CENTRE FOR FASCIST, ANTI-FASCIST AND POST-FASCIST STUDIES

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Introduction

Welcome to the fourth issue of Teesside University’s Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies Newsletter. In this fourth issue we have, as usual, included contributions from the Centre’s research associates. We welcome Professor Dr. Samuel Salzborn as a new associate but sadly say goodbye to Dr Graham Macklin who will leaving us to join colleagues at CREX - Center for Research on Extremism – in Norway. Adieu Graham!

Professor Nigel Copsey
The curious case of Britain First: wildly popular on Facebook, but a flop in elections

Professor Nigel Copsey

“All Britain First groups, members, officials and supporters are prohibited from displaying, transmitting or indulging in extremist behaviour, language or clothing. This covers the following creeds/ideologies: National Socialism, Fascism, Communism, Islam, Zionism, Liberalism, Socialism and anything relating to the skinhead movement”. (Britain First Constitution, Version 1.1).

“I can promise you, from the very depths of my being, you will all meet your miserable ends at the hands of the Britain First movement. Every last one of you”. (Paul Golding, leader of Britain First, public statement January 2017).

Britain First is, as we shall, a curious thing. As a registered political party (first registered with the Electoral Commission on 10 January 2014), it has been singularly unsuccessful. When in November 2014 it contested the Rochester and Strood parliamentary by-election, it came in ninth with a paltry 56 votes, even finishing behind the Monster Raving Loony Party. In the 2016 London mayoral elections its leader Paul Golding (ex-BNP) could only muster 1.2 per cent of the vote. The most memorable moment in this campaign was when, at the declaration, Golding shamelessly turned his back on Labour’s winning candidate, Muslim Sadiq Khan. Britain First made no impression whatsoever on the 2017 general election campaign (in fact it did not contest it). And yet the most recent estimate is that Britain First has around 1.9 million ‘likes’ on Facebook (compared to the Labour Party’s 1 million). This from a political party that rarely contests elections and when it has done so its performance has been abysmal. How can this possibly be?

In 2011, as support for the BNP nose-dived, I recall seeing an email by a new group calling itself “Britain First” (at the time I thought ‘oh, just another BNP splinter’). But this particular splinter had a significant benefactor: James (Jim) Dowson, an Ulster loyalist Calvinist businessman, who had hitherto (successfully) raised funds for the BNP through his company, Midas Consultancy. Fronted by Paul Golding, the BNP’s former Director of Publicity, who had been elected to Sevenoaks District Council in 2009, Britain First filled a void created by the BNP’s collapse and the near total disintegration of the EDL. Part electoral party but also part street movement, Britain First would acquire some public notoriety during 2014 as a result of a series of stunts and direct actions, such as Christian Patrols in East London (driving around in Land Rovers) as well invading Mosques, confronting imams, and handing out bibles. Greater notoriety followed in June 2016 when Britain First frantically distanced itself from the murderer of Labour MP Jo Cox, who had repeatedly shouted “Britain First” as he shot and stabbed his victim. Yet for all this offline provocatio, it is Britain First’s online presence which has attracted most attention (its latest offline demonstration in Birmingham in July 2017 attracted a pitiful 250 supporters).

1 This was originally published on the LSE blog see http://www.democraticaudit.com/2017/07/17/the-curious-case-of-britain-first-wildly-popular-on-facebook-but-a-flop-in-elections/
The EDL blazed a trail with its use of Facebook. Britain First followed its example, but unlike the EDL, it kept a much tighter hold over its social media output. Already by mid-2014, the anti-fascist campaign group, Hope not Hate, was claiming that as many as two million people were interacting with Britain First content on social media every day. Dowson’s idea, based on pro-life publicity campaigns in the US, was to use social media to push right-wing narratives (on Islam, immigration, multiculturalism, political correctness, crime, morality etc.) into mainstream society, splicing relatively uncontroversial online content (such as support for the Queen, the British military) with more controversial anti-Muslim content, often clips of its own confrontational activities (such as doorstepping Anjem Choudary and other radical Islamists). It is quite obvious that this online strategy has made its presence felt. But do not read too much into it. The level of its online ‘support’ has clearly not translated into soaring votes at the ballot-box, nor has it translated into boots on streets.

