

UNITED Conference

**Choosing Right?
European Conference Against New Right-wing
Extremism**

June 23-27, 2004, in Zittau, Germany

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1 INTRODUCTION

Just before the UNITED Conference the anti-racist movement in Europe was shocked and saddened by the murder of one of its leaders from Russia - Nikolay Girenko. He was a well-known academic and devoted anti-racist and anti-fascist activist living in St. Petersburg. He was especially renowned for his fight against discrimination of foreign students in Russia and was a presenter at a previous UNITED Conference, in St. Petersburg in 2002. On 19 June 2004 unknown assailants armed with guns shot him in his apartment. The conference started with this sad news after which the participants expressed their will to unite and to establish a strong platform to combat racism and fascism with double energy. This UNITED Conference took place soon after the elections to the European Parliament. The citizens of 25 states, including new EU members, had had an opportunity to choose a future political course for their own countries and the EU as a whole. The results showed that extreme-right forces won seats in the European Parliament.

These events show the necessity of a strong movement against racism in Europe today.

The UNITED Conference took place in the beautiful house of Augenauf - Zivilcourage Zeigen, in Zittau. The conference venue was chosen for its friendly, multi-cultural atmosphere, in contrast with certain other areas in East Germany. 65 delegates of anti-racist and human rights organisations from all over Europe took part in the Conference, representing a total of 28 countries. The participants underlined the importance of the discussion on the situation in the "enlarged Europe", the growth of far-right tendencies, especially as regards the attitude towards minorities and migrants. Through various working methods - lectures, discussions, brainstorming, presentations, and exercises - the participants showed their strong interest in the development of anti-discrimination tools. They also shared their experiences in opposing the New Right through education and public campaigns.

The new extreme-right movement all over Europe has several faces. One of them is the New Right, which is not directly related to common neo-Nazi groups, such as skinheads or (neo-)fascist political parties. They do not openly show their admiration for the Third Reich. Choosing another terminology, they focus not on "racism", but on differences and the struggle of "cultures". If somebody calls their ideology antisemitic or Islamo-phobic, they refer to their right to "the freedom of speech and opinion". The New Right brings together mainstream conservatives

and the extreme right-wing movement. Its protagonists see themselves as an elite working on ideological concepts and being able to express controversial ideas.

How can we join our efforts in combating old racism and fascism in the new form of the New Right? The discussion on the New Right was fruitful, participants sharing their valuable experience in fighting the extremists in different countries.

The conference focused on:

1.	Possibilities to share ideas
2.	Connecting people in the struggle against extreme right in Europe
3.	EU policy towards migrants and refugees (Fortress Europe) and its connections to NewRight ideas
4.	Educational methods used in anti-racism/anti-fascism work

2 LECTURES, PRESENTATIONS, DEBATES

The Conference became a unique opportunity to hear the views of outstanding anti-fascists with many years' experience in opposing the far-right.

2.1 Introduction to New Right-wing Populism in Europe

Graeme Atkinson, European editor, international anti-fascist magazine "Searchlight"

Graeme Atkinson's lecture focused on the development of right-wing populism in Europe in the recent years. The conference participants had a chance to receive information about the current status of the right-wing populist parties in Western Europe, their representation in national parliaments, similarities and differences between them. Graeme explained one of the reasons of their popularity today and a reason why it is so difficult to combat them: the right-wing populists have managed to invade and conquer the political space and social base that formerly belonged to the traditional left, especially social-democracy. As the social-democrats have largely abandoned the working class and lower middle class, the populists have attempted to move in and fill the vacuum. In doing this, they attempt to address the fears and worries of "ordinary" people.

In Austria, Italy, Portugal and Switzerland, these parties participate - as junior partners - in right-wing coalition governments. In Denmark and Portugal, right-wing governments are heavily dependent on their support.

The recent electoral support of some of the right-wing populist parties is significant:

Austria	Freedom Party	6,3%
Belgium	Vlaams Blok	11,6%
Denmark	Danish People's Party	6,8%
Italy	Alleanza Nazionale	11,5%
Netherlands	List Pim Fortuyn	2,6%
Norway	Progress Party	expected to get 17%
Portugal	Popular Party	8,75%
Switzerland	Swiss People's Party	28%

The Vlaams Blok (VB) remains a fascist party hiding behind a "populist" strategy. The Freedom Party (FPö) is a populist party with its roots deep in Hitler's NSDAP. The Alleanza Nazionale (AN) is a populist party which still has many fascist aspects (not least a huge chunk of its membership) and is a direct descendant of Mussolini's Fascist Party. The other mentioned parties, in contrast, have their roots within the political mainstream, mainly as disaffected fragments of conservative or liberal parties. For this reason, these parties generally do not have, and actively resist, any cooperation with those parties like VB, the FPö and AN which are rooted in, or have an organic connection with, fascism.

Where the ideas and policies of these parties converge is on two key issues:

1. Immigration/asylum/Islamophobia
2. Law and Order

The populist parties in Denmark, Holland, Norway, Portugal and Switzerland while being right-wing are not fascist or even authoritarian parties, despite their enthusiasm for a hard line on the issues of immigration/asylum and law and the order.

