Reinhard Kühnl/Rainer Rilling/Christine Sager: Die NPD, p. 187 (translated by the author).

38   "[Ein europäisches] Zentrum des nomadisierenden internationalen Verbrechertums, der Zuhälterei und der Prostitution." Quoted in: Reinhard Kühnl/Rainer Rilling/Christine Sager: Die NPD, p. 188 (translated by the author).

39   See: Hermann Bott: Die Volksfeind-Ideologie. Zur Kritik rechtsradikaler Propaganda, Stuttgart 1969.

precisely scheduled *Deutschlandfahrt* (tour of Germany), consisting of indoor as well as open-air gatherings. This tour spun out of control, as it attracted aggressive young supporters of the party and exposed them to an attentive public. Moreover, the party's security team turned out to consist of some of the most violent thugs among its supporters. When the rallies met with protests from a broad coalition of opponents, reaching from leftist student activists and other anti-fascists, trade-unionists, former concentration camp survivors both of Jewish and gentile origin, and many other concerned citizens, the NPD's security men went berserk. At the peak of the campaign, the chief of the squad fired at protesters with his pistol, injuring one severely. The tour had to be stopped, and on election day the party failed to enter the *Bundestag*.

The failure in the national election campaign of 1969 offered some lessons for the radical right in the Federal Republic, but it took its activists almost a decade to learn from them. One important lesson was that street activism had to be separated from party politics in order to achieve any support at the polls. The other lesson was that xenophobia was the best-selling product the extreme right had in stock. It was ideal for winning over support and, consequently, radicalizing the opinions of the constituency in order to spread racist, ultra-nationalist and authoritarian, anti-democratic ideology. Utilizing widespread nativist sentiments could open the hearts and minds for a more radical worldview—a worldview rooted in pre-national socialist and national socialist ideological traditions of the German extreme right.

In analyzing the history and development of Germany's post-war extreme right,[40] the 1970s and early 1980s can be regarded as critical years, but also as a sort of laboratory to experiment with new forms and content to gain momentum for the future. The nationalist activists had to assimilate to an environment in flux. A strain of the radical right which was later called the New Right[41] played an important role in this process. Even though the impact of this tendency should not be underestimated, it is worthwhile turning attention to the "Old Right." Being more traditionalist by definition, this strain also went through transformation processes, which have received far less scholarly attention. Their actors also discovered step by step the possibilities of a new cultural environment, like youth subcultures and new forms of non-violent or violent protest. No less important than the intellectual renewal by the New Right, which addressed itself to political and social elites, and maybe of an even greater impact, was the Old Right's turn towards proletarian milieus in transformation. The most effective key to reach new supporters was addressing nativist stances. As the

---

40   See: Gideon Botsch: 'Nationale Opposition' in der demokratischen Gesellschaft. Zur Geschichte der extremen Rechten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, in: Fabian Virchow/ Martin Langebach/Alexander Häusler (eds.): Handbuch Rechtsextremismus, Wiesbaden 2016, pp. 43–82.

41   See: Volker Weiß: Die autoritäre Revolte. Die Neue Rechte und der Untergang des Abendlandes, Stuttgart 2017.

lower strata of German society became extremely volatile regarding the risks of so-cial change, negative feelings against immigrants were widespread, especially in the younger generations. Supporters could be found in emerging masculine proletarian subcultures like football fans, motorcycle gangs or skinheads.

A discourse was developed to connect the nativist rejection of immigration with an overall worldview of authoritarian and racist ultra-nationalism and antisemitism. This was the narrative of the *Volkstod*, or "death of the nation" by *Überfremdung*.[42] For the latter word, there is no proper English term; it might be translated as "foreign infil-tration," but the similarity to the word "alienation" in German (*Entfremdung*) should be noted. In 1971, the influential Franconian publisher Arthur Ehrhardt, a former member of the SS and now local politician of the NPD, wrote in his monthly journal *Nation Europa* shortly before his death:

