



Anti-Establishment Movement

Coronavirus Pandemic Edition



Introduction

As the Coronavirus pandemic progressed, governments internationally implemented various measures to attempt to curb the spread among their citizens. As is typical for times of crisis and economic instability, societal polarisation and distrust in governments and media has been increasing.

Across Europe, strong anti-establishment sentiments have been expressed in several major cities. While the protests have in part emanated from legitimate concerns by affected members of the population – such as restaurant owners, entertainment workers, and people in the tourism industry – they have become overshadowed by members of the XRW (extreme right wing), with conspiracy myths and antisemitism in particular abounding.ⁱ

The movement initially started with:

- protests against lockdown measures and fears about negative consequences;
- fake news and disinformation surrounding claims that the danger from the virus was grossly exaggerated; and
- conspiracy myths.

The movement encourages distrust in government and calls for leading politicians to leave office, blaming them for restrictions and claiming that they are complicit in the implementation of the supposed New World Order (NWO) – an imagined secretly emerging totalitarian one-world government. Since the early moments of the movement, it has grown to include large-scale and often violent protests, gaining momentum across Europe but particularly in Germany and Austria.ⁱⁱ It also encourages violent protest and frames violence as an acceptable measure in the struggle for freedom from what they consider to be authoritarian rule.

This report provides an overview of the rise, spread, and continued appeal of the anti-establishment movement, the organisations and individuals associated with it, as well as its increasingly antisemitic undertones/aspects.

Note: While the anti-establishment movement has gained momentum internationally and across Europe, it does not generally present itself under a uniform name or official umbrella organisation. However, in Germany, protests are often organised by “Querdenken” (lateral thinking) and supporters refer to themselves as “Querdenker” (lateral thinkers). Supporters of the movements often believe in a variety of conspiracy myths and thus consider themselves to be better informed about the perceived reality and believed nefarious intent of political actors.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ideology

While some of its supporters' concerns stem from legitimate fears surrounding loss of livelihoods and psychological effects arising from restrictions, a core tenet of the movement is the belief that a secret group is behind the state, controlling politicians, health care, and the media.

The anti-establishment movement claims that this supposed secret organisation is currently implementing a plan to replace democratic society with an authoritarian state.^{iv} It should be noted that several of the XRW actors involved in the protests themselves revere and glorify the Nazi regime and fascist ideologies. Nevertheless, a common theme of the movement includes trivialization of the Nazi regime and the Holocaust. Supporters wear yellow stars marked "unvaccinated" and make statements such as "the old enemy was the Jew; the new enemy is the virus" or "once people were accused for not doing the Hitler salute; today they are criticised for not wearing the mask properly."^v

According to a spokesman for the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz), "Extremist actors seem to have managed to spread their anti-constitutional messages to large parts of the non-extremist protesters through Querdenken."^{vi}

Conspiracy Myths

The belief in various conspiracy myths has increased drastically during the Coronavirus pandemic and often includes strongly antisemitic origins and influences.^{vii} Supporters of the movement believe in a wide amalgamation of often antisemitic conspiracy myths;^{viii} however, those most central to the movement include the belief in a secret society, the so-called New World Order (NWO), meddling in world affairs for personal gain and world domination, a conspiracy myth often associated with the Protocols of the Elders of Zion – an antisemitic fabrication from the 19th century. The NWO myth, often referred to as the "quintessential" conspiracy myth, suggests that a secret cabal is working to establish an international and totalitarian one-world government^{ix} that seeks to enslave and eradicate humanity.



The myth combines antisemitism with other beliefs and the supposed evildoers are generally assumed to be Jews, although popular stand-ins include shape-shifting lizards, aliens, the Illuminati, Freemasons, the Rothschild family, George Soros, and Bill Gates, to name just a few. ^x

Fake News

False and misleading information about the Coronavirus and surrounding phenomena, including masks, tests, and vaccines, abound.

Repeated claims include (but are not limited to):

- The virus is not dangerous / the virus does not exist.
- The virus is man-made.
- The pandemic was orchestrated to instate the New World Order.
- Restrictions are an attempt at enslavement.
- Coronavirus testing is dangerous.
- Coronavirus testing is inaccurate.
- Masks are dangerous.
- Vaccines are a threat.
- Vaccines are a method of population control.

