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# Radical Hate Speech: The Fascination with Hitler and Fascism on the Slovenian Webosphere

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## Introduction

In January 2015, Lutz Bachmann, the leader of the German anti-Muslim Pegida movement, posted a photo of himself on his Facebook profile posing as Adolf Hitler and captioned by hate speech, referring to the migrants as “vermin”. This triggered an avalanche of media backlash and public distancing, also within the right movement’s membership itself. It seemed that a direct fascination with the Führer was going to be too difficult to justify even in the framework of political convictions of the likeminded and the wider public, which has come to expect nothing other than this sort of islamophobia and hatred towards migrants from Pegida and its leader. Kirn (2015: p. 51) notices that Bachmann’s positions were considered absolutely fine until the publication of the leader’s portrait. But having thus penetrated the media agenda, the leader’s public flaunting of his Hitlerian visage, which veritably reflects the truth about Pegida, miscarried and resulted in his, at least temporary, resignation from Pegida’s leadership.

Bachmann later tried to apologise by claiming that the photograph, featuring him wearing the typical Hitlerian parting with the addition of the recognizable moustache, was only an attempt at satire after a visit to the hairdresser for his sound book titled *He is back*. He added that that satire was a normal human reaction, which needs to be applied from time to time to allow for self-mockery (Connolly, 2015). This paper specifically examines the issue of the intolerability of the fascination with Hitler in Facebook users from Slovenia and, in turn, runs aground a similar

dilemma: how very seriously should online flirting with fascism be taken and considered to represent radical hate speech, while avoiding hasty generalizations? The textual evidence is unequivocal: social networks in Slovenia were flooded by markedly homogenous hate speech of intolerance, hatred, xenophobia and islamophobia after the outbreak of the refugee crisis, in particular after August 2015, which was continuously made legitimate by Slovenian politicians and their parties. At the same time, a large part of the mass media leaning towards or even financed by those same political parties saw a new political and marketing niche for self-promotion in the dissemination of fear, racism, intolerance and a negative attitude towards the refugees. In its most extreme form, the discourse occasionally resorted to direct approval of the worst crimes against humanity that were committed by fascist forces during WWII, including a fascination with Hitler, the Third Reich, and concentration camps as a freshly-discovered historical “solution” to the refugee problem. There can be no other explanation for the numerous calls for the Furner’s intervention, and the seeming disposition towards concentration camps and the use of gas chambers.

Is the fascination with Hitler on social networks, then, a *de facto* manifestation of oncoming fascism in Europe; and how to epistemologically explain it without arriving at (erroneous) conclusions? Can the enthusiasm over former fascist leaders alone constitute fascism; or, are references to Hitler to be taken at some other plane? Stanley (2018: pp. 9–10) lists common traits shared by fascist politicians as follows: a) emphasis on a common sense of history through the creation of a mythic past; b) rewriting the people’s understanding of reality through the establishment of the language of ideals, achieved in turn through propaganda and promoting anti-intellectualism; c) attacking universities and educational systems, when these challenge their ideas; d) creating a state of »unreality« through conspiracy theories and fake news replacing reasoned debate; e) the introduction of dangerous and false beliefs replacing the established understanding of reality; f) the naturalization of group differences, established through a seemingly natural and scientifically supported hierarchy of values; g) the solidification of social differences by using fear; h) a feeling of victimhood, developed in the dominant population every time progress of a minority group is detected; i) the appeal of the law and order policy, casting »us« as law-abiding citizens and »them« as criminals representing an existential threat to the nation; j) sexual anxiety that threatens the patriarchal hierarchy by growing gender equality.

It is impossible to deny that the evocations of Hitler and the Third Reich represent a form of promotion of fascism. Three public discourses on

Hitler may be distinguished, though they may not necessarily be »fascist discourse«. Below, these are treated summarily. The first includes modern attempts at reinterpreting fascism as an expletive; the assumption underpinning this thesis is that either the examined social phenomenon does not constitute fascism since it serves to obfuscate real social antagonisms, or that the marker “fascism” is only used to disqualify a political or any other opponent. Such a potentially dangerous “reductive” thesis is promulgated, among others, by Žižek (2018: p. 39):

Their function is to obfuscate actual social antagonisms – people are magically united against some demonized ‘fascist’ threat... The demonized image of a fascist threat clearly serves as a new political fetish, in the simple Freudian sense of a fascinating image whose function is to obfuscate the true antagonism. Fascism itself is inherently fetishist, it needs a figure like that of a Jew, condemned as the external cause of our troubles – such a figure enables us to obfuscate the immanent antagonisms that cut across our society. My claim is that exactly the same holds for the notion of ‘fascist’ in today’s liberal imagination: it enables us to obfuscate immanent deadlocks which lie at the root of our crisis.