They are generally not ideologically racist even though they are happy to manipulate and instrumentalise so-called 'popular racism'. They are all anti-Muslim but antisemitism - in the VB and FPö - is total taboo.

Leaving those issues to one side, these parties have more in common with right-wing conservatism and ultra-liberalism than with fascism and traditional right-wing extremism. On economic issues and many social issues, they are ultra-liberal, fanatical believers in a totally free market and oppose all forms of state regulation and intervention. They are not totalitarian. Their ideology has no concept of "masses" and is heavily centered on the "individual". They are not violent and, because they see themselves as the real representatives of the mainstream, do not promote the notion of violent change. They are not anti-parliamentary or anti-"democratic".

They are most of all politically opportunist and do not work from clearly defined programs but, instead, gather up "popular" grievances, resentments and concerns like a vacuum cleaner. They seek to capitalize on popular belief and political reality that all the mainstream parties look and smell the same and the fact that voter participation in elections is falling everywhere in Western Europe. As the democratic deficit grows, the voting behavior of those who continue to participate becomes more volatile.

The rise of this kind of populist politics has two key consequences:

1.	They push an already rightwards-moving mainstream political axis still further to the right.
2.	They legitimize and make respectable the racist propaganda of those on the right, namely the fascists and nazis.

Graeme Atkinson stated that the anti-fascist and anti-racist movements will be making a catastrophic error if it confuses right-wing populism in its present manifestation in with fascism and nazism. It is necessary to oppose right-wing populism on its own territory, addressing the political issues of the day.

For more information see: www.searchlightmagazine.com

2.2 Culture? Racist and anti-racist culture and subculture Jan Raabe, Argumente & Kultur gegen Rechts, Germany

In order to fight the extreme-right effectively we need to know a lot about the culture of extreme-right. Jan Raabe presented an overview of the culture of the extreme-right, its historical roots, using audio and visual examples. After the Second World War, fascists started to reorganize themselves, their structures, but at the same time they kept the spirit and the cultural habits of the historical movement. In the post-war years young people preferred to listen to swing or rock music while fascists still listened to military marches. Because of that approach the extreme right largely lost their contact with society. The changes came in the 1960s when in France the extreme-right realised their long-term failure in getting a real power by standing in the elections. Some of them discovered the concepts of the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci who wrote that it is more important to work with minds of people and to get influence in their culture (the 'every-day' culture and not only 'high' culture) than try to win the elections. One of the issues the New Right worked on is "ethnopluralism". By their opinion every "volk" (people) has its own identity, built by history, culture, religion, and race. All 'volks'/different peoples are important, but it is not good to be mixed or to allow migration to other countries, because of the alleged loss of identity. The central idea of this ideology is anti-egalitarianism and anti-universalism.

One of the main points of the New Right is religion. For them the Christian and the Jewish religions are both 'foreign' religions which are not suitable for the Nordic people. By their opinion the basis of these religions is equality and weakness. So, they reanimated a new paganism (or Odinism or heathenism). They followed the historical ideologies developed by ideologists of the German "conservative revolution" who fought against democracy and for nationalism even before the period of National Socialism (e.g. Ernst Jünger, Möller van den Bruck and Oswald Spengler). They also found similar ideologists in other countries, e.g. Gabriele D'Annunzio (Italy), Julius Evola (Italy) Yukio Mishima (Japan). They used those theoreticians who worked and lived before fascism to refresh the old ideologies.

At the same time, a second important, but totally different development started in England/Britain. This is the white power music, which links young people and

the extreme right. The white power movement found in the skinhead-movement a youth culture which it could adopt. Organisations like Blood & Honour and other networks grew up first in England and later in the whole Europe. There are B&H divisions in England, Russia, Greece, Poland, Czech Republic, Spain and other countries. Two more examples. The first is Black Metal. Black Metal is a very extreme kind of heavy metal. It became popular in the early 1980s (eg. through the band Venom). A lot of black-metal fans hate the world and dream about destroying it. One of the main enemies for them is the Christian church. In the beginning it was a clearly provocative promotional (commercial) play on teenage fantasies. In the 1990s a group of young band members in Norway began to realize the fantasies by burning churches and murdering people. The second example is dark-wave. In the beginning of the 1980s it was the dark side of punk. This very intellectual scene is interested in religion, mysticism, the purpose of life and a retrospective view of all things. In the early years it was more left-wing, but later people with right-wing views started to appear on this scene. The first well-known band is Death in June from Great Britain. They were interested in the "left side" of National Socialism and they were fascinated by the heroic pictures of that time. The right-wing dark wavers are not fascinated by Hitler and killing Jews, they are fascinated by aspects of the "real" fascism, like "comradeship", elite, power, leadership, "care and control" myths. They are anti-modern in the sense of being against equality and democracy. In most cases they did not renew old nazi concepts/ideas, they revive the ideas of the people of the so-called "conservative revolution", the same antidemocratic ideologists that the intellectual. Or they take up ideas of people from the early times of international fascism like the Romanian Corneliu Codreanu, the Italians Gabrielle D'Annunzio and Julius Evola.

