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Polish Transnational Far Right

Research Report

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Note from authors

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This report contains discussion of extremist ideologies, racism, antisemitism, misogyny, political violence, and terrorism-related offences. Some quotations, screenshots, and case studies include discriminatory language or imagery that readers may find distressing.

List of organisations and acronyms

B&H	Blood & Honour
BNP	British National Party
EDL	English Defence League
KKP	Confederation of the Polish Crown (Konfederacja Korony Polskiej)
KONF	Confederation (Konfederacja)
NA	National Action
NOP	National Rebirth of Poland (Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski)
NF	National Front
ONR	National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny)
PA	Patriotic Alternative
PF	Patriae Fidelis
Reform	Reform UK
RN	National Movement (Ruch Narodowy)
UKIP	UK Independence Party
WJS	Strength in Unity (W Jedności Siła)
ZE	United Emigration (Zjednoczona Emigracja)

Executive summary

- Polish migrants and the communities they form in Britain are politically diverse, and the vast majority do not engage in far-right activism. However, a minority do act on extremist political ideologies that fuse Polish and British notions of national, ethnic, and white exclusivity, often drawing on historical narratives that emphasise Poland's supposedly exceptional role.
- While politically diverse, Polish communities have shown signs of growing polarisation. In the 2025 Polish presidential election, approximately 40,000 of the 120,000 Polish nationals voting in Britain supported a far-right candidate.
- There is clear ideological and practical alignment between segments of the British far right and Polish organisations and activists, with both sides deriving international exposure, prestige, networks, and operational connections from these relationships.
- The British political context - particularly increasing polarisation around immigration - plays a significant role in the radicalisation of some Polish nationals.
- Radicalisation of Polish nationals is not an imported phenomenon but the product of multidimensional integration processes in which some Polish nationals and elements of their British environment converge around ideas of white supremacy or civilisational dominance.
- Risks of politically motivated violence among Polish communities and activists under the scope of this project is relatively low, although there are some particular issues of concern.
- The main form of activism remains in online spaces. However, potential for violence remains, especially around street-level confrontations during riots, demonstrations etc.

- Eight individuals with Polish background have been convicted under anti-terror laws in the UK in the past 7 years. The majority of them have few or no connections with formal Polish diaspora organisations or Polish groups in Poland, and have been radicalised through transnational networks or British environment.
- Second- and third-generation Polish-British youth appear particularly vulnerable to radicalisation, including potential involvement in activities that may fall under anti-terror legislation.
- There is a recognisable pattern of far-right activists normalising, legitimising, or even endorsing violence against women.
- There is a systemic gap in how British and Polish authorities approach, address, and target, policy-wise, the issue of the radicalisation of Polish nationals, as well as individuals convicted under terror laws who are deported to Poland.
- The findings highlight the need to update policy frameworks to reflect the transnational and increasingly diverse nature of contemporary far-right mobilisations, including its reach into diaspora communities. This requires both strengthened strategic awareness and targeted interventions, including culturally-informed prevention within the Prevent framework, engagement with community institutions, and improved monitoring of cross-border dynamics. Further research is needed to better understand radicalisation pathways, including the roles of online ecosystems, transnational exposure, and informal social spaces.

Introduction

There is now a large body of literature drawing attention to the growing popularity of the politics of the far right.[1] One aspect of this phenomenon is its increasing internationalisation and embedding in transnational networks. The unprecedented speed and scope of exchanges of information and practices has allowed for a diverse range of coalitions and ideological synergies within that broad field.[2] At the same time, transnational relations among far-right movements are not without barriers arising from differences in ideological foundations, historical legacies, and geopolitical circumstances. Nevertheless, adaptive processes within these movements indicate ongoing attempts to overcome these barriers. As a result, both far-right organisations and activists seek to strategically expand their audiences and supporters in line with social changes in the countries in which they operate. These new audiences may include ethnic minorities, women, sexual minorities, or immigrants, forming coalitions based on criteria linked to racialisation, religion, or belonging to a particular "imagined community"[3] such as a nation, faith, or civilisation.

The growing popularity of far-right ideas, groups and parties in Britain and their tactics of selective engagement with some minority groups prompts the question of how Polish immigrants, one of the largest ethnic minority groups in Britain, respond to this process. The British public are familiar with the post-2004 arrival to the UK of over one million Polish nationals. They are probably less familiar with the issue of small, but vocal elements within Polish communities which are overtly supportive of far-right ideologies and practices, both Polish and British. Since 2016, this phenomenon has been reported by the media,[4] NGOs monitoring radicalisation[5] and Polish communities themselves.[6] It has also attracted the interest of the British authorities due to incidents of racially aggravated acts of violence perpetrated by Polish immigrants in the UK, including terrorism.[7] Since 2019 eight individuals with Polish background have been convicted and

sentenced under Terrorism Act 2000, making Polish background individuals the largest minority to be convicted for offences related to the far-right extremism. And although a vast majority of members of Polish communities are well integrated into the multicultural British social landscape, and accept diversity as a feature of British life, far-right, exclusionary ideologies and practices are present among small, but visible number of Poles. It is clear also that this is a sign of shift within the British far right. As Hope not Hate's 2018 report notes: "A feature of the British far-right scene over recent years has been the rising numbers of Polish extremists active in it. From the political party National Rebirth of Poland (NOP) to right-wing Polish hooligans fighting on our streets, there are few British far-right groups that do not have any links to their Polish extremists."[8] But how this happens, when, and why had not been examined prior to the study discussed in this report.

This report addresses these questions by focusing on the involvement of Polish migrants, or people of Polish origin, in movements, organisations, and activities situated within the ideological spectrum broadly termed far right. Based on pioneering research using qualitative and ethnographic methods conducted in the UK and Poland, the report sheds new light on dimensions of political engagement among Polish migrants, as well as the processes that radicalise their attitudes, ideologies, and social practices.

Fieldwork photo by AJ, Tommy Robinson march in London, 26 October 2024.

Notes on terms used

The report uses a number of terms that require clarification. As these terms function both in academic literature and in media/popular discourse - sometimes with different meanings - the following definitions aim to provide readers with better orientation

Far right

Following a leading scholar on the subject, Cas Mudde,[9] the far right refers to organisations, programs, ideologies, political parties, and attitudes characterized to varying degrees by the following general features: exclusivism (ethnic, national, racial), anti-egalitarianism, anti-democratic, traditionalism, and a corporatist approach to the state. It is a broad term encompassing varying intensities of these traits. In general terms, far-right ideologies revolve around nationalism, nativism, and the belief in an ethnic essence of the nation. Consequently, the far right is typically marked by hostility toward migration, multiculturalism, and gender equality, but the degree of its radicalism and its approaches to political strategy vary between cases, ranging from readiness to operate within democratic constraints to their outright rejection, support for authoritarianism, or even - on the so-called "extreme right" - legitimisation of violence as a means of political struggle.

In the case of Poland, far-right parties and organisations include nationalist groups forming coalitions around **National Movement** (**RN**), **National Radical Camp** (**ONR**), **National Rebirth of Poland** (**NOP**), as well as various less formal structures emerging from the skinhead movement, **Rock Against Communism** (**RAC**) music scene, neopagan groups, neo-Nazi networks, or football fan organisations. In the case of Britain, scholars agree broadly that parties such as **National Front** (**NF**), **British National Party** (**BNP**), **English Defence League** (**EDL**), **British Movement** (**BM**), **National Action** (**NA**) and

Patriotic Alternative (**PA**) fall under that term. However, scholars are divided about the political identity of Reform. Some, especially those closer to antifascist networks, use the term far right in relation to Reform,[10] while others find the label unhelpful and erroneous in this case and use the term populist radical right instead.[11] We use the term far-right, as many scholars do, as an umbrella term under which we distinguish between radical and extreme right, and would recognise Reform in the former category.[12] However, these are also fluid terms, used with different connotations in public and academic discourse. For this research we decided to include Reform UK into our sample, as from the perspective of our interviewees the party aligns closely with Polish far-right ideologies (especially its anti-immigration and anti-EU position).

Polish diaspora

This report uses a broad definition of diaspora, referring to people of Polish origin or Polish citizens residing abroad. However, due to the focus on political activity, the terms "formal" or "institutional" diaspora activities are also used. It should be noted that formal diaspora organisations may include individuals from different generations, including both recent migrants and second- or third-generation descendants. As a consequence, the term also denotes a significant political and ideological diversity of views.

Transnationalism

The report uses the notion of transnationalism, developed within migration studies, to explain the fact that many aspects of migrants' lives involve participation in both the country of origin and the country of residence, and that social entities within the administrative boundaries of nation-states overlap and intersect. Transnationalism concerns social practices, orientations, and ideologies, and may encompass political, religious, economic, as well as personal-life issues. In the context of this report, transnationalism primarily refers to the political influence of far-right activists across two or more countries.

Methodology and data sources

In contrast to most political science studies of the far right, which focus on official ideological programs, electoral results, or opinion polls, this research was conducted "from within," using ethnographic methods, in-depth interviews with activists, and participant observation in various events important to this political space both in Poland and the United Kingdom. Due to the risks associated with such an approach, and distrust of far-right activists toward academia and universities, this is a relatively rare research practice, although it has important precedents and contributions within social sciences.[13]

The research also included intensive digital ethnography and observing social media spaces managed by activists, organisations, and leaders: here the geographical scope extended to many other European countries, as well as the United States and Canada.[14] Particular attention was paid to several well-known transnational far-right influencers of Polish origin.[15]

In total, 75 in-depth biographical interviews were conducted with activists in the United Kingdom and Poland, both immigrants and UK-born individuals of Polish origin. Interviews were also conducted with British individuals active in far-right organisations who, at certain stages of their activity, established contacts with Poles. A number of interviews in Poland involved individuals who had been convicted in the UK for hate crimes or terrorist-related activities. The interviews, often lasting several hours, focused on the respondents' biographical backgrounds, migration histories, processes of political socialisation, trajectories of radicalisation, political beliefs, and overall ideological profiles. In addition to formal interviews, contacts were established and informal conversations conducted, both in person and online, with approximately 150 activists from Poland and the UK.