In an interview, Žižek (Forstnerič Hajnšek, 2016) pointed out: “It is fashionable to speak about Europe becoming fascist. When I hear the word, I clench. Fascism usually replaces thinking. Instead of analysing an adverse situation, slap the fascism sticker on it, and it all gets clear.” It seems that to Žižek the search for the fascist as an enemy functions to obfuscate real social antagonisms. The more we look for the fascist, the blinder we are to real social problems. Therefore, the fascist threat is an unnecessary demonization practice: a fascist is demonised so as not to have to face real issues. The image of the fascist threat serves as a new political fetish, in the simple Freudian sense of a fascinating image whose purpose is to obfuscate true antagonisms; while fascisms is inherently fetish – hence the need for the figure of the Jew as the external root cause of our plight; however, such a character obfuscates the immanent antagonisms that govern our society. In the theory of fallacies, the *ad Hitlerum* line of argumentation comes with the same caveat: drawing analogies with Hitler will usually result in ensnaring the counterpart in a fatal analogy. A similar conclusion has been drawn by Mike Godwin, the author of the commonly referred to Godwin’s law: as a discussion grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Nazis or Hitler approaches 1. Since the Nazi leader has become a traditional metaphor to epitomise evil on online fora, any comparison drawn with Hitler is always simple, yet highly efficient, as noted by Erk (2012: p. 97). On the other hand, what is always

lurking is the danger that the real relevance and the historical gravity of the Nazi atrocities would pale into insignificance as a result of the hypertrophy of analogies with Hitler. However, Godwin's discovery does little to explain people's desire and need to sympathise with the Nazi regime. In fact, the fascination with Hitler is diametrically opposite to Godwin's law and may be paraphrased in the following rule: as the discussion on the refugees grows, why the parallel rise in probability that a person would mention Hitler as a potential solution?

If the first type of discourse on fascism can be labelled reductive, since it minimizes the significance of fascism and attributes the relevant discussion with a certain self-blinding tendency, or even draws parallels between the purposes of anti-fascism and fascism: that is a fetishist exclusion of the Other, then the next type is imitational. Meaning that fascism, including the fascination with Hitler, can only be virtual, satirical, »unreal«, perhaps pedagogical, and containing elements of parody. In this type, imitations of the Führer function most often to amuse, or provide a current social critique at best, but never serve to approve or foster fascist belief. Contrary to Žižek's reading, under which the marker is too hastily employed, this reading reduces the marker to a mere tool for consideration: a good example of such imitational discourse is the 2015 David Wnendt film titled *Er is wieder da*, a satirical parable on the return of Hitler in the twenty-first century, his resurfacing among the Germans, who convivially embrace him, and who, in return, delivers a number of grievous remarks about the society. Wnendt, perhaps in order to promote the film, even decided to engage in a small-scale psychological experiment and sent the male lead, Oliver Masucci, out on the streets of Berlin (Drury, 2015) with a surprising result: people pulled him over to take selfies and begged him to re-introduce concentration camps – 2015 marked one of the high tides of the refugee crisis in Germany – and support right wing movements in Germany.

In this second type of discourse on fascism, Hitler is still perceived as a pop icon, rendering the fascination with his personae not entirely attributable to the existence of fascist beliefs. Sometimes, Hitler is the source of material for comedy, featuring online in the form of various memes, with the emphasis on the interplay of incongruity and the search for amusement. The World Wide Web has made possible numerous visual, graphical and textual depictions; one noteworthy example is a scene from the 2004 German film *Der Untergang*, featuring a dramatic performance by Bruno Hanz as Hitler, which has been imitated profusely. Published on Youtube, the videos invariably alter the scene's context by subtitles playing out different variations of social events so as to further the agenda of

the authors of the subtitles, which is to ridicule. In the cases of Facebook users listed below; however, people do not embrace fascist nostalgia for name-calling, nor do they wish just to play make-believe fascism; rather, they are actually enthusiastic about it, at least from the perspective of the “useful solutions” that the holocaust offered.