The complex reality of the cultural roots of the contemporary extreme right needs to be understood by all those who attempt to lay the basis of an alternative antifascist culture.

3. DISCUSSION GROUPS: 'Danger of Words'

At the beginning of the conference the delegates had the possibility to discuss the meaning and definitions of the words that are often used in anti-racist work and are connected with the main topic of the conference - extreme-right (antisemitism, populism, extreme-right, nationalism, security, and globalization). The participants gave different interpretations of the words, but usually were able to reach a consensus. The most heated debates centred around the definition of "antisemitism", which gave a good chance to discuss the related problems in-depth during the next days of the conference. Some participants treated "antisemitism" as a term that is "related to all people of Semitic origin". Fritz Burschel, Netzwerk gegen Rechtsextremismus (D), wrote a widely discussed open letter stating his arguments on the word usage. "Antisemitism is the scientific word for hatred against Jews and only Jews.(...) 'antisemitism' has denoted hatred of Jews, anti-Judaism and - in the historical development and context - anti-Zionism and eliminatory antisemitism of NS-Germany". We should "use the word anti-Arabism, racism or Islamophobia to describe increasing hatred against Muslims and people from Arabic countries" - wrote Fritz.

A common conclusion can be made from all the discussions among the participants that Islamophobia has undoubtedly gained a dreadful dynamics since September 11. The heated debates that happened during the conference have also shown that there is a strong necessity to fight all kinds of racism - both against Jews and Muslims.

More information: *UNITED Information leaflet #13 "The Danger of Words: Definitions of Concepts Most Frequently Used in Anti-racist Work"* available free of charge from the UNITED secretariat

4. MAJOR THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS

The working groups gave participants multiple possibilities: to identify the problem and present a situation in the participants' countries, share action and reaction, and develop possible solutions.

4.1 European Policies and Immigration Laws

Often administration and police have a suspicious attitude towards refugees and asylum seekers. Their administrative status is not constant and all decisions depend on the arbitrary policy of the responsible institutions.

The general policy of the governments is - to prevent migrants from crossing the border or to close them away in detention camps and exclude them from the mainstream society.

The cynical argumentation from the political elites is even that these standards wish to do the best for every individual case - denying the situation that this kind of practice is far from the Geneva Convention. This is the origin of the well-promoted "EU standards" in the framework of immigration laws. These standards are now imported to the 10 new member states and their neighbours (eg. Ukraine and Belarus).

One of the arguments to reject migrants is that they have had an "internal alternative of refuge", which means that there are "other possibilities" in the country of origin to flee.

As a result of all these mentioned points this contradictory policy creates illegality because the legal procedures do not solve the problems of refugees and their hope for a new life in a foreign country.

The participants had a detailed overview of the difficult path of migrants from crossing the border to the final act of expelling them to another country or their land of origin.

It was obvious that the immigration laws and administrative practices in European countries do not differ so much from each other and people face the same problems concerning the inhumane procedures and living conditions of refugees and asylum seekers everywhere. The asylum procedure in the different countries becomes more and more similar and that this can be described as the harmonisation of the asylum policies on a very low level.

The main part of the working group debates was about possibilities to act or to develop campaigns to improve the situation of refugees. A lot of campaigns from

different countries were mentioned and one could learn from these good practices:

- Trainings for journalists, summer schools, multicultural events
- Campaigning to rise awareness of the people
- Monitoring of the access to the asylum procedure or to the country
- Campaigns against deportations and detention
- Campaigns against racist police brutality
- Co-operation with refugee self organisations
- The "No one is illegal" campaign with the "no border camps" and the "deportation .class" (against deportations by airplane) campaign

The participants talked about the basic need for nearly every campaign, which means the collection and the distribution of reliable information, not only on the national level but also on the European-wide level. As an example the Migreurop initiative was mentioned. Its aim is to collect information about refugee camps and detention centres all over Europe and to produce a map with this information.

The participants agreed on the necessity for cross border co-operation and networking, especially for the monitoring of cases of readmission of refugees under the Dublin-II rule and the threat of chain expulsions to the new "safe third countries" and further on to the countries of origin.

4.2 [Legal Aspects of Dealing with the Extreme Right](#)

The group gathered participants from all over Europe, and especially from Eastern Europe, where the law is often violated and minority rights abused (Romania, Belarus, Slovakia, Hungary, etc.) not only by individuals but also by state structures. The group identified problems both common for all countries and specific for a particular country. The discussion also concerned some ethical questions. Thus, for example, how it is possible to find a balance between freedom of speech and political opinion and the Nazi propaganda? Where is the border between freedom of speech and hate speech?

The abusers are usually people who have social problems and are marginalized, they also suffer economical problems, and are usually poorly educated. The victims of abuses are local minority groups (for instance, Caucasians in Russia, Roma in Central and Eastern Europe), foreigners, people who are different from mainstream community.

