

Homeland: British fascism fractures

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Executive summary

- > **Fascist party Patriotic Alternative (PA) has undergone a catastrophic split, marking the end of PA's reign as the largest and most significant fascist group in the UK**
- > **We expect Homeland will pose a serious threat to social cohesion nationally and in the areas they target for community organising.**
- > **PA's growth has stagnated and there is widespread frustration among party organisers about a lack of political direction from the leadership**
- > **PA's former national administration officer, Kenny Smith, has led a large breakaway faction to form a new neo-Nazi party called Homeland**
- > **Homeland's inaugural meeting was held on 20 April, a date celebrated by neo-Nazis around the world as the anniversary of Adolf Hitler's birthday**
- > **Homeland intend to register as a political party by stealth, using a fake name and officers unknown to the authorities to deceive the Electoral Commission**

A catastrophic split

“There’s definitely not a split”

Laura Towler, PA deputy leader

Fascist party Patriotic Alternative (PA) has undergone a catastrophic split, likely marking the end of PA’s brief reign as the largest and most significant fascist group in the UK. Kenny Smith, the now former national administration officer for PA, has led a large breakaway faction including a majority of PA’s regional organisers and dozens of officers, to form a new party called Homeland. PA leaders have been locked out of activists’ group chats and defectors have retained control of regional PA bank accounts.

During an emergency meeting on 20 April, PA leader Mark Collett made desperate pleas for PA organisers and activists not to leave. PA’s deputy leader Laura Melia claimed that the split “makes us look absolutely stupid”, and another member described the split as a “disaster”. An audibly hoarse Collett claimed that the prospect of a split “breaks my heart. It gives me sleepless nights. I am very worn down. I am very tired”. Collett claimed that he had the “utmost respect” for Smith and other defectors, and that “if we can shake hands and agree on things, I would happily wipe the slate clean and say it’s water under the bridge”.



PA leader Mark Collett

Behind the scenes, the remaining PA leadership have accused Smith of disloyalty and of leading an “insurrection”. Meanwhile, Smith and other defectors have accused the PA leadership of incompetence, and

being too focused on livestreaming - a major source of income for Collett and Melia - and social events, to the neglect of political organising.

Smith was a central figure in a major split within the British National Party (BNP) in 2008, and has been accused of leaking the BNP’s membership list by former BNP leader Nick Griffin. One of the defectors, former East Midlands regional organiser for PA, Anthony Burrows (aka ‘Anglofolk’), claimed he “wouldn’t be surprised” if the PA membership database - which Smith has until now been responsible for managing - was leaked in the future and defectors were blamed.

“Lack of direction”

During Homeland’s inaugural meeting on the evening of 20 April, a date celebrated by neo-Nazis around the world as the anniversary of Adolf Hitler’s birthday, Smith issued a scathing critique of the PA leadership. Smith revealed that PA’s growth has stagnated during the past two years and described deep-seated frustration among regional organisers and officers towards the party leadership.

Smith criticised “the lack of political direction, lack of political focus, the lack of progress on becoming a registered political party, [the lack of] any support for people who want to do community politics”, stating that “the membership and vetting seems to be a constant source of conflict” and that “communication within the organisation is terrible”. According to Smith, Collett “makes no effort to work with his team. He does not know his regional organisers” and Laura Melia “has no interest in [PA] being a political party”.

During the meeting former PA West Midlands regional organiser, Connor Marlow, claimed: “Yesterday PA died. Yesterday every activist worth his salt came along. Yesterday every officer with political ambition came to us. We are the future of nationalism. PA has got no more political aims. Everyone with political aims left yesterday. The leadership have none.”

Other defectors criticised Collett and Melia as being unsuited to lead, with Collett's continued focus on "[live] streaming, playing video games [and] reviewing books" to the neglect of political organising a particular source of frustration. In response to such criticisms, Collett claimed he had missed his daughter's third birthday to attend a PA protest against a drag event.

Disagreements over vetting

PA were forced to introduce strict vetting practices during 2020, after several of their events were disrupted by anti-fascists. In August 2020, PA's fledgling London regional group were ambushed and had their banner stolen by anti-fascists during an attempted early morning banner drop in Trafalgar Square. That October, a joint London and South East region event was disrupted, causing the then South East regional organiser Theo Wilmot to leave PA shortly afterwards.