> We have been observing the progress of foreign infiltration for years now. Today there is readiness for the final execution, for the extinction of the German na-tion—literally for genocide! Literally for the extermination of our gifted, brave, peace-loving, hard-working people, that is to be replaced by a mash even more susceptible to manipulation.[43]

The antisemitic idea of an overall plot, a worldwide conspiracy for the "replacement" of white European people with foreigners in order to gain better control over those masses was formulated in 1971. Thus, Ehrhardt had updated the connection of na-tivism and antisemitism. "The Jews" were no longer so much the foreign "infiltrators" themselves, but the evil power organizing immigration for the sake of their own profit. From the end of the 1960s on, one can find evidence for an ever more efficient spread-ing of this idea throughout the inner circles of the far right; for example, in closed lectures and seminars or in journals and other publications.[44] By the beginning of the 1980s, the public seemed to be ready for a massive campaign. In 1981, a text signed by a group of professors emeriti was published. This "Heidelberg Manifesto" opened with a statement of concern about "the infiltration of the German people by the influx of many millions of foreigners and their families," and about the "cultural alienation

---

42   For a detailed analysis, see: Gideon Botsch/Christoph Kopke: "Umvolkung" und "Volks-tod." Zur Kontinuität einer extrem rechten Paranoia, Ulm 2019.

43   "Wir haben jahrelang die Fortschritte der Überfremdung verzeichnet. Heute ist man bereit zum letzten Vollzug, zur Auslöschung des deutschen Volkes—buchstäblich zum Genozid! Buchstäblich zur Austilgung unseres begabten, tüchtigen, friedliebenden, fleißigen Volkes, das durch einen noch leichter manipulierbaren Brei ersetzt werden soll," quoted in: Arthur Ehrhardt: Die Idee wird siegen! Die letzten Worte Arthur Ehrhardts, in: Nation Europa 20:6 (1971), pp. 3–7, p. 7 (translated by the author).

44   For example, see: Gideon Botsch/Christoph Kopke: "Umvolkung" und "Volkstod."

of our language, our culture and our national identity." The professors pretended that the

> integration of great masses of non-German foreigners is not possible while preserving our people, and [it] will lead to the well-known ethnic catastrophes of multicultural societies. Every people, including the German people, has a natural right to preserve its identity and characteristic in its habitat. Respect for other people's demands their preservation, but not their meltdown.[45]

New about this manifesto was its appeal to the German constitution, the Basic Law:

> The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany does not emanate from the concept of 'nation' as the sum of all people within the state, [but] from the concept 'Volk,' in fact the German people […]. Thus, the Basic Law demands the preservation of the German people. […] The current immigration policy, which promotes the development towards a multiracial society, contradicts the Basic Law, which obliges all Germans […] to preserve and defend the birth right of our people.[46]

This was combined with a statement against "ideological nationalism," "racism" and "all extremisms, right and left"[47]—an odd enough statement, since the manifesto was printed in a journal from the core of the openly right-wing extremist milieu. The manifesto offered a clear strategical direction for future right-wing extremist campaigns:

---

45   "[Mit großer Sorge beobachten wir die] Unterwanderung des deutschen Volkes durch Zuzug von vielen Millionen von Ausländern und ihren Familien, die Überfremdung unserer Sprache, unserer Kultur und unseres Volkstums […]. Die Integration großer Massen nichtdeutscher Ausländer ist […] bei gleichzeitiger Erhaltung unseres Volkes nicht möglich und führt zu den bekannten ethnischen Katastrophen multikultureller Gesellschaften. Jedes Volk, auch das deutsche Volk, hat ein Naturrecht auf Erhaltung seiner Identität und Eigenart in seinem Wohngebiet. Die Achtung vor anderen Völkern gebietet ihre Erhaltung, nicht aber ihre Einschmelzung", quoted in: Das Heidelberger Manifest 1981, in: Nation Europa 31:12 (1981), pp. 29–30 (translated by the author).

