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“The national music scene”: the analysis of the Nazi rock discourse and its relationship with the upsurge of nationalism in Poland

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ABSTRACT

The article contains the analysis of lyrics created by bands associated with the “national music scene” in Poland, as well as the means of fascist propaganda used in music by far-right extremists. The article also shows the cultural and political similarities between the official right in Poland (PiS party) and extreme right wing movements. These environments are bridged by a similar cultural narrative, which is based on the cult of the nation and tradition, a dislike for immigrants, as well as the creation of conspiracy myths concerning “traitors of the homeland”.

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Introduction

The offensive of the nationalist discourse in Poland (Żuk and Żuk 2018a) and Europe is associated not only with the revival of far-right parties, but also with the activation of other nationalist propaganda channels. One of them is created by Nazi rock bands. Although they usually constitute a margin, they can emerge from niche clubs and try to reach wider audience in times of “national revival”, as was the case in Poland after 2015, when the Law and Justice (PiS) party came to power.

Although bands performing this kind of music usually refer to themselves as patriotic and promoting “national identity,” rather than fascist, their cultural and political message is full of xenophobia and prejudice. However, as Michael Billig aptly remarks:

If one asked fascists what their creed was, they will invariably say that “it consists in passionate devotion to the nation and in putting its interests higher than anything else” [Hitler 1972, 35] Fascists will protest that they are defenders, not

attackers, only taking against foreigners when the latter are a danger to the beloved homeland. Hitler, for example, imagined that he was defending Germany against the Jews, asserting in *Mein Kampf* that “the Jew is not the attacked but the attacker” [Hitler 1972, 293]. (Billig 1995, 57)

A similar attitude is often adopted by bands associated with the “national music scene” in Poland, who say that they “defend their national identity” against “foreign threat” and “the left and liberal clique”. Under favourable conditions, the message Nazi bands may become the right response for young people to a sense of threat to social security and fears of neoliberal globalization (Žuk and Žuk 2018b).

The article analyses the message of Polish Nazi bands and the social process, in which the political position of the right can increase the influence of openly racist environments, which were formerly marginalized. Although the process of the “nationalisation” of culture and language grew stronger under the rule of the PiS party, it had been initiated much earlier.

Language flagging

The process of “language flagging” began in Poland in the 1990s, when rejecting the communist past became a common practice after the collapse of the Eastern bloc. This also applied to language: all concepts associated with communist ideology (*working class, class struggle, social classes, class conflict*) gave the impression of empty notions referring to the bygone past (Žuk 2010). This process took place not only in the media and political debates, but also in social sciences during the first period of the neoliberal transformation in Poland (Žuk 2008). In such circumstances, “nation” became the key term referring to collective life. It was clearly meant to replace the concept of “class” (Ost 2014).

When the word “class” was removed from the dictionary of politics, all problems of collective life, growing inequalities and visible social divisions were described in terms of the nation. In this way, dividing lines were not between the power and society or the working class and the capitalists, but between “patriots” and “traitors to the homeland,” “real Poles” and those who serve “foreign forces.” Under such conditions, social exclusion and inequality fuelled the far right rather than the left, which did not have its own language and its role in public life decreased (when the PiS party won the elections in 2015, the left did not enter the parliament for the first time after 1989) (Žuk 2017b). Both the official right and the far right contributed to the “nationalisation” of descriptions of social reality. Consequently, the political space was more and more often “flagged,” using Billig’s (1995) term: nationhood has become a key category in public debates. Information, honour, history, education, business, identity and politics – all these elements have become more “national” under the PiS.

Thus, opposition to the neoliberal transformation was not expressed as a protest of the lower classes against their economic exploitation by the power elites but instead became a cultural-political resistance to “foreign forces,” “enemies of the nation” and “race traitors” symbolized by the RAC scene. The language of nationalism and racism filled the void after the leftist language of class divisions had been erased from the public space. Consequently, lower classes and those harmed by the neoliberal transformation supported the populist right in the political sphere (Żuk 2017c, 109). In the cultural sphere, an attempt was made to manage social exclusion through nationalist discourse, including music bands connected with the extreme right.

Members of the band Obłąd explain the message behind one of their songs as follows: “The song ‘Because Here is Poland’ is about things that have been recently happening in our country, people have had enough of poverty, corruption, taxes and fucking European political correctness, gender and the leftist scum, ‘because here is Poland!’” (Gralewski 2014). This song by the leading RAC band in Poland reflects the PiS party’s narrative. The musicians sing about a “conspiracy,” accuse the liberal and left-wing opposition of “destroying the country” and finally announce a “national revolution,” which the PiS party has been carrying out in Poland since 2015, breaking the constitution and civil rights:

“Because Here is Poland” by Obłąd

It’s a revolution at your own request
 You lead the country to destruction
 You make the nation crazy
 And you bitches do not have enough!