The following month, PA's deputy leader Laura Melia and her husband and Yorkshire regional organiser, Sam Melia, were confronted by anti-fascists while leafleting near Rotherham. In PA's emergency meeting on Thursday 20 April, Laura Melia claimed that: "I used to go every Saturday to these events, thinking to myself, 'Am I going to get my head kicked in? Have we given our location to antifa or journalists or what?' And it got to the point where we were like, 'We just can't do this, because we're risking our safety every weekend.'"

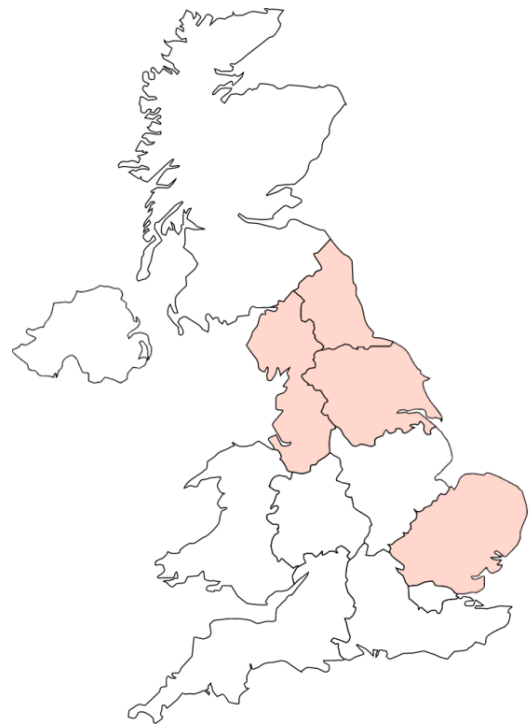
The strict new vetting measures for prospective members imposed and overseen by Smith have been contentious and are central to the split which appears to be fatal for PA. Before they could be added to PA group chats on encrypted messaging app Telegram or attend any events, prospective members had to show a driver's licence or passport, proof of address such as a recent utility bill, and receive a home visit by a regional organiser or officer.

The introduction of such measures caused several existing activists to leave PA and has severely hampered the organisation's ability to grow. Some supporters, whose family members did not share their worldview, were unwilling to receive home visits; others were reluctant to share their personal IDs (which Smith retained on file), fearing that were they to be leaked it would jeopardise their reputations and employment. Following PA's recent

turn to public protests around 'migrant hotels' and drag events, Collett proposed relaxing these measures in favour of what he termed a more "common sense" approach - a move opposed by Smith who favours the "high trust community" he believes is guaranteed by strict vetting.

Following the split, key remaining figures in PA include:

- > Mark Collett (leader and company director)
- > Laura Melia (deputy leader and company director)
- > Steve Blake (East of England regional organiser and company director)
- > Sam Melia (Yorkshire regional organiser)
- > Steven Wilson and Phoebe Hoare (North East regional organisers)
- > Stephen Thomson aka 'Chief Moody' (now Scotland regional organiser)
- > Joe Butler aka 'Joe Marsh' (former Wales regional organiser)



Four regions' organisers have stayed with PA.

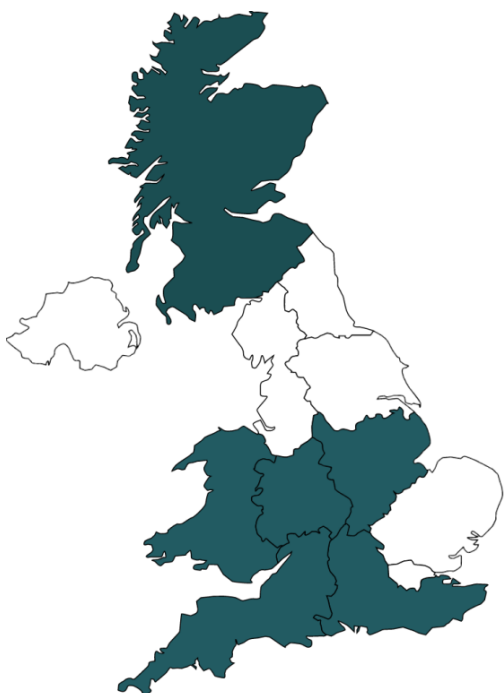
Homeland

A majority of PA's regional organisers and officers have defected to Smith's new party, Homeland, which aims to differentiate itself from PA through a renewed focus on registering as a political party, "community politics" and contesting local elections, with less focus on what Smith describes as online content creation "for the sake of it".