46   "Das Grundgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland geht nicht aus vom Begriff ‚Nation' als der Summe aller Völker innerhalb eines Staates. [Es geht vielmehr aus] vom Begriff 'Volk,' und zwar vom deutschen Volk […]. Die jetzt praktizierte Ausländerpolitik, welche die Entwicklung zu einer multirassischen Gesellschaft fördert, widerspricht dem Grundgesetz, das alle Deutschen […] zur Bewahrung und Verteidigung der Lebensrechte unseres Volkes verpflichtet," quoted in: Das Heidelberger Manifest 1981, in: Nation Europa 31:12 (1981), pp. 29–30 (translated by the author).

47   "Auf dem Boden des Grundgesetzes stehend wenden wir uns gegen ideologischen Nationalismus, gegen Rassismus und gegen jeden Rechts- und Linksextremismus", quoted in: Heidelberger Manifest 1981, p. 29 (translated by the author).

to combine a radical antisemitic and racial-nationalist ideology with the widespread xenophobia, rooted in "softer," but more accepted nativist sentiments and opinions.

Lessons Learned? Different Actors with Common Goals

Other activists of the extreme right used similar wordings in their agitation against foreigners, but promoted more radical means. Neo-Nazi leader Manfred Roeder stated that "every people uses violence when its birth rights are concerned."[48] Early in 1980, along with a small group of followers, Roeder started a terrorist campaign of arson attacks, first aimed at representatives and symbolic targets related to the culture of remembrance of the Shoah. From the summer of 1980 on, Roeder's underground gang *Deutsche Aktionsgruppen* (German action groups) firebombed three different accommodations for refugees, and when, in a fourth attack on 22 August 1980, a transitional shelter for Vietnamese "boat people" in Hamburg was set on fire, Nguyễn Ngọc Châu and Đỗ Anh Lân died in the flames. The two refugees were most likely the first victims of organized right-wing terrorism against immigrants in the FRG. To the shame of German society, they have not been the last by far.

A closer look at the different events exposes how violent acts, organizing, street campaigning, and the production and dissemination of propaganda—from leaflets, stickers, posters, brochures and books to lectures in closed circles or in public, graffiti, and threatening mail or phone calls—can work hand in hand. The different actors shared a common nativist goal: to close the borders for foreigners and to send back those who are already in the country. It cannot, however, be assumed, let alone proven, that those different actors have all been interconnected, cooperated with or even accepted the activities of each other, especially when it comes to violence. Still, the interactions between them should be carefully scrutinized.

In the case of Hamburg, a traditionally liberal-minded and international city with the largest sea port of Germany, it can be studied how a wave of racist violence was embedded in multi-facetted political activities. Besides neo-Nazi groupings, a new organization called *Hamburger Liste Ausländerstopp* (HLA) was formed. To understand this name, one has to look at an overall development in Germany in the 1970s. With new divides on the political agenda, citizens' initiatives and action committees known as *Bürgerinitiativen* became a common new form of participation and protest. For the larger part they were perceived as left-wing or centre-left, but especially in the field

---

48   "Jedes Volk wendet Gewalt an, wenn es um seine Lebensrechte geht," quote taken from: Klaus-Henning Rosen: Rechtsterrorismus. Gruppen—Täter—Hintergründe, in: Gerhard Paul (ed.): Hitlers Schatten verblaßt. Die Normalisierung des Rechtsextremismus, Bonn 1989, pp. 49–78, p. 63 (translated by the author).

of ecology, some can be rooted back in more conservative, right-wing or even racist traditions of German history. By and large, those groupings had been melted into the formation process of the Green Party. An important intermediate stage was the participation of some of them in local or regional elections throughout the 1970s. The groups normally transformed themselves into *Wählerinitiativen* (voters' initiatives), sometimes called *Wahllisten* or simply *Listen* (electoral list, or party ticket), which formed, in several cases, the first nuclei for future local or regional branches of the Green Party, founded in 1980.[49]