So let us look a little closer at the nature of this online ‘support’. What do we know about it? BuzzFeed News recently analysed posts on the official Britain First Facebook page over a six week period. Its data revealed that around 350,000 people had liked at least one Britain First post. Yet this figure included many who had done so without being aware of its origin (the casual; the incidental). Behind this figure, however, were two other groups. The first was a more active group of around 19,000 who liked at least 10 Britain First posts and they comprised around 50% of the posts’ 1.1 million ‘likes’. The second was an even more active core of dedicated users, characterised as an “ultra-active” group of some 559 people who “each liked at least 100 separate Britain First posts in six weeks, collectively amounting to more than 100,000 likes”. What is also revealing is that many of its online ‘likes’ derive from accounts registered outside Britain. “Two-thirds of the [core] group were men, and perhaps surprisingly 1 in 3 of the group lived overseas – with the US, Australia, and Spain being most common, but also several people living in eastern Europe and the Middle East.” Further analysis has revealed that as many as 23,000 of the group’s Facebook page’s ‘likes’ actually come from Polish accounts (perhaps unsurprisingly Britain First is busy trying to recruit amongst Poles in Britain, with both Golding and his deputy, Jayda Fransen, having recently returned from visiting right-wing extremists in Poland). We should also be mindful that Britain First has reportedly paid Facebook thousands of pounds to push anti-Islam videos on its social network and whilst some of its online traffic can be accounted for in terms of public interest following particular terrorist-related incidents, one suspects that a number of its ‘likes’ may well have been simply bought.

So what of its prospects? In a typically hyperbolic statement, Golding’s website claims that “Paul has led the movement through troubled times to the consummate position it enjoys now with over 1.7 million supporters worldwide. Under his leadership, Britain First has emerged as the strongest patriotic and counter-jihad movement in Britain.” However, the return of the former EDL leader Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (‘Tommy Robinson’) to the fold (in

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4 See http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-40509632
6 See http://www.paulgolding.org.uk/about-paul/
the shape of “UK Against Hate”) could well subdue Golding’s street protest aspirations (‘Tommy’ has more cachet and is far more popular amongst the footsoldiers). There were rumours of some kind of merger between Britain First and Yaxley-Lennon in 2015 but they remain competitive rivals. As an electoral or EDL-style public order threat, the reality is that behind all this talk of unassailable strength, Britain First’s membership stretches to no more than 1,000 or so; it has no elected representatives at any level in Britain, and it struggles to mobilise more than a few hundred followers.

So should Britain First be cause for concern? Despite what its constitution states, it is quite clear that Golding is violently opposed to the ‘traitor class’ (the corrupt ‘ruling elite’). His angry words quoted at the start, proclaimed in a video statement following his release from prison earlier this year, gives licence to the more violent imaginings of the far right. This combined with recent revelations of Britain First holding a ‘security training day’ to teach its members how to fight with knives is bound to ring some alarm bells in the Home Office. In the curious absence of genuine mass support, does the real danger lie more offline, in Golding’s gnashing of teeth, and would-be violent extremism?

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7 See http://metro.co.uk/2017/07/11/britain-first-holds-security-training-day-to-teach-how-to-fight-with-knives-6770167/#ixzz4mhPRnpq5
Summarised responses to Home Affairs Select Committee evidence on the far-right, Islamophobia, and hate crimes in contemporary Britain, originally presented on 10 Jan 2017 (edited for clarity; see the verbatim transcript, available online).

Professor Matthew Feldman

For today's British far-right, anti-Muslim prejudice or Islamo-prejudice is the lowest common denominator that we have seen over the last 10 or 15 years. There is lots that separate groups on the far right, including, for example, forms of racism. Some of them might take a cultural form; some of them might take the old-fashioned eugenic biological form. The one thing that all of groups that span the far-right spectrum is anti-Muslim prejudice and its currency in contemporary Britain.

In a sense the internet is the perfect storm in a teacup for the far right: it’s global; it’s potentially anonymous; it is potentially permanent in terms of the material that is there. So, in that sense, the far right has cottoned on to the value of the internet. A group like Stormfront is in its 21st year and has upwards of 150,000 supporters. So, in that sense, the internet, which has, of course, transformed many, many lives and many other ideologies as well, is, in a sense, perfectly built for a far right that was, let’s say 30 or 50 years ago, meeting in the backrooms of pubs, dealing with these kind of dodgy off-prints of Holocaust denial, or something like that. It is much, much easier now to circulate and attempt to normalise some of that discourse.