Defectors include regional organisers and every officer from Scotland, East Midlands and West Midlands regions, as well as regional organisers from Wales, the South East and South West. Officers from almost every region, including Yorkshire (Collett and Melia's own region) have also defected, as well as two thirds of PA's website team.

Central to the split is the defectors' ambition to win political power at local and regional levels. According to Smith, Homeland will take a "focused approach to winning power, taking control of budgets and policymaking in places. And that can be as simple as parent councils, parish councils, but ultimately we want local authority, and then who knows beyond that".

Six PA regional organisers have defected to Homeland.



The reemergence of British fascism saw a new generation of British fascists gather around PA. The defectors

breaking away to form Homeland are even more explicit about attempting to replicate the BNP's successes.

"Squeaky clean"

"Optics will be a big focus as we effectively have a clean slate."

Homeland statement of aims

Homeland aims to present a "squeaky clean" public image from the outset, believing they have a "clean slate for optics" without Collett, who was the subject of two embarrassing documentaries in the early 2000s and was later photographed next to a swastika-tattooed ex-girlfriend.

PA's image had also been tarnished by the group's links with National Action (NA), a neo-Nazi group proscribed as a terrorist organisation in 2016. Multiple PA activists had been members or supporters of NA before its proscription; so far, none of these activists have identified themselves as supporters of Homeland.

While PA have attempted to mask their neo-Nazism, it has always been clear under the surface and in adjacent online spaces. PA's website is littered with references to the "Jewish Question" and the "White Genocide" conspiracy theory. PA activists' social media output is crawling with extreme racism, Holocaust denial, veneration of Hitler, and celebration of Nazi atrocities and far-right terrorism.

These extreme elements have particularly flourished under the leadership of Kenny Smith. A 2022 investigation by The Ferret revealed Smith had been using a Telegram group called Scottish Identity to recruit what he called "true" National Socialists into PA Scotland. Members of this group shared pictures of weapons caches, made Nazi salutes, and called for "guerilla warfare".

Homeland will likely take more care to obfuscate their underlying politics and attempt to reject the neo-Nazi label. The PA organisers who have defected are experienced at publicly staying 'on message' and restricting open expressions of their worldview to private conversations. Smith has suggested that Homeland will continue to use social media and livestreams, and will aim to evade the social media bans that have befallen

PA by keeping their output “professional”. Smith has also suggested that Homeland will adopt a code of conduct stricter than PA’s, which forbids the use of racial slurs and the endorsement of terrorism.

Since defecting from PA, some members of Homeland have ditched their online aliases and anonymous profile pictures for their real names and photographs. With aspirations to move away from the online ecosystem of content creators that has converged around Collett and PA, and towards local community organising, it is likely that Homeland will aim to have the majority of its activists using their real identities for political activism. Homeland will institute a two-tier membership system, with a paid but otherwise unvetted membership, and a strictly vetted “activist corps”.

Registering as a political party by stealth?

Homeland intends to register as a political party by stealth, using a fake party name and officers unknown to the authorities to deceive the Electoral Commission (EC) into approving their application. In a leaked recording of Homeland’s inaugural meeting, Smith claimed the party is already in the process of submitting an application to the EC. Smith boasted: “We have got a team of people who are putting an application in at the moment that are not well-known nationalists who might be on the radar.”