Ethnographic research took place in social spaces where events important for community-building and ideology formation among activists, organisations, and social networks occurred. Participant observation was carried out during numerous commemorative events related to Polish history (particularly World War Two and the Polish Armed Forces in the West), special gatherings during political events, community picnics, historical lectures, film screenings, public discussions, religious services, demonstrations organised by British activists (mainly Tommy Robinson), and informal organisational meetings. The ethnography also included one of the most important public events for Polish nationalists as well as far-right circles in Europe: the Independence March in Warsaw.[16] We also followed the campaign of several **Reform UK** (**Reform**) electoral candidates of Polish origin, and took part in the party conference in Birmingham in 2024. The research also explored less explicitly political social spaces that nonetheless play an important role in reproducing values, practices, and social networks of that milieu: football matches, MMA training sessions and events, live music events, and activities related to combat sports.

At the same time, as with any study concerning a relatively underexplored area, this report has certain limitations. These stem primarily from frequent refusals to be interviewed, restricted access to sensitive data, particularly in relation to legal proceedings and operational information held by state services. An important factor influencing the scope of collected data was also the overt nature of the research: all participants were informed about the researchers' role and the purpose of the study. This research followed the ethical guidelines of the British Sociological Association, which informed the overall approach to the study. Participants were guaranteed anonymity, and all quotes included in this report have been pseudonymised. The study did not include research in the so-called Dark Web.

Poland as a model for the international far right

For Polish far-right activists in the United Kingdom, as well as for Britons establishing contacts with Polish activists, a specifically constructed ideological and propaganda discourse around Poland and its history plays an important social function. Drawing on romantic-nationalist myths, symbols, and cultural codes referring to a vision of Poland as the “bulwark of Christianity” with a special historical mission, and of Poles as the “natural” defenders of this bulwark, this discourse has, over the past decade, become amplified and more sophisticated, largely through social media and highly impactful visual-textual campaigns.

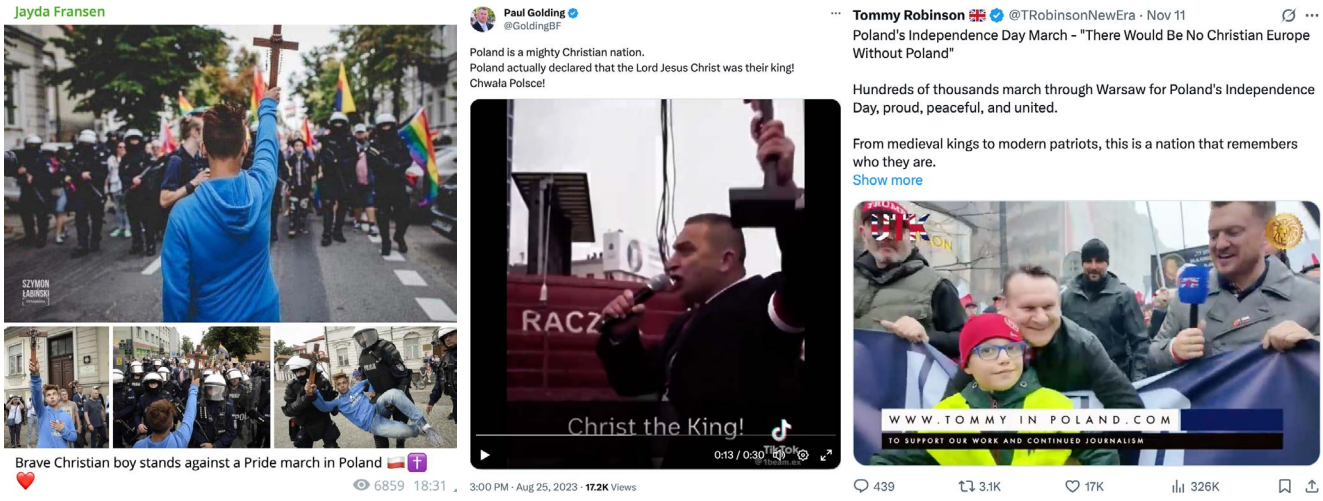
X post by RadioGenoa (@radioGenoa), 24.07.2024. This video shows a public breastfeeding flashmob event held in July 2024 at the Citadel park in Poznan, Poland.

In this vision, Poland is portrayed as the last bastion of heteronormatively and nationalistically defined normality, conservative European values, and a model “white” country that resists both mass immigration and left-wing ideologies imported from a morally corrupted and cosmopolitan West. This conservative narrative carries a strong emphasis on strictly defined gender roles: Polish women are depicted as white - and therefore beautiful - mothers and caretakers of the home who know their place within the

social hierarchy, while Polish men are portrayed as strong, athletic, and ready to fight. Poland is also presented as an oasis of free speech, with the Independence March serving, for international activists, as key evidence.

> **This is something I liked about Poland […], that I can live in Polish society, among Poles, with Poles, build relationships, and, for example, go to the Independence March, which is still legal. [laughs] […] Such a march, perhaps looking similar, might not take place [in the UK], because the police would immediately disperse it.**
> **Aleksander, former member of Korwin UK (part of Confederation) party**

To varying degrees and with different emphases, this vision of Poland as a country burdened with a special historical mission to defend European values (understood as conservative, Christian, and essentialist-nationalist) is reproduced across multiple levels, from elites and public discourse to declarations within Polish football fan communities. It features both in Donald Trump's 2017 Warsaw speech[17] and in the activities of the influential right-wing portals such as Visegrád 24. It corresponds also with the popular stereotype of the Polish warrior, the pilot who chose to remain in Britain after WW2, hence is also fairly familiar to the broader British public.



Telegram post by Jayda Fransen (@JaydaFransen), 12 August 2019; X post by Paul Golding (@GoldingBF), 25 August 2023; X post by Tommy Robinson (@TRobinsonNewEra), 11 November 2025.

For the Polish diaspora and migrants, this image of Poland as a “normal” country defending European civilisation (implicitly suggesting that the “abnormal” West can no longer defend itself) constitutes symbolic capital of considerable importance, fulfilling multiple sociological and cultural functions. This narrative is a recurring motif both among Polish immigrants active in far-right organisations, but also among the British public. Its social function is to distinguish Polish migrants from other minorities and present them as exemplary, positioning them normatively higher within the hierarchy of British multiculturalism due to their history, particularly its military dimension reaching back to World War Two.

In this ‘martial’ discourse, Poles are framed as bound to English history through a brotherhood-in-arms relationship—an exceptional bond based on shared sacrifice. In that way, Polish migrants are no longer viewed as merely economic migrants among numerous other minorities, and their economic contribution is no longer the primary justification for their presence. Instead, emphasis is placed on their contribution to moral and cultural values, often described in lofty terms such as a “love of freedom,” “aversion to dictatorship,” or “opposition to communism”, which usually means opposition to cosmopolitan, universalist, and egalitarian values associated with the European Union, human rights discourse or affirmation of cultural diversity.[18]

Important social spaces where this discourse is reproduced include heritage sites associated with Polish WW2 veterans, monuments

> **England without Poles might collapse. In fact, one Englishman said that if it weren’t for Poles, England would have collapsed long ago. […] They remember the Second World War. They remember who works hard for their economy. Most Poles, when they come here, go to work the next day. We are not the kind of migrants who come here just for benefits. I think we contribute to the GDP here.**
>
> **Marcin, convicted for taking part in 2024 riots**

> **Polacy still helped out, even despite this history. And I think that shows what sort of character we really are, and that I'm very proud of. I think really we are we're sort of just decent, decent chaps really at the end of the day.**
> **Jerzy, second generation Pole, Reform UK supporter**

commemorating significant historical events, and places linked to Polish history. Such sites are formally protected and, in theory, cannot be assigned a clearly political character; events organised around them bring together participants from diverse backgrounds, and political orientations. Nevertheless, as our research indicates, far-right organisations frequently engage with these spaces, incorporating elements popular within Polish nationalist circles.[19] Particularly important here is the cult of the so-called "Cursed Soldiers" – Polish partisans who chose not to lay arms after the end of WW2 but continued to fight against the new communist rulers of Poland[20] until late 1940s.

Across the Western world, the far right increasingly frames its identity in broader, civilisationist, rather than just nationalist terms. Polish history provides an attractive resource for such far-right discourses, allowing for the selective use of facts and historical processes to construct myths legitimising political actions and ideological positions today. Since its inception - especially from the 1990s onward - the Polish far right has drawn on such selectively constructed histories, whether grounded in antisemitism, neopaganism, or a radical vision of pre-Vatican II Catholic orthodoxy. In migratory contexts, however, Polish activists face different challenges, particularly in articulating their identity in relation to other cultures and minorities while themselves being members of a minority. The symbolism associated with the discourse of Poland as a country with a special historical mission, and Poles as its agents, thus becomes a valuable form of capital linked to prestige and social advancement. As this report shows, many activists actively draw upon this resource.

Screenshot from video by Tommy Robinson, “Unforgettable Moments from My Trip to Poland,” YouTube, 13 November 2025.

Diversity of groups and organisations

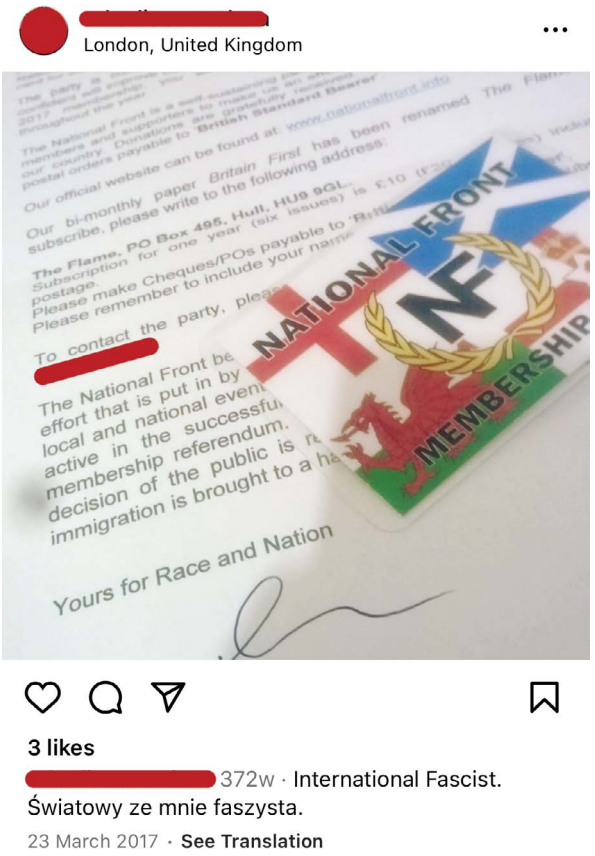
The emergence of Polish nationalist and far-right organisations in the United Kingdom is a result of post-EU accession migration in 2004, when approximately one million Polish citizens arrived in the UK over the following years. These organisations form a diverse ideological and cultural mosaic, shaped by the intersection of British and Polish politics and, at times, by the transnational interpenetration of these two spheres.