Thousands of people on city streets
 Will fight for their Homeland
 Thousands of people on city streets
 Will never lay down their arms
 Thousands of people on city streets,
 Will blow up your conspiracies
 Thousands of people on city streets,
 Too much evil affects us
 Because this is Poland! Fight or die!

Research material and methods

The research material includes lyrics by the most well-known Polish Nazi rock bands performing between 1989 and the period of the PiS party’s rule in

Poland (2015–2018). Selected works by Konkwista 88, Legion, Obłąd, Irydion, Gammadion, Szstorm 97, Agressiva 88, BTM, Prawe Skrzydło and rapper Basti are analyzed in the article. Their songs were derived from the YouTube channel. Individual songs had several thousand to about 2.5 million views (with an average number ranging from tens of thousands to 100,000 views). These numbers indicate the number of recipients of this type of music in Poland. It is worth noting, however, that these bands also sell CDs, regularly perform in Poland (in clubs and during extreme right-wing festivals such as “Orle gnizado” [The Eagle’s Nest]) and, in recent times (since 2015), they have also been performing during street demonstrations and occasional concerts accompanying political events. In addition to the analysis of the content of Nazi rock music, the article also contains the analysis of Polish far-right websites, such as Nacjonalista.pl, the website of the National Rebirth of Poland (NOP) – (<http://www.nop.org.pl/>) and the website of the Blood and Honour section in Poland (<http://www.bhpoland.org/strona/index2.htm>).

White rock, rock against communism, Nazi rock: a historical overview of the phenomenon

Polish bands being part of this trend also define their music as “patriotic rock,” “identity music” or simply “rock against communism.” The latter term refers directly to its British originators, which were associated with the National Front during the late 1970s and organized concerts under the banner of RAC. This initiative was created as a result of cooperation established in 1977 between the Young National Front (YNF) and far-right skinheads. The YNF used the ideology of British nationalism to build its influence. They organized anti-immigrant demonstrations, football tournaments and published a newsletter entitled *Bulldog* (Cotter 1999). The idea of RAC was outlined in *Bulldog* in 1979:

For years White, British youths have had to put up with left-wing filth in rock music. They have had to put up with the anti-NF lies in the music papers. They have had commie organisations like Rock Against Racism trying to brainwash them. But now there is an anti-commie backlash! R.A.C. is going to fight back against left-wingers and anti-British traitors in the music press. We hate the poseurs in R.A.R. who are just using music to brainwash real rock fans ... Over the next few months we are going to hold concerts, roadshows and tours. The message to the commie scum is clear. Rock Against Communism has arrived and Rock Against Communism is here to stay. (as quoted in Cotter 1999, 119)

In addition to anti-communist propaganda, groups associated with this trend, such as Skullhead, Skrewdriver, Ovaltinees, Peter and the Wolves, the Die-Hards, Brutal Attack and No Remorse, proclaimed white supremacy and racist nationalism. In this way, the far right used its own music scene to

create a counterbalance to the radical left and the anarchist cultural and political rebellion manifested by the punk movement. Oi music, which inspired the development of the RAC scene and was linked to Skinhead culture, was recognized by Bulldog as “music of the ghetto. Its energy expressed the frustrations of white youths. Its lyrics described the reality of life on the dole ... It is about fighting the government, about fighting the whole system. It was the music of white rebellion” (Worley 2012, 343).

Ian Stuart Donaldson of Skrewdriver, who was the leader of the RAC scene in the 1980s and the main link between the National Front and skinheads, set up several bands and a political organization operating under the name Blood and Honour. Since 1988, a quarterly magazine has been published under the same title. It contains interviews with musicians and preaches white supremacy.

Not only did the RAC scene and the Blood and Honour movement influence the far right in the United Kingdom (cf. Raposo and Sabin 2018; Worley and Copsey 2018) and Western Europe, but they also affected the attitudes of far-right extremists in Eastern Europe. Skinheads in Russia became involved in politics under the influence of messages conveyed in RAC songs (Pilkington, Omel’chenko, and Garifzianova 2010, 81). The situation in Poland was similar.