“We’ll be putting in an application that does not look like it’s connected to anybody else, and it won’t even be under the Homeland name, initially. It is far easier to change a political party’s name after the fact than it is to get it registered, and I think if we went straight in with “Homeland” and well known personalities, we’d probably face exactly the same struggles as Patriotic Alternative [...] So, yeah, the tactic is basically to get registered essentially with unknowns”

Kenny Smith

“Community politics”

“You can’t have a proper community if you don’t control the levers of power in that community, and PA has put no effort whatsoever into achieving that. So that’s really what we want to do here with Homeland”

Kenny Smith

Homeland has explicitly stated they will attempt to replicate the successes of the BNP by standing candidates in local elections. The BNP was the most successful British fascist organisation ever, gaining over 50 local councillors during the 2000s and winning nearly a million votes in the 2009 European Elections. They achieved this by targeting predominantly white wards in council elections. The BNP became the opposition in Burnley and Barking & Dagenham councils, and came close to taking control of the council in Stoke-on-Trent.

That era of British fascist electoralism began in the late 1990s when Nick Griffin became BNP leader. The party began targeting disenfranchised white working class communities in post-industrial areas, where the BNP would engage in community organising before standing candidates in local elections.

During this period, the BNP started to hide their anti-Semitism and shifted the focus of their propaganda to demonising refugees and Muslims. They attempted to exploit racial divisions in Northern former mill towns which had large Asian communities and high levels of unemployment.

One of the books published by Smith’s Claymore Books imprint points to this as a strategy Homeland will attempt to replicate. Some of Homeland’s organisers and activists have already gained experience in community organising through PA’s campaigning, particularly around ‘migrant hotels’ and they have announced their intention to continue this activity with a renewed focus.

Homeland: Key figures

Kenny Smith



Location:

Currently based in Broadford, Skye

Originally from the Isle of Lewis

Former affiliations:

- > **Patriotic Alternative**
National administration officer
- > **British National Party (BNP)**
Head of administration

Veteran British fascist Kenny Smith, from Broadford, Skye, is the driving force behind the creation of Homeland, which was sparked by his resignation as PA's national administration officer in April 2023. Smith is likely to become the chairman of Homeland but has stated he does not see himself as a "political leader" for the new party. While Smith's mantra is "optics matter", he is best known for waving a swastika flag in his garden on Hitler's birthday, and in November 2022, pled guilty to firearms offences.

Smith has been involved in British fascism since 1991 when he joined the BNP in Glasgow. Smith claims to have initially been a skinhead and a fan of neo-Nazi bands including Skrewdriver and Brutal Attack, who sparked his interest in the BNP and National Front. After becoming the BNP regional organiser for the Highlands & Islands, Smith was rapidly promoted, going on to become the party's Scottish secretary then head of administration. While in the BNP, Smith contested elections for the party on several occasions.

Smith was involved in PA from the organisation's beginning, initially as the Scottish administration officer and then the national administration officer. Smith was involved in the provision of physical security at PA events, and has been pictured at PA conferences wearing a 'security' lanyard and Secret Service-style coiled earpiece. Former BNP leader Nick Griffin has written that as a key player in PA's Scotland region, Smith was "closely associated with the organisation's only real bunch of 'hard men'".

Smith also appears to have been central to PA's limited counter-surveillance efforts. Documents leaked in August 2021 by a disgruntled former PA member implicate Smith and other PA Scotland members in a covert project attempting to infiltrate left-wing groups and compile a "hit list" of anti-fascist activists. Leaked voice notes from

the same period appear to show Smith trying to convince another PA activist to commit identity fraud in order to obtain the details of a suspected anti-fascist infiltrator. Smith's Twitter activity reveals a deranged fixation on anti-fascist counter-protestors.

In March 2022, Smith launched his own far-right publishing business, Claymore Books. Claymore's first publication was *Hammer of the Patriot*, a guide for neo-Nazis on how to argue in favour of ethnonationalism

and against democracy, multiculturalism, feminism and LGBTQ+ rights. The book, which was formerly promoted by the now-banned neo-Nazi terrorist group National Action (NA), is authored by "Charles Chapel" (real name Gabriel Sohler Chaput), a former moderator of the now-defunct forum Iron March, which was linked to a wave of murders and groups including NA and Atomwaffen Division. The book refers to the Holocaust as "a ridiculous myth" and states that "Jews are a big problem in white society"

Anthony Burrows (aka 'Anglofolk')



Location:
Derbyshire

Former affiliations:

- > **Patriotic Alternative**
East Midlands regional organiser

Anthony Burrows chaired the first meeting of Homeland on 20 April and seems likely to fill a senior role within the new party. Burrows, who uses the online pseudonym 'Anglofolk' and hails from a village close to Alfreton in Derbyshire, was until last week PA's East Midlands regional organiser. Burrows is the director of an engineering services company.