Sometimes authorities and police are influenced by public opinion, sometimes xenophobia is even higher among the authorities, comparing to the average rate of the particular society. How it is possible to change the attitude of the police and authorities? First of all through personal contacts, training and education. It is necessary to put pressure on the authorities: through media, NGOs, international organizations, domestic courts, legal aid to victims, international human rights courts.

The activities of the extreme-right can be divided into "legal" (e.g. demonstrations, concerts, non-illegal publicity, TV and radio programs, etc) and "illegal" (street violence, destruction of property, nazi propaganda and spreading inter-ethnic hatred, discrimination and segregation).

Which action and reaction can be in response to extreme-right actions?

First, there are national laws (penal codes - ordinary crimes, motivated by nazism, racism and intolerance) which must be applied in that situation. Secondly, provisions against nazi propaganda; provisions against spreading ethnic, racial or religious hatred; anti-discrimination legislation. Thirdly, there also exist international instruments: CERD (Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination), ECRI (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance) of the Council of Europe CoE, EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, international courts - mainly European Court of Human Rights. Solutions: The ultimate solution is to fix the socio-economical problems of the abusing society and educate people. If it is impossible - the legal remedies, alternative punishments, parole sentences can be used.

4.3 [Minorities and Migrants](#)

The main problems faced by minorities and migrants in all European countries could be classified into the following categories: racism, unemployment, ignorance of certain existing laws and procedures, fluidity or non-existence of discrimination laws in certain East and West European countries, uncoordinated communication between some government agencies and UN agencies for refugees, insecurity, lack of education, discrimination, linguistic problems and cultural misunderstanding. It should be mentioned that there are slight differences in concepts and applications of certain principles and terminology on minority and migrant issues in various countries, especially there is a difference in the understanding of this question in Central and Eastern and Western Europe. In Belgium there is a problem of neo-slavery, when many farmers and some industrialists are exploiting and using the precarious and desperate situation of refugees by employing them to work in farms and industries under harsh and inhumane conditions and low pay. The work is not insured and in case of any troubles or default of payment, the migrants just stay silent. Racism was identified as one of the stabling block for a harmonious society. Because of the stringent and racist laws in Belgium, the face of racism has changed from open violence to extreme hypocrisy. The recent landslide victory of the Vlaams Blok is can be a good illustration. Unemployment was identified as one of the major problems faced by the minorities in Belgium. This leads to high crime rate and illegal strategies of survival. Because of this they are socially excluded. A similar situation exists in Finland. Daily racist routines could still be observed in the public spaces and institutions. The situation in the South Caucasus is not so good as well. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were bloody conflicts in the region, and it was a reason for a huge number of refugees. Thus, for example, Georgia is a transit zone for migrants to Western Europe. There are many internal institutional problems in handling the cases of refugees. The refugees from Chechnya face high rates of unemployment and most of them are undocumented. The housing situation is difficult and deplorable leading to a situation of absolute insecurity and instability.

In many countries of Europe (especially Eastern Europe) minority groups suffer from stereotypes and discrimination. Especially it concerns Roma people. They usually do not have access to information when their rights are violated, there exists no access to justice because of ignorance of the law. There is a cultural segregation, which leads to huge and growing Roma ghettos. In Finland the

Roma face the problems of low education, unemployment, drugs and criminality. These factors result from one another, forming a vicious cycle, which pushes the people in a poverty trap. There exists a problem of integration also. A high level of unemployment, which is a result of social disintegration, easily leads to rejection and social exclusion. There is a high prevalence of cultural misunderstanding because of lack of intercultural education at schools. The group also discussed the experience for support of minorities and migrants and different countries, in order to exchange opinions what is useful and can be appropriate for other countries also. There is a problem of society's indifference towards internal problems in general. There is a growing nationalism and hostility against minorities, asylum seekers and migrants. In Belgium, the governmental non-profit organization, the Forum for Ethnic and Cultural Minorities stimulates empowerment and participation of ethnic minorities in economic and socio-political activities of Belgium. The aim of this project is to let the voices of the migrants to be heard and to influence directly on political decisions concerning them. A participant from Germany presented a project called SANKOFA, an empowerment training for minorities against racism. Its main goal is a promotion of minority's perspectives on racism and their need for coping with it.

Which steps should be done to improve the situation with minorities and refugees in Europe? The group discussed several important points:

- Forums or networks should be established for ethnic minorities in every European country;
- Advocacy and lobbying are two major factors in terms of significant support for the ethnic minorities;
- Legislation for minority rights and anti-racism laws, of which implementation, monitoring and sanctions against racist political parties should be regarded as vital. It was mentioned that following the enlargement of the EU, national governments should seek tough sanctions on the extreme nationalistic political movements. Refugee applications should be dealt as fast as possible to recognize the situation whether an asylum-seeker stays or leaves. In addition, there should be termination on so-called 'new slavery' and more possibilities for migrants to have a legal job. There is also a necessity of anti-racism hotlines, free and available for 24 hours.