The RAC scene in Poland: from subculture to nationalist offensive

The first nationalist rock bands in Poland did not openly manifest their Nazi ideology. The example is the band Ramzes & the Hooligans, which was founded during the communist period. As Kirsten Dyck (2017, 95) claims, “they did, however, draw on the pervasive racism, Polish national chauvinism, and xenophobia that permeated some demographics in Polish society, just as bands like the Böhse Onkelz, and Totenkopf were doing at the same time in Germany and Russia.”

However, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, Polish fascists who created the “national music scene” were inspired by the British RAC tradition. The origins of this phenomenon in Poland date back to the period after 1989, when communism collapsed in Eastern Europe. One of the leading bands, Konkwista 88, played a joint concert in Poland with Britain’s No Remorse in the early 1990s. As Rafal Pankowski writes:

Konkwista 88, Honour and some other openly national socialist bands formed the Aryan Survival Front (Aryjski Front Przetrawania, AFP). The AFP was modelled on the British organization Blood and Honour. (Pankowski 2010, 99)

This initiative was established in Wrocław and, from the very beginning, the intention was to combine elements of the skinhead subculture with strong

political commitment on the side of the extreme right and the vision of white supremacy. The AFP quickly put its slogans into practice: the AFP attacked a demonstration of non-white students who, in October 1990, wanted to celebrate the release of Nelson Mandela in the old market square in Wrocław.

Again during the early 1990s, another organization called the National Rock Scene (NSR) was created in Warsaw. The aim of its founders was to spread a racist message outside the ghetto of neo-Nazi skinheads and promote extreme nationalist ideas among a wider circle of young people. The NSR had a page in each of the right wing weeklies, *Mysł Polska.*, *Nasza Polska* and *Głos*, where they promoted Catholic nationalist bands. The number of issues certainly exceeded the narrow circles of the skinhead subculture of the 1990s. The struggle for cultural influence among young people was in line with the strategy of the right wing political mainstream to build a profile and gain a foothold among this section of the population. Hence, some publications associated with right wing conservatives provided support to and looked favourably on the initiatives of young nationalists. In this way, both environments benefit: the extreme right wing can move into a wider field, while those in the right wing mainstream gain a foothold and active support in the environments that have previously been inaccessible to them.

The ideological manifesto of the National Rock Scene, which was published in the late 1990s, states the following:

A crucial battle in the realm of culture and ideas must be fought ... Popular culture is an integral part of this phenomenon. The popularity of right wing slogans can be ensured only by the attractiveness of their form. This is the role of the music scene, which is operationally called the National Music Scene. (Pankowski 2010, 100)

The “Kulturkampf” (“culture war”) strategy implemented among young people was certainly effective. This was done, among other things, through the use of multiple extreme right wing web portals, online magazines of nationalist parties, private and group Facebook accounts of fascists, as well as videos and music on YouTube.

“First words, then rifles”: nation and nationalist narrative

This strategy of building far-right cultural hegemony – which Pankowski (2010, 103) aptly refers to as “right-wing Gramscianism” – has proved to be effective in the long run. Language was the carrier of this cultural hegemony and a tool for its preservation. This was consistent with the assumption that linguistic ideologies have “metacultural” function. As Jane H. Hill writes:

They “move culture through the world,” putting certain kinds of talk and text into general circulation. A very good example is the role of personalist linguistic

ideologies in the circulation of racist slurs and epithets. Slurs are highly visible as racist. However, even though they are stigmatized and discredit the people who utter them, they are astonishingly common. Everybody somehow learns them. (Hill 2008, 43)

The cultural and political presence of far-right slogans in public life became a reality 20 years later in Poland. Gramsci's (1999, 690) prophecy that, "when one succeeds in introducing a new morality in conformity with a new conception of the world, one finishes by introducing the conception as well," had the opposite effect in Poland: the dominance of nationalist slogans in education (Žuk 2018), history lessons and youth music culture first led to the domination of racists in the streets (since 2010, they have taken over the streets and put Polish anti-fascist movements on the defensive – in contrast to the 1990s, when anti-fascist and anarchist youth had an advantage during demonstrations) (cf. Žuk 1999), eventually leading to the seizure of complete power by the nationalist PiS in 2015.