These organisations can be categorised according to several criteria: their degree of innovation and independence from parent organisations in Poland; the scope of cooperation with Polish or British organisations; and the extent of their connections to politics in Poland.

Branches of organisations established in Poland

The first group includes organisations that function as foreign branches of entities established in Poland. These include British branches of **Confederation** (**KONF**), supporters of politician, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, **RN**, **ONR**, **NOP**, as well as groups supporting a far-right politician and presidential candidate in 2025, Grzegorz Braun (leader of Confederation of the Polish Crown (**KKP**)) or religious brotherhoods such as the Warriors of Mary, and communities of Rodzimowiercy (Slavic neopagans). A distinct network consists of members of skinhead subculture, associated with **Blood & Honour** (**B&H**) – a transnational alignment of neo-Nazis.

In terms of cooperation strategies, these organisations do not follow a uniform approach. For example, **ONR** and **RN** tend to avoid relationships with British organisations, whereas **NOP** has taken the opposite path: largely disengaging from Polish groups while co-operating extensively with British far-right organisations such as **BNP**, **NF**, and the neo-Nazi organisation **NA** (banned in 2016).



From left: Photo of *The National* article on "White Rescue" action (NOP–NA collaboration), source: nop.org.pl, 18 September 2016; Instagram post by NOP activists on NF membership, 23 March 2017.

Polish organisations established in Britain

Post-accession migration also generated a degree of institutional innovation. New far-right organisations emerged in the UK with specific orientation towards Polish migrants and had no direct counterparts in Poland. The most prominent and dynamic of these was **Patriae Fidelis** (**PF**), which, despite its initial popularity and reach, has now largely ceased to exist.

Founded in 2011 by several activists associated with nationalist and football fandom circles (its founder, Jerzy Byczyński had been a member of the All-Polish Youth, a youth branch of **RN**) **PF** became known for numerous public actions and demonstrations aimed both at British audiences (e.g., a protest outside the BBC against the German series *Our Mothers, Our Fathers*[21]) and at Poles, particularly through organising commemorative events related to the "Cursed Soldiers." **PF** brought together a wide range of Polish social

groups, including students, middle class, working class, football supporters, and Poles born in the UK. This class and generational heterogeneity aligned with nationalist ideology but ultimately generated irresolvable strategic and political tensions. For some members, the activities of students and educated individuals were insufficiently radical and too elitist. For others, the involvement of football supporters was associated with excessive radicalism and violence. In addition to peaceful actions, **PF** also disrupted a public lecture by renowned sociologist Professor Zygmunt Bauman at the University of Manchester in 2014,[22] and, according to accounts from its members, planned to stalk Bauman at his home in Leeds. This is a direct result of the cult of "Cursed Soldiers", as Bauman in his youth in late 1940s was a member of communist military intelligence unit.[23]

> **Bauman was my neighbour in Leeds, and everyone from Patriae Fidelis kept an eye on him. We quickly managed to verify his exact address, but to be sure, we decided to double-check. We grabbed a stack of leaflets from a local pizzeria, and our friend walked down the street handing them out. When she knocked on Bauman's door, it was him who answered and took the leaflet. From then on, we knew exactly where he lived. We never interacted with him…**
> **Zdzisław, former leader of a local branch of Patriae Fidelis**

Our findings indicate that individuals with fascist and neo-Nazi views, maintaining contacts with the British group **NA**, also joined **PF**. Following the criminalisation of **NA**, this association attracted the attention of British security services, which proved reputationally damaging for **PF** activists aspiring to enter mainstream British political life.

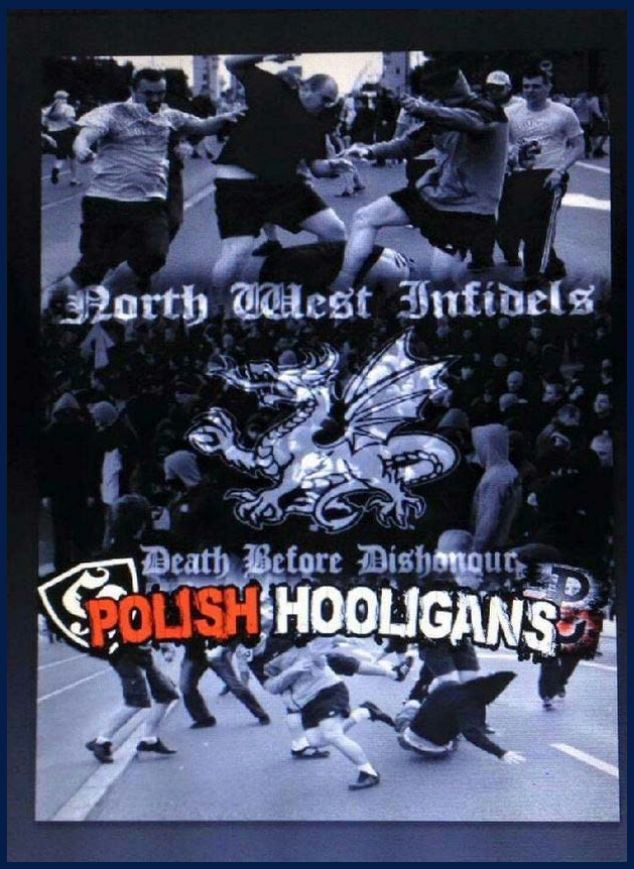
A similar form of organisational innovation can be seen in the football supporter group **Strength in Unity** (**WJS**), which brought together fans of different Polish clubs. In line with football fan culture norms observed during Polish national team matches, supporters of local teams agreed to a non-aggression pact within the organisation. Both **WJS** and another

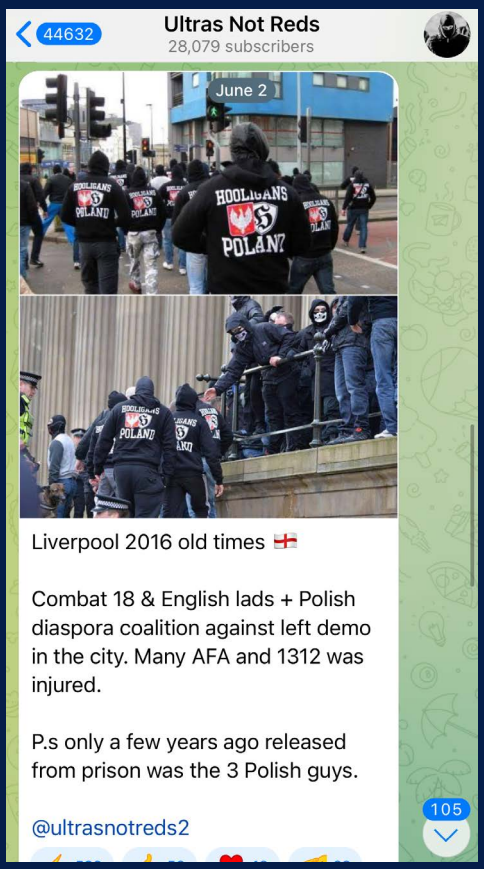
fan-based organisation, **United Emigration** (**ZE**), gained notoriety in 2016 for participating in an anti-immigrant and anti-Islam demonstration alongside the British neo-Nazi group **North-West Infidels** in Liverpool. The event led to street clashes, the arrest of several Polish participants identifying as "Polish Hooligans," and the conviction of five individuals.[24]

Far-right organisations in the UK tend to be fragmented and sometimes unaware of each other's existence. Due to their dependence on individual leaders, they often have short lifespans and primarily local reach. At the peak of **PF**'s activity, attempts were made to form alliances among various groups (including an agreement signed by **PF**, **ONR**, **RN**, supporters of Janusz Korwin-Mikke, and others), but these initiatives did not produce significant outcomes. The decline of **PF** was largely due to the inability to reconcile differences between various factions, particularly those divided along local and class lines, such as football supporter communities and circles aspiring to Polish or British elite status. The latter suffered particular reputational damage due to **PF** association with neo-Nazi groups.

Visuals shared by Zjednoczona Emigracja group, 23 June 2014. Translation: top row from left: Polish fan culture. Hooligans - adrenaline gives confidence. United Emigration; United in RAP ZEL&WJS; central - London is ours; bottom row from left: United Emigration always on the right side; An active lifestyle: fight, train, emigration must prevail. Source: observers.france24.com

Flyer promoting participation of Polish hooligans in Liverpool, 2016 (event initially planned for Manchester), posted on W Jedności Siła (WJS) Facebook account, 10 February 2016.





Materials related to the Liverpool 2016 protest, involving North West Infidels inviting Polish hooligans. From left: *Liverpool Echo*, 27 November 2017; Telegram post by @ultrasnotreds, 2 June 2024.

Pathways and nodes of radicalisation

Biographical interviews and observations of the lives and activities of Polish activists in the United Kingdom indicate a specific type of radicalisation linked to their migration experience. This is not the only pathway to radicalisation, but it is particularly significant in the context of this report. It refers to a direct causal relationship between migration and ideological radicalisation, leading to engagement in political activism.

There is no shortage of individuals who had already been active in Poland as members of various organisations in their places of origin, particularly within football supporter movements or skinhead circles. However, the research shows that the majority of leaders and activists only became involved in far-right organisational activity after arriving in the UK. Most cases of individuals of Polish origin radicalised online and convicted under UK anti-terrorism laws involve people who had arrived in the UK as children and undergone their entire socialisation process in the UK.

Motivations and justifications for involvement vary in the activists' own accounts, but often are rooted in their belief in white supremacy. Some openly state that life in the UK radicalised them, due to their experiences of multiculturalism —perceived by them as discriminatory against white individuals.