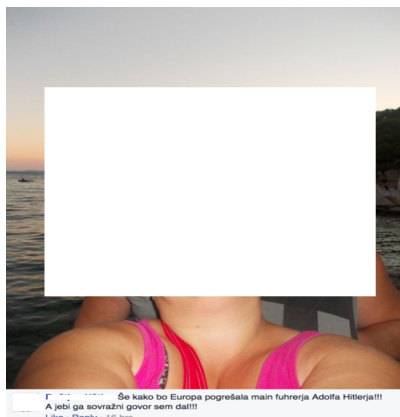
### Textual evidence: Hitler’s awakening by Facebook users from Slovenia

“Nothing ever dies on the Internet,” says Rosenfeld, the author of *Hi Hitler! – How the Nazi Past Is Being Normalized in Contemporary Culture* (2015: 9). Facebook profiles, blogs, his websites and his digital presence are going to survive, making sure that Hitler’s presence in humanity is a constant. And while social networks today are one of the drivers of free speech online, providing an open platform for the expression of political and social beliefs in a significantly more open manner than in the past, there is a certain element of danger contained of trends of the line between freedom of speech and hate speech becoming increasingly blurred. People create posts, upload images or videos and make comments without being fully aware of the extent to which this may degrade and insult other groups, or individuals (Dawn, 2012).

If users are anonymous, the situation only worsens. The statements cited below were made from August 2015 to December 2015 on Facebook. They refer to the transit of refugees across Slovenia during one of the peaks of the refugee crisis and represent just a small proportion of all recorded opinions of Slovenian users. Importantly, it must be noted that the authors are not anonymous and have not concealed their identity. The sample – since only a small selection is cited – is intended for illustration purposes only. We emphasise that the statements were not sampled from Facebook profiles given over to the expression of radical positions and the dissemination of xenophobia, or locations frequented by aspiring radical right-wingers or neo-Nazi followers. The personal profiles of the authors reveal that the sample is a valid representation of a system of belief of common people, who had not been subjected to any prior ideological indoctrination. Below follows a list of thirty documented statements that show readily identifiable basic elements of fascination with Hitler discussed above:

1. “Off to Auschwitz with them! They don’t belong anywhere else.”
2. “Too late for borders – they are here already – Hitler must be brought back from the dead. He’d sort this out fast.”
3. “Mauthausen, followed by a group shower.”

4. "Dachau, Auschwitz, etc. still in condition for repopulation. Folks, I know, it's ugly to hear it from me, but if we want what's best for our kids, European countries will have to, absolutely, really, have to do something to protect our people. I'm not a racist, but this can't be happening in Europe. A million people, are you nuts? Where to put them? Who to feed them? Should it come to war, I hope the EU wins, even though a lot of people think Europe is led by Jews."
5. "Lock 'em all up in concentration camps, the trash of a nation have no business in the EU."
6. "Oh, no. C'mon people, these are poor ol' refugees. Mercy, Adolf, please reincarnate."
7. "Sometimes, when you see this real images and the statements by the police, you wish that Hitler woke up and put an iron curtain on our border with Croatia."
8. "Hitler was a cruel leader, but he put all who disrespected him in their place. He also taught his people to respect their nation and their land. Despite his cruel behaviour, he was a respected and successful leader."
9. "Auschwitz's been deserted for too many years, and the stacks are in need of cleaning."
10. "Take them to Auschwitz, the vermin."
11. "Gas it up."
12. "Stinkin' vermin. I'd make gas chambers instead of these centres and ship 'em off there. Goddam."
13. "Gas chambers still open?"
14. "Europe will come to miss 'mein Führer' Adolf Hitler. Fuck it, this IS hate speech."«
15. "Hitler, where are you? Shoot 'em all up."
16. "Lock all 5,000, or how many there may be in Slovenia, in a gas chamber."
17. "Put 'em on trains. On cattle cars, then 'destination' Dachau."
18. "Gas chambers are the solution."
19. "Here is our Lebensraum. They should adapt to us, not the other way 'round. What is being done is just the opposite; they have almost more rights than we do, and people are just idle. We will be exterminated, that's their goal. Where is Hitler, when you need on? He'd sort it out."
20. "I think the entire Middle East is going to migrate. This means the soon downfall of Europe. Regrettably, we're missing the kind of ruler that the Germans had in 45."
21. "Gas chambers, then run all the bloody vermin directly in there."
22. "Put 'em all in camps with gas chambers."



