

MIGRATION AND THE FAR RIGHT: BRIEFING 3

Immigration has always been a focus for the far right, the recent and explicit targeting of people who are migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and the organisations that support them has rightly triggered concern, and has brought to the fore the needs of the migration and refugee sector to better understand the threat and how to respond.

That's why HOPE not hate charitable trust and Migration Exchange have developed the Response project, which aims to better equip the migration and refugee sector to understand the extent and nature of the threat posed by the far right, supporting them to apply that understanding through more appropriate responses in both the long and short term.

As part of this project, we will be sending these updates, to share what we are seeing through our monitoring and intel work, to offer you a clearer picture of the far-right threat around immigration and asylum.

RECENT ACTIVITY

The Government's new plan for immigration, including more stringent controls on asylum, has been a frequent topic of debate in the far-right since the plan was announced by Priti Patel.

While the plan outlined offers extremely harsh measures to control migration and limit asylum claims, far-right activists have made it clear they want more .

A lack of support from anti-migrant activists for the new asylum proposals demonstrates that even large concessions to far-right demands will not placate or appease them on this issue. Alan Leggett (aka Active Patriot UK) wrote on his Telegram channel that "The answer is to stop them landing - her plans don't mention that!". Nigel Farage dismissed the plans on Twitter as "Yet more tough talk" and that "nothing is going to change". The possible deportation of non-UK rough sleepers has, however, been endorsed by even the more extreme elements of the far right.

Over the last month, far-right 'citizen journalists' have once again turned towards Dover and taken up their filming of arrivals in the harbour town. Alan Leggett last week live streamed from Dover. He was accompanied by Nigel Marcham (aka Little Veteran). The daily streams attracted between 2.5 and 5 thousand views on his YouTube channel.

Leggett also filmed at an anti-lockdown demonstration in Bradford on 27 March and Steve Laws, another prominent anti-migrant activist, was on the anti-lockdown demonstration in London the previous weekend.

Alan Leggett



While they are currently focusing on a range of issues, including anti-lockdown events, we expect them to increasingly focus solely on cross-channel migration as the lockdown lifts and the weather improves.

Highlighting the increasing mobilisation against channel crossings are “Little Boats 2020”, an anti-migrant vigilante group launched in August 2020. Little Boats has announced that they have “tentatively ordered” a boat after crowdfunding from their supporters. They hope to use it to monitor the Channel and live stream from the sea.

Another indication of the far right’s increasing focus on the issue is the upcoming film ‘[Destination Dover](#)’ by Jake Hadfield. Hadfield is a former writer for Breitbart London who was let go in 2017 after he was [exposed as the admin](#) of an antisemitic and nazi glorifying Facebook group by HOPE not hate. The film describes migrants coming across the Channel as a type of “invasion”.

PROFILES OF FAR-RIGHT ANTI-MIGRANT GROUPS

■ BRITAIN FIRST

Combining the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the British National Party with hostility to Islam similar to that the English Defence League, Britain First is attracting supporters from both camps of the far right, because of its direct action and stunts. Central to their tactic is to directly confront their opponents and filming it. This has allowed them to attract a large support on social media and have created a climate of fear amongst Muslim communities. In May 2020 leader Paul Golding was convicted under terrorism law after he had refused police access to his phone at Heathrow on return from Moscow in October 2019.

During the last year BF has confronted staff at hotels housing migrants and filmed from the coast of Dover. The group have a sailboat that it has attempted to use to confront migrants crossing the channel.



Britain First leader, Paul Golding (center)

■ HUGH THORNE (AKA BASED WELSHMAN)

Hugh Thorne is a British YouTuber and far-right activist who has been engaged with a range of groups and projects over the years. He was arrested while filming Yellow Vest protests in Paris in 2019 and has worked closely with Alan Leggett (aka Active Patriot UK).

In 2020 Thorne produced anti-lockdown and police overreach content, but also aligned himself with the anti-migrant activists objecting to and filming migrants coming across the English Channel. He appeared in a video by Leggett and published multiple videos about the Penally camp (former barracks) where migrants were housed. On Telegram he also criticised the Black Lives Matter movement and posted content meant to denigrate black people.



- To receive updates, you can sign up to the project mailing list here: <https://donate.hopenothate.org.uk/page/s/sign-up-to-receive-updates-MEX>
- We’ve also created a form for sharing intel, so that we get a fuller picture of far right activity alongside our monitoring. You can submit anything you’re coming across on or offline: <https://donate.hopenothate.org.uk/page/s/response-project-intel-submission>
- And for anything more specific, or for any questions, please email: response@hopenothate.org.uk