> **I saw what life with these people is like. I saw how they are treated. That, in reality, a white person is slowly ceasing to have any rights in their own home. That the English—because they are the best example—constantly have to give way to people from Africa and South Asia.**
> **Marcin, convicted for taking part in 2024 riots**

> **From the very beginning of my arrival in the United Kingdom, there was a sense of unequal treatment compared to… compared to all those… generally speaking, "people of colour," because…. We all know who I mean—Black people and… and… For the same job in any restaurant, you get the same pay, but the duties are completely different. A Black person can dance, sing, and do nothing, and no one will say anything. The same with those "ragheads." He won't do it because it's Ramadan, yet he receives exactly the same pay. And it's like this everywhere. […] it's this feeling of injustice, that a Pole is expected to work hard and honestly, while others are not.**
> **Kamil, convicted of a racially motivated hate crime and deported to Poland**

Others relate their radicalisation to earlier biographical experiences, including involvement in organised crime. For example, one **NOP** activist stated that the organisation's ideology helped him understand why Poland experienced high unemployment in the 1990s, which led him into criminal activity and eventually to emigration. The conspiratorial, antisemitic, and nationalist worldview of **NOP** thus provided an explanatory framework for his life trajectory and decisions. According to one leader of **RN**, activism was driven by the need to actively represent the Polish minority in the UK, which is not politically represented on the right-wing spectrum. For a Polish activist of **BF**, the impulse behind his strongly anti-Islam views was the July 7, 2005 terrorist attacks in London, followed by a strong interest in British politics influenced by Jacek Międlar, then a priest and **ONR** supporter. For another individual convicted of terrorist activity, the catalyst was the ideological messaging of **BF** regarding Islam and direct meeting with an **EDL** activist, combined with a perceived sense of injustice affecting white people. As seen previously, this perception is rooted in white supremacist view, associating whiteness with racial privilege.

Most biographical accounts indicate that the British context plays a crucial role here, though in varied forms. Activist narratives reflect both a perceived need for right-wing representation of Poles in the UK and personal experiences, such as workplace situations, that reinforced racist beliefs

> **And then he started saying [an EDL activist I met in a bar] that he really likes Poles, that Poland is actually great, that England is not doing well because of immigrants—this and that—but Poles are different. […] That Poles are hardworking, so we stand out from the rest of the immigrants, that we are alright, and that he wants to befriend us.**
> **Emanuel, convicted for terror offences**

rooted in white supremacy. An important role is played here by the positive reception of their activism by segments of British right-wing groups, which provided Poles with specific roles, political visibility, and opportunities for social mobility. For example, in circles around UK Independence Party (**UKIP**), the Vote Leave campaign, and currently the **Reform** party, Poles are clearly welcomed, as exemplars of 'true patriots', and association of Polishness with heroism and military history becomes practically useful.

As for activist profiles, while it is difficult to generalize, several features stand out. First, men dominate among activists, which is common in right-wing movements, particularly on the extreme end. The most active and radical individuals are typically working-class men employed or self-employed tradesmen, car mechanics, construction workers, drivers, or manual labourers. Self-employment and financial independence make them relatively resilient to negative media coverage concerning the presence of the Polish far right in the UK. With the exception of younger individuals convicted for terror offences, most fall within the 40–60 age range. Several high-profile individuals are middle-class, active in formal diaspora circles.

A particular type of activist consists of individuals associated with football supporter movements in Poland, men aged 40–50 who often have prior criminal records in Poland. They frequently form tight-knit groups ready to appear at events, sometimes for intimidation purposes (as in the disruption of Zygmunt Bauman's lecture). It should also be noted that many supporter

networks have diaspora branches, such as fans of notoriously right-wing Ruch Chorzów (“Niebieska Emigracja”) club, which sometimes provide logistical support for public events. Some of these activists, linked to the neo-Nazi music network **B&H**, see themselves as “waiting wolves.” Although their current activity is often limited to online spaces and music events, during the riots in England in the summer of 2024 they displayed strong interest and readiness for engagement. According to their own accounts, they were encouraged by British associates to participate but declined in order to avoid drawing attention from UK security services.

These social circles are also very active in official combat sports, particularly bare-knuckle boxing leagues in Britain. These leagues range from top British organisations such as Bare Knuckle Fighting Championship UK, to small groups of mainly Polish fighters who regularly organise events and fights. This is accompanied by dozens of boxing clubs, individual coaches, and associations that have emerged in the last few years. According to our approximate count, there are at least 50 Polish active professional fighters in the UK taking part in MMA events of various scale, on a regular basis. These social spaces are not overtly political, and fighters or coaches usually refrain from expressing their views in public, although their online activities sometimes disclose clear political alignment. As numerous studies indicate, MMA social environments are associated with far-right politics, and are spaces of reproduction of ideas and recruitment of new generations of activists, globally[25] and also in the UK.[26]

Links with British politics

Another category of activists includes individuals who join British far-right organisations or movements such as the **EDL**, **BF**, or political parties like Nigel Farage's **Reform** and **UKIP**. Poles have appeared in all of these organisations, sometimes forming separate Polish subdivisions.

Polish presence in British structures is mutually beneficial. On the one hand, activism within British organisations gives Poles a distinctive status, tied to their reputation as experienced, aggressive yet disciplined participants in street confrontations. This sometimes led to Poles assuming roles as security personnel: for example, at London Forum (an international conference of far-right extremists) or as protection for Tommy Robinson.[27] On the other hand, for less extreme parties such as **UKIP**[28] or **Reform**, the presence of Poles provides a form of tokenistic protection against accusations of discrimination and anti-immigrant rhetoric.[29]

> **Researcher: And don't you think that this kind of presence also works on the basis of, "look, we're not that anti-immigrant, because we've got a Pole here" [about the Conservative Party and UKIP]?**
> **Antoni: Of course. They could always say, "look, we're not anti-immigrant because we've got this club." On the other hand, they could hope to attract some Polish voters. And you know, when you're a small party, every vote counts, right?**
> **Antoni, former member of UKIP**

As noted earlier, the organisation that developed particularly close ties with the British far right through its Polish migrant members is the **NOP**, the oldest Polish far-right party, established in the 1980s. **NOP** demonstrated consistent integration with British organisations, stemming both from

ideological affinity (e.g., Third Position ideology) and longstanding ties between its leadership and groups such as the **BNP** and **NF** dating back to the 1990s.[30]

> **The NOP guys were already installed when I started attending and organising for the LF [London Forum]. […] The LF had a wide variety of types of people involved in its activities, but I think the NOP were the main group who had a different first language; and I am not sure to what extent they all spoke and understood English; therefore their dealing with security was a natural and appropriate role for them.**
> **George, co-organiser of London Forum**

According to **NOP** leaders, their primary strategic focus was cooperation with British actors including members of **NA**. For British organisations such as the **BNP**, **NF**, or **NA**, cooperation with **NOP** also brought certain benefits. Despite occasional tensions - since anti-immigration ideology also applied to Poles - collaboration lasted for at least a decade. Polish activists added an element of internationalisation and prestige at demonstrations, stood out visually, and were notably more disciplined. For **NOP**, these relationships also carried prestige. International contacts of its UK branch distinguished them from activists in Poland, sometimes generating internal tensions and jealousy. Close ties with British extremists also helped NOP activists navigate the complex landscape of UK far-right networks and avoid police infiltration. However, close (sometimes friendship-based) connections with **NA** became problematic after the latter had been banned and criminalised, drawing the attention of British security services.

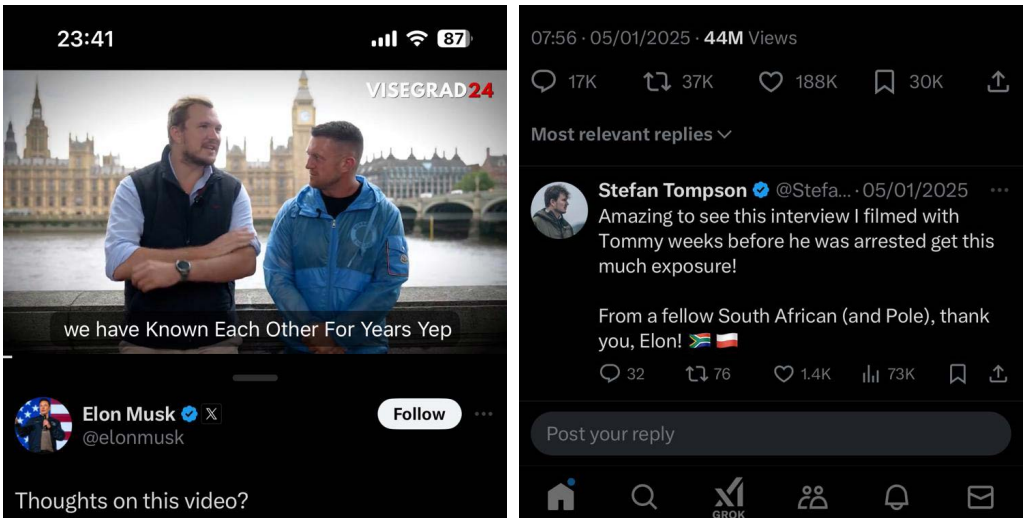
Poles in the UK also joined **BF**. The party's popularity among Poles partly stemmed from contacts established by its leaders with Jacek Międlar, then a priest and **ONR** sympathizer. According to activists, Polish migrants significantly boosted the party's popularity on Facebook, and its leaders explicitly called on Poles in the UK to join.

> **Mostly they had a lot of discipline… One thing you'll find in comparison to European parties, and if I'm honest, English parties is they were quite disciplined, which was something I could actually respect. They didn't do shouting and they was there with a lot more of a purpose for their cause and rather to make a scene and be seen. They didn't… A better way of looking at it for like, layman's terms would be they didn't go out of their way to cause trouble.**
> **Allan, former member of National Front**
>
> **I'll be honest. They did drink alcohol, although again, they never drank it at any events, which is truth be told, but separated them a lot from the English groups. […] They actually, for the best of my recollection, they actually waited till everything was over and then they would do you know, afterwards.**
> **Allan, former member of National Front**

Among far-right leaders, Tommy Robinson (Stephen Yaxley-Lennon), founder of the now-defunct **EDL**, enjoys by far the greatest popularity among Poles in the UK. Nearly all Polish interviewees emphasized sympathy to his cause; many participated in his marches and share his views. Criticism focused either on his perceived lack of radicalism or his strongly pro-Israel stance, as the majority of the Polish far right tend to harbour antisemitic views.