Amongst the first right-wing extremists to pick up this wording was Manfred Roeder, who called his group *Deutsche Bürgerinitiative* already in the 1970s, before introducing his *Deutsche Aktionsgruppen* when going underground in 1980. The same year a *Bürgerinitiative Ausländerstopp* (citizens' initiative for the stop of foreigners, BIA) had been constituted from the NPD's clientele. Shortly after, some of the local branches of the BIA transformed themselves into *Wahllisten*, who participated in local and regional elections. Most successful at this level was the *Kieler Liste für Ausländerbegrenzung* (KLA), winning over 3.8 per cent in the Baltic city of Kiel, the capital of the northern-most federal state Schleswig-Holstein. With regard to the further development of radical right nativist protest movements and their relationship to political party activities, the HLA in Hamburg is an interesting example. Even though its chairman, Michael Adrejewski, was not a formal member of the NPD at that time, the HLA was very close to the party. Thus, the NPD refrained from taking part in elections in Hamburg—itself a federal state of the FRG—for the following decade. Indeed, the HLA was able to achieve some attention and even a small percentage of voters' support (up to 0.7 per cent), which was, at least from the perspective of the NPD, a promising result. It seemingly paid off to step back behind a group of "concerned citizens" who pretended not to be racist at all, but simply afraid of "too many foreigners." However, the HLA shared and propagated a right-wing extremist, racist ideology in its leaflets and periodicals.

By the mid-1980s, the NPD drew some hope for a growing acceptance from voters and electoral success from events like the HLA's performance in Hamburg. At least, functionaries and rank-and-file-members felt as if a turning point was reached twenty years after the NPD's foundation, as the NPD went, with the newly discovered key issue of *Ausländerstopp*, into the election campaign for the European Parliament in 1984. Here the NPD polled at 0.8 per cent, which was slightly better than in elections of previous years. "You know," a party activist stated, "I believe it's finally going

---

49   See: Silke Mende: 'Nicht rechts, nicht links, sondern vorn.' Eine Geschichte der Gründungsgrünen, Munich 2011; Sven Reichardt: Authentizität und Gemeinschaft. Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren, Berlin 2014.

upward with the party now."[50] However, the NPD's hopes had been betrayed again when in the mid-1980s, the *Deutsche Volksunion* (German People's Union, or DVU) a second right-wing extremist, nativist party ran in several elections in competition against the NPD. At the same time, a split-off of the Bavarian Christian Democrats, the newly formed populist radical right party *Die Republikaner* (The Republicans, or REP), also competed for votes from the xenophobic parts of the electorate. Throughout the 1980s, there was not a large enough constituency in the FRG for three nativist competitors to surpass the five per cent threshold.

In West Berlin, however, the allied authorities had banned the NPD to run in elections, and the DVU also refrained. In the mid-1980s, a *Bürgerinitiative Demokratie und Identität* (Citizens' Initiative for Democracy and Identity, or BDI), an action platform of different right-wing groupings, started campaigning against immigration into the Western part of the divided city. The BDI unified some scattered renegades from democratic parties along with longstanding right-wing extremist activists and violence-seeking young skinheads and football hooligans grouped around the neo-Nazis of the *Nationalistische Front* (Nationalist Front or NF). It functioned as a nucleus for the regional association of the REP, which went into the 1989 Berlin election campaign with an extremely racist agenda. A centrepiece was a TV advertisement of comparably high quality, showing Turkish families with many children—the women wearing headscarves—in a run-down street of Kreuzberg, underlined by Enrico Morricones melody to *Once Upon a Time in the West*. This was seen as particularly detestable by the REP's critics since the enigmatic German title of this well-known Spaghetti Western is *Spiel mir das Lied vom Tod* (Play me the song of death). Hence, the Berlin REP gained attention and, in its constituency, a reputation as a voice for nativism. Without a competitor at the polls, it was able to reach a triumphant result of 7.5 per cent in January 1989. A few months later, on 12 May 1989, Ufuk Sahin, a young man of Turkish origins, was stabbed to death by a native German in a Berlin suburb where the REP had won a particularly high percentage of votes.[51]

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the GDR collapsed and the path was laid for re-unification, and German right-wing extremist actors came across new opportunities to gain support and spread their message. In the early 1990s, unified Germany was confronted with a prolonged and extreme wave of anti-immigration pro-

---

50   "Du [...], ich glaube jetzt gehts [sic!] wieder aufwärts mit der Partei," quoted in: Gerd Knabe (ed.): Zwanzig Jahre NPD. Porträt einer jungen Partei, Knüllwald-Nausis 1984, p. 7 (translated by the author).