Burrows previously ran a Telegram channel with over 1,000 subscribers, which he used to give neo-Nazis practical tips on topics from shopping to cyber-security. The channel has promoted another which contains terrorist manifestos.

A significant part of Burrow's far-right activism has been encouraging fascists to boycott the products and services of Jewish and ethnic minority-owned businesses, and to develop a parallel economy. Burrows created a number of social media accounts using the 'Anglofolk' pseudonym in October 2019. His posts venerated Adolf Hitler and Oswald Mosley, and frequently referenced anti-Semitic memes.

After we revealed his identity in August 2021, Burrows had his firearms licence revoked by Derbyshire Constabulary. The following year Burrows took it upon himself to personally organise PA's national camp in Lathkill Dale so as to avoid PA activists being "stalked by reds with long range lenses". We photographed it anyway.

Connor Marlow



Location:
Staffordshire

Former affiliations:

- > **Patriotic Alternative**
West Midlands regional organiser

Marlow was a rising star within PA and his ascent within the British far right looks set to continue in Homeland. Formerly PA's West Midlands regional organiser, Marlow broke the news of the split by posting on Facebook that he was "no longer affiliated" with PA: "I have resigned my position as west mids regional organiser as has every member of my west Midlands team".

Despite living 30 miles away in Stoke-on-Trent, Marlow has until now been the public face of PA's campaign against 'migrant hotels' in Cannock, Staffordshire, where he has been organising protests and administering a Facebook group with over 500 members. Marlow will continue to campaign in Cannock under the Homeland banner.

Marlow has been supporting independent candidate David Hyden who is standing in the forthcoming local election in the Cannock South ward. Smith has said that "we've got a man going to be a local candidate" in Cannock.

Jerome O'Reilly



Location:
Cardiff

Former affiliations:

- > **Patriotic Alternative**
Wales regional organiser

Jerome O'Reilly from Cardiff was briefly PA's regional organiser for Wales, making his first public appearance as PA Wales' regional organiser in March 2023 at a protest in Llantwit Major, where PA were heavily outnumbered by counter-protestors. During the protest, O'Reilly ranted about an "internationalist, Zionist system" over a poor quality loudspeaker. It is likely that O'Reilly will be Homeland's regional organiser for Wales.

O'Reilly had been involved in PA since at least July 2021, where we photographed him alongside Anthony Burrows at PA's national camp and hike in Edale. O'Reilly was deputy head boy of Radyr Comprehensive School in Cardiff before attending the University of Bath, where he was a member of the skiing club.

Simon Crane (aka 'Si Borg')



Location:
West Lothian

Former affiliations:

- > **Patriotic Alternative**
Scotland regional organiser

English butcher Simon Crane from Broxburn, West Lothian, is PA's former Scotland regional organiser and is likely to fulfil that role for Homeland. Crane, who uses the online pseudonym 'Si Borg', has until now co-hosted the weekly 'PA Talk' livestream alongside Jamie Brown (aka 'Mean Peem'). Commenting on a livestream on Friday 21 April, Crane claimed that PA's lax vetting system allowed James Shand - who in December 2020 we exposed as a convicted child sex offender, and former employee and housemate of PA's London regional organiser Nicholas Hill (aka 'Cornelius') - to attend the group's "family friendly" events.

Claire Ellis (aka 'OurClaire')



Location:
Isle of Skye

Former affiliations:

- > **Patriotic Alternative**
South West regional organiser

Ellis is Smith's fiancé and is expected to play a key role behind the scenes in Homeland. Ellis is the former regional organiser for PA's South West branch and was a key figure in directing supporters towards regional PA groups during the organisation's early days.

We revealed Ellis's real identity in July 2021 while she was working as a delivery driver in Teignmouth, Devon. She then started a "nationalist" soap company which she owns and operates. Ellis left the South West and moved to Scotland where she became engaged to Kenny Smith, who proposed on stage during a PA conference.