The concept of "Kulturkampf" was already known to neo-fascist circles in Western Europe. It was based on the assumption that it is impossible to overthrow the political order "without taking over cultural power, i.e. obtaining a decisive influence on the world of ideas and the perception of the whole social world by these groups who have so far not associated themselves with the ideology of racism" (Pankowski 2006, 90). The hypothesis of a politicization of culture has already been proposed by the classic National Socialists of the NSDAP in Nazi Germany. In 1933, Joseph Goebbels outlined two ways of bringing about a national revolution:

You can go on shooting the opposition with machine guns until they acknowledge the superiority of the gunners. That is the simpler way. But you can also transform the nation by a mental revolution and, therefore, win over the opposition instead of annihilating them. We, the National Socialists, have adopted the second way and intend to pursue it. (as quoted in Eksteins 2012)

Nationalist elements smuggled into the language of popular culture do not necessarily appear in the hard version. Nationalist beliefs are also internalized in the social consciousness in a soft way. This involves disseminating specific social ontology, which assumes that a nation characterized by a specific character and unchangeable features is the basic element of any social reality. These beliefs are common to the far right, the RAC scene and nationalist politicians, such as those belonging to the PiS party.

The framework of Nazi rock discourse

Racist and nationalist slogans in music are not only the domain of the RAC scene. They are also used in country music (Messner et al. 2007), black metal (Spracklen 2013), rap, hip-hop (Putnam and Littlejohn 2007) and neo-

folk. The latter tries to “smuggle” fascist elements in a more veiled way (Shekhovtsov 2009).

When analysing messages conveyed in music, one can also treat music itself as a form of discourse and prove that “the principal musical systems – melody, harmony, rhythm, timbre and so on – are not just abstract, formal systems. They realize social meanings and express values and identities and ideologies” (Van Leeuwen 2012, 327). However, using the example of the Third Reich national anthem, Anton Shekhovtsov aptly states that music devoid of social context and content can be interpreted in a variety of ways:

An isolated piece of instrumental music may be open to dozens of interpretations and uses, but it is virtually impossible to establish precisely its meanings and implications without specific markers. For example, a person who has never heard the “Horst-Wessel-Lied,” an anthem of the Nazi party, would never be able to associate its tune with the Third Reich without knowing its title and/or lyrics, as well as the history of twentieth-century Europe. Thus, in order to associate the “Horst-Wessel-Lied” with the horrors of Nazism, a person must possess a set of very particular cultural traits: without them, an anthem of the Nazi party remains “innocent.” (Shekhovtsov 2013).

Other authors, however, argue convincingly that although lyrics are important, other elements of the discourse (“melody, voice, arrangement and rhythm”) are key to communication (Machin and Richardson 2012).

Here, however, the analysis is limited to the lyrics of Polish bands, which can be described as the RAC scene. The musical framework of this trend is quite flexible and ranges from Oi! (a specific version of punk rock, which John M. Cotter (1999, 117) described as “back to basics” style of rock and roll that consisted of hard, fast, and “unmelodic” music, with forcefully sung lyrics, typically with working-class accents) through to typical hard rock, ballads and “sung poetry” praising the nation and race.

Not only were Nazi rock lyrics addressed against minority groups and the left; nor did they simply romanticize the nation, as was the case in nationalism. As John M. Cotter (1999, 121) states, “white power rock and roll lyrics convey other themes associated with right-wing extremist ideology, such as the notion of a global Jewish conspiracy against the white race, the complicity of state governments in this plot and a belief in the inevitability of a brutal war between races in which the warriors of the Aryan race will eventually emerge victorious.” These elements were present from the beginning in the lyrics of Polish Nazi bands that fit into the “Aryan race” narrative. They often emphasise a certain historical continuity (“the struggle for racial purity has lasted for generations”) and refer to the idealized past. Although circumstances change, “white race warriors” are still remembered. At that time, when communism had come to an end in Eastern Europe, and the new enemy (in its opinion), embodied by capitalism, appeared on the horizon, Konkwista 88 openly praised National Socialist practice and ideology from

the World War II period. This is evident from its song that honours the *Waffen SS* and praises those who continue the National Socialist fight against communism and capitalism. This was connected with the myth propagated by the Blood and Honour about a special role of the *Waffen-SS* in the fight against Judaeo-Bolshevism (Pollard 2016, 415–416). Advocates of this myth also used the pejorative term “Jew Commune” (Judeo-Communism), which continues to be very popular among Eastern European nationalists (Žuk 2017a).

