

# The ‘hipster fascists’ who anti-racism campaigners say are breathing new life into the far right

Forget bomber jackets and beer bellies, Britain’s far right is rebranding with skinny jeans, trainers and honeyed words

A 23-year-old City banker leads a movement of young “hipster fascists”, which is “breathing new life” into the British far-right, according to anti-racism campaigners. Middle class and well-spoken, dressed in skinny jeans and New Balance trainers rather than bomber jackets and boots, members of Generation Identity (GI) are accused of using slick branding and coded language to “normalise” extremist views.

GI’s new British co-leader, Tom Dupré, is the son of an insurance broker from Sevenoaks, Kent. Educated at the Judd School and Bristol University, where he studied psychology, he works in the City for Standard Chartered.

The group is part of a 13-nation European GI movement with significant numbers in France, Germany, Austria and elsewhere. Last month two senior GI figures, Martin Sellner from Austria and Abel Bodi from Hungary, were detained and deported as they tried to enter Britain for the group’s first UK conference.

At least two other non-British GI figures have also been excluded from the UK. Jacob Aasland Ravndal, of the Centre for Research on Extremism at Oslo University, said action by the British authorities against GI had “really stepped up in recent months”.

GI UK claims to “explicitly denounce racism and racist language”. However, it campaigns to preserve “our ethnocultural identity” against what it calls the “great replacement” of white people with black and minority ethnic people in Britain’s cities. Posters in Manchester last week said that “each new census heralds the end of England and the English . . . by 2061, we will be nothing more than a footnote in history books”.

GI calls for what it describes as “remigration” of black and minority ethnic people and for “ethnopluralism”, which is defined by the anti-racist group Hope not Hate as “essentially racial separatism by another name”.

It demands the “reconquista” of Europe, using the Spanish term for reconquest, which describes how non-Christians were expelled or converted when Christian forces took over Muslim-ruled parts of Spain in the 15th century. The group uses the lambda, the Greek letter symbolising the militaristic republic of Sparta, as its logo.

Joe Mulhall, a Hope not Hate researcher, said: “The European network as a whole is deeply, deeply troubling and GI are clearly the most active far-right group in the UK. Whilst the numbers [in Britain] are small, they are young, and it’s also in a sense about the quality of them. The older traditional lot are seeing them breathe new life into the movement. We haven’t seen someone like

[Dupré] in a while . . . a young, articulate, normal-looking far-right activist who works at a bank like Standard Chartered.”

Mulhall said GI was an “image-conscious far-right movement that thinks very carefully about how it looks to the outside world” but its ideas were “much more extreme than people think and more extreme than groups like the English Defence League”. Other anti-fascist groups call them “Nazi hipsters”, but they strongly deny sympathy for Nazism or violence.

In his speech at the conference, Dupré said: “I don’t think anything we’ve said thus far is particularly controversial . . . There is clearly a real fear that if these kinds of ideas are expressed well, as they were in the past by someone like Enoch Powell, they’re a danger or a menace to the civil society we live in now. I don’t think this is fair.”

In a video interview with Sellner, Dupré said he aimed to link up with “sympathetic” individuals within political parties to “take out of the shadows some of these ideas [about] the great replacement. It’s vital that you get normal people, respectable people, confronting this publicly and not privately. Just to normalise that would have a fairly seismic effect.” Dupré claimed to disavow racism but said: “Everyone’s told to believe people are equal. But the whole way people live their lives proves that’s not true.”

He added: “Demographically [Britain] is not quite as bad as say the US, but it’s extremely advanced. London is majority non-white, majority non-European . . . The centre, the absolute core, of London still seems like a European city. If you walk round the City, you wouldn’t get what the problem is. And then you have this doughnut, moving outwards.”

Asked by The Sunday Times whether a black person or a Muslim could be a European, he said only “small numbers” would qualify. Asked whether the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, was a European, he said: “My impression of Sadiq Khan is no, he’s not European.” Dupré said “remigration” did not mean mass repatriation but could include closing radical mosques to encourage their worshippers to leave. He said he was “centre-right”, not far-right. His father, Marius, is Dutch.

GI is still small in the UK, but movements in France, Italy, Germany, Austria and parts of eastern Europe boast thousands of members and an extensive infrastructure including branded bars and gyms. They and allies have mounted missions to “defend Europe” from refugees, using a ship in the Mediterranean and conducting “patrols” of the French border in the Alps.

Standard Chartered said: “We are currently investigating an allegation made against one of our employees and dealing with this matter accordingly. We strongly believe it’s our diversity that sets us apart and we possess an inclusive culture where equality is promoted.”

## **THE OLDER FACE OF THE FAR RIGHT**

### **British National Party**

In 2010 the BNP had two MEPs and 55 local councillors, and won more than half a million votes at the general election. Within months, plagued by infighting and its soft support leaching to Ukip, it started to disintegrate. It polled fewer than 2,000 votes at the 2015 general election and this month lost its final councillor.

### **English Defence League**

A street protest group whose demonstrations sometimes descended into violence, it has now largely collapsed. But its former leader, “Tommy Robinson”, appears to have built links with Generation Identity (GI), delivering a speech written by GI’s Martin Sellner in London in March. Robinson (real name Stephen Yaxley-Lennon) could bring a significant following to GI, but may not be in keeping with the smoother image the group is trying to project.

### **Britain First**

Far-right political party that has unsuccessfully contested a number of elections and has now been deregistered by the Electoral Commission. Its leader and deputy, Paul Golding and Jayda Fransen, were jailed in March for religiously aggravated harassment.

### **Andrew Gilligan**

May 20 2018, 12:01am, The Sunday Times