Robinson's popularity among Poles is not solely due to his UK activities but also his introduction into Polish political circles in 2016, when he was invited to the Independence March by far-right politicians Dominik Tarczyński (now an MEP) and Dariusz Matecki. The visit was organised and promoted by Stefan Tompson, co-founder of Visegrád 24, a Polish-based conservative news aggregator, who describes himself as Robinson's "longtime friend." Tompson led a campaign publicising Robinson's legal troubles (a contempt of court conviction), which in Poland was framed as a struggle for freedom of speech against the judiciary, aligning with the ruling party's

messaging at the time. Tompson, a South African born, London educated Polish national, has been promoting Robinson for almost a decade. His news portal Visegrád 24 has been recently identified as one of the main sources of news and opinions for Elon Musk.[31] Visegrád 24[32] regularly shares content that aligns with Musk's ideological views on the perceived decline of Western population, Islam and immigration.



X post by Elon Musk (@elonmusk), 5.01.2025.

In 2025, Tompson again helped organise Robinson's participation in the Independence March, this time accompanied by a larger group of British activists and his supporters, such as Ant Middleton (a former British Special Forces soldier and influencer, planning to run for Mayor of London in 2028 as an independent candidate), Don Keith (an American podcaster, author of *The Real Beef*), Sarah White (a British activist and influencer associated with the Alternative UK party and the Pink Ladies movement), Liam Tuffs (a British podcaster, author of *The Dozen with Liam Tuffs*), Paul Thorpe (a British influencer and media personality).[33] A key element of Robinson's video coverage of the march included interviews with Poles who had returned from the UK and strongly echoed his hostile views on immigration, Labour Party governance, and alleged restrictions on free speech. Robinson maintains close links with Polish MEP Dominik Tarczyński who was a speaker, at the Unite the Kingdom rally organised by Robinson in September 2025[34] as well as with MP Krzysztof Bosak who serves as Deputy Marshal of the Polish Sejm and leader of **RN**.

Visegrád 24 @visegrad24 · Nov 12, 2025

Visegrad24 founder @StefanTompson hit the **streets of Warsaw** for the Polish Independence Day March, Europe's largest annual conservative event, together with @TRobinsonNewEra, @D_Tarczynski, @liamtuffs1 & @antmiddleton

They all agreed it's time for a European alliance of patriots

82 533 2.7K 247K

Tommy Robinson @TRobinsonNewEra · Nov 12

Polish patritos burn EU flag at their independence march

From **Młodzież Wszechpolska**

219 443 3.4K 83K

Tommy Robinson @TRobinsonNewEra · Nov 11

Warsaw ready @advancesarah @antmiddleton

210 436 4.4K 109K

Sarah White @advancesarah · Nov 13

While Poland celebrates their freedom and independence are we losing ours

10am live with Paul Thorpe

youtube.com/live/hAaDGHGNv...

7 27 97 1.7K

Tommy Robinson reposted

Wojciech Pawelczyk @WojPawelczyk · Nov 11

NEW: The English are jealous of Poland's Independence March that is currently taking place in Warsaw 😎

"We don't have this in England these days."

95 536 4.7K 120K

Don Keith @RealDonKeith · Nov 9

We're celebrating Polish Independence Day early with @D_Tarczynski, @visegrad24, @advancesarah, @WesleyWinterYT, and Paul Thorpe!

36 112 862 111K

X posts on an international visit during the Polish Independence March, 9–11 November 2025, by Visegrád 24 (@visegrad24), Sarah White (@advancesarah), Tommy Robinson (@TRobinsonNewEra), Wojciech Pawelczyk (@WojPawelczyk), and Don Keith (@RealDonKeith)

Cases of individuals convicted of terrorist activity

Over the past seven years, eight individuals of Polish origin - at least seven of them Polish citizens - have been convicted in the United Kingdom under terrorism legislation. These are: Oskar Dunn-Kaczorowski,[35] Michał Szewczuk,[36] Jacek Tchórzewski,[37] Filip Bednarczyk,[38] Paweł Golaszewski,[39] Piotr Kucharski,[40] Gabriel Budasz,[41] and Robert Adamski.[42] The charges involved disseminating materials that could support far-right terrorist activity, encouraging terrorism, disseminating terrorist publications. In the cases of Dunn-Kaczorowski, Szewczuk, and Tchórzewski, the charges related as well to support for the proscribed neo-Nazi **Sonnenkrieg Division**[43] which is a British version of the American neo-Nazi organisation **Atomwaffen Division**. In the case of Kucharski, the charges concerned membership in the **Wagner Group**. In two cases (Budasz, Adamski), terror offences included also 3D-printing of firearms; and Bednarczyk was convicted for the acquisition of explosive materials.

It should be emphasized that each of these cases is unique and complex. Explaining pathways to radicalisation typically requires consideration of sociological, cultural, and psychological factors. Due to limited access to court materials, the political sensitivity of offences, and data protection constraints, available information on these cases is necessarily restricted. Our analysis is based on media and police reports, informal consultations with UK law enforcement, and several interviews conducted with individuals sentenced for far-right terrorism, racially motivated attacks or causing a public disorder. Nevertheless, combined with broader research on the far-right environment in the UK - both online and offline - it allows for several observations.

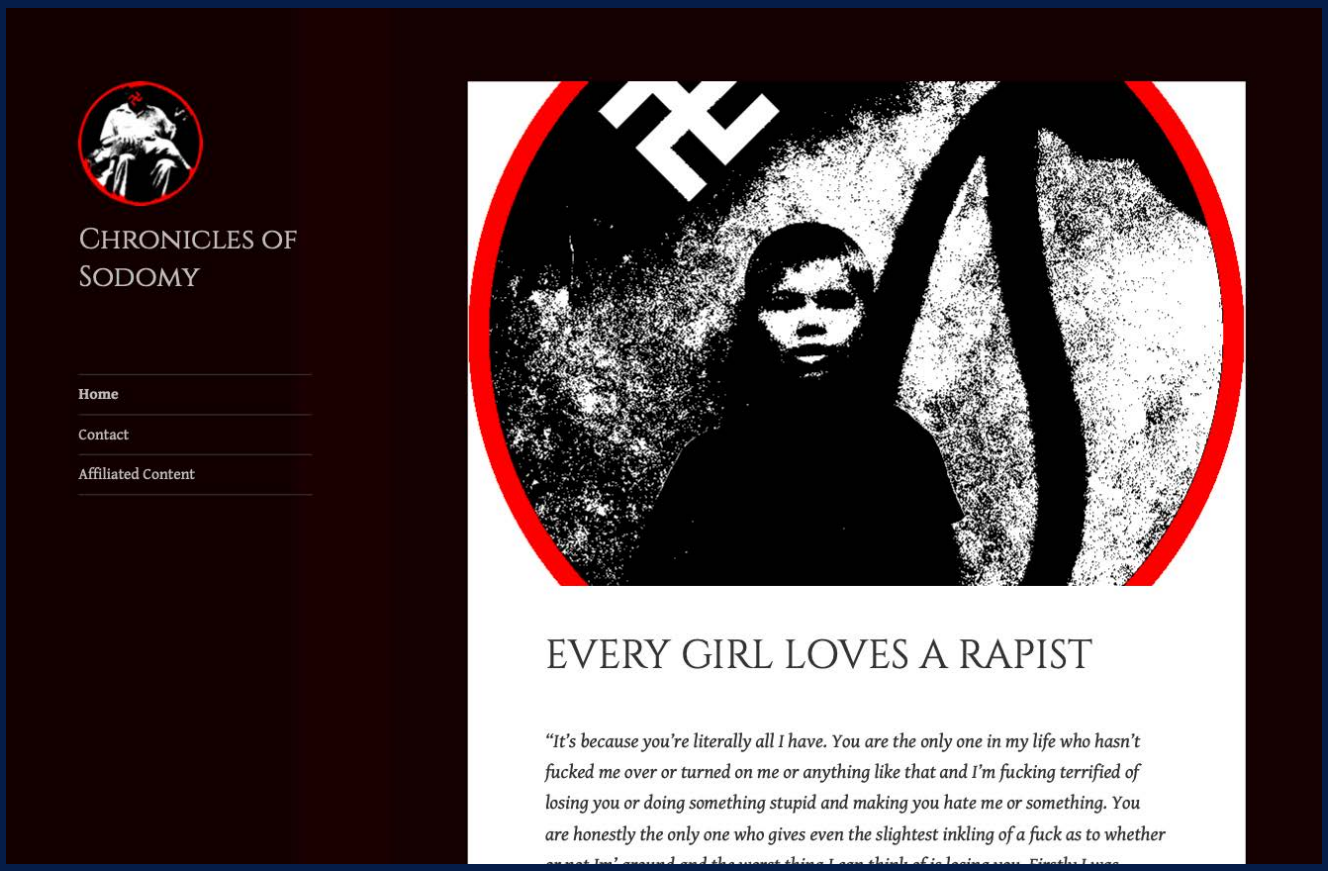
Based on the available evidence, a key characteristic of the individuals concerned is their minimal or non-existent engagement with Polish politics, Polish-related issues or links with Polish organisations in the UK. With the exception of Paweł Golaszewski, who, according to our sources, was linked to a branch of **PF** in Leeds, none of the convicted individuals maintained close ties to Polish community structures. Kucharski is associated with Slavic neopagan milieus, whose links to neo-Nazi and nationalist environments are well documented; he is therefore the only individual among those convicted for whom it can be stated with some confidence that he arrived in the UK already holding radical nationalist views. This cannot be said of the others, particularly as Szewczuk, Bednarczyk, Budasz, and Tchórzewski arrived in the UK as children or teenagers.

At a general level, it can be concluded that radicalisation in these cases occurred primarily through exposure to British or transnational far-right environments, most often in online spaces. In the case of Budasz, there are clear indications of a phenomenon identified by UK security services: the online radicalisation of youth largely disconnected from real-world political contexts, combined with the formation of hybrid ideological frameworks in which violence is glorified through identification with perpetrators of terrorist attacks such as Brenton Tarrant or Anders Breivik, as well as online creators such as GypsyCrusader and CodComedyTJ. Budasz's extensive online content, including material produced on platforms such as Omegle, contains almost no references to Poland or Polish politics, limiting his views to occasional comments asserting the superiority of Poland over other countries.