23. "The refugees just need to be fed rat poison or locked up in a gas chamber. Death to the refugees, long live Slovenians."
24. "The furnaces in the concentration camps need to be stoked so that this lot can burn and migrate through the chimney stacks."
25. "All we need is a Hitler too quickly put them all away. I'd chip in for the ammo from my own salary."
26. "Release the gas, otherwise we'll be slowly beaten and stabbed, since there's more and more of them by the hour, what about our poor kids?"
27. "Sorry, but just wake up Dolfi, if we can't hack it."
28. "Where's Hitler now?"
29. "Open up Auschwitz, and then welcome them home. I want to work there and we'll shower them, the bunch of Muslims."



30. “Hitler’s spirit has risen in Europe, which will unify the people this time over and wash the immigrants back to where they came from. People in Europe are not as naive as the politicians in Brussels imagine. You can lie some time to ten people, but you can’t lie all the time to all the people.”

The anti-refugee xenophobia exhibits certain common characteristics both in the cited statements and otherwise. Firstly, a large part of the statements directly calls for Adolf Hitler to be reawaken (statements 2, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 19, 20, 25, 27, 28, 30). What is typical is that Hitler is imagine as if in a form of hibernation, or as somebody who needs to wake up himself (7, 27), or somebody who needs to be resuscitated (2), since we all “miss” or need him to intervene against the refugees (14, 15, 19, 25), because of which



he needs to reincarnate (6). The author of (8) paints, with great sympathy, an image of Hitler's historical success, as a foundation for the need for his reappearance, while the author of (30) recognises that the spirit of the Nazi leader is already present, that he is arisen and will "wash away the migrants." All of the above ideas associate directly with the icon of the leader of the Third Reich and indisputably emanate a fascination with him, as well as a type of open idolatry, while perceiving Hitler as the only truly successful person that will handle the problem of the inflow of refugees in Europe in the same manner as with the Jews. In other words: his crimes against humanity and the holocaust are regarded with admiration and pride; there are moments when he is intimately and amiably addressed as Adolf (6) and "Dolfi" (27).

A second characteristic is the reference to Nazi concentration camps, offered as a solution to the refugee crisis and the "annulment" of the refugees, who are frequently termed "trash" (5) or "vermin" (10, 12, 21). Accompanying are references to three widely known camps, well-established in Slovenian historical memory (Auschwitz, Dachau, Mauthausen). That the refugees ought to be deported and locked up in concentration camps is asserted by a particularly high number of users (statements 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 17, 22, 24, 29). Some of them also directly indicate the suggested method of execution, while others do not. The former mostly connect concentration camps with gas chambers. In this sense, gas as the suggested method of execution is mentioned by authors of 3, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 21, 23, 24, 26 and 29, who sometimes refer also to chimney stacks, which need to be "cleaned" (9), or cleverly suggesting that the refugees migration route is now going to lead through the stacks (24). Other Facebook users, a significantly lower number, proposed shooting (15, 25), or using rat poison (23). Generally, most often the evocation of Hitler as the image of the saviour is accompanied by a reference to the concentration camps and gas chambers, while the anticipation of his arrival is pervaded by the feeling that he will "sort it out" (19) and handle what we "can't hack" (27).

### **What is fascism and what isn't? Casual epistemic fascism**

What to think of the beliefs of such Facebook users and where to place them? To what extent and observing which criteria may they justifiably by attributed fascist beliefs? In a highly-publicized article, Fuchs (2017: pp. 228–263) analyses user-generated fascism, which he calls "Fascism 2.0", a more appropriate term than "participatory fascism". Based on Hitler's 127th birthday (20 April 2016) and the fascination of Twitter users, he develops a thesis on the four elements of such fascism: online authoritarianism, online nationalism, online friend-foe scheme, and online patriarchy

and naturalism. Fuchs attributes the fascination with Hitler and the growth of “Fascism 2.0” to the social crisis, which generates fascism.