These claims aim to and often succeed at creating increased feelings of insecurity and fear among the general population, destabilising trust in the government, and encouraging further support for the movement.



Protests

The protests initially started in April 2020, following the first lockdown and introduction of restrictions to curb the spread of the Coronavirus. Critics of the measures said that the restrictions on civil rights went too far.^{xi} While antisemitic imagery and trivialization of the Holocaust were evident even at early protests, participation levels were low initially. The demonstrations in Berlin were initiated by a left-wing organisation opposing the infringement on German basic law (Grundgesetz) but were soon co-opted by conspiracy ideologues. The appeal and popularity of such protests increased drastically as the pandemic progressed, with XRW individuals and organizers quickly identifying the potential for recruitment and lending their support to the movement.

In May 2020, Michael Brück, prominent antisemite and leader of the German neo-Nazi party “die Rechte,” published an op-ed^{xii} in which he called on members of the XRW to support the anti-government protests regardless of whether or not they actually believed the conspiracy myths surrounding them. He further suggested that the XRW should use this opportunity to make connections and recruit followers to their own movement, emphasizing the importance of not taking a leading role but rather encouraging and supporting others. As this report will show, Brück’s advice appears to have been followed, with neo-Nazi participation in the protests becoming normalised.

Protests initially took place across Europe and in several cities in Austria, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, and the UK from April–June 2020. The movement became particularly powerful in Austria and Germany.^{xiii} Protests have also been seen across Europe in the Bulgaria, France, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland, and the UK various local factors affect the rhetoric, strong anti-government sentiments and misinformation associated with a denial of the pandemic fuel the protests all over.^{xiv}

While the protests initially targeted specific restrictions, they soon escalated to encompass a more general anti-establishment sentiment. In Austria, one common slogan for the movement is “*Kurz muss weg*” ([Chancellor Sebastian] Kurz must go).

Violence

As the pandemic progressed with increasingly harsh restrictions and repeated lockdowns being announced, the anti-establishment movement continued to gain support.

Violence against the press became a regular occurrence at the demonstrations. The European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) reported at least 70 attacks against journalists on duty in 2020, with 71% of the attacks taking place at these demonstrations.^{xv}

Berlin, 30 August 2020: Approximately 40,000 people took part in one of the largest demonstrations in Berlin. Among the protesters were far-right extremists, neo-Nazis, QAnon supporters, and members of the general public. A group consisting of approximately 400 XRW protesters attempted to storm the Reichstag building.^{xvi}

Vienna, 06 March 2021: Police attempted to encircle and identify several of the protesters, who tried to escape by storming a building belonging to an insurance company, severely injuring a security guard stationed at the entrance. He was hospitalised with serious injuries including a broken leg.^{xvii}

Austria, May 2021: The police arrested a group plotting an attack during the protest on 15 May 2021. Members communicated via encrypted messaging app Telegram, where they discussed how to buy weapons and build explosives and firebombs. Police recovered a collection of weapons and ammunition hoarded for the planned attack.^{xviii}

Antisemitism and XRW influence

The anti-establishment demonstrations exert strong and growing influence on the XRW. Antisemitism within the movement is strong, with protesters simultaneously blaming Jews for the negative effects of the pandemic and comparing themselves with members of the resistance during the Third Reich or claiming that their rights are being curtailed and they are being treated much the same as Jews were treated during the Nazi regime.^{xix} Protesters often wear yellow stars or draw parallels between themselves and historical figures such as Anne Frank or Sophie Scholl and between government restrictive measures and the NSDAP/Gestapo methods. This can be attributed not only to a paucity of factual knowledge about the Holocaust and its horrors, but also to a planned trivialization and watering down of the rhetoric by far-right activists.^{xx}



Erinnert mich stark an die NSDAP 🙄😬 Gestapo...wie auch immer.....
Die ganze Zeit jetzt erinnert mich immer mehr an die Zeit als Menschen in Gruppen selektiert wurden. damals in arisch und nicht arisch, Arbeitsfähig oder Gaskammer!
heute in System relevant und nicht System relevant! Getestet und nicht getestet.....

Gesunde werden "gezwungen" einen Test zu machen um zu beweisen, dass man gesund ist! In gewissen Berufsgruppen hast schon den Impfwang durch die Hintertür.....

