The Extreme Right Before 1980

The Radical/Populist/Extreme Right in Western Europe
Introduction

Review/Preview

The Interwar Extreme Right

Pre-1914

Right-Wing Movements in Interwar Europe

Right-Wing Regimes

The Extreme Right after the War

Conclusion
Current Events

Austria:
- Deputy mayor of Braunau forced to resign from Freedom Party over "rat poem"
- Party secretary threatens journalist with "consequences" in TV interview

Today: meeting of Le Pen, Wilders, Okamura, others in Prague

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Current Events

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Last week’s class question

- In teams of five students, pick one right-wing party you are reasonably familiar with and answer these questions
  1. Are they nativist?
  2. Are they extremist?
  3. Are they populist?
  4. Are they authoritarian?

- Designate one person to keep notes
Last week:

- Attempts to define and label the relevant party family
- Mudde’s 2007 typology now standard
  - Lowest common denominator: Radical Right (nativist)
  - Many of them populist (elite/people dichotomy)
  - Very few of them extreme/extremist (openly fighting democracy)
- New (post-1980) parties operate in different environment, so different from Interwar Extreme Right
- What was the Interwar Extreme Right?
The long, liberal 19th century
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- Liberals
  - Protect property, freed trade, (new) upper and middle classes
  - Often suspicious of democracy, working classes, mass suffrage
  - End of the century: liberal parliaments in place in many states
  - Distrust of mass politics
The long, liberal 19th century

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- Conservatives
  - Against liberal (and further reforms)
  - Restauration of old regimes
  - Sometimes pretty authoritarian
  - Not very nationalistic, political ambitions of mostly moderate scale
  - *Distrust of mass politics*
- By and large: an age of rationality and positivism
Backlash against rationality

- A small, heterogeneous intellectual movement against rationality
- In favour of emotions, heroism, mysticism, paganism, violence, action, nationalism
- + Social Darwinism
- + New Anti-Semitism
- A *revolutionary*, new right that wants to restore an imagined, glorified past, not the old system
- Very much a minority culture; the seeds of future Fascism
- In some countries (e.g. France), harbingers of future mass movements
Democracy in Interwar Europe

- End of “Long 19th Century”
- 1919 peace settlement → Democratic Nation State as model for Europe (Wilson’s 14 points)
  - Many new States
  - Many newly Democratic States
  - Advent of mass politics
- Opposition from old elites and large segments of society
- Russian revolution → threat of working class radicalisation
- “Democracy without democrats”
- Ethnic tensions in many states + discontent (peace settlement)
- Massive economic crises
The Interwar Right

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- Plus a “new”, radical, potentially violent right and revolutionary right
  - Largely driven by veterans and war supporters
  - Traumatised/form by war experience
  - Extreme levels of pointless violence, nationalism
  - A shared experience of struggle + male bonding, contempt for politics as usual
  - Unlike most of the old right: a mass movement
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- Summary: the right
  - At best ambivalent, usually hostile towards democracy
  - Mad about the threat of a Communist/Socialist revolution
  - Hate for Liberalism, Social Democracy, Communism
Democracy → Authoritarian Rule

- Portugal
- Spain
- Austria
- . . .
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- ...
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- Sometimes *suppressed the new right* (to bold, bad for business, to proletarian etc.) – Portugal
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- Sometimes tried to *use the new right* – never a good idea → Italy, Germany
The master case: Italian Fascism I

- Italy before the war: a “liberal” (elite-dominated) constitutional monarchy
- After the war:
  - Italy (the right) not satisfied with territorial gains
  - Intense social, economic, political conflict
  - A lust for rebellion, heroism, a “breaking of the mould” amongst the returning war-generation
- Former Socialist journalist Mussolini creates Fascist movement in 1919
- *Not* a very elaborated/homogeneous ideology, rather a rebellion against “weak”, “foreign”, rational systems (Marxism, Liberalism etc.)
Italian Fascism II

- Radical change/reform including land reform, nationalisation etc.
- Improve situation of workers/peasants
- “Direct Action”
- Anti-socialist/communist; a national socialism
- Glorification of Italian/Roman past and future
- Morally conservative
- Different streams, Mussolini extremely flexible
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- *Not interested* in biological racism, anti-semitism
- Disproportionately high number of Jewish members and sponsors
Fascism III