4.4 **Impact of Slavery**

The group started its work with the audiovisual introduction of the slavery history that has affected the life of 15 millions of Black Africans. What does it mean to have no rights, to be forced to work for, and what does slavery mean today? Slavery's impact and legacy is today's racism and xenophobia.

The word slavery means: owned or controlled by an 'employer', forced to work - through mental or physical threat, treated as commodity or bought and sold as 'property', restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement. Millions of people today are still affected by slavery - in every country of the world. People often become bonded laborers by taking or being tricked into taking a loan. Many people are illegally recruited by individuals, governments or political

parties and forced to work. Millions of children work in exploitative or dangerous conditions.

Migrant women are being forced to work as domestics by employers who withhold their papers, make them work long hours and restrict their liberties. Children, women and also men trafficked end up being forced to work in the sex industry. Trafficking human beings nowadays is a very profitable business. The traffickers prevent their victims from their freedom, controlling them in everything. The group discovered that Black African women faced double discrimination - as they are black and female, forced to keep the 'master' house, white men viewed them as easy sexual pickings, they were considered by them to be very worthy of having children (to continue slavery). The dealing with human beings as resources was a very profitable business for the "masters". Taken from Africa brought to America, trading people, shipping thousands and thousands of people from their homes away into a so called "new world"... Today this trade still exists, in a form of human trafficking, with false promises of a new life, marriage, well paid jobs in a "New World". And that world would be a slave world. It is strongly connected with the past mistreatment of Black African slaves.

The traffickers beat, torture and humiliate their victims in order to achieve their goals. It is necessary to find a way to end this unspeakable crime against humanity for good.

4.5 [Anti-racist Education](#)

The issue of education has been discussed from the perspective of refugees. Education can be considered one of the ways to overcome stereotyping, in general, and the way to fill the lack of information about refugees in particular. It is not only a tool or a way to change something, but a mutual process. The group discussed the phenomena of globalization, which can be considered as one of the factors for increased waves of migrants and refugees in the opinion of some participants. The participants analysed the issue necessity of education more deeply, by discussing different kinds of education.

Formal education - educational program that is approved by ministry of education and other state institutions; this kind of education can also be called as "official"; it is very important as if there was no formal education program in a country, then it would lead to some significant problems; though formal education is very important, as a rule it may face the problem of not objective representation of information, and even can be totalitarian in its methodology. Informal education - this is a form of education that deals more with sharing experiences on different topics (seminars, trainings, workshops); there is no need for these activities to be approved by state administration.

Traditional education and intercultural education - these are absolutely different terms. Some participants associated traditional education with conservative education - but after a short discussion participants came to a conclusion this pattern does not always apply. According to the summarised opinions of participants, intercultural education deals with exchange of knowledge and broadening borders of understanding different cultures and societies that exist within the country and/or behind borders. The answers to questions lead to the importance of reciprocity.

4.6 [Antifascist Research and Action](#)

The group started its work with presentations on the situation in different countries. The situation in Germany after WWII differs from that in other countries. In Germany fascists are rather a "movement" than a party. The extreme-right is still active on the stage. There is a wide range of antidemocratic groups with very different ideologies, various strategies and special forms of organization. In some of them members are very old people, in others - very young. In some organizations members look like managers; in other groups you may think they have just gone out of the Third Reich. There are three significant openly extreme right parties, the DVU (German People's Union), Die Republikaner and the NPD (National Democratic Party of Germany). Besides, there are more than 500 militant groups that organize marches and meetings every weekend. This militant scene is very close to the white power music scene. Germany has the biggest white power music scene in the world. Nearly 180 concerts are organized during the year, some with 1500 or more people in the audience; nearly 100 CDs of German white power bands are produced every year. People from the white power scene and militant Nazi groups have killed nearly 150 persons in the recent years. You can find areas where militant right wing youth is really in power. Other groups are revisionists, revanchists, the New Right, which is a network of intellectual right-wing extremists.

A presentation was made on the Fraternities in Saxony, Germany and their importance for the New Right. Fraternities are elitist, racist and anti-women students' societies most of which are connected with far-right parties. There are approximately 250 fraternity sections in Germany, which makes three thousand members. Fraternities do not admit women, foreigners, homosexuals and handicapped people, because they want to build their own elite. Some of them support revisionist ideas and their goal is to occupy leading positions in a future society.

The antifascist movement in Germany is, however, quite strong (trade unions, local groups) and sometimes it receives support from the state.

Then participants discussed the situation in Moldova, Greece, Russia and Turkey. There exists a problem of Holocaust denial in Moldova, and a big part of historians (some of them teach at the State University) justify the regime of Marshal Ion Antonescu who was responsible for the death of 400,000 Jews between 1942-1944. Their main arguments are based on Antonescu's anti-Soviet feelings and the alleged involvement of almost all Jews in the Red Army.

Newspapers of the Christian-Democratic Popular Party in Moldova support this position and often publish revisionist and xenophobic articles.