“Waffen SS” by Konkwista 88

It was winter, and hard time
 Snow shone on the horizon
 A White Legion went to the front
 Blood was boiling in the veins
 Unfair wind was blowing there
 And the moon was shining on the sky
 On the impossible roads
 A war song you can hear

The enemy fought and was taught
 Soldiers’ blood was spouting
 For the communistic brothers
 America sent weapons
 At Kursk and Stalingrad
 The snow was the whitest
 Where soldiers were killed,
 Communism showed it fangs to

Waffen-SS White Legions, Aryan Blood
 Waffen-SS White Front, White Bound
 Waffen-SS White Legions, Aryan Blood
 Waffen-SS White Front, White Bound

Today you live in this country
 You get the crop of communism
 A new enemy is coming from the west
 The vision of Capitalism!
 Remember soldiers fighting for the race
 For the freedom of the white men
 Let the idea of these soldiers
 Make a bound of new covenant

Another typical feature of lyrics created by Nazi rock bands is the conviction about the ubiquitous conspiracy of the hostile forces that rule the world. Jews are believed to have a crucial meaning in this conspiracy. John Pollard describes the transformation of the Jew-Commune into the ideology of the Zionist Occupied Government (ZOG) as follows: “Twentieth-century myths about Jewish control of both Communism and international finance have now mutated into the idea of ZOG (Zionist Organized (or Occupied) Government). This powerful, paranoid conspiracy theory, held in common by much of the racist right, perceives Jewish financiers as being at the helm of all the major governments and corporations on the planet, with a particular dominance over the media” (Pollard 2016, 415). The website of the Polish Blood and Honour section contains the following description of ZOG: “ZOG affects our people’s thoughts and beliefs. We must ignore peripheral political parties and strike the minds of society with our propaganda. National Socialists are the only form of resistance to the ZOG genocidal policy” (Blood and Honour 2018).

These “bad elements” are characterized through a simple mechanism of stigmatization and the use of simplified names evoking reluctance. This is the case of the song “Mafia,” in which the theme of “Zionist occupiers” appears. The names used imply that those who want to bring in immigrants are the ones who rob the “national estate” and serve the “Jewish mafia.”

“Mafia” by Konkwista

Look at the European nations,
 arguing between themselves,
 enemy instigates those conflicts,
 to manipulate you,
 destroy it from inside,
 by bringing immigrants,
 pulling the wool over your eyes so you won’t recognize,
 Zionist occupiers

Chorus

Jewish mafia is friends with the devil,
 they want to conquer whole world,
 but our race will unite,
 will defend on time,

Look at our country,
 corruption in the government,
 the ones who called them names,
 usually end in court,

they unlawfully sell our national wealth,
but it's only,
the begin of their rule,

In socially and politically uncertain times, such simple, "black and white" descriptions of the world, as in the song "Mafia" by Konkwista 88, might gain the support and interest of those social circles that have been frustrated and excluded due to the transformation of the economic system.

Defenders of the white race and nationalist homophobia

Any binary classification of reality includes "bad" and "good elements." In Nazi rock, the latter are "defenders of the white race," "we, defenders of the nation" and "we, real Poles." Consequently, "the ZOG," "liberal liars," "leftists" and "perverts" are on one side and "we, proud and noble" and "white overhumans" are on the other side of this continuum. Far-right bands use the term "white race" almost as a religious symbol, which is worthy of worship. This can be best illustrated in the following song by Agressiva 88:

"Deride, you proud Overhuman"

Protect the White Race from death,
so that it can live forever.
They want to change it into a dirty mass,
which they can deride!

Don't let strangers stay here,
they spoil the purity of blood.
The White Man is strong,
and still fights for better days!

Arise you proud Overhuman!
Deride the false weak laws!
Pick up the glory of past ages!

Glorify the honour of the race today!
Look at the minions of your god,
who have betrayed their blood.
Now they are overwhelmed by fear,
they hear the call of the Overhuman!

Look at the source of this nonsense,
which is holy for them!

The book of the weak, full of deceit,

means death, just like the cross!

The voice of ZOG politicians,

the gibberish of liberal lies.

Stand in line with fanatics,

to show them how false they are!

Hearing their pathetic nonsense:

the paradise of perverts, racial equality!

Squeeze your fists firmly,

it's time to confront them!

In the above lyrics (as in many other Nazi rock songs), time is used as a rhetorical category. This is meant to activate the audience (*it's time, now, today, immediately*), create a universal perspective of existing rules and mechanisms (*always, for a long time*) and to metaphysically and messianically indicate "a time frame" (*time has come, it's time to confront*). To emphasise that their judgments are true, fascists and nationalists describe the future in categorical terms: better days will come, the time will come, the time of the decisive battle.

The element of fetishization of the "white race" and the need to defend its purity are constantly referenced in neo-Nazi lyrics. They are also often the apotheosis of violence, which the extreme right wants to use against its enemies. Legion, one of the most famous extreme right bands in Poland, openly calls for violence. The following song also contains the topic of the "international" fight for the white race. It does not matter whether it is in Poland or South Africa, the struggle for the race's honour takes place worldwide:

"Defenders of the White Race" by Legion

We have to fight alone,

with sticks or knives.