> **Poland is somehow still a bastion of anti-faggotary and anti-immigration to some extent.**
> **Dawid, convicted for terror offences**

In the case of one convicted under terror related charges, radicalisation occurred through direct personal contact with a British activist and supporter of **EDL**; he himself was, for a period of time, a member of **BF**. He had no involvement with Polish organisations, and his online content similarly contained very little references to Poland or Polish politics. However, at some point he became part of a self-proclaimed Polish division of the **EDL** called **Polish Defense League** producing online content, and he frequently communicated with other Poles in the UK or Poland. Dunn-Kaczorowski, in turn, maintained contacts with **NA** and American neo-Nazi networks; however, aside from his associations with Szewczuk and Tchórzewski, there is no evidence of broader connections with Polish individuals or communities.

In that sense, the radicalisation trajectory of the individuals concerned does not differ from other cases of British teenagers or young people who are increasingly vulnerable to radicalisation. However, based on similar cases in the past, including cases of second-generation radicalised Islamist extremists, we assess that their in-between positionality as non-English UK residents with Eastern European background plays an important role. Their radical views may have developed in response to being perceived within the far-right milieus as 'less English' hence 'less white'. A similar process in the past related to second-generation Irish youth in the 1980s. As the anti-fascist activist and founder of Hate not Hope (and former member of the **NF** and **BNP**) Matthew Collins recollects: *There was all that forced assimilation, about being more English and wanting to fit in… It's a well-known fact that during the 1980s, almost everyone in the National Front came from an Irish family.*[44] Polish background teenagers may be in a similar position, hence their relatively high numbers among those sentenced. As second-generation migrants, whose whiteness and belonging may be questioned, they have something to prove. From our fieldwork and conversations with parents of young people and Polish teachers it seems that this is a common experience among youth of Polish background, hence we assess this group as particularly vulnerable to radical ideas and practices.



Prosecutor Naomi Parsons told the court how Szewczuk - who joined National Action as a schoolboy - posted links from the GrozAW account to a blog called the *Chronicles of Sodomy*. Above: excerpt from the blog. Source: Wayback Machine.

Sonnenkrieg Division propaganda. The image of the Duke of Sussex branding him a 'race traitor' created by Michal Szewczuk and shared online in far-right chatrooms. Source: left - BBC, right - minerva.no.

Deportations of extremists

Most of the Poles convicted of terrorist activity have been deported to Poland (with the exception of Budasz and Adamski who are currently serving sentences of 12 and 15 years' imprisonment, respectively).

British authorities have for some time sought to encourage convicted individuals without British citizenship to agree to voluntary deportation. From the perspective of Polish security policy, this practice has significant implications and practical consequences. As those designated for deportation, are not to be released in the UK, they are not included in deradicalisation programs in British prisons aimed at rehabilitation and prevention of reoffending, or are included only to a limited extent. This increases the likelihood that, despite conviction and serving a sentence, the individual will keep their extremist views. Deportation to Poland means that, upon release, a person convicted of terrorist activity effectively becomes a Polish problem, not a British one. Moreover, under Polish law, such individuals are formally considered to have no criminal record.

Despite the political nature and exceptional character of these crimes, our findings indicate that Polish authorities lack tools for working with former extremists, and so the deportees fall into a systemic gap. Following their deportation to Poland, apart from routine monitoring by the Internal Security Agency (ABW), such individuals are essentially left to themselves, without any state support, social assistance, or involvement from organisations monitoring radicalisation. These individuals often return after many years in the UK, sometimes lacking familiarity with life in their country of origin, and experiencing strong feelings of isolation and social marginalisation. As a result of the lack of rehabilitation in British prisons and re-entry into a social environment where far-right political discourse is more normalised, a deported individual may potentially re-enter the path of political extremism. Our data indicate that Polish far-right leaders and activists

actively monitor deportations of Polish citizens convicted of hate-related crimes and establish contacts with deportees. These contacts may serve to recruit them into political activities and to use their stories for propaganda purposes. In such narratives, the deportees are often portrayed as victims of the liberal Western system, helping to construct their image as "martyrs" for the cause. Cases of Polish migrants convicted of far-right terrorist activity—often motivated by anti-immigrant, anti-Islamic, and racist ideologies—may be politically exploited to demonstrate the alleged "decline" of Western institutions, which are portrayed as unjustly persecuting Polish citizens and penalizing white Europeans defending European heritage.

> **One could say that I am a kind of symbol for others—that I was the one who fought. Some even called me a martyr. […] A few, a few neo-Nazis who wrote to me on Facebook called me a martyr, saying that I was actually condemned and persecuted for a good cause.**
> **Emanuel, convicted for terror offences**

There is a precedent for such heroisation of a Polish emigrant who committed a terrorist act: the case of Janusz Waluś, a member of South African neo-Nazi **Afrikaner Resistance Movement**, who in 1993 murdered a prominent anti-apartheid figure Chris Hani.[45] Having served a 30-year prison sentence in South Africa, Waluś returned to Poland in 2024, and has become a frequent guest at political meetings, demonstrations, book fairs, and events organised specifically for him. His main political sponsors and "patrons" include the **KKP**, as well as the milieu surrounding the magazine Szczerbiec, linked to the **NOP**. Waluś is also a frequent guest in football fan circles. In all these spaces, he is treated as a hero, martyr, and warrior in the service of the "white race."[46]

During the course of this research, it was established that one of the Poles deported from the UK for terrorist activity became the target of similar political recruitment efforts shortly after arriving in Poland, including from circles associated with Janusz Korwin-Mikke and neo-Nazi groups. He was offered participation in joint photo sessions for social media campaigns and encouraged to engage in their activities. This confirms our claim that such cases, due to their political potential and capacity to generate controversy, are actively monitored by organisations and activists who then approach deportees with offers of cooperation. For far-right organisations, conviction for ideologically motivated, racist, or hate-based crimes is not disqualifying, on the contrary. One activist had been convicted of a religiously aggravated criminal damage and racially/religiously aggravated public order offence and after deportation became a **RN** politician.

Facebook post by Grzegorz Braun, 26 March 2026. Translation: “At the National Stadium during the Poland 🇵🇱 - Albania 🇦🇱 match—among others with Mr. Stanisław Tymiński, journalist Andrzej Kumor, Janusz Waluś, MP Roman Fritz, Włodzimierz Skalik, and a delegation of the Confederation of the Polish Crown 🇵🇱💪”

Formal structures of the diaspora and radicalisation

Some of the interviewed activists are participants in formal Polish diaspora associations, some born in the UK, others present since the 1990s or belonging to the cohort that came after 2004. Most are engaged in preserving the memory of Polish war effort and promoting Polish contribution to British society. In this sense, their activities are not overtly political. However, it must be remembered that the Polish diaspora is highly diverse politically. Polish community spaces often serve as arenas for competing viewpoints, typically shaped by British norms, where caution toward extreme positions is significant. Labels such as “nationalist” or supporter of the British far right can be viewed as controversial, leading some far-right activists to carefully conceal their views, contacts, or past activism.

Drawing on the symbolic and social capital of post-WW2 émigré structures can bring recognition, prestige, and sometimes access to funding, but may also limit certain forms of activity. For example, **Dywizjony Lotnicze**, an organisation linked to **ONR** and football fan groups commemorating Polish airmen at a monument in London, organises ceremonies without consulting the formal organisation responsible for maintaining the monument composed largely of second- and third-generation Poles. This sometimes leads to tensions and conflicts occasionally involving relevant British organisations, unaware of political alignments of Polish partners. At another centre commemorating Polish WW2 pilots in northern England, Polish activists strongly objected to the presence of a rainbow flag on the website of the centre and demanded its removal; following a threat to withdraw cooperation, the British side complied. The Polish activists, informally supporters of Grzegorz Braun, have claimed that the flag is “contrary to traditional values, model of the family, the Church, and Polish tradition

which are the foundations of Polish national identity", and that WW2 pilots would be surely against this too.

Fieldwork photo by AJ, online concert of Basti organised by Polskie Dywizjony, 11 May 2024 capturing an ONR activist presence. The event was originally planned as a concert featuring Polish nationalist rapper Basti at a separate venue, but a few days beforehand the venue withdrew following public pressure. As a result, organisers relocated the event to the Polish War Memorial and replaced the planned live performance with a pre-recorded screening, due to concerns that UK border control might prevent Basti's entry.

Long-term observation of the Polish diaspora in the UK and broader diaspora processes allows for several insights, including forward-looking ones. Like any social group, the Polish diaspora faces the challenge of reproducing its institutions, networks, and cultural capital. The post-WW2 diaspora received a major boost after 2004 in terms of human capital and a range of activities, but after more than two decades, the sustainability of these institutions remains uncertain. In a multicultural British society where far-right, anti-immigration narratives are gaining popularity, Polish history and diaspora may become attractive resources for distinguishing Poles from other—implicitly non-white, non-European—minorities. Symbolic capital—especially narratives centred on military history, martyrdom, and nationalism – can therefore easily be transformed into exclusionary and

xenophobic discourse. This may lead to increasing radicalisation within diaspora structures.

The British context plays a decisive role here, explaining the dominant trajectory of political activism among interviewees, most of whom radicalised after migration. Since the Brexit referendum, British politics has been marked by persistent populist criticism of immigration policy. Given recent data indicating growing support for **Reform**, it is notable that many of our interviewees agree with aspects of its programme, and Polish candidates are present within the party. At present, it is difficult to precisely assess overall Polish support for Reform.