Einfach nur mehr Wahnsinn.....vor allem wenn man in etwa eine Ahnung hat von der Mithilfe der Ärzte beim Holocaust.....

Mir schaudert 🤢😬

19:36

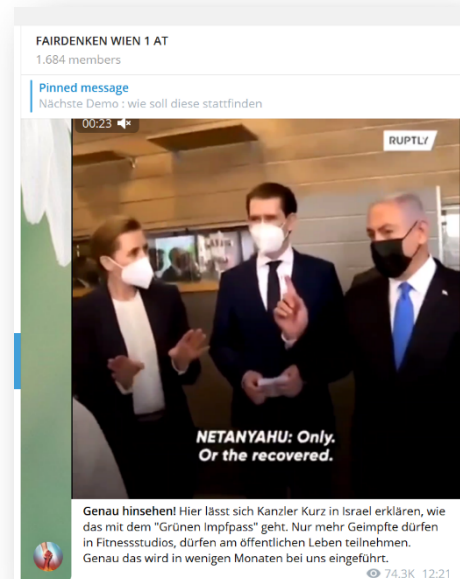
Demonstrations organised by the Querdenken movement in Germany have seen the active participation of leading neo-Nazis and XRW activists, including members and candidates from the neo-Nazi parties NPD, der Dritte Weg, and die Rechte.^{xxi} Banned flags and symbols used by neo-Nazis are often seen amidst other antisemitic imagery.

In Austria, well-known neo-Nazi leader Gottfried Küssel, who was released from prison in 2019 where he had been serving a nine-year sentence for his involvement in launching a neo-Nazi website,^{xxii} has been seen taking an active part in the demonstrations, with members of his social circle joining the demonstrations after not having been seen in public for several years.^{xxiii}

In August 2020, a video emerged showing Christina Kohl, a candidate of the newly formed far-right party “Team HC Strache” leading one of the protests with chants of “(Chancellor) Kurz must go,” “Rothschild must go,” and “Soros must go.”^{xxiv}

At a demonstration organised by the FPÖ (Freedom Party in Austria) in March 2021, Herbert Kickl gave a speech in which he incited the protesters against Israel, criticizing the government’s vaccine strategy and “green passports” as a form of “vaccine-apartheid” separating vaccinated citizens from unvaccinated ones, thus creating an unequal society.^{xxv} The demonstration later became violent.^{xxvi}

Switzerland has also seen a sharp increase in antisemitism, with antisemitic symbols and statements regularly being used by anti-government protesters.^{xxvii}



Social Media

Social media giants have attempted to curb the spread of conspiracy myths and fake news that drive the movement. Several influential figures, including conspiracy ideologue and vegan chef Attila Hildmann (Instagram) and the major Q-Anon channel Qlobal Change (Youtube), experienced de-platforming on mainstream platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Proponents of the movement use alternative platforms, especially Telegram, to promote their content, organise protests, and spread fake news and conspiracy myths.

Telegram

Telegram has become one of the major channels of communication for protesters. As Telegram, unlike the larger mainstream platforms, seldom chooses to modify or delete content, extremists spreading fake news and conspiracy myths abound. Popular channels often have more than 100,000 subscribers, and it should be noted that content from Telegram is often also circulated offline, thus recruiting more users to the movement's echo chambers.^{xxviii}

The content posted and shared by anti-establishment supporters on Telegram is well coordinated and effective in its goal of recruiting, promoting, and radicalizing for the anti-establishment movement.

An important actor in this coordination is Frank Schreibmüller, alias Frank der Reisende (Frank the Traveller).

Frank Schreibmüller alias Frank der Reisende (Frank the Traveller)

Frank Schreibmüller is a far-right activist and IT technician who is the administrator of at least 4,000 Telegram channels and groups associated with the movement. He first emerged in the ranks of the so-called "Reichsbürger Bewegung" or "Citizens of the Reich movement" – a movement that rejects the authority of the current German state, maintaining instead that the Third Reich is still intact.^{xxix} Later,

Schreibmüller was seen on the front lines of anti-refugee demonstrations organised by the neo-Nazi party "der Dritte Weg" in Germany. He has now emerged as a strong supporter of the anti-establishment movement, spreading fake news, conspiracy myths, and Holocaust denial. He participates in numerous demonstrations and has been identified at anti-establishment marches in both Germany and Austria.^{xxx}