In Greece there exists a Nazi group of Golden Dawn that openly admits being a supporter of Hitlerism and an antisemitic party LAOS with one Euro-MP. Golden Dawn is not big in membership, but influential and applies Red/Brown Alliance strategy inspired by the Russian example. The extreme-right in Greece have antisemitism as their basis.

The situation in Russia is very complicated: besides such well-known extremist groups as Russian National Unity, there exist ultra nationalistic parties (e.g. "Motherland", People's Front in Defense of Russian Land, People's Party of Russia) which are very popular with masses. It was proven by the last

parliamentary elections in Russia in 2003, when these parties got many votes. During the campaign they disseminated xenophobic, anti-Caucasian and antisemitic ideas.

The Turkish representative outlined how Turkish nationalism emerged, how in 1960-1970 it actively encouraged anti-democratic violence. Nationalism flared up with the Kurdish question again. The EU ignores the existing problems, which raises the question of the West and negative and prejudiced perception of the 'East'.

The outcome of the discussions was the idea of creating a brochure containing international and national symbols and codes of extreme-right and neo-Nazi subculture. The info leaflet will be based on participants' experience and can be used by antifascist groups in every European country. Teachers, police, prosecutors, etc. are supposed to make use of it in their activities.

5 CAMPAIGN WORKING GROUPS

5.1 European-wide Action Week Against Racism

The International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21st March) was established by the UN General Assembly in 1960 in reaction to the murder of South African anti-apartheid protesters by the police. UNITED co-ordinates an annual anti-racist week on the European level encouraging local activists to fight against all forms of racial discrimination. In the working group the participants discussed tentative topics for the next year anti-racist campaign as well as determined the problems that are common to all European countries. They concluded that, firstly, the next campaign must be more focused on media: journalists often connect the national level of criminal acts with asylum seekers, immigrants and minorities in the country. Secondly, there exists a problem of passiveness that needs to be faced. People prefer to be unaware of racist crimes as long as it does not concern them personally. The campaign should be mainly targeted at the majority and should develop the feeling of responsibility among majority population. Thirdly, the process of empowerment of minorities is very important.

The participants also discussed ideas concerning campaign slogans, which first of all should have a positive message. The slogans proposed are mostly focused on the problem of passiveness.

- Involve Yourself - Act!
- Get Involved!
- React!
- Do Something!
- Unite against Racism!
- Unite! Act!
- We are all the same (pictures of Shadows)
- What Would You Do? (related to a specific situation where someone is harassed, e.g. on the bus)
- Open Your Eyes! (picture of a blind person and a neo-Nazi, with a title "Who's really blind?" or something similar)

5.2 International Day Against Fascism and Antisemitism

Many people consider 9 November a symbolic beginning of the Holocaust. The first large scale Jewish pogrom organized by the Nazis took place on the night of 9 November, 1938. Many Jews were arrested and Jewish shop windows were broken; that is why this night is known as the night of broken glass ("Kristallnacht")

UNITED initiated a European-level campaign on this date involving local groups and meaning both to commemorate six million Jews killed by the Nazis and to fight today against fascism and antisemitism. Antisemitism is still spread in our societies and sometimes transforms into violent actions against the Jewish population, antisemitism in the media, and political statements against Jews. After September 11 2001 this problem got extended.

It was also mentioned that it is important to commemorate the date by taking action against all forms of racism. Since September 11 also an increased number of Muslims has become victims of nazi-skinheads and many people consider them as terrorists.

The working group participants had a profound discussion on what November 9 means for them. E.g. in Romania and Moldova, unfortunately, there is a strong movement of history revisionists, there were even attempts to call the streets by the name of Antonescu. School and university history books ignore the fact of the Holocaust on this territory and there is nothing written in them about the massacre. That is why it is important to distribute more information among the population. At the same time there are many activities annually held in other European countries on this date (Poland, Russia, etc.), but not as many as necessary to prevent modern cruelty.

The participants also proposed that UNITED materials in English be used as an educational tool in English language classes in schools and colleges, especially in Eastern Europe. Young people will learn English and be introduced to the ideas of anti-racism and tolerance at the same time.

5.3 Campaigning in Support of Refugees

The idea of the campaign is based on the new statistics that UNITED prepared on death on the borders of EU - more than 4500 people. The group discussed campaigns at the European and national levels developing effective ways of drawing people's attention to the problems refugees face in their new country. It is necessary to show people the real state and feelings of refugees and do it involving professionals (artists, graphic designers, and journalists) or recruiting prominent figures to support the campaign (politicians, artists, football players, actors). The idea of the campaign is to present e.g. both beautiful pictures of Spanish beaches in the foreground and dead corpses of the refugees in the background. They try to create such associations (as in the "deportation class" campaign - business class, travel class, deportation class) which will disturb the comfort and peace of the public, especially the comfort of politicians who are able to change the existing situation. This can be done by moral argumentation or by using tragedy as an instrument. The tragedy has been always used to sensitize the public - a single mother with her children, a barefoot refugee, etc.