51   See: Hajo Funke: "Republikaner." Rassismus, Judenfeindschaft, nationaler Größenwahn. Zu den Potentialen der Rechtsextremen am Beispiel der "Republikaner," Berlin 1989; Richard Stöss: Die "Republikaner." Woher sie kommen—Was sie wollen—Wer sie wählt—Was zu tun ist, Cologne 1990; Hans-Gerd Jaschke: Die "Republikaner." Profile einer Rechtsaußen-Partei, Bonn 1993.

test, including shocking events of violence, pogroms and terrorism. Even though the intensity was higher, fewer people protested against the nativist mobilization in the former GDR[52], yet the whole country had to face this problem. Interestingly enough, the success of traditional right-wing parties in the elections was first limited to the Western federal states, and it took until 1998/1999 that the populist radical right DVU entered the parliaments of the Eastern German federal states of Saxony-Anhalt and Brandenburg.

In the late 1980s, opinion polls by sociological institutes of the GDR which had been kept secret showed that a broad public in Eastern Germany shared right-wing extremist or nativist attitudes and many youths sympathized with the growing subcultures of so-called *Faschos* and *Skins*.[53] Almost all Western German right-wing groups, including the neo-Nazis, started to campaign in the East and utilized xenophobic sentiments for their propaganda. The neo-Nazi NF was particularly active, flooding the East with propaganda material. One leaflet spread en masse had a front-page headline in capital letters with the threatening and dramatic message: *They are coming! For decades and in masses* […]. *Without limitations!* The back side was headed with the slogan *Two thirds of our people demand: Out with the foreigners! The people's will is our mission!*[54] The line *Out with the foreigners!* was printed in bold letters. Another leaflet distributed by the NF was a *Nine item plan for repatriation*, written by the notorious neo-Nazi activist Jürgen Rieger from Hamburg. When more and more attacks on refugees took place and the number of atrocities grew, the NF issued a leaflet with the dubious headline *Enough is Enough*. It read:

> Germany must not become an immigration country, that's what we all are fighting for—but if we fight, then properly and purposefully. To set asylum seekers' shelters on fire isn't right politically or humanely. [It] doesn't solve the problem, but produces new ones: for each displaced asylum seeker new ones are coming; charred

52 See: David Begrich: Hoyerswerda und Lichtenhagen. Urszenen rassistischer Gewalt in Ostdeutschland, in: Heike Kleffner/Anna Spangenberg (eds.): Generation Hoyerswerda. Das Netzwerk militanter Neonazis in Brandenburg, Berlin 2016, pp. 32–44.

53 See Britta Bugiel: Rechtsextremismus Jugendlicher in der DDR und in den neuen Bundesländern von 1982 bis 1998, Münster 2002; Gideon Botsch: From Skinhead-Subculture to Radical Right Movement. The Development of a 'National Opposition' in East Germany, in: Contemporary European History 21:4 (2012), pp. 553–573.

54 "SIE KOMMEN! Seit Jahrzehnten und in Massen […] Ohne Einschränkung"; "Zwei Drittel unseres Volkes sind für Ausländer raus! Des Volkes Wille ist unser Auftrag," Antifaschistisches Pressearchiv Berlin (Apabiz), NF, folder 3. See Gideon Botsch: "Nationalismus—eine Idee sucht Handelnde." Die Nationalistische Front als Kaderschule für Neonazis, in: Heike Kleffner/Anna Spangenberg (eds.): Generation Hoyerswerda, pp. 74–97.

children of asylum seekers, as victims of these attacks, are off putting and are used […] for anti-German agitation.[55]