No one will stand in our way,

even Bandera will not help.

Let us hold in our hands

possibly so many guns.

We shall chase them away.

We shall defend the White Race.

A Pole and an Afrikaner,

each has his own task:

Great Poland, South Africa,
the White Power here and there.

Our pride does not allow us
to know a Negro and a Gypsy.
We shall defend the White Race.
We shall chase them away.

Nationalist homophobia is a common element of Nazi rock. A real patriot values the traditional family, is heterosexual and despises “poofs” – this is “normality.” All “sexual differences” are typical of perverts who violate “our norms.” Homosexuals are identified with the danger of destroying the Polish identity – the nationalists’ aversion to sexual minorities involves anti-homosexual manifestations, blockades of Equality Parades and campaigns aiming at the promotion and defence of the traditional family (Kajta 2017). This is also the subject of the following song by Prawe Skrzydło [The Right Wing]:

“The March of Degenerates” by Prawe Skrzydło (Right Wing)

“Faggots are coming, the sea of rainbow flags;
the march of tolerance starts, let it go to hell!
Vibrators in hands, strings instead of pants,
led by Tinky-Winky, the parade Fuhrer.
The procession of degenerates is approaching,
they start insulting people around.
Degenerates will not retreat,
if we do not stand in their way.”

In Poland, hostility towards sexual minorities, just like hatred of Islam, is a manifestation of resentment towards left-liberal slogans and an element of a more general political discourse expressing disgust towards liberal democracy associated with the European Union (EU). However, this was not only dislike for LGBT people – this was also part of a larger phenomenon known as “struggle against gender.” Like the social policy of the Nazi Party in the Third Reich treated anti-feminism as a milder version of anti-Semitism (Grunberg 1971), the nationalist right in Poland treated anti-gender ideology and opposition to abortion, sexual education and homophobia (Žuk and Žuk 2017) as elements (next to Islamophobia and dislike for refugees) of protest against the interference of EU core countries in Polish tradition. Homophobia and Islamophobia are in this sense a strategy of protest against liberal modernization and nationalist discourse is a political tool for managing the “national community”.

Nation, homeland and the national independence day: a struggle for cultural hegemony in public space

The “Kulturkampf” strategy also involved leaving small clubs and going out to the public and new social circles. Members of nationalist movement confirm the fact that the “Kulturkampf” strategy was implemented. For instance, Nordica, a band that defines its music as “national rock” (earlier they performed under the more niche name of Agressiva 88), said in an interview:

We will live to see that moment when identity rock will play on big radio stations and break through to the mainstream. Other bands from the scene also have impressive achievements, while album sales are constantly increasing; there is a growing demand. Take a look at Horytnica; take a look at Oblęd [Madness]; look at the number of videos on YouTube; look at the quality of music bands playing concerts. This is already happening right before our eyes. (Gralewski 2015)

Musical activity is only one element of nationalist propaganda and an addition to other activities. Members of Nordica added that:

... apart from the sphere of music, we also support other social initiatives, such as the associations known as “Pride and Modernity” and “White Eagles,” as well as the “Eagle’s Nest” festival. We participate in national and patriotic marches throughout the country (Gralewski 2015).

When bands associated with the national scene felt favourable political circumstances in Poland, they also began to participate in far-right street demonstrations. Since 2010, however, the largest annual demonstration of nationalists and neo-fascists, called “The March of Independence,” which is held each year in Warsaw on National Independence Day, has been attended by tens of thousands of right wing fanatics – beginning with around 10,000 in 2010 and up to 60,000 in subsequent years.

During the 2015 March of Independence, Basti, a rapper from Łódź (Poland), who is associated with the extreme right, sang his songs, standing on a platform, in front of crowds of several thousand people. The song, “Stop the Islamisation of Europe,” which had been watched on YouTube by over a million people by January 2018 (Basti 2015), is part of a campaign of hatred against immigrants:

Stop the Islamisation of Europe!
Stop! We don’t want their hordes here.
We have to defend our nation,
we must stand up to this wave of immigration.

No one will tell us how to live at home,
this is Poland, this is our land, our space.

We Poles don't give a fuck what Germans think,
 they'll suffer as this is what they want.
 We choose who we want to host at home,
 no Euro-commie will impose that on us.

The above lyrics contain modal verbs (we have to, we must, we do not want to). They are regularly used by the representatives of the national music scene to create a deterministic view of the social environment. Nationalists also tend to use large quantifiers (all of us Poles, they Germans, Jews, Islamic hordes). They generally like to speak on behalf of the whole nation. There is no room for diversity in far-right messages. Nationalists prefer uniform attitudes and views, and are suspicious of diversity that undermines national unity.

