

Christian Responses to the Far Right



Thinking**Faith**Network

ORIGINS OF THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

- Intellectual Origins: New Right (Bar-On 2001)
- Sociological Origins: Silent Counter-Revolution to Post-Materialism (Ignazi 1992 & 2003)
- Political Origins: Cartelisation of Mainstream Parties (Katz and Mair 1995)
- Economic Origins: Discontents with economic globalisation (Betz 1994)

DEFINING THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

- ‘Terminological Chaos’ → 26 definitions & 58 different features (Mudde 1996 & 2007)
- Some prefer right-wing populist, far right or extreme right.
 - However, the radical right provides ‘a critique of the constitutional order without any anti-democratic behaviour or intention.’ (Carter 2005: 22)
 - In contrast to extreme right, who ‘espouse violence’ and ‘seek the overthrow of liberal democracy.’ (Eatwell 2003: 14)
 - This makes the radical right both more difficult to place and response to.
- Key ideological features: **nativism**, **authoritarianism** and **populism**.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT ACTIVISM

1. Paramilitary Style Organisations
2. Social Movements
3. Political Parties



ELECTORAL SUPPORT FOR THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

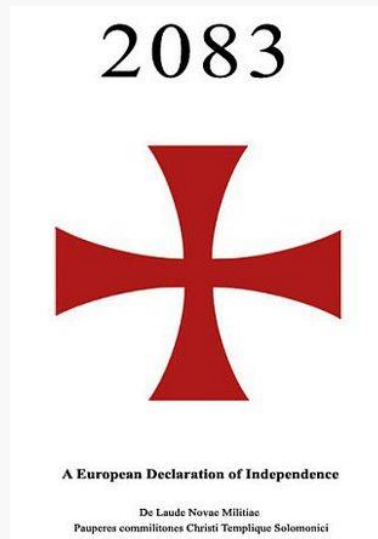
Country	Party Name	% vote in EU Parliamentary Elections	Seats in EU Parliament	% vote in national parliamentary elections	Seats in national parliament	% change
Austria	Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ)	19.72%	4	20.50%	40	+ 5.5%
Belgium	Flemish Interest (VB)	4.26%	1	3.67%	3	- 4.07%
Bulgaria	Ataka (PPA)	2.96%	0	9.07%	27	+ 1.7%
Czech Republic	Worker's Party of Social Justice (DSSS)	0.52%	0	0.2%	0	- 0.66%
Denmark	People's Party (O)	26.5%	4	21.1%	37	+ 8.8%
France	National Front (FN/RN)	24.85%	24	8.75%	8	+ 5.09%
Germany	Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)	7.1%	7	12.6%	94	+ 7.9%
Greece	Golden Dawn (XA)	9.4%	3	6.3%	17	+ 0.7%
Hungary	Jobbik (JMM)	14.67%	3	19.06%	23	- 1.16%
Italy	Northern League (LN)	6.15%	5	17.35%	37	+ 13.9%
Lithuania	Order and Justice (PTT)	14.25%	2	7.63%	11	- 2.08%
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV)	13.3%	4	13.1%	20	+ 3.0%
Poland	Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland (SRP)	0.04%	0	0.03%	0	- 0.04%
Slovakia	Slovak National Party (SNS)	3.61%	0	8.6%	15	+ 4.1%
United Kingdom	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	26.6%	24	1.8%	0	- 10.8%
Average	Radical Right Parties	11.6%	5.4	9.98%	22.13	+ 3.05%

CHRISTIANITY & THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

- Ideology – Clash of Civilisation’s narrative, Eurabia Conspiracy Theory, appeals to emotive issues around tradition.
- Practice – use of Christian iconography, overt Christian rhetoric, and Christian symbols as a way of othering Muslims.
- Support Base – minority of electorate are religious, vaccination effect (Arzheimer and Carter 2009), importance of ‘socio-cultural’ aspects of Christianity (Billiet 1995).