Diaspora voting patterns in Polish presidential elections provide some indication as results abroad are more polarized than in Poland. In the 2025 Polish presidential elections, Poles in the UK cast 120,000 votes, with 33% going to far-right candidates (Sławomir Mentzen 18.84%, Grzegorz Braun 14.45%), 36% to Rafał Trzaskowski, and the incumbent president ranked fourth (13%), which means that approximately 40,000 Polish nationals in the UK supported a far-right candidate.[47] There is a notable correlation between areas where Braun and Mentzen performed well and areas where **Reform** is strong. While this is correlation rather than causation, research suggests that the British political environment plays a role in shaping radicalisation among Polish migrants, normalising anti-immigration discourses and encouraging immigrants to become anti-immigrant, a process that authors of this report describe as “integration through racism.”[48]

The visits of radicals and the impact of deterrence

The integration of Polish migrants into British society does not mean that Polish politics has no influence on the radicalisation processes described above. The rich social and cultural infrastructure of Polish communities across Great Britain provides numerous spaces and opportunities for Polish social and political life to shape the diaspora. This includes visits by far-right politicians, activists, writers, and other public figures, for whom trips to Great Britain have long held significant publicity and financial value.

The visits of far-right radicals have been noticed by British authorities and Polish communities themselves, who have often acted to prevent their arrival to the UK with the assistance of local MPs, or the Home Office. The most notable examples include Jacek Międlar who came at the invitation of **BF** but was prevented from coming to the UK at least twice[49] and Rafał Ziemkiewicz, publicist and journalist.[50] These incidents have sparked a lively internal debate within the Polish communities, some in favour, other less so. The far-right activists we spoke to were obviously in the latter group who regarded the practice by British authorities, or anti-fascist activists (among them also Polish ones) as an attempt to stifle free speech. Although we recognise that that these measures were aimed at preventing hate speech, in our view, they also have several counterproductive effects.

First of all, for these far-right activists being singled out and questioned by British authorities is a cause for additional promotion and publicity. In certain circles, this functions as a sort of badge of honour, and further validation of their conspiracy views as the perception of persecution by the left amplifies the message's importance. Second, for some the risk is still worth taking, as numerous activists during our research did make it to Britain, staged events, gave speeches, sold books and disseminated their

message. Some were high profile, as the Polish MEP Janusz Korwin-Mikke who actually claimed to have entered Britain via Ireland, hence avoiding detection from antifascist activists. During these events, the guests often gloat about their skills in outmanoeuvring British authorities and left-wing activists. Moreover, at some events, the speaker's talk or performance is directly streamed through the web, with activists in Poland interacting directly with the audience in Britain, again claiming to be able to outsmart the authorities' attempts to limit free speech, hence reinforcing the stereotypical Polish fight for 'freedom'.

The issue of preventing high-profile far-right activists from delivering their message to UK-based audiences is highly delicate, as it concerns not only Polish activists but also diplomatic relations between Poland and the United Kingdom. Based on our assessment and observations, it is clear that far-right activists in Poland have developed sophisticated tactics either to avoid being barred from entering the UK or to turn such exclusions into a source of additional prestige.

Fieldwork photo by AJ, film screening of "Neighbours. Last Witnesses to the Ukrainian Genocide against the Poles" - first episode followed by an online meeting with its creator Jacek Międlar, 7 September 2024. The meeting was conducted online due to concerns from the outset that the director might be refused entry at the UK border, which did happen a year later.

Prevent and community resilience

Polish migrants, especially those with children in schools, are aware of various Prevent policies and the importance of being able to recognise hate speech or signs of radicalisation. However, from our assessment it seems that British authorities have not developed tailored Prevent policies that would cater to Polish communities. We are not aware of Prevent intervention officers who would be knowledgeable about the Polish complex landscape of far-right discourses, politics, organisations, symbols or celebrities. According to our assessment, there are no Polish speaking specialists in Prevent structures who could assist in particularly difficult cases. In the light of the cases of Polish nationals convicted under Terrorism Act 2000, this indicates a significant omission in policies and implementation of security measures under Prevent framework.

The majority of Polish communities across the UK are well aware of the divisive and controversial nature of far-right discourses, particularly when directed against British ethnic and racial communities with whom British Poles maintain professional, personal, friendship, and family ties. In several instances, they have resisted providing platforms for far-right activists or have refused their participation in public events. Various Polish diasporic networks are also politically diverse, which can strengthen their resilience to far-right influence. At the same time, our research indicates that broader political polarisation in the United Kingdom is also affecting Polish communities, including a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment, as reflected, for example, in the above-mentioned results of the Polish presidential elections.

Security threats and potential for violence

This research engaged with diverse type of activists (also former radicals), with different ideological views, tactics and political alignments. Some, in particular members of more mainstream political parties and organisations, conform to the rule of law, and recognise the importance of debate underpinned by democratic procedures. Several of the activists we spoke to have been investigated by the security services, and some were convicted for politically motivated crimes, including engaging in violent acts. It is difficult to categorically assess the level of threat and potential for violence among such a diverse group. Although sometimes heated, and emotionally challenging, online discussions as well as our interviews rarely featured calls for concrete, directed violence or endorsement of such acts. However, many interviewees regarded the use of live ammunition towards immigrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea, or the Polish-Belorussian border as legitimate. Others used a more general language of 'defending Europe', or 'defending Western civilisation' in this context.

It is important to note that the UK authorities' interest in the last decade proved to be burdensome for a few of our interviewees, and as a result some decided to leave political activism, and move on, concentrating on their careers or family life. Others returned to Poland and remain active.

The summer 2024 riots were extensively discussed by many of our interviewees, and as noted, some – members of neo-Nazi networks with a reputation for being skilled in street fights – were encouraged by their British friends to take part, but declined. Overall, although Polish social media alluded to the presence of Poles, we found only one Polish citizen arrested and charged for taking part in the riots. In comparison to numerous incidents 10 years earlier (like the Liverpool disturbances in 2016), and other

accounts of politically motivated violence perpetrated by Poles[51] it would be safe to argue that the appetite for street violence among some Polish far-right activists has now waned. This may be the result of many of them being arrested and deported, not necessarily for political reasons, but – given that there is a proven connection between far-right extremism, football fan networks and organised crime - for other offences. Others may have simply moved on, or even – cases we also encountered – de-radicalised, even becoming involved in some de-radicalisation activities (see: Educational resources to the project chapter). Others have become increasingly involved in combat sports and MMA, which may act as an outlet for violent impulses, without political outcomes. At the same time, however, it is certain that many activists we spoke to simply adapted, and learned how not to draw attention of the security services, engaging in politically neutral activities such as historical commemorative events, educational activities involving diaspora circles and the like.

That said, some hard-core, highly committed far-right activists, especially on the extreme fringes, do maintain that they are 'waiting wolves', anticipating the right moment to emerge and act. This does not imply an act of violence, but simply a readiness to act in defence of values based on white supremacy and racism. In extreme circles, apocalyptic visions are common, and that 'waiting' means precisely a sense of anticipation of a 'race war'. However, despite some circles claiming that the summer 2024 riots were such an event, when they were happening - and Polish social media were full of highly exaggerated stories about mass burning of mosques, and that 'the English had enough' - these 'waiting wolves' activists preferred to lie low, mainly to avoid being arrested and possibly deported to Poland.

The above allows us to state, that the direct threat to security in the UK from Polish far-right activists is low. This is not to deny that their messages, ideology and ways to disseminate them are toxic, divisive and harmful to social cohesion and individuals. Rather, it is simply to state, that among our interviewees political violence was either a thing of the past more

associated with football-style violence street confrontations, or not on their agenda at all. Of course, the nature of our overt research meant that individuals committed to violence would not be likely to engage with us or disclose their plans. We heard stories of some individuals willing to join extreme groups (**NOP**) who were refused due to their propensity for violence. Our concern was also raised in the case of one prominent activist closely linked with **NOP**, **PF** and **NA** who simply disappeared around 2020 and, despite our efforts, is untraceable through social media, or informal enquiries. Among a few posibilities we considered, this disappearance may indicate complete de-radicalisation and change, or an attempt to move off-grid for preparation purposes.

An important exception to this picture is represented by the individuals discussed in sections “Cases of individuals convicted of terrorist activity” and “Returns, deportations of extremists” who endorsed terrorist acts, such as those commited by Brenton Tarrant and Anders Breivik. Based on our research and understanding of the complexities within Polish communities in the UK, we identify a key security concern in relation to second-generation Polish youth, who may be exposed to a dual radicalisation dynamic: (1) as white Britons with a minority background, whose whiteness/Britishness is at times contested; and (2) as Poles exposed to the nationalist and far-right discourses characteristic of Poland.

Narratives surrounding Poland’s exceptional historical and contemporary role can be readily translated into activism targeting others, particularly non-white immigrants, or Muslims who in far-right discourse are portrayed as threatening Europe, Christianity, and Western civilisation. Moreover, given the masculine and often misogynistic character of far-right ideologies, it is Polish teenage boys and young men that appear particularly vulnerable. As many travel regularly to Poland, they are also exposed to the rapidly changing political and social realities of their parents’ country of origin. Data from Poland indicate that a significant proportion of young people, particularly males, hold deeply conservative and right-wing views.[52] In our assessment, young British males of Polish background are therefore

vulnerable in multiple ways and should be a priority target for tailored policy interventions.

Lastly, politically motivated violence doesn't have to be public and can also include domestic violence. Strongly heteronormative and patriarchal ideas are shared by many of our interviewees. Some endorse celebrities of the manosphere, such as Andrew Tate and Jordan Peterson, as well as beliefs that society is conceptualized through a cisgender, heterosexual hierarchy of sexual market value based on economic status and physical attractiveness. These spaces often reflect wider far-right views, particularly the belief that feminism harms men's rights, overlapping with broader narratives that reinforce gender hierarchy and inequality. Certain far-right milieus can provide fertile ground for normalising, legitimising, or even endorsing violence against women. Data on violence against Polish women in the UK is a significant cause for concern, and although this study did not explore that issue,[53] the potential intersections between violence against women and far-right ideological environments warrant further research and policy attention.

> **They [party colleagues] had views… a complete ban on abortion, even in cases of rape, which I think is going too far. […] One guy said, "Well, if a woman dies during childbirth, it's no loss, because there are five times more women than men anyway."**
> **Felicja, former member of Korwin UK (part of Confederation) party**

Conclusions

The study of Polish migrants' involvement in far-right politics indicates a range of factors and processes contributing to radicalisation. This is a dynamic phenomenon shaped by structural, political, cultural, and individual factors.