According to Griffin (1991: p. 201), the “fascist minimum” is represented by three mythic components: the myth of the rebirth, populist ultra-nationalism and the myth of decadence. Today, many radical right wing and extremist movements contain elements of the above and it represents the ideological core of the movements or the parties similar to them. Their desire for ethnic purity and a sort of fundamental order places them alongside of fascism. The fascism of social network users interprets the myth of the rebirth literally, as far as the Führer is concerned: it is Hitler, who needs to be reborn, his time is allegedly coming again. The fascist myth of the rebirth, taken as a palingenetic myth, can be associated with the feeling of a fresh start or regeneration, following a stage of crisis or downturn (Griffin, 1991: pp. 33–35). However, the convictions of Facebook users are not entirely associated with the coming of a new era and a sense of belonging; the evocation of Hitler is rather a practical recipe for what to do with the refugees, so belonging to the established fascist idea is hardly an appropriate designation.

Are there any social and historical idiosyncrasies, typical only in social network users from Slovenia? Even though individual thought patterns cannot be the result of abstract thinking alone, removed from social certainties, historical reminiscence and the political atmosphere, whose composition is heavily influenced by intensive journalistic and media propaganda, the affinity to fascism cannot be directly tied to the Home Guard tradition entirely. Šumi (2015: pp. 28–44) finds that the propaganda drive against Jews by the Home Guard was central to the argumentation of their political programme. General Leon Rupnik certainly could not go without it in all of his published speeches. It also constituted the entire purpose of the political and military alliance with Germany and the Third Reich. Concurrently, allied policies, positions and military actions were, as a rule, subject to sarcasm and ridicule, in particular as these were believed to be the result of falling for the Zionist plot, the disclosure of which and, in turn, destruction was the holy objective of the struggle by the Third Reich and its allies. Similarly, Slovenian partisans were consistently portrayed as a tragically misguided, laughable vigilante movement by a handful of traitors to the Slovenian nation and the Catholic religion, who have voluntarily fallen for the Jewish propaganda and global conspiracy, which blinded them with their fairy-tale of communism. The Home Guard fought with conviction on the side of Germany for the victory of the healthy Aryan race against the Jewish-borne destruction of Europe and all things Slovenian. The Home Guard quisling authorities and its

mouthpieces thought of themselves as privileged participants in an epochal, decisive war against Jews, the Zionists and their global conspiracy, while Hitler and the Third Reich were perceived as the only, last historical opportunity for Europe, Aryans, including Slovenians, civilization and the pure Catholic faith to ward off the cataclysm of the Jewish hell-bent plan.

Similarly, the above mentioned Facebook users cannot be necessarily accused of negationism, i.e. the denial of historical facts against humanity, describing a movement that denies the Nazi genocide over Jews in 1941–1945 (Finkelkraut et al., 1998). In fact, we know nothing about their anti-Semitism, since they only state a fascination over Hitler’s “efficiency”. Pavlič’s research (2015: pp. 245–257) has found that the degree of anti-Semitism and negationism in secondary school students in Slovenia is not negligible. However, methodological prudence dictates that users are not attributed with beliefs that cannot be evidenced. In addition, there is no evidence of their membership in groups or movements that are otherwise considered racist, homophobic, zealot, anti-Semitic, aggressively nationalist or similar, or that they abide by National Socialism in any other form, or employ neo-Nazi iconography. Moreover, we do not know if they have adopted Nazi modes and patterns of operation, such as glorifying one race’s supremacy over others, promulgation of the mythical explanation of the nation’s history, verbal and physical altercations with others, or if they are perhaps organising military training.