Promotion

Supporters of the movement range from regular citizens to QAnon believers, general believers in various conspiracy myths, far-right and populist politicians, and members of the XRW, including well-known neo-Nazis and individuals associated with the sovereignty movement (Staatsverweigerer or Reichsbürger) who reject the state's authority, often claiming that the Third Reich never ended.^{xxxix} Although the movement is interconnected internationally, there is no strict hierarchy or detailed organisational structure. The protesters are not a homogenous or unified group, and do not all support the same aims and goals.^{xxxix}

Several terms such as “Querdenker” (lateral thinkers), “Corona Rebellen” (Corona rebels), or “Corona Widerstand” (Corona resistance) are often used interchangeably by both the media and supporters.

Groups

Some of the early demonstrations in protest of the infringement on civil rights were organised by left-wing groups such as KDW and referred to as “hygiene demonstrations” due to the two-metre distance required between protesters. However, very quickly, a variety of organizations and key figures have arisen amidst the protests. It is important to note that while many of the demonstrations were registered by individuals, the main mobilization was often carried out by specific organisations and individuals mentioned below. It should also be noted that the organizations mentioned do not have a rigid structure and official membership is not required, with supporters often interacting with one another online. Below is a description of a selection of the main groups involved in the promotion and organisation of the protests:

- Corona Rebellen (Corona Rebels)
- Querdenken (Lateral thinking)
- Corona Widerstand (Corona Resistance)
- Corona Querfront (Corona lateral front)
- Honk for Hope
- Fairdenken (Fair thinking)

Corona Rebellen (Corona Rebels)

Supporters of the anti-establishment movement often refer to themselves as “Corona Rebels.”^{xxxiii} They refuse to adhere to the restrictions imposed by the government and often perceive themselves as freedom fighters.

They use social media, especially Telegram, to plan and organise activities, and share fake news and conspiracy myths. Groups exist both locally and regionally, with users across the DACH region sharing information online.

The so-called Corona Rebels often downplay the horrors of the Shoah. Supporters wear yellow stars, refer to themselves as “the new Jews,” use language associated with the Holocaust, or compare vaccinations to mass murder in concentration camps.^{xxxiv}



Querdenken (Lateral Thinking)

Querdenken or “lateral thinking” is an organization that refers to itself as an “initiative” rather than a party or association. It started in Stuttgart in April 2020 and is often referred to as Querdenken 711 – the 711 referring to Stuttgart’s area code. Querdenken has several regional offshoots across Germany.^{xxxv}

Querdenken also had a regional offshoot in Austria led by Hannes Brejcha. However, following an incident in September 2020, in which two activists (Jennifer Klauninger and Martin Rutter) destroyed a rainbow flag claiming it was a symbol of paedophilia, leading to criticism from the less extreme members of the group, Hannes Brejcha formed a new group called Fairdenken.^{xxxvi}

The group is under observation by the Office of the Protection of the Constitution across Germany^{xxxvii} for “activities delegitimizing the state.”^{xxxviii}

Michael Ballweg

Michael Ballweg is the main spokesperson of the Querdenken movement. He has been accused of misusing funds acquired through donations and other forms of income associated with the movement for personal gain.^{xxxix}



Fairdenken

Fairdenken is an offshoot of Querdenken that was founded following public criticism of Querdenken in Austria in autumn 2020.

Hannes Brejcha

Hannes Brejcha has been involved in the organization of anti-establishment protests in Austria since the early days of the movement. He is a known far-right activist who supported Jörg Haider (a deceased far-right politician) and has been seen consorting with neo-Nazis such as Gottfried Küssel during demonstrations. Moreover, he is a conspiracy ideologue.^{xi}



Corona Widerstand (Corona Resistance)

Corona Resistance is an organization structured around Austrian ex-politician Martin Rutter. Similar to Querdenken in Germany, it has several local offshoots and organizes demonstrations across Austria.

Martin Rutter

Martin Rutter is an ex-politician and Austrian activist. He is a proponent of conspiracy myths and one of the main organizers of the anti-establishment demonstrations related to Corona. He has emerged as one of the most high-profile faces at these demonstrations and has a vast following.