Common narrative elements and the legitimization of the far right by the PiS party

Bringing nationalists and Nazi rock bands out of their ghetto was made possible thanks to the mainstream right, which legitimized their environment. This was done in a variety of ways by the conservative nationalist PiS party, which has been sending friendly signals to far-right politicians.

It is well-known what Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the PiS, said about right wing football fans in 2011: "If football fans arrange patriotic celebrations, we need to applaud them. Fans have the right to express their political views" ("Jarosław Kaczyński" 2011). In this way, the stadium extreme right has been recognized by the PiS as "patriotic youth."

The alliance between the official right, which has gathered around the PiS and nationalist circles, was predicted exactly by Kaczyński, who did not want to have any political competition on the right. The paradox of the PiS strategy lies in the fact that it has not weakened the extreme right, nor has it eliminated its followers as a competitor. On the contrary, the whole cultural and political atmosphere has become more nationalist, which the extreme right has taken advantage of.

The PiS party's relationships with the far right and the Nazi rock scene can be observed on the personal and cultural-ideological levels.

Direct contacts and the PiS party's institutional support

Some deputies from the PiS party (e.g. Stanisław Pięta and Artur Górski) directly supported concerts by the extreme right or took them under their patronage, e.g. concerts performed by the bands Irydion, Zjednoczony Ursynów and the Hungarian Karpatii, held in November 2012 in Warsaw (Górski 2012). In addition to right wing extremists (as Deputy Górski admitted on the pages of the conservative nationalist quarterly *Frona*), the concert was

also attended by members of the PiS Youth Forum and the anti-communist and nationalist clubs of the *Gazeta Polska* [Polish Newspaper], which are associated with the PiS (Górski 2012). Personal or even family relations between PiS activists and people from the Nazi rock and far-right environments were also present in Lower Silesia, where the RAC scene was mainly developed in Poland and a local branch of the Blood and Honour was established (Harłukowicz 2017).

Mariusz Bechta, a publisher and a promoter of the national music scene in the 1990s who significantly contributed to the development of the Nazi rock in Poland, can be an example of a man who directly benefited from the PiS's support. In 2017, he was awarded by Andrzej Duda (who was elected president of the Republic of Poland due to the PiS's support) the Gold Cross of Merit for "disseminating knowledge about the recent history of Poland" (Woroncow 2017). He works as a historian at the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), a state institution which pursues the politics of memory in the spirit of PiS.

The cultural and ideological community of the PiS party and the extreme right

In addition to the personal relations between the PiS community and the Nazi rock circles, there are certain ideological ties more or less accepted by the official and extreme nationalist right. These include the abovementioned homophobia, the cult of tradition (including the legend of the anti-communist underground in communist Poland), dislike for migrants, fascination with the historical right-wing "heroes" from the interwar period, the rejection of the so-called "political correctness" associated with the EU's liberal policy, the motif of "national treason" and radical anti-communism.

- (1) The common element of the PiS and nationalist right circles is a certain symbolism and mythology that is rooted in nationalism and patriotism. For example, fascination with the so-called "cursed soldiers" (anti-communist underground resistance movements, which were formed in the later stages of World War II and its aftermath in communist Poland) is shared by both environments. The "cursed soldiers," who are depicted on the T-shirts of football fans and representatives of the extreme right, have also been recognized by PiS politicians.

In the "music" section of the internet portal "Nacjonalista" [The Nationalist], which supports Polish and foreign bands associated with the extreme right, there is an advertisement for the album entitled *Niepokorna krew* [Defiant Blood] by Gammadion (an alternate word for swastika), which is entirely devoted to the "cursed soldiers" ("Gammadion" 2013). One of the songs says:

The cursed soldiers, boys as tough as steel.
 The last patriots among the ruins and lies.
 All for Poland, nothing for themselves.
 Today, our memory for you.
 The cross of valour for you.

- (2) The aforementioned analogies between the PiS's strong objection to admitting refugees to Poland and referring to the narrative of "protecting national security" and the anti-immigrant discourse propagated by the RAC scene are evident. It can be said that the latter more openly expresses what numerous sympathizers of the PiS party privately believe. Its leaders use a soft version of the anti-immigrant discourse by calling it "the rejection of multiculturalism" and "negating political correctness" (Cap 2017).

