

Network of Black International in Serbia

Tuesday 7 May 2019, by [PEROVIĆ Miloš](#) (Date first published: 26 March 2019).

For a long time, Serbia enjoys a good reputation among right-wing extremists in Western Europe. British racists, German Islamophobes, Italian fascists, French identitarians and Nazis from all over the world have turned Serbia into their Mecca in recent years. Support to the development of the domestic Nazi scene that's coming from the West is not conditioned only by the fantasy about Serbia as a kind of bastion in a struggle against Islam. It's also the consequence of the fact that domestic institutions in Serbia usually gives warm welcome to the extremist organizations from abroad.

Better informed experts are familiar with the fascination that heterogeneous far-right organizations all around Europe have for Serbs and Serbia. Even though Serbs, like other Slavs, were considered as part of the inferior race during the original historical manifestation of fascism. Nowadays admiration of Serbia among European fascists is direct proof that fascist ideology takes new forms and develops over time. The primary reason for the new status of Serbs in neo-fascist circles is found in the recent war history of Serbia. In Yugoslavia's disintegration, the Greater Serbian nationalist project has, amongst other things, being directed against the Muslims (Bosniaks and Albanians). This is a sufficient reason for new European extremist right - based on Islamophobia and theirs simplified mythologized projections - for the idealization of the Serbian people.

Another reason for this idealization is the successful Serbian resistance to modernization and Europeanization, above all through a strong resistance to the European Union and the so-called liberal values on which it is formally based. Most frequent manifestations of this resistance, such as the attack on the US Embassy on the occasion of the formal declaration of Kosovo's independence or the long-standing violent resistance to the Belgrade Pride, further raised the reputation of Serbia in the fascist circles of Europe. And thirdly, because Serbia, like Bulgaria and Greece, occupies a crucial geopolitical point of Europe, close to the border with Asia. This is the direction from which, according to fascist propaganda interpretation, the biggest threat to the European future and stability is coming - migrants. According to this conception, Serbs have the role of border guards, guardians of Christian Europe from the Asian invasion. All of the above reasons, alongside favourable stance of local authorities and the public towards European fascists declarative opposition to Kosovo's independence, have crucially influenced intensification of activities of the so-called "black international" in Serbia over the past decade or so.

European Nazis, Serbian mainstream

In this short article, it is impossible to look at all the examples of the activities of the European extreme right in Serbia in recent years, but we will try to look at the most recent and important ones. The last example of this practice was the "Europe of Free Nations" forum held at a hotel revealingly called "88 Rooms". At this event, organized by the National Serbian Front (NSF), Serbian Action (SA) and the book cafe "Carostavnik", in addition to the domestic extremists as Marko Dimitrijević from the Serbian Action and Zoran Buljugić, appeared the representatives of the German Nazi party NPD - Torsten Heise and Udo Voigt, who is also a member of the NPD in the European Parliament and a member of the Alliance for Peace and Freedom (APF), which brings

together various fascist parties in this European Union body.

Heise was not in Belgrade for the first time because he also participated year before in the forum that time organized by "Zbor", an organization that is considered the successor of the collaborative fascist movement led by Dimitrije Ljotić from the Second World War. To which extent are opinions of this German Nazi actually part of the political mainstream in Serbia, proves the fact that the interview with him was published in Kurir, one of the most popular political tabloids in Serbia. There is no doubt that Heise has strengthened contacts with Serbian fascists over the last few years, and that the resources that NPD receives as a member of the Alliance for Peace and Freedom in the EU Parliament have certainly helped him.