Once the above mentioned users are shed of the listed circumstances, their mental allegiance might be termed casual epistemic fascism: the proponents’ system of beliefs still follows the fascist tradition, but only to the extent that they harbour convictions of the success, historical role, and efficiency of fascism, Nazism or national socialism, perceiving the foregoing with casual nostalgia and expectation. Casual epistemic fascism does not represent a political ideal, its followers lack the drive for active engagement, and, in all likelihood, not everyone fosters ambitions and expectations for the coming of a fascist social and political order, since there are not any indications that the Facebook users quoted above might be credited with such inclinations, completely equating them with existing neo-Nazi and other radical ideas on the political right. It seems more likely that they have turned to Hitler with a certain resentment, casually and exclusively out of a need driven by their xenophobic and Islamophobic beliefs. Even though each fascism is based on a system of beliefs and opinions, epistemic fascism may be distinguished from the full-fledged fascism in this respect, as these are not users that are likely to practice the use of fascist symbols in their daily life, or pursue a political agenda. At the same

time, their fascism had been used opportunistically for the purpose of dissemination of own Islamophobic, xenophobic and intolerant attitudes towards the refugees.

In the users' statements, the refugees are not necessarily identified as a threat on a nationalist level through a kind of a patriotic discourse, but have become that Other in a manner, similar to the erased in the past. The difference being that the mythologization of being European is now replaced by its defence: European, that is Judeo-Christian, roots must be defended from the incursion of the alien Islam. The problem is not that we are witnessing a "new racism" in hiding, spoken about by Van Dijk (2000: p. 33), but that we are faced with a direct apology of old racism and fascism.

**Hate Speech, Fascism and the Refugee as the New-age Jew**  
Racism in Slovenia traditionally targets "non-Slovenians", which is a term usually used for the ethnic origin of people coming from the territories of former Yugoslavia, with the standard addition of the Roma people and immigrants (Trplan 2005: p. 226). Jalušič (2015: p. 40), has found that the dominant understanding of racism today is that it represents an ideology, or racist ideology, manifested through speech and the symbols of hatred as one of the key reasons for the focus on hate crimes. A similar conclusion can be drawn about fascism: its historical backdrop is the interpretation of the Nazi totalitarianism and the holocaust as phenomena, whose origin can be traced directly to Nazi ideology (anti-Semitism and racism and Hitler as the extreme irrational zealot), and not some separate new structure of authority that took root in the twentieth century Europe, but it also follows from the thesis of "victory" over fascism in WWII.

Anti-Semitism was replaced by anti-Islamism during the refugee crisis, and the hatred towards Jews by the hatred towards Muslim refugees. The latter have become the new-age Jew. Refugees do not exist, they are outside the realms of social and political subjectivity. Any emotion of empathy is redundant in relationships with them, they do not require help; on the contrary, they must be eliminated: gassed, shot, and murdered. Presented as a homogenous ethnic, national and religious group, their origin, political, or religious beliefs are irrelevant; their homogeneity is constructed and warranted by the simple fact that we need to get rid of them and that Hitler will see to it. The casual epistemic fascism does not generate a discourse of exclusion; instead, it demands a clean, ultimate exclusion in the form of extermination. The refugees as the Other, as opposed to "us", are no different from us, but represent an ultimate threat. Peaceful co-existence and the intermingling of different racial and ethnic groups

are not issues relatable to refugees, but only a radical rejection of every possibility of the former. Being dehumanised, the abstract perception of refugees is that of a threat that needs to be eliminated.

With the outbreak of the refugee crisis in Europe in 2015 and 2016 and the appearance of distinct hate speech in Slovenia in the public discussions on the attitude towards the refugees, two camps were again formed in the heated discussions: numerous figures from the fields of sociology and other humanities, as well as the lay and critical public detected unfathomable cases of, expecting law enforcement authorities to sanction it. Conversely, there were opposing opinions by mostly political and ideological reactions, which had difficulties concealing their mere tolerance of the phenomenon of hatred and hate speech in the spirit of more or less latent xenophobia, mostly under the pretext of safeguarding the freedom of speech, as the result of their ideological or political agenda, or simply out of some economic or other justification of the fear of refugees. In this stalemate, it was the law enforcement institutions that were called upon to be the arbiter, even with regard to sociologically charged interpretations and public diagnosis of the society; for example, the state prosecutors were expected to take action. Public discussions did not bring any significant progress, mostly because of the law enforcement institutions' lack of involvement in the discussions. The first more intensively examined case of a highly publicised tweet of Sebastjan Erlah, a publicist, was reported to the state prosecutor's, but the charges were dismissed. Similar charges were later brought to bear on account of different posts on social networks; however, the results of those proceedings are not in the public domain. When Erlah, acting as a publicist, posted a tweet on his Twitter account, saying that Middle Eastern refugees must be ambushed at the border and shot ("I have a more radical idea: allow them up to 500m of the border. Anything closer than that and shot them all, God will know his own."), this was followed by numerous other examples, and keeping up with the tone (Vezjak, 2017).