Ellis has only been involved in the British far right since 2016. She was initially a supporter of former English Defence league leader Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka 'Tommy Robinson') before joining PA. Ellis was introduced to fascism by 'Yuro' from The Absolute State of Britain (TASOB) podcast, which helped to advertise PA to British neo-Nazis.

Simon Shepherd



Location:
West Yorkshire

Former affiliations:

- > **Patriotic Alternative**
West Yorkshire local contact

Another defector to Homeland is Simon Shepherd from Holmfirth, formerly a local contact for PA in West Yorkshire and one of the PA Yorkshire region's longest-serving and most active members. Shepherd was a member of the short-lived fascist fitness group White Stag Athletic Club (WSAC), who performed Nazi salutes on top of Glyder Fawr in Snowdonia, Wales, in 2022. The leader of WSAC, founding host of the TASOB podcast, Ashley Sharp (aka 'Ash' and 'Sarge'), is currently awaiting trial for terrorism offences. We expect Shepherd will be in contention to become Homeland's Yorkshire regional organiser.

Analysis and prospects for the future

While splits on the far-right are often a cause for celebration for anti-fascists, the emergence of Homeland presents new dangers. PA have created a new generation of British fascist activists and introduced them to political organising, many for the first time. This generation is now breaking free from PA's leadership and forming an organisation intent on winning political power - something PA has never seriously attempted.

Homeland represents a distillation of PA's most dangerous elements into something harder, more serious and better organised. Those who have defected from PA include competent neo-Nazi organisers with experience of running PA on the ground in their regions, while Collett and Melia were live-streaming from their homes. They have left PA because Collett and Melia were disinterested in the changes they wanted to make to the organisation to make it a more effective vehicle for neo-Nazis to seize power in the UK. By forming Homeland, they have created a vehicle where they can attempt to enact these changes.

It is important to emphasise that both Homeland and PA are neo-Nazis and fascists: Holocaust denial and Hitler worship is rife among members of both organisations. This split is not ideological in nature - rather, it is the result of differences in strategy and approaches to organising.

Collett and Smith are both polarising figures within the British far right who have made plenty of enemies in their decades of fascist activity. However, Smith carries slightly less baggage than Collett and has already stated he will not attempt to become the "political leader" of Homeland. With Smith operating in the background, it is possible that Homeland will be able to attract more of the thousands of former BNP members.

While PA's growth can largely be attributed to the sizeable audiences of the far-right content creators in Collett's orbit and Collett's use of YouTube to spread his worldview, Homeland does not yet appear to have attracted any such influencers to its ranks. Homeland seeks to distinguish itself from PA in part through an emphasis on real-world political organising and as

such, is unlikely to benefit from the support of Google's YouTube platform which PA received in its early days.

By creating a "safe space" for fascists to meet, network and organise in private, PA was successful in bringing online audiences into real world activism - however it appears to have hit a ceiling in this regard. Homeland no longer needs YouTube's support in creating a new generation of British fascists: they are already reaping the rewards. Their goal is now seizing power at a local and regional level.

Until recently PA was largely inward looking, focusing on organising social events and conferences for its members, attempting to develop their confidence and foster personal relationships. The activists breaking away from PA to form Homeland were the PA members driving the community organising in places such as Cannock Chase in Staffordshire. Most of the defectors to Homeland - including regional organisers and officers - have limited or no experience in local politics and it remains to be seen how successful they will be. Through Smith they have access to the institutional experience of British fascists.

Homeland will present new challenges for anti-fascists who have struggled to adapt to PA's "community building" model. Prior to the emergence of PA, British fascists were restricted to poorly-attended secret meetings in pubs and hotels and working men's clubs. Street protests were rare and opposed by significant numbers of anti-fascists when they did occur. PA have changed this; there are now fascist events happening across Britain every weekend, in addition to regular fascist-led protests since PA's turn back to the streets. Homeland is entering a very different political landscape to the one in which PA was created. The cost of living crisis and government rhetoric about refugees and the transphobic bile of the culture wars have created a toxic environment where a party like Homeland could thrive. Preventing them from benefiting from these conditions needs to become the top priority for anti-fascists. Homeland is now the most dangerous group on the British far right.

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