Polish activists display significant ideological diversity and operate along a continuum from British to transnational to Poland-focused politics. Despite these differences, they share a characteristic far-right worldview centered on a perceived existential threat and a political programme aimed at countering it through aggressive, sometimes violence-legitimising renewal of collectivist communities (racial, cultural, ethnic, religious). Within this framework, references to Poland play a key role, often rooted in a modernized version of the messianic vision of the country's role in Europe and in the world. Polish migrants are cast as being on the "front line" of defending an exclusionary conception of European civilisation.

For many migrants, this vision offers a pathway to social and cultural advancement and social mobility within the complex hierarchy of multicultural Britain, positioning themselves closer to perceived dominant groups - white, upper-class English society. At the same time, segments of this dominant group, feeling threatened by demographic change, seek allies. Polish migrants, occupying an ambivalent position within the hierarchy of "whiteness," may feel the need to prove themselves, contributing to radicalisation shaped primarily by the British context.

Thus, radicalisation on the far-right spectrum is not directly imported from Poland but emerges through migrants' experiences and integration into British society. Our data indicate that it is the British context – highly diverse and encompassing both elite and working-class environments – that stimulates a distinct version of Polish nationalism, which becomes hostile to other ethnic minorities.

A particularly illustrative case is that of Janusz Waluś, whose radicalisation occurred in apartheid-era South Africa in late 1980s and early 1990s but shares elements with the trajectories observed among our interviewees: anti-communism intertwined with racism, emphasis on Polish exceptionalism, glorification of the "Cursed Soldiers," desire for integration into host societies perceived in racial terms, and deeply held belief in the decline of Western civilisation and need to defend it. For individuals with strong racial prejudices, the mythologized figure of Waluś provides a framework for making sense of their own experiences and beliefs. His story of emigration resonates strongly within far-right circles, including in the UK, where demonstrations have been organised in support of his release.

In conclusion, political radicalisation among Polish migrants is neither new nor unique. However, as Poland becomes a country of immigration, it is important to recognise that threats to social cohesion may also arise from within - through returning migrants or numerous diaspora communities. Similarly, findings of this study also point out that far-right radicalisation in the UK is not an exclusively British phenomenon anymore, and although some grievances may have a specific, localized angle, political action, vocabulary, ideology and practice rely strongly on transnational connections.

Telegram post by Mark Collett (@markacollett), founder of PA, 3.02.2023

Policy recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed.

Strategic awareness and capacity-building

1. Recognise the transnational nature of contemporary far-right networks
Government, security services, and relevant stakeholders should explicitly recognise that contemporary far-right ideologies, narratives, and organisational practices operate across borders. The traditional understanding of the British far right as nationally-bounded is increasingly outdated. Policy frameworks should reflect the reality of globally interconnected networks of actors, ideas, and digital platforms.

2. Broaden understanding of target audiences of far-right mobilisation
Awareness strategies should reflect that far-right groups are no longer exclusively targeting white British populations. Increasingly, they engage individuals from migrant and minority backgrounds, including European diasporas. Preventive frameworks should therefore be adapted to address this diversification.

3. Targeted prevention for at-risk diaspora youth
Young people of Polish origin - particularly young men - should be recognised as a potentially vulnerable group in specific contexts. Tailored prevention initiatives should focus on:

- online radicalisation risks,
- legal consequences of hate speech and extremist activity,
- critical media literacy and resilience to disinformation.

Targeted policy and operational measures

4. Specialist expertise within the Prevent framework
Specialist Prevent officers with expertise in Polish-language content, cultural

context, and diasporic networks should be designated. This would enhance early identification of risks and improve the effectiveness of interventions within Polish communities.

5. Structured engagement with Polish Saturday Schools and community institutions

Polish Saturday Schools and other diaspora educational institutions should be systematically engaged as partners in prevention. Their role could include:

- co-developing educational materials,
- supporting awareness campaigns,
- acting as early-warning community interfaces.

6. Clarify and standardize entry and exclusion policies

Policies concerning the exclusion or monitoring of foreign far-right activists entering the UK should be made more transparent, consistent, and evidence-based. Engagement with relevant Polish community organisations could improve situational awareness and policy effectiveness. Current approaches appear reactive and ad hoc.

7. Monitor high-risk social environments (e.g. combat sports spaces)

Certain environments, such as mixed martial arts (MMA) and combat sports communities, may function as informal spaces of socialisation where radicalisation risks can emerge. These spaces should be subject to proportionate monitoring and further assessment, particularly where youth participation is high.

8. Leverage credible voices in disengagement and prevention efforts

Greater use should be made of former extremists of Polish origin who are engaged in community work. Existing capacity in this area remains underutilized and should be strategically supported. As credible messengers, they can play a key role in:

- counter-narrative development,
- awareness-raising initiatives,
- mentoring and early intervention programmes.

9. Cooperation between security services

There is a significant need to strengthen cooperation and information exchange between security services regarding Polish activists convicted and deported to Poland. Although such communication channels exist, our findings indicate that specific radicalisation and de-radicalisation trajectories are not currently the subject of targeted policy interventions. As the individuals in question have, in most cases, been radicalised in Britain, Polish authorities would benefit from deeper insight into these dynamics from their British counterparts.

In addition we identify the following issues for further research:

1. As young white Britons of immigrant background are identified in our report as at risk, there is a need to further that assessment taking into account complex online and offline environments they are immersed in. In particular taking into account individuals convicted under Terrorism Acts, there is a gap in scientific and public understanding of what draws young people into the far-right today.

2. Increased number of Britons who travel to Poland and become radicalised or exposed to Polish nationalist ideologies which may align with British far-right discourses. We have identified a recent growing popularity of organised tours to Poland for the purpose of training at shooting ranges, including military weapons and training. Although not overtly political, some shooting ranges are associated with far-right activists.

3. Our research identified a correlation between gender-based violence and far-right extremism. Polish women's groups confirm that traditional gender roles which are one of foundations of far-right discourses are partially responsible for a very high level of Polish women in the UK being victims of domestic violence.

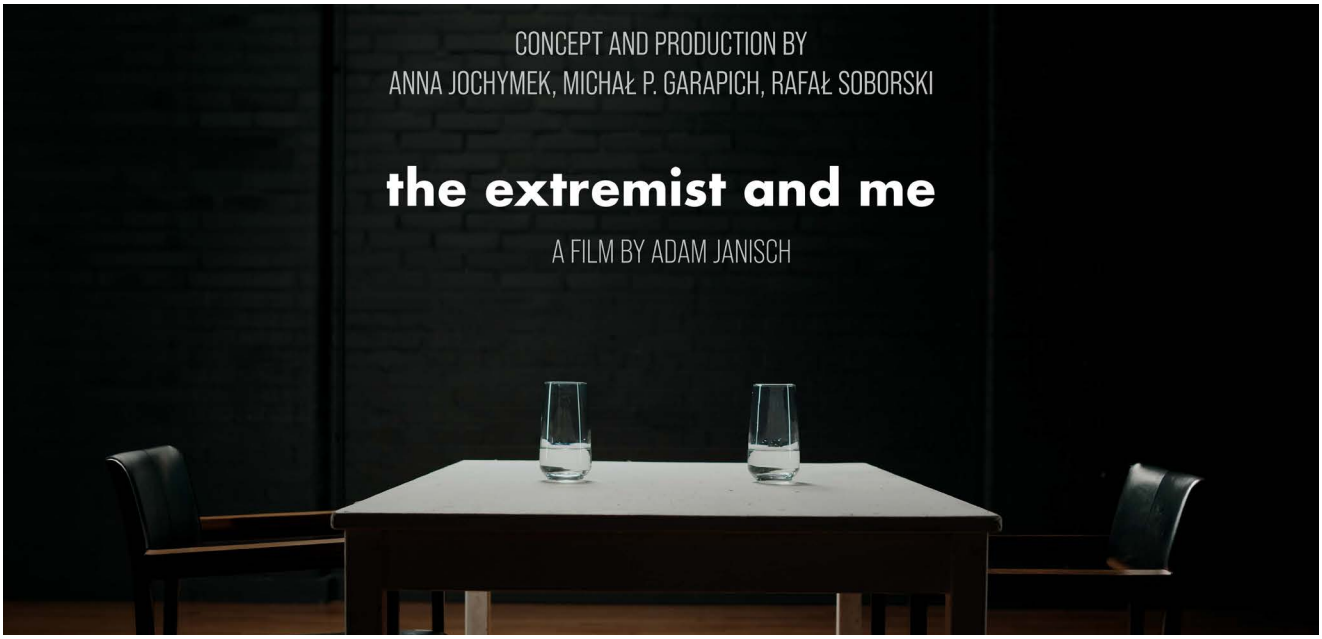
4. There is a further need to explore the nature of MMA combat sports in far-right milieus, as they may be spaces for radicalisation and reproduction of far-right ideologies but also act as necessary outlets and safety valves for individuals whose biographies were often immersed in violent behaviour.

Project's educational resources

Our team produced two documentary films that explore extremism, far-right ideology, childhood traumas, and life trajectory towards rejecting hate and de-radicalizing. Both explore these themes through deeply personal stories involving people we met during our ethnographic work. Both films were designed as educational resources for British services, schools and possibly young offenders institutes across UK, while also reaching wider audiences through networks such as Roma NGOs across Europe and film festivals.

The Extremist and Me (2026)

In an unprecedented dialogue, a former Polish neo-Nazi who converted to Christianity and a British former radical Islamist who found a way out of extremism through science sit down for a hard-hitting and brave conversation. The film traces their parallel journeys into radical ideologies, uncovering a shared landscape of childhood trauma and search for identity as well as pivotal moments that led to their transformation, offering a rare glimpse into the path from hate to healing.



That Boy: A Conversation about Hate and Healing (2025)

This film documents the encounter between Toby Gorniak MBE, a Roma activist, and refugee who fled Poland in early 1990s, after enduring violence from neo-Nazi skinheads, and Mirek, a former neo-Nazi and football hooligan from Poland, now a born-again Christian giving testimonies about his past and transformation. Their unfiltered conversation touches on the origins of hate, its consequences, and the possibilities for reconciliation.

To request access to the films, please contact the authors.

'That Boy' had its first public screening during Roma Week at the European Parliament (2025), received an Audience Choice Award during AKE DIKHEA?, The 9th International Festival for Romani Film 2025), and has been officially selected for the 8th edition of the Rolling Film Festival in Prisztina.

Poject articles

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