The Slovenian public was also able to follow a website called Zlovenia for a few months, whose anonymous author was attempting to identify the authors of similar hate posts. Below is a small sample of the statements by social network users, mainly Facebook, posted at the site: "Shoot, and once ten are down, they are guaranteed not dragging themselves to Europe anymore," "Good enough for killing only," "If I see one nigger in Prevalje, I'll slaughter him," "It's 'bout time that the people get a licence to kill economic migrants," "Let's slaughter us some ragheads," "Any Muslim is a terrorist by default," "Shoot every one in three as a warning," "Put all the migrants under a sort of dome, then just gas 'em, or let loose a hail of bullets,"

and similar. The number of very specific and identified cases is staggering; actually, these were not cases of particular hate speech, but its mass outburst (Vežjak, 2017). It stood to reasons that the state prosecutor's office would provide a sensible explanation as to why they had not taken action, even though criminal charges were raised.

In their analysis of the language of the "anti-Semitic mind" in present-day modern Germany, Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz (2017: p. xiv) find that the World Wide Web has become the largest and most influential propagator of anti-Jewish statements, in particular in social media:

"You ugly little Jews, mankind's rats, one should gas all genetically declared Jewish criminals." Or, "The Jews are to be blamed for everything. Therefore we should eliminate the Jews, in whatever way we can." These are two examples among thousands in online comments, in chat forums, on Twitter accounts, on Facebook, and so on.

They also list some cases that bear a strong resemblance with the quoted users from Slovenia – insofar as these refer to Jews: "Its time again for proper Aryans to turn on the gas! [. . .] HEIL HITLER!" (Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, 2017: p. 131), "I'm going to give you a grand gassing in Auschwitz!" (Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, 2017: p. 251), or "It's getting to be time again for proper Aryans to turn on the gas!" (Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, 2017: p. 268). Sometimes, the use of gas is aimed at Israelis, too: "The Israelis are the rats of the world and should one and all be poisoned with Zyklon gas, the way you do with rats" (Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, 2016: p. 268). Such anti-Semitic discourse has largely doubled up on anti-Muslim today. In his analysis of islamophobia, Lean (2017: p. 66) highlights the significant surge of anti-Islamism and the role of social networks in this regard:

Conversations about the anti-Muslim blogosphere cannot overlook the role of social media. Indeed, without it, write-ups about Muslim-led violence and the threatening cloud of 'Islamic extremism' that are so dominant on the Internet today would not enjoy the traction and success that they do. Social media replaces traditional advertising. While Facebook has been influential in the past, it is Twitter that, more recently, stands out as the platform that is so crucial to getting Islamophobic messages out to the masses.

Kompatsiaris and Mylonas (2015) detect a significant linguistic similarity between anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hatred in the membership of the Greek extremist party called Golden Dawn, that some consider fascist: the vocabulary, as in the case of Hitler's Germany, is aimed at migrants, Jews and Bolsheviks, who contain an element of "impurity" and

threaten to destroy the nation. Undeniably, the fires of the anti-refugee political propaganda are in a large part stoked by politicians; Stanley (2018: p. 92) makes a detailed report on Trump's completely fabricated accusation of Mexican refugees being rapists. Casual epistemic fascism and racism is indisputably the result of international migrations, creating an increasingly nationally and ethnically heterogeneous society. Intolerance, the creation of stereotypes, the division to "us" and "them", discrimination and new racism, which is adopting the ideas of the Third Reich and the fascination with Hitler are based on national, religious and ethnic identities. Bučar Ručman (2014) finds that the ideological machinery of a state is a key player in the (re)production and dissemination of (neo)racism, the discourse of Otherness, stereotypes and prejudice, operating behind the curtain of such a discourse upon which discriminatory and racist social practices are founded. At the same time, the recourse to hatred and the division between "us" and "them" follows from the feeling of being endangered, direct assault, rape, terrorist attack, the expected loss of jobs and abuse of subsidies in the destination country.