In the past, Martin Rutter attracted attention due to his extreme-right-wing (XRW) and antisemitic views. In 2017 he gave a speech at the far-right “Ulrichsberg Meeting” in Carinthia. This resulted in his expulsion from the Team Kärnten political party for which he was a member of the state parliament. In 2018 Martin Rutter posted a comment (since deleted) on the Facebook page of Johann Gudenus, a far-right Austrian politician, in which he praised Gudenus for his anti-Soros campaign.

Corona Querfront (Corona lateral front)

The Corona lateral front is a sub-section of the group that is particularly associated with neo-Nazis and so-called “sovereignists” who reject the contemporary German state, claiming that it has no authority, as the Third Reich never ended (Staatsverweigerer/Reichsbürger).^{xii}

The term Querfront was used by far-right extremists during the Weimar Republic to denote their attempts at forming alliances with far-left extremists.^{xiii} In this case it likely refers to their alliances with supporters of conspiracy myths.

One of those identified as a member of the Corona lateral front is known neo-Nazi and Holocaust denier Gottfried Küssel, who has been seen leading the demonstrations on some occasions. The lateral front also connects the German and Austrian neo-Nazi scenes, with activists from the German neo-Nazi party the Third Path (der Dritte Weg) seen at demonstrations in Vienna.^{xliii}

Gottfried Küssel

Gottfried Küssel is a self-identified neo-Nazi and Holocaust denier. He is known as a rallying point and leader of the XRW scene in the region. He has served sentences for Holocaust denial, owning illegal weapons, and involvement in the website Alpen Donau Info, which published propaganda against those considered enemies, including the then-president of the Jewish community, Ariel Muzicant.^{xliiv} He was released from prison in 2019 and was not publicly active until his involvement in anti-establishment demonstrations. Küssel has a long history of activism and leadership in the neo-Nazi scene of Austria and Germany, including the recruitment of fighters for the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s.^{xliv}

Honk for Hope

Honk for Hope is an initiative allegedly aimed at protesting the effects of restrictions on the coach travel industry. Honk for Hope has organised demonstrations and motorcoach rallies across Europe. The organization strongly supports the anti-establishment movement and arranges travel between demonstrations.^{xlvi}

Alexander Ehrlich

Alexander Ehrlich, an Austrian tour operator with offices across Europe, is the main speaker of the initiative and organizer of several demonstrations and rallies. He supports the Querdenken and Corona Widerstand groups, using the buses to enable protesters to travel between demonstrations. This has been referred to as “demo-tourism.”^{xlvii}

On 14 May 2021 Ehrlich was charged with violating the “Verbotsgesetz” after playing a Hitler speech at an event he organised on the outskirts of the Mauthausen Memorial in Upper Austria.^{xlviii}

Political Parties

In Austria, several members of the far-right populist Freedom Party (FPÖ) have expressed their support for the movement and its protests. The FPÖ also organized a political demonstration after the protests were initially banned due to fears that demonstrators would not adhere to Coronavirus restrictions.^{xlix} Herbert Kickl may face judicial consequences due to his role as a speaker at one of the events, which later became violent and resulted in the hospitalisation of a security guard.

In Germany, the far-right populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) joined the anti-establishment protests criticising the ruling government for implementing measures to curb the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic and calling for its supporters to join the protests.ⁱ Additionally, neo-Nazi parties NPD, die Rechte, and der Dritte Weg have also promoted and joined in the demonstrations.ⁱⁱ

Early on, supporters of the anti-establishment movement founded their own party called Widerstand 2020 (Resistance 2020). It was later rebranded as “die Basis” (the Base) and is active in both Austria and Germany.

Influencers

In addition to the above-mentioned groups and individuals, several well-known conspiracy ideologues and celebrity influencers have also played an important role in the promotion of the anti-establishment movement. These individuals not only perpetuate anti-government sentiments but also spread fake news and conspiracy myths to an even wider audience.