The goal of the refugee campaign is to try and change the public opinion, media attitudes and to lobby politicians or to exercise pressure on them. The timing should be taken into account, because there can be a better response if the elections are to take place soon or an international refugee/anti-discrimination day is approaching. The campaigns need messages, and the group discussed such slogans as "Europe is a fortress. But who wants to live in a fortress?" or "The Dark Side of the Schengen" or "Crossing Borders". One of the results of the conference was a mailing list whose goal is to discuss Fortress Europe and discriminatory policies towards minorities and migrants.

5.4 Ad-hoc Campaigning

This group started by discussing the successful ad-hoc campaigns from the past (demonstrations, concerts, meetings with involvement of celebrities, etc). Then it discussed a practical example with Chechen refugees and an appeal to the Russian government to stop violations of rights and aggressive war (which was later signed by Conference participants). On 21 June 2004 Chechen fighters attacked the law-enforcement bodies and military units of the Russian Federation in Ingushetia for over ten hours and they fled back to their base. The Russian military responded by victimizing the civilian population. The immediate reaction from the participants was a joint letter to the Russian Federation authorities with a strong request to stop acts of cruelty on other human beings committed by the Russian military and government. The group concluded that this kind of action is also quite effective.

5.5 Campaigning for Education against Discrimination

The context of educational activities is important. The danger of new extreme-right movements is very strong in Europe today. The enlargement of the EU and other processes facilitate the spreading of these tendencies.

A major issue is that education against discrimination must be a joint effort of non-governmental organizations, activist groups and governments and a result of their coordinated work. Another thing to be done against discrimination can be universalization of education. Education must be open to everybody. In general people, including migrants and ethnic minorities, do not know their rights and, if they do, they often do not know how to stand up for them. It is necessary to lobby for anti-racist ideas and to include them in textbooks, in school curricula.

6. PRESENTATION OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

6.1 Show Racism the Red Card - Great Britain

This is an anti-racist education campaign, which was started in 1996. Today "Show Racism the Red Card" is a wide network of organizations and individuals including football managers, teachers, the police, famous football players, and youth clubs. It has inspired campaigns abroad and the campaign video has been translated into many languages. The "Show Racism the Red Card" video is one of the best resources promoting the discussion of racism in a simple way - famous

football players speak about racism openly. The video is accompanied by a package of education material, which stimulates discussion.
More information: www.theredcard.org; www.farenet.org(European campaign)

6.2 Tolerant Saxony - Network Against Racism and Antisemitism, Germany

The project aims to reach local anti-fascist and anti-racist groups and associations in Saxony, bringing together projects for youth and culture, social-cultural projects, and associations for political education

The network www.tolerantes-sachsen.de is a platform of local initiatives and associations, working concretely and practically against right-wing-extremism, racism and antisemitism in its many forms. The network supports the development of a democratic and tolerant culture in Saxony.

More information: www.tolerantes-sachsen.de

6.3 Assistance for Parents of Extreme-right Youngsters - Arbeitsstelle gegen Rechtsextremismus und Gewalt, Germany

The main idea of this already long-term project is a creation of an offer of help for parents' who children are extreme-right. The project includes work with the teachers, sisters and brothers of neo-nazis and youngsters themselves. The methods of work include non-formal education (case-specific research, individual consultancy, training groups, crisis intervention, passing on to their instances, (self)help groups). 50 per cent of the cases were successful. The project outcomes are: assessment of a specific scene, minimization of peer pressure, supply with info material, get to know offers for dealing with your own children, installation of a regional network of multipliers. There are such possibilities for contact as a hot-line+49-531-12333634 and stationary contact address (see list of participants).

7 POLITICAL CAFE

The political cafe started with an introduction of main topic "child labour (slavery)". A moving video was shown, which encouraged the participants to discuss further the meaning of capitalism and communism. Then the discussion turned to the situation of women in Belgium (especially with migrant or refugee background), whose rights are violated by men.

8 OPEN FORUM: Chechnya on top of the agenda

The situation with human rights and freedom of speech is getting worse in Russia. The situation in Chechnya was presented for the whole group and the conference participants signed the appeal to the Russian government in support of refugees, and expressed their ideas on possible resolution of current problems there. The presentation was conducted by a representative of the Society for Russian-Chechen Friendship.

Information about the European Social Forum in London was distributed, too. The participants were introduced to results of the previous forums and to the Declaration of the Berlin Preparatory meeting which had taken place before the UNITED Conference. The Declaration states that it is necessary to discuss in the framework of the European Social Forum the so-called "Constitution for Europe", which is profoundly undemocratic. It is necessary to speak about the bases and principles of a real democratic constitution.

9 SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Social events at the conference included an info market, intercultural snacks and a very successful intercultural evening.

Every day the participants could contribute to a daily conference newspaper edited by Yosef Haimanot from "Show Racism the Red Card". The newspaper included brief reports from the working groups, interesting funny stories from Florant Schaeffer (hCa), participants' opinions about the conference. Participants had a chance to play a football game during the conference ("Move your legs instead of brains"). Many took part in a visit to a local progressive project comprising a library and a social-cultural centre.