CHRISTIANITY & THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

Case Study I: Anders Breivik



Case Study II: Britain First

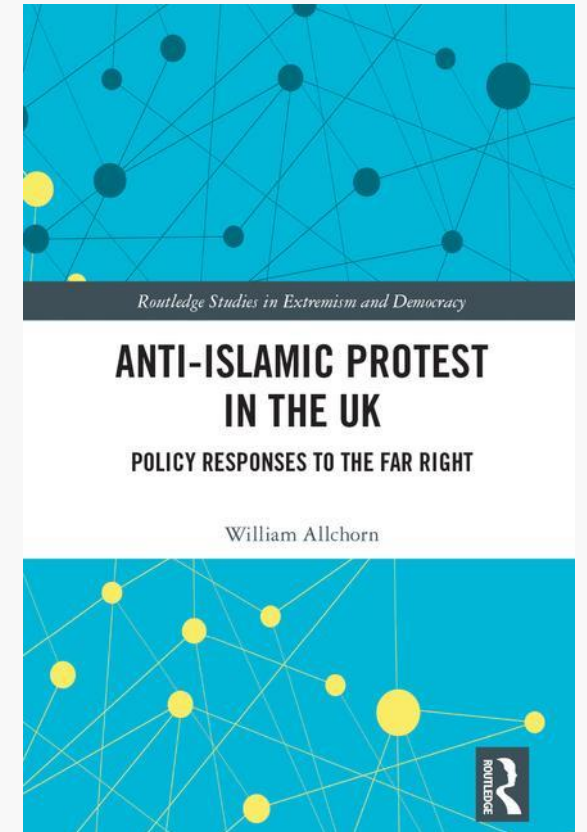


Case Study III: Viktor Orbán



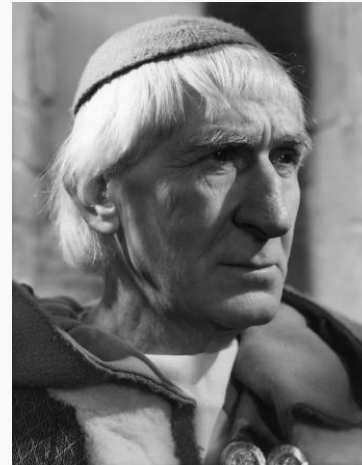
ANTI-ISLAMIC PROTEST IN THE UK

- Anti-Islamic Protest: context, origins and scholarship.
- 5 in-depth case studies – focusing on Birmingham, Bradford, Leicester, Luton and Tower Hamlets.
- 58 semi-structured elite interviews – with politicians, police and behind-the-scenes council officials.
- Findings: responses to anti-Islamic protest have varied – mainly exclusionary but some inclusionary also.
- Argument: inclusion, however, only viable strategy to address far right groups in a sustainable way.



EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN RESPONSES I – TOWER HAMLETS

- 1930s Christian Anti-Fascism in the East End
 - 1936 Battle of Cable Street
- 1990s Christian Anti-Fascism in the Isle of Dogs
 - 1993 Millwall By-Election
- Contemporary Christian Responses in Tower Hamlets
 - English Defence League Protests (2009, 2011 & 2013)
 - Britain First Demonstrations (2014, 2015 & 2016)



Rev. John Grosner



St. Edmund's RCC



Rev. Alan Green

EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN RESPONSES II - LUTON

- Contemporary Christian Responses in Luton
 - English Defence League Protests (2009, 2011, & 2012)
 - Britain First Demonstrations (2014, 2015, & 2016)
 - Emphasis on ‘redefining the centre’ & intercultural relations.



Peter Adams



St Mary's Luton

TOWARDS A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

➤ Broad Approach – Holistic (small 'l' liberal) Christian Anti-Fascism

- Church – debunking & disrupting the 'Christianist' narratives & iconography used by Populist Radical Right groups in their campaigns.
- Churches – engaging in cross-community projects that break down tendencies towards social polarisation and isolationism.
- Christians – avoiding the divisive, identity politics of the populist radical right.



THANKYOU FOR LISTENING...



SELECTED REFERENCES

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