Using a cynical and brutal language, even the NF saw the need for a political statement to put xenophobia into a broader ideological frame:

> The fight we have to lead as NATIONALISTS is in the first place a […] fight for the soul of our people. […] We have to make our deluded people understand that the asylum seekers problem is—like all other problems—caused by the FRG system, which preaches false values ('multi-cultural society'). The major enemy is, therefore, not the asylum seeker, but the inhumane ideology of liberalism/capitalism. The enemy is furthermore the liberal-democrat politician who cares more about the well-being of a Negro than the well-being of his own people.[56]

In fact, the NF was an ultra-violent group, and a considerable number of its adherents became involved in brutal attacks, including arson attacks, murder and homicide. When in August 1992 a pogrom was started in the Baltic coast city of Rostock, formerly the most important port of the GDR, one periodical of the NF carried the headline *Come Together in Rostock*, illustrated with a picture of rioters.[57] This pogrom in Rostock is another example of the interaction of different groups and networks. Shortly before it took place, Michael Andrejewski from the *Hamburger Liste Ausländerstopp* agitated local youth in the suburbs to spread leaflets with a call for action against a central drop-in centre for refugees in the district of Rostock-Lichtenhagen. With the numbers of refugees from South-Eastern Europe rising as result of the Yugoslav Wars and the extreme discrimination and persecution of the Roma people, the

---

55 "Es ist genug. Deutschland darf kein Einwanderungsland werden, dafür kämpfen wir alle—aber wenn wir kämpfen, dann richtig und zielgerichtet. Asylantenheime anzustecken ist politisch und menschlich völlig falsch, [es] löst das Problem nicht, sondern schafft nur neue: Für jeden verbrieben Asylanten kommen neue. Verkohlte Asylantenkinder, als Opfer dieser Anschläge schrecken ab und werden […] zur antideutschen Hetze benützt," Apabiz, NF, folder 3.

56 "Der Kampf, den wir NATIONALISTEN führen müssen, ist in erster Linie ein […] Kampf um die Seele unseres Volkes […]. Wir müssen unserem verblendeten Volk klarmachen, daß das Asylantenproblem—wie alle anderen Probleme auch—vom BRD-System verursacht wird, das falsche Werte ('multikulturelle Gesellschaft') predigt. Der Hauptfeind ist also nicht der Asylant, sondern die menschenverachtende Ideologie des Liberalismus/Kapitalismus. Der Feind ist ferner der liberaldemokratische Politiker, dem das Wohl eines Nege[r]s wichtiger ist als das Wohl seines eigenen Volkes," quoted in: Apabiz, NF, folder 3.

57 It is not finally clear if this issue, dated August 1992, was produced before the pogrom, while it still was going on, or afterwards. See: Gideon Botsch: "Nationalismus—eine Idee sucht Handelnde," footnote 64/p. 276.

refugee centre was overcrowded. For almost a week, a mob of protesters gathered in front of the building, which also hosted a home for Vietnamese workers, firebombed it and attacked the police. It was not the authorities who finally stopped the rioting, but a huge humanitarian and antifascist march through the neighbourhood.

After those events, the NF and other main neo-Nazis groups were banned by the state. From the mid-1990s on, the right-wing extremist movements reorganized themselves. Many of the young people who became active in the nativist street campaigns and protests in the late 1980s and early 1990s found new fields of activities. From the diffuse skinhead subculture, a clearly right-wing oriented subculture scene emerged as an environment which consistently bred violence. It was this subculture where the terrorists of the *Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund* (National Socialist Underground or NSU) felt at home, and on which they could rely when committing three brutal bombings and executing nine "foreigners" and a female police officer during the first decade of the new millennium. At the same time, the NPD gathered the activists of the banned or disbanded neo-Nazi groupings, and thus won over its own constituency particularly amongst young voters in the East. They gained some success in the federal elections in Saxony (in 2004 and 2009) and Mecklenburg-Pomerania (in 2006 and 2011). In the latter federal state, where the city of Rostock is located, Michael Andrejeswki became a central figure of the regional NPD who even was elected to be a member of the state parliament. Until recently, he consistently organized rallies and campaigns against refugees and other "foreigners" on behalf of the NPD. To a certain extent, Michael Andrejewski embodies in his activism a 40-year-long history of organized nativist protest against immigration in Germany.