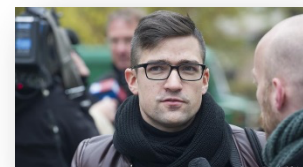
Attila Hildmann

Attila Hildmann is a vegan celebrity chef and cookbook author who has become increasingly radicalized over the course of the pandemic. He is a strong believer in and spreader of conspiracy myths and also denies the Holocaust. Hildmann is one of the early organizers of the anti-establishment demonstrations in Berlin and has called for armed resistance against Jews, the Corona restrictions, and the German government. He uses social media, especially Telegram, to spread hate against Jews. The Berlin state authorities have issued an arrest warrant for Hildmann, who left Germany and now resides in Turkey to avoid prosecution.ⁱⁱⁱ



Martin Sellner

Martin Sellner is an XRW social media influencer and the Austrian leader of the Identitarian movement. He harbours strong anti-establishment sentiments and subscribes to conspiracy myths related to the Great Replacement.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ



Ken Jebsen - KenFM

Ken Jebsen was a radio moderator for the German radio show “Radio Fritz,” which is part of the ARD group, but lost his job in 2011 following antisemitic comments he made. Currently, he hosts a social media show called “KenFM.”^{liv}



Oliver Janich

Oliver Janich is a German journalist and right-wing conspiracist. His Telegram^{lv} channel has 162,000 subscribers. His videos include antisemitic conspiracies blaming Rothschild, Soros, and Bloomberg for various aspects of the Coronavirus and linking them to the NWO.^{lvi}



Xavier Naidoo

Naidoo is a successful German soul and R&B singer/songwriter, record producer, and occasional actor. He has been involved in several controversies, including for the use of antisemitic tropes in some of his songs. During the Coronavirus pandemic, he has been sharing mainly conspiracy myths on his Telegram account (114,000 subscribers). He has also recently released a new song filled with conspiracy myths and denying the Coronavirus pandemic.^{lvii}



International Examples^{lviii}

Austria

Almost all of the numerous demonstrations organised by the anti-establishment movement in Austria featured Holocaust trivialization and antisemitic content. Rallies also served as fertile recruitment and mobilization grounds for far-right and neo-Nazi activists.^{lix} Some examples are listed here:

14 May 2021, Mauthausen: At a protest organised by Alexander Ehrlich and Honk for Hope in the vicinity of the Mauthausen concentration camp memorial site in Upper Austria, attempts were made to broadcast an excerpt of a Hitler speech during Ehrlich's speech. Later, protesters shouted, "Free Palestine" and "Israel is terrorist." Several speakers also trivialized the Holocaust and compared current Coronavirus restrictions with regulations imposed during the Third Reich.^{lx}

06 March 2021, Vienna: A demonstration organised in part by the far-right Freedom Party in Vienna became violent. Police made 42 arrests and filed 3,000 administrative reports as well as 60 criminal reports. Protesters broke into an insurance building severely injuring the security guard stationed at the door. The demonstration also featured several well-known neo-Nazis including Gottfried Küssel.^{lxi}

12 December 2020, Oberwart: Activists hung a sign with the slogan "*Impfen macht frei*" (vaccination will set you free" – reminiscent of "*Arbeit macht frei*," which greeted arrivals at the entrance to several concentration camps including Auschwitz/Birkenau).^{lxii}

24 April 2020, Vienna: A crowd of around 200 people defied a police ban to gather in central Vienna to protest lockdown measures, chanting slogans such as "Kurz must go," referring to conservative Chancellor Sebastian Kurz. One arrest was made.^{lxiii} The protests, one of the earliest in the wave that followed internationally, also featured antisemitic posters including the quote "*Impfen macht frei*" (see above).^{lxiv}

Belgium

01 May 2021, Brussels/Liège: Police fired water cannons and tear gas in a Brussels park to break up an anti-lockdown party of several hundred people designed to defy coronavirus social distancing rules. Hundreds of people also marched in central Brussels and through the eastern city of Liège demanding a relaxation of Coronavirus measures.^{lxv}

Bulgaria

14 May 2020, Sofia: More than 2,000 people demonstrated in Sofia to protest the confinement of the Bulgarian population at an event organized by a far-right opposition

party, at which protesters accused the Bulgarian government of imposing unnecessary measures in its attempts to combat the new coronavirus pandemic in the country.^{lxvi}

Croatia

03 February 2021, Zagreb: Several thousand entrepreneurs protested in the Croatian capital of Zagreb against the lockdown, urging the government to allow them to work.^{lxvii}

Czech Republic

08 January 2021, Prague: Protestors against the government-imposed restrictions to curb the Covid pandemic wore yellow Stars of David.^{lxviii}



