

Infiltrator exposes Generation Identity UK's march towards extreme far right

Thursday 3 October 2019, by [TOWNSEND Mark](#) (Date first published: 24 August 2019).

Encrypted messages show the racist group was expelled from wider European alt-right for its embrace of dangerous ideologies

In a beer garden in central London last Tuesday the atmosphere was relaxed. But not for Mike. Every few minutes he would turn to scrutinise the people around him. When you have infiltrated a group like the far-right Generation Identity UK, paranoia comes easily.

Anti-racist groups have been trying to infiltrate the Identitarian movement's British branch for years without success – until now. Earlier this year Mike began posting Facebook messages expressing outrage over "[the great replacement](#)" – the conspiracy theory that claims white people are being wiped out through mass migration. Soon after, following the Christchurch massacre in New Zealand by an Identitarian supporter in March, members of the group invited him to join.

On Sunday the *Observer* reveals the results of his undercover mission, which was abruptly halted by the startling discovery that two Royal Navy personnel – one of them due to serve on a Trident nuclear submarine – were members of the group. He and anti-racist campaigner [Hope Not Hate](#) gained unprecedented access to the movement's social media operation, and exposed the even more disturbing and extreme views being adopted by the far-right group.

Mike said: "It was clear that the UK branch appeared to be more open to things like antisemitism than its European counterparts would want."

Mike began copying messages from the group's leaders on the encrypted messaging app Telegram. Generation Identity's leaders like to present themselves as clean-cut, but the messages – seen by the *Observer* – expose connections to extremists.

One is a former British National Party official and neo-Nazi called Mark Collett, who has tweeted that a "white genocide" is under way in Britain. Another is Swedish activist Daniel Friberg, a co-founder of the AltRight Corporation, formed through the merger of the National Policy Institute, run by American white supremacist Richard Spencer, and an antisemitic Scandinavian media platform.

Expressions of casual racism were regularly shared by Generation Identity UK members. One Telegram message, commenting on the number of Muslim women in Ealing, says: "TGR [the great replacement] is being rolled out in West London."

Other messages show members wanting to connect with antisemites and downplaying statements from a virulent "JQer," a far-right reference to what they term the Jewish question.

This drift even further to the extremes appears to have been noted by Martin Sellner, the movement's Austrian leader. When the UK branch decided to allow an antisemite vlogger, Colin

Robertson, known on YouTube as Millennial Woes, to address its annual conference last month, Sellner expelled the group from the wider movement.

Some British members also left in disgust. One wrote: “We are trying to get totally away from the shadow of the Old Right. We don’t do that by getting a JQer to speak at our conference.”

“We will be left with a smaller but more toxic group in the UK, open to the more dangerous elements of the far right”

Simon Murdoch, Hope Not Hate

Mike quickly learned how the group operated. Its leadership created fake Twitter accounts to write positive replies to their own tweets. New members were recruited by “patriotic” Facebook pages that failed to mention they were run by Generation Identity. Ukip chatrooms were infiltrated. A strategy document called “campaign outreach” listed extremists like Collett as people they should contact to amplify their message.

Others included the [commentator Katie Hopkins](#) and Paul Joseph Watson, an editor at the far-right [conspiracy theory website](#) Infowars.

In some messages Generation Identity UK’s leadership described their group as a “water-tight metapolitical project”, their ambition not to win political power but to shape public debate, promoting ethno-nationalist ideas, and their goal the ethnic cleansing of [Europe](#).

Traditional far-right discussion of race and genetics is replaced by the language of culture and identity. One member wrote: “Pushing cultural differences is a more subtle way of implying that there’s very real differences between the people who were originally here and the people who are coming here.”

The disclosures coincide with a new report by [Hope not Hate](#) revealing that Identitarian groups are active in at least 23 countries, making it “one of the most dangerous far-right networks currently active”. Researchers have previously found that 30,000 people are members of Identitarian Telegram groups with 140,000 subscribers on YouTube.

France, where the author Renaud Camus coined the phrase *le grand remplacement* in 2012, remains the movement’s ideological centre. Having originated with the Nouvelle Droite (New Right) that emerged in 1968, Generation Identity has retained extensive links with the electoral French far right, particularly Marine Le Pen’s [Rassemblement National](#) (National Rally).

Austria is another major player: its Generation Identity branch, led by Sellner, has nearly 17,000 Twitter followers. Police have revealed that the [Christchurch mosque killer](#), who took the lives of 51 people, had donated €2,000 and €1,500 to the movement’s French and Austrian branches respectively. On 19 August, Austria’s centre-right People’s party [announced](#) it wanted to ban the Identitarians.

Identitarianism is also influential among the US far right with support from Breitbart news, alt-right figures like Spencer and the neo-Nazi website, the Daily Stormer. The American Identity Movement site claims it is “defending our nation against mass immigration”.

In the UK, the movement’s expulsion from Europe has prompted warnings that it could become more dangerous. Simon Murdoch, Identitarianism researcher at Hope Not Hate, said: “Evidence suggests we will be left with a smaller but more toxic group in the UK, open to engagement with the more

antisemitic, extreme and thus dangerous elements of the domestic far right.”

Already a possible alliance with the For Britain political party suggests a new chapter. Ann Marie Waters, For Britain’s leader, addressed the recent Generation Identity conference in London, in a speech billed by supporters as the first “great replacement” speech by a UK politician.

Many, including Mike, are worried. “Anti-Islam is now seen as boring; it’s moving on to ‘white genocide’, the replacement of whites” he said. “The trajectory is ominous.”

Generation Identitarian in the UK claims to be non-violent and there is no suggestion that they have been responsible for any violent acts. Internationally, groups using the GI tag have been active since the 1960s.

1968 The far-right Nouvelle Droite (ND) is formed in France.

Early 2000s Génération Identitaire, a rightwing extremist group drawing on ND beliefs, is launched.

2010 French writer Renaud Camus, coins the phrase “great replacement”.

2012 Austrian alt-right activist Martin Sellner founds Identitäre Bewegung Österreichs (IBÖ), a group opposed to liberalism, multiculturalism and Islam.

2016 IBÖ members storm a stage in an Austrian university where a play is being performed by refugee actors.

2017 Sellner raises more than £70,000 to sail a ship into the Mediterranean targeting boats helping migrants and refugees.

2018 Sellner visits Luton, insults Muslims with provocative slogans and is banned from the UK.

March 2019 Identitarian-linked shooter kills 51 in mosques in New Zealand.

August 2019 Gunman kills 22 in El Paso, Texas, citing identitarian ideas.

Mark Townsend

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P.S.

The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/24/generation-identity-uk-far-right-extremists>