- Fascism struggled in 1919; sponsored by Northern businessmen
- 1920/21 Fascism becomes even more anti-socialist, less revolutionary
- Tens, then hundreds of thousands of members
- Leaders willing to compromise with established elites; Fascist party in 1921
- 1922: Mussolini PM, more or less at the invitation of established right
- Rise by no means inevitable, long period of consolidation (1922-25)
- In many ways, a model for other European countries
“National Socialism”

- Similar but different
- Partly influenced by Mussolini’s style, methods, ideas
  - + Violent anti-semitism
  - + Biological racism
  - + even more radical social Darwinism
  - + Pan-Germanism
Fascism in Italy

- Mussolini declared a dictatorship in 1925
- Embraced the label “totalitarian” and “corporative”
- Cult of the leader (Duce)
Fascism in Italy

- Strong state, relatively weak party
- Church, crown and army co-operated but remained intact
- Totalitarian rule limited in practice
- Imperial war in Ethiopia, involvement in Spanish Civil War (1936), Balkans (from 1940) → Radicalisation and international backlash
Fascism in Italy

- Relatively modest levels of political violence
- No radical transformation of society/economy; no total war effort
- Racial legislation and persecution of Jews only introduced from late 1930s (to please/appease Germans)
- Racism largely unpopular with party, army, population
- One of the highest Jewish survival rates even after German occupation (1943), even in Italian war zones
The “Third Reich”

- Decisive move against relics of old right, Hitler’s supremacy constitutionalised
- Institutions of state and society soon under complete party control
- Highly aggressive foreign and racial policies
- Ultimately, the far-reaching “nazification” of German society
- Then largely successful creation of an European Empire based on race
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- Atrocities at home + subordination of so many countries → Extreme Right politically infeasible for decades to come
Extreme Right parties in post-war Western Europe

Germany:
- Host of successor parties; most successful banned in 1952
- Revival 1964-69 (NPD)
- Never got rid of Nazi image, no new ideas, few new members

Italy:
- "Italian Social Movement" founded in 1946 by Ex-Fascists
- Co-operation with centre right until 1960 (Genoa congress)
- MSI isolated for many years
- Splinter groups, but party moderately successful
- Towards "post-fascist" party from early 1990s (Fini), later: merger with Forza Italia

Austria:
- 1949: V/WdU ("Union of Independents", German nationalists)
- Supported by socialist party for strategic reasons
- More moderate/liberal since mid-1960s
- Until 1986
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The Extreme Right, old and new

- Many 3rd-wave parties connected to 2nd (post-war) and 1st (inter-war) right
  - Germany: many old NSDAP members, concerns about German “honor”, territorial losses, racial purity
  - Austria: German nationalists, neo-nazis etc.
  - Italy: literally, a neo-fascist party
  - France: Catholic fundamentalism, colonial war, Poujadist movement
  - UK (NF): Racism, “British Fascism”, “national socialism”
  - Spain: Falange parties
  - Flanders: Racism, Flemish corporatism

- But many of the new/most successful: not
  - Freedom parties in Denmark and Norway, Netherlands
  - LPF in Netherlands
  - Lega Nord
The Extreme Right, old and new

- Who would proudly call themselves “totalitarian” today?
- Who is *openly* racist?
- Who dares to openly attack democracy?
Conclusion

▶ 1920s/30s: Democracy in a hostile environment
▶ The Interwar right
  ▶ Conservative/authoritarian
  ▶ “Revolutionary”
  ▶ Co-operation against democracy
▶ Today:
  ▶ Democracy “the only game in town” for most people in Western Europe
  ▶ Crude racism unacceptable for most people
  ▶ No revolutionary left
  ▶ Right mostly pacified
▶ Not a return of the Fuhrers, Duces, Caudillos . . .
▶ Something more subtle
Class questions

► How are the two manifestos different from what you might have expected?
► Where are the key differences between the manifestos?
► Where are the key differences between these two texts from 1919/20 and the political realities of Fascism/National Socialism?
► Are there any parallels between these documents on the one hand and the ideology of the modern Extreme Right on the other?