10 FEEDBACK

· Graeme Atkinson - European editor Searchlight magazine:

As a speaker who has had the great honour of making presentations at three UNITED conferences (and I hope to attend more!), I would like to offer a few comments on the conference.

Firstly, I think everyone associated with the mammoth job of organising the event right down to the smallest detail deserves a medal. Secondly, there must be special thanks for all the comrades in Sachsen and at the Meeting centrum who worked so hard to make our stay so comfortable and enjoyable. Thirdly, it was very pleasing to see the high level of political understanding and awareness shown by the delegates, many of whom had traveled considerable distances to take part.

The discussions, both plenary and in the working groups were overwhelmingly good and I sensed that delegates went home all the richer in ideas for positive and constructive activity. I also feel that their sense of the threat posed by racism, fascism and nationalism was much increased. If that enhanced understanding can be translated into concrete day-to-day activity, then I feel we can grasp some grains of optimism.

A positive feature of all UNITED events is the way they bring people together socially as well as politically to break down national barriers. This conference was no exception and it was great to see the way people "gelled" together and made friendships whether at the garden grill, over drinks and meals in the courtyard, at the international social evenings or just watching the Euro 2004 football on the wonderfully improvised big screen. We have much to thank UNITED for.

· *Caroline Noel - Universal Embassy, Belgium:*

The most important thing for me was an opportunity to meet people and find new partners. We have been already started working for the European campaign against "Fortress Europe". I also was very happy to share the experience of my organization - Universal embassy, and to see the encouraging reactions from other participants. This was very important for the undocumented people living in the house! The organization was very good, and the house was nice and comfortable.

· *Anastasia Nikitina - Youth Human Rights Movement, Russia:*

It was my first UNITED conference despite the fact that my organization has been UNITED member for four years already. I learnt a lot about the international context of Antifa work, new trends, threats and found the potential partners. It helped me also to understand the situation in Russia better. I have already started e-mail correspondence with some participants. So I can confirm that UNITED unites us.

The level of organization and experts of this conference astonished me.

My organization is really looking forward to developing UNITED among Russian-speaking people.

· *Harald Glöde - Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration, Germany:*

Thanks to the UNITED conference I have got the feeling that a lot of people from different countries and with very different backgrounds were engaged in fighting against the restrictive and inhumane European asylum policies and that we have had a very good atmosphere debating various examples of actions and campaigns. We create a basis for closer co-operation and for the planning of common actions.

I think it is not necessary to express more in detail how important this cross border co-operation will be in view of the thousands of deaths at the European borders and in view of the unscrupulous dealing of the German and Italian authorities with the case of the Cap Anamur*.

I hope that we will widen this initiative and we will carry out some good common actions.

* A ship which saved the lives of 37 refugees, who were in very great danger of drowning in the Mediterranean Sea, and afterwards was not allowed to bring them to the next harbour in Sicily. The captain of the ship and two other persons were imprisoned because of "help for illegal entry to Italy".

11 THANKS TO

This Conference was enhanced by lively discussions and inputs from the participants. Thank you to all who devoted their time, energy and enthusiasm to make it possible!

The Conference was prepared by: Anti-Nazi Group (PL), Antidiskriminierungnetzwerk (D), Türkischen Bundes (D), Associazione Rieti Immigranti - Provincia (I), ASLIR / FTMB (RO), Kulturbüro Sachsen (D), Netzwerk gegen Rechtsextremismus (D), Never Again Association (PL), People

Against Racism (SK), Show Racism the Red Card (Wales), UNITED for Intercultural Action.

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12 UNITED for Intercultural Action

UNITED for Intercultural Action

European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees

Racism, nationalism, fascism, discrimination, asylum policies... all of them have a European dimension even though they often look like pure national issues. Reports from all over Europe demonstrate the increasing dangers facing migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities. Often these dangers are increased by undemocratic intergovernmental decisions like the Schengen Treaty. Strangely enough, racist and fascist organisations have strong European links from Portugal to Russia, from Sweden to Italy. Fortress Europe needs to be fought at local, regional and European levels - it cannot be fought on one level alone.

Linked through UNITED, hundreds of organisations from a wide variety of backgrounds, from all European countries, work together on a voluntary basis. They base their cooperation on common actions and shared activities on a mutual respect.

UNITED is and will remain independent from all political parties, organisations and states, but seeks an active co-operation with other anti-racist initiatives in Europe.

Through the UNITED network organisations meet each other, work on common actions and share information. Europe-wide action weeks, campaigns and such are planned and discussed on UNITED conferences. Like-minded organisations find each other on such conferences and work together on specific projects on specific topics. The workers in the secretariat are in constant contact with the network organisations, ensuring that information and proposals for action are transmitted rapidly. Information is received from more than 2300 organisations and mailings are sent out to about 2500 groups in Europe.

If you want to get involved... Discuss the ideas and aims of the UNITED network within your organisation. Let us know that you would like to join or receive information. And add us to your mailing list!

More information you can find at www.unitedagainstracism.org or write to info@unitedagainstracism.org

Report prepared by Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (MD)

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