Denmark

11 January 2021, Copenhagen/Aalborg: Dozens of people were arrested in Denmark as demonstrations against the country's Coronavirus restrictions became violent in two cities including the capital, Copenhagen. According to local reports, up to 250 people gathered there, as well as dozens in the northern city of Aalborg, in demonstrations organized by a group called Men in Black. The protesters sought to repeal the restrictions, chanting "Freedom for Denmark; we have had enough," lighting firecrackers, and hurling bottles, triggering clashes with police.^{lxix}

France

22 May 2021, Paris: During an anti-establishment protest in Paris, comedian Jean -Marie Bigard compared the vaccination passport with the yellow star Jews were forced to wear during World War II.^{lxx}

05 March 2021, Avignon: Protestors wore yellow stars and carried banners comparing the governments restrictions to Nazi persecution of the Jews.^{lxxi}

Finland

19 April 2021, Helsinki: Seventeen people were arrested for flouting regulations and disobeying orders at two anti-Coronavirus restrictions protests that took place in Helsinki.^{lxxii}

Germany

Germany has seen a large number of anti-establishment protests over the past year. These often heavily featured antisemitic content and Holocaust trivialization. A common

theme includes the wearing of yellow stars emblazoned with the words “unvaccinated” or “non-vaccinated.”^{lxxiii}

03 April 2021, Stuttgart: Violence erupted at an anti-lockdown protest in Stuttgart with over 10,000 participants in which stones were thrown at members of the press and a policewoman injured.^{lxxiv}

13/14 March 2021, Munich: Anti-lockdown protesters in Germany were roundly criticized for appropriating the horrors of the Holocaust, with several even dressing up as concentration camp inmates and putting on Nazi-era yellow stars reading “unvaccinated,” leading the city of Munich to ban the wearing of such stars at Coronavirus protests.^{lxxv}

03 January 2021, Nurnberg: Several hundred Querdenker, members of extreme right-wing parties, and others travelled from all over the country to participate in an anti-lockdown rally in which vaccinations intended to combat the coronavirus were compared to medical experiments conducted in concentration camps by the Nazis.^{lxxvi}

22 November 2020, Hannover: At a Querdenken rally, a 22-year-old woman known simply as “Jana from Kassel,” who protested against the coronavirus restrictions, went viral when she compared herself to White Rose resistance fighter Sophie Scholl who, along with her brother Hans, was executed by the Nazis. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas was vocal in his criticism of this trivialization of the Holocaust.^{lxxvii}

14 November 2020, Regensburg: One protester proclaimed that the “Merkel dictatorship” was far worse than Hitler’s and that forced vaccinations promoted by secret elites were intended to poison the population.^{lxxviii}

31 August 2020, Berlin: Hundreds of far-right activists waving the black, white, and red flag of the pre-1918 German Empire that once inspired the Nazis broke through a police barrier and tried to force their way into the Reichstag, or German Parliament. A total of some 38,000 protesters from all over the country flocked to the German capital. Some were anti-vaxxers, some were anti-capitalists, some were ordinary citizens unhappy with the Corona-related restrictions, but there were also about 3,000 members of the far-right scene present, some of whom actively courted police officers deployed to secure the march, urging them to switch sides. Ultimately, three police officers stood their ground at the entrance to the Reichstag and held off the angry mob. A [video](#) of the three men pushing back against the demonstrators for several minutes before reinforcements arrived has gone viral in Germany.^{lxxix}

09 May 2020, Dortmund: About 150 people, including a group of known right-wing extremists, gathered in the western city of Dortmund. One of the right-wingers insulted



and then attacked a team of reporters, slightly injuring one of them; according to the police, the 23-year-old was subsequently arrested.^{lxxx}

Generally, as can be seen in the examples from Germany cited above, it can be concluded that members of the Querdenker movement have been instrumentalizing the Shoah with their tasteless, false, and dangerous comparisons of contemporary Coronavirus restrictions (the so-called “Corona dictatorship”) to the horrors of the Nazi regime and life in a totalitarian state. Conspiracists believing in a “plandemic” feel that the machinations of today’s secret elites are on par with the actions of the Nazis during World War II, trivializing the horrors of that period. In addition, it is suggested that the Rothschild and the Soros families are the ones pulling the strings of government from behind the scenes, an allusion to the common antisemitic trope of Jews controlling the world.^{lxxxi}