BTM is a band regarded as a symbol of Slavic patriotism in extreme right circles. Their song, "Slavic Power," openly expresses a nationalist opinion about newcomers from other countries:

Jews before the war and gypsies today,
 soon nothing will be left of this country
 It cannot stand up due to foreign invaders.
 Once it was great, now it has to beg.
 Slavic power for the country and nation,

Slavic power for all of us.
 Slavic power for the country and nation,
 as long as it is here, before it is too late.
 It will come in the end and chase away this gang.
 All those who do not speak Polish in this country,
 so many Russians, Gypsies and Jerries.
 We have to destroy this gang of freeloaders.

- (3) The cult of tradition and national identity is thriving, among both the extreme right and the parliamentary right in Poland. In both cases, the reference point is the idealized interwar period (1918–1939), as well as right-wing heroes and trends typical of that period. While the PiS party refers to Roman Dmowski, the then leader of the national movement, the far right also praises the traditions of the National Radical Camp (ONR). Today, this organization is also one of the main pillars of the

nationalist movement. The tradition of ONR is widely praised by Nazi rock bands. The following song by Legion is a tribute to ONR:

“ONR” by Legion

Over the years of street fighting and the greatness of those days,
when the faithful son didn't reckon with the life of the Nation.
Only one force was ready to stop the foreign power,
it shall be alive forever and alive forever shall be its voice!

It is a well-known thing, we don't fall to our knees.
The Phalanx and ABC, now they hold one steer – ONR!

- (4) After the terrorist attack in Manchester in May 2017, Beata Szydło, the prime minister in the PiS government, said in the Polish parliament: “Poland will not accept blackmail from the EU. We will not participate in the madness of Brussels’ elites. We will not be blackmailed and will not surrender to political correctness!” (Wroński 2017). Her statement was in line with the message conveyed in the lyrics by the band Szwadron 97. The PiS party and the far right in Poland reject “political correctness” and the liberal system of Brussels elites who do not understand “Polish patriots.”

“Politically Incorrect” by Szwadron 97

Why are you so afraid of us?
We're free and defend our rights
You desecrate the symbols of your lands
You lie to us and laugh
A tribute to Marxism, AWAY WITH NATIONALISTS!
A lifestyle that has been touted for many years
You will not make us white slaves
We will line up to fight!

REF

Politically incorrect, our destiny
Incorrect in the liberal system
Politically incorrect, the law requires this
It will give freedom of speech to obedient people

- (5) The theme of anti-Polish conspiracy and national treason is another common element found among the extreme right and the nationalist

right wing mainstream of the PiS. The youth organization of the PiS states on its website that:

The common opinion is that Polish society is characterized by a high indulgence of traitors to the Homeland. Examples from our history may be repeated ... One does not need, however, to delve into distant historical periods to see national treason. There are still many traitors in our times. (Nieradka 2018)

The mythical traitors of the homeland and the enemies of the national cause may be lurking everywhere: in the liberal media, in leftist circles, among anti-fascists and supporters of cultural cosmopolitanism and cultural diversity. In the opinion of the nationalist right, the more they disguise themselves, the more dangerous they are. The community of "real Poles" continuously and endlessly exposes the links between secret traitors and foreign forces.

- (6) Anti-communism is the element that particularly strongly connects the parliamentary right with the RAC scene in Poland. When demonstrations against the violation of civil rights by the PiS authorities began to be organized in Poland in late 2015, Kaczyński and his collaborators created a slogan: "All of Poland is laughing at you, communists and thieves" in reference to protesters ("Jarosław Kaczyński" 2015). This narrative resembled a song entitled "Destroy the Red" by Konkwista 88 ("The Communist band destroys every new foundation") and a song entitled "Anti-Communism" by Legion ("Death is better than communism!"). The definition of communism as used by the PiS party and the RAC scene is very wide. It includes all opponents of the nationalist right: socialists, social democrats, anti-fascists, feminists, environmental activists and human rights defenders.

Conclusion

The article introduces the subject of Polish bands associated with the RAC scene and shows that the message of the extreme right is only a harder version of the message of the populist parliamentary right. The same cultural model is the backbone of both these forces. The contribution of this study of the RAC narrative in Poland lies in the fact that it emphasises that the boundaries between the far-right nationalism and the official right-wing nationalism are often liquid and constitute a certain continuum of the same discourse. Namely, issues raised by Polish Nazi bands in their lyrics (dislike for refugees, nationalist homophobia, the cult of tradition, anti-communism) reflect and reinforce the message of the Polish right.

The language of the official right legitimizes the presence of the far-right discourse in the public space and at the same time "domesticates" certain

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