Casual epistemic fascism as a form of hate speech is certainly based on social stereotypes on refugees; the formation of a feeling of threat from a Muslim invasion took place through the processes of attribution of characteristics based on group membership and not individual traits. The paranoia, so typical of islamophobia, is propped up by the dichotomy between the external Other, perceived as an enemy, and an internal saviour. The framework of such a dichotomous division is also the birthing plane of a homogenous demand for a super "us" that would face off with the imagined enemy. The evocation of Hitler by means of a wide-spread political and media propaganda is the logical, though radical, offspring of the psychopolitics of hatred, permanently fostered by certain political parties in Slovenia and their media.

## Conclusion

On 27 January 1945, the Red Army liberated one of the worst Nazi concentration camps – Auschwitz in Poland. At least 1.6 million Jews, Roma, Slavs and other "lesser" peoples died there. Auschwitz is also the final resting place of 1,351 Slovenians. At its session on 1 November 2005, the General Assembly of the United Nations designated Auschwitz liberation day as the Annual International Day of Commemoration to Honour Holocaust Victims. The Slovenian government designated in 2008 27 January as the National Holocaust Remembrance Day. Slovenians, too, remember the holocaust as a terrible experience of the unhuman, the beastly, the experience of ethnic cleansing and a history of extermination. According to Alič

(2018), almost 13,000 Slovenians died in Italian, German, Croatian and Hungarian concentration camps, of which the majority in Risieria di San Sabba in Trieste, a sub-camp of Auschwitz, – over four thousand. During WWII, almost 59,000 Slovenians were interred in concentration camps, of which 36,000 in the Italian camps of Rab, Gonars, Renicci and Visco.

What is the horizon of beliefs and judgements of this world, adopted by those who in 2015 and even today want a repeat of the experience, calling for new extermination in the case of the refugees and offering “migration through the stacks?” Copsey (2018) finds that, in political science today, the line separating the radical right and fascist is hard to define. He believes that the (neo)fascism of the past is the best way to understand the modern radical right, but this chain of reasoning is missing a link. One part of this link is the casual epistemic fascism, wearing the disguise of many forms of adoration of the Third Reich, and expressed in the belief that the time is coming for Hitler to walk among us. The distinction between the causal epistemic and the full-fledged fascism may explain the magnitude of the phenomenon: the rise of radical movements, right wing popularise, nationalism across Europe and the world cannot be explained by counting actions and memberships alone. It also allows for a more serious consideration of fascism even when fascism appears at the level of individuals’ convictions, and even when it is remedied, though treated it with insufficient gravity and due analysis, upon detection on social networks.

In 1995 Umberto Eco wrote:

Ur-fascism is still present, sometimes, even surprisingly in the open. It would be a lot easier for us, if someone appeared and said: ‘I want to reopen Auschwitz, I want the Black Shirts to parade the squares of Italy again.’ Life is not that simple. Ur-fascism may return in the meekest of disguises. It is our duty to expose it and point a finger at any of its new versions – each and every day and in every corner of the world.

Eco’s choice, the one he considered easier, is before us: this paper lists sufficient evidence of the existence of not just ur-fascism as a structural reality, but even in the form of a desire to reawaken and reopen concentration camps; and we should not be lulled by the fact that it is present amongst Facebook users alone. Erlah’s example explains why, for reasons that are incomprehensible, we cannot prosecute and limit fascism in accordance with our criminal legislation. In this regard, it is imperative that we be guided by methodological inhibitions. It is not just that there are not any substantial reasons to believe that the philosophy of life of the mentioned Facebook users harbours “full-fledged” convictions on the imperative of fascist transformation of Europe and the arrival of a saviour in the guise



of Hitler; no, in all likelihood, the users carry no such convictions. On the other hand, the declaration of their position on the level of utterances cannot be neglected: the enthusiasm over the Führer, gas chambers and concentrations camps, which are to be reused. These remain their core message; one whose significance must not and cannot be simply waved off as empty talk, nor can it be examined separated from the social and media practices in which flirting with fascist leaders and the subscription to their ideas seems to be becoming the norm. Or, as Timothy Snyder (2018) ominously wrote: “Some Americans ask: What is wrong with the Internet? Others ask: Can fascism return? These questions are the same question.”

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