With the xenophobic wave of the early 1990s, social scientists in Germany started a controversial, but fruitful debate whether it is possible to define the contemporary radical right as a social movement and analyse it with the highly developed concepts and methods of related studies.[58] Its enmity towards immigration, rooted in a nativist ideology, was seen as the chasm which made it possible to speak of the radical right as a social movement. Some scholars argued—notwithstanding the fact that radical right actors frequently conceptualized themselves as "movements," with the most prominent example being the *nationalsozialistische Bewegung*—that this movement character was a novelty, at least in Germany.[59] However, as I have outlined in this

---

58   The debate started with Volume 5 (1992) of *Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen*; for an overview, see: Jan Schedler: Die extreme Rechte als soziale Bewegung. Theoretische Verortung, methodologische Anmerkungen und empirische Erkenntnisse, in: Fabian Virchow/Martin Langebach/Alexander Häusler (eds.): Handbuch Rechtsextremismus, pp. 285–323; Manuela Caiani/Donatella della Porta: The Radical Right as Social Movement Organizations.

59   See for example: Andreas Klärner/Michael Kohlstruck: Rechtsextremismus—Thema der Öffentlichkeit und Gegenstand der Forschung, in: ibid. (eds.): Moderner Rechtsextremismus in Deutschland, Hamburg 2006, pp. 7–41.

essay, the movement character, in combination with the anti-immigration stance, can be traced back for a long time in the history of the radical right. Furthermore, the underlying antisemitism within the specific right-wing extremist variety of nativism has connections to older manifestations of modern antisemitism in German history.

Since about half a century, starting with the election campaigns of the NPD in the late 1960s, the radical right has discovered—or probably "rediscovered"—the topic of foreign immigration as a centrepiece for political campaigning. Migration is in this specific context framed as a systematic approach by, and for the profit of, elites to annihilate or "replace" the German people. These elites are either portrayed as "Jewish," as aliens or—at the very least—as alienated from the people. The German catchwords within this specific narrative are *Überfremdung*, *Volkstod* and more recently *Großer Austausch* (great replacement).

A cataclysmic scenario predicts the imminent danger of a civil war, even a racial civil war, caused by continued immigration of foreigners from alien cultures or ancestries. While this might be the true belief shared by the adherents of the radical right, it is at the same time a very powerful instrument in order to close ranks and mobilize protest. Since it does not limit the agenda of the movement to the demand of an "end on immigration," it is suitable to transform random prejudices into a closed and consolidated right-wing extremist ideology. Hostility towards immigrants can thus be converted into an overall ultra-nationalist agenda to turn over the "system." By attacking immigration not merely as an undesirable aspect of modernity, but as an evil plan by an alien or alienated elite against the native German people, the issue is framed in a way that it can integrate most aspects of right-wing extremist ideology, including antisemitism, nationalism, racism, authoritarianism, the rejection of democratic institutions and representative bodies, anti-democratic, anti-liberal and anti-left wing stances, classical sexist and anti-feminist positions, and a cult of violence.

An historical and actor-oriented analysis shows that the radical right can reach these strategic goals best within multi-facetted campaigns in which multiple actors work in different arenas, but share—all things considered—a common right-wing extremist understanding of immigration. It also hints to a tradition of nativist and radical right campaigning on immigration, in which collective actors apply the techniques of trial and error and thus learn their lessons from previous failures or successes.

For future studies, more in-depth analysis of specific examples should be combined with data and context information on the changes in public opinion as well as the opportunity structures radical right actors may utilize.

Gideon Botsch, born in 1970 in Berlin (West), is associate professor for Political Science at the University of Potsdam and coordinator of the Emil Julius Gumbel Forschungsstelle Antisemitismus und Rechtsextremismus at the Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies in Potsdam.