Italy

29 October 2020, Palermo: Tensions flared in Palermo, the capital of Sicily, as riot police faced off with angry demonstrators led by local traders. Business owners across Italy have warned that the 6:00 pm closure of bars and restaurants and the complete shutting down of gyms, swimming pools, and cinemas would sound a death knell for many people’s livelihoods.^{lxxxii}

27 October 2020, Naples: With the closure of nightlife in Italy, the Camorra mafia’s drug revenues will be decreased by as much as 60 percent, say police. At a protest in Naples, police identified known members of four Camorra mafia families who are thought to be instigating violence. Protesters threw rocks at police, attacked officers inside their cars, and damaged the vehicles with clubs; a regional governor described the events as “guerilla warfare.”^{lxxxiii}

24 October 2020, Rome: Violence broke out in Rome as anti-lockdown protesters clashed with police following the introduction of stricter Coronavirus shutdown measures. Footage posted on social media showed demonstrators throwing firecrackers and other missiles at officers who responded with tear gas. Some protesters also smashed shop windows in the city whilst a number of scooters were set on fire.^{lxxxiv}

The Netherlands

19 April 2021: A Dutch politician tweeted an image of a yellow star featuring the words “Corona App.” He captioned it “No obligatory corona app,” a reference to a test being carried out by the Dutch government for a smartphone app that would help authorities monitor the whereabouts and interactions of people, including known or suspected carriers, in order to curb the spread of the virus.^{lxxxv}



29 January 2021, Eindhoven: Demonstrators gathered in defiance of a new 21:00 curfew. Some protesters threw firecrackers, looted supermarkets, and smashed shop windows. Others grabbed bicycles to build barricades against the police, who eventually used water cannons and tear gas to clear the streets of the demonstrators. More than 100 people were arrested.^{lxxxvi}

18 January 2021, Amsterdam: Approximately 2,000 people came together in Amsterdam in an unauthorized demonstration against lockdown restrictions. Riot police used water cannons to attempt to disperse the gathering. Authorities arrested approximately one hundred people who took part in the protest.^{lxxxvii}

06 May 2020, The Hague: An illegal protest against the lockdown led to 80 arrests.^{lxxxviii}

Romania

29 March 2021, Bucharest (and others): Protests against lockdown restrictions became violent in Bucharest and other cities across Romania as demonstrators threw firecrackers at police and hurled stones. Demonstrations were organized mainly by the far-right AUR party.^{lxxxix}

Serbia

07 July 2020, Belgrade: Police fired tear gas at thousands of protesters in Serbia who took to the streets of Belgrade over fresh lockdown measures, with some chanting "resignation" as they gathered in front of the central parliament building. Some managed to enter the building by force but were pushed back by riot police.^{xc}

Sweden

06 March 2021, Stockholm: Swedish authorities dispersed hundreds of protesters in Stockholm who had gathered in violation of the government's restrictions on large gatherings. Video showed protesters being arrested and holding signs that read "Freedom for security," "Stop dictatorship," and "They inject us with poison."^{xci}

United Kingdom

25 April 2021, London: 10,000 protestors gathered in London to protest against restrictions and the use of vaccinations to curb the spread of the pandemic. Several protestors wore yellow stars^{xcii} reminiscent of the ones Jews were forced to wear by the Nazi regime.^{xciii}



20 March 2021, London: Anti-lockdown protesters ran riot in central London, pelting bottles and cans at police who were forced to retreat to their vans.

The thuggery in Hyde Park caused members of the public to leave, with parents hurriedly carrying their small children away from the clashes. Officers wielding batons were seen backing off while projectiles rained down on them before gathering in number and charging back at the hooligans, ultimately making 33 arrests.^{xciv} Protestors also wore yellow stars.

29 August 2020, London: More than 10,000 anti-lockdown protesters who believe the Coronavirus is a hoax gathered at Trafalgar Square for a “Unite for Freedom” rally. Demonstrators called for an “end to Government lies” and the restoration of all freedoms as they marched past Downing Street towards the Houses of Parliament. One of the individuals arrested was Mr. Piers Corbyn, brother of Jeremy, who was hauled into the back of a police van. Video from the scene showed organizers label the Government “terrorists who are waging a war on the people of this country” and one man who said: ““This is a political agenda to commit mass genocide on the population. That is their agenda.”^{xcv}

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