"Border Guards"

Another Udo Voigt's colleague from the Alliance for Peace and Freedom has been particularly active in Serbia and Bulgaria since the current refugee wave. It is Nick Griffin, a British fascist veteran that has crossed the road from the National Front's infantry in the 1970s, to the leader and creator of the British National Party's (BNP) greatest electoral success at the beginning of the new millennium (from which he was later kicked out because of financial malversations and factionalism) to the European Parliament MP as the representative of the British Union (BU). Last year, along with unavoidable Buljugić, he spoke at the anti-immigrant panel of NSF in Belgrade. However, much more interesting are other activities of Nick Griffin and his Scottish colleague James Dobson. News portals Balkan Insight and Krik gave detailed reports on this. Namely, these two British fascists supplied light military equipment (drones, uniforms, tactical gear) to Serb nationalists in the north of Kosovo in preparation for the alleged "Muslim extremist attack".

It is also known that Griffin and Dobson supplied Bulgarian fascist paramilitaries that are patrolling Bulgarian-Turkish border by capturing migrants and often subjecting them to sadistic torture. Besides that, Kosovo is a popular location for activities of Nazi "humanitarians", from Italian Casa Pound, through French Identitarians, to German Nazis gathered in the European Front of Solidarity. The leader of the last mentioned group is Mike Miller, a renowned neo-Nazi from Dresden and one of the main organizers of the German movement. Miller is a regular participant of Nazi demonstrations across Germany and was also one of the speakers on the summer demonstrations of hardcore Nazis in the Spandau district of Berlin. The "humanitarian" work in the Serbian enclaves of Kosovo aims to achieve a positive perception of such groups in the Serbian public space, as well as to change the common view of fascist groups in their own societies.

Nazis in institutions

However, the cooperation of European fascists with their Serbian fellows is not limited only to the street fascists from the sphere of non-parliamentary politics. "Black international" has succeeded in gaining access to the cultural institutions such as Matica Srpska in Novi Sad. Namely, two seminars were organized in cooperation between the Matica Srpska and ultraconservative politician Mišo Đurković's Institute for European Politics, attended by representatives of "moderate" German Nazism. The first guest was Götz Kubitschek, one of the leading ideologues of the German Identitarians and a frequent speaker at the meetings of the anti-immigrant Pegida movement, while other was Mark Jongen, an official of anti-immigrant, far-right party Alternative for Germany (AFD). This party won 13% of the votes at the last elections and became the third largest political force in the country.

Proof that this is not a coincidence but a result of the worldviews of the current leadership of the oldest Serbian cultural institution was the response of President Dragan Stanić on the statements and protests of numerous non-governmental organizations and anti-fascist groups in Novi Sad.

Specifically, Stanić rejected the request of the Alliance of Anti-Fascists of Vojvodina to hold a lecture titled “Neo-nazism in Vojvodina at the beginning of the 21st century” in Matica after the departure of German extremists. He stated that “this organization did not prove credibility, objectivity and scientific foundations in the analysis of modern ideological and political phenomena.”

Silent support

In the next few days, the current president of Matica had led the debates on this question on the pages of daily newspaper Danas, where he presented the enviable level of cynicism. Allegedly, he was advocating pluralism of political attitudes and opinions and defending the right of AfD and Pegida spokespersons as right-wingers, not Nazis, to present their views within the institution he manages while simultaneously withholding the same right from anti-fascists. To add insult to injury, he continued with the accusation of the critics of the ideological direction in which Matica Srpska is heading, that they are doing the dirty job for “strong power centres”, saying it from the position of the most powerful and most influential cultural institution in Novi Sad, which enjoys state patronage. Of course, any state reaction to the politics of the current leadership of Matica is missing, which can be interpreted as a silent support.

The aforementioned examples of activities of the so-called “black international” in Serbia are only the most striking and most important of its activities in the last two years. The depth of Serbian extreme right-wing connections with its European fellows is impossible to cover in the form of this article. Especially in view of the fact that the very strong links between Serbian and Russian Fascists and nationalists – on which a whole book could be written – are not mentioned. But what has been said is enough to realize that the international neo-fascist movement finds a very fertile ground in Serbia for various aspects of its actions. Particularly worrying is the willingness of individual institutions to open their doors to them.

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P.S.

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https://www.transform-network.net/fileadmin/user_upload/the_new_right_and_the_old_left_online.pdf

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