On Breitbart News and similar outlets, I would use the phrase “near right”. I don’t think they are far right in terms we would traditionally consider, but I do think they have a kind of transmission belt that allows people to move towards the far right and, dare I say it, back again. If you find yourself a member of the BNP in 2013 or 2014, when the wheels have come off you might find that some of those political views might be vented in other ways, and that can have a de-radicalising influence. We should not think of it as a conveyor belt on which you start here and you end there. If we look at 100% of terrorists and violent extremists, of course they are going on a conveyor belt—of course they must—but there are many ways one can stop off it, which is why the importance of de-radicalisation programmes and so forth suggests that it is not a conveyor belt, that there are places where people can stop off and, in fact, go backwards.

The far right is in disarray and fragmented today, and that has also been the case historically. If we take a longer-term view, there tends to be a generational coming together of the far right—think of the BUF in the 1930s and then the Union Movement after the war. It took something like 20 years for those different little wings of the far right to come together again in 1967 and give us the National Front, and another 15 or even 20 years until the BNP started making breakthroughs in places like Tower Hamlets. Rather than this idea of there being a consistent far right, I think it is better to think of it as peaks and troughs.

In terms of dangers posed by the far-right, it depends what we understand by threat and risk. Certainly violent extremism and terrorism are one risk that is rightly associated with extreme right-wing views, but there are other forms of threat. For example, threats that relate to community cohesion, hate crimes, policing budgets or things like that may not
necessarily rise to the level of a terrorist threat that might be part of the Contest strategy, but are equally felt on our streets by communities who might feel increasingly unsafe. That can lead to this idea of a cumulative extremism, where different extremes can, in a sense, turn the temperature up for whole communities, even if they are just 1% or 2% of that community. I suggest that a wider-ranging understanding of threat, including the normalisation of frankly bigoted sentiments, is something that we might very well see in coming years.

I like the way that the Germans have a distinction between “radical”, which might include pretty searching critiques of democracy but still be in the democratic camp—think the English Defence League—and “extreme”, as in, “We’re revolutionary, we want to overthrow the state and we are willing to use violent means to do that.” That distinction between radical and extreme is something I would definitely recommend thinking about in this country. If we are talking about extreme, I am happy to put Combat 18 there, and happy to put a group like the National Socialist Movement there. Again, we are talking about a couple of dozen members, so not a huge number. Racial Volunteer Force is another one that has been on the radar screen. Even one that we heard testimony about earlier, the Misanthropic Division, which is Polish nationals living in the UK who are engaged in certain forms of violent extremism. These are guys who reject democracy. I would put them in the same basket with National Action.

By contrast, historically I think we could say, in Europe and beyond, “Here is the cordon sanitaire. These are the mainstream parties. Even if they are pretty far to the right or pretty far to the left, they are on our team. I think that what we are seeing in the last 10 or 15 years is a real breaking down of that cordon sanitaire, where we can say, “These are the guys that are outside the bounds of democratic legitimacy.”

What we see with something like Breitbart News is both the assault on the cordon sanitaire—I am not suggesting that it is an intentional assault, but dissolving that makes it much harder to say, “These groups are beyond the pale and these are not”—and that also, when we look at a group like Breitbart News, they are quite happy to use certain means and ideas, like “globalism”, for the vast majority of that population who are reading it. It has to be said there is much bigger—not an echo chamber—circulation; they are talking to conservatives and they might be talking to libertarians, as well as people on the alt-right, far right or neo-Nazi. It is a house where people can come together in different rooms. They are also using terms that some people know, like “globalism”, which 50 or 75 years ago was simply code for Jews. I am not suggesting that everybody who logs on to Breitbart is nodding and winking, but some of the rehabilitation of that is part of this dissolved cordon sanitaire that we are seeing right across Europe and into the United States. That, to me, would be one of the real areas of concern—these mainstreaming, breaking taboos that allow for certain ideas that are really beyond the pale to be given, frankly, a coat of white paint over what is asbestos and say, “It’s fine. You can go back into this house.”

One difference between the biological, or old-fashioned, extreme right and a new right, which tends to have traffic in cultural stuff, tends to be the issue of Jews and Israel. I think that anti-Semitism remains a serious concern for hate crimes. It is also a kind of way station for where one might situate oneself in terms of biological, race-based hate crimes—still,
almost four out of five hate crimes recorded are ethnic-based—and what we might consider religious or ideologically-based attacks. The other observation I would make about hate crimes is twofold. One, we need to think of hate crimes as similar to crimes in a way, in that some of them are opportunistic—someone sees another person crossing the street, or online, and says, “I’m going to take that opportunity.” If that is the case—the whole approach to radicalisation is that it takes months and months, or is a conveyor belt—well, radicalisation may take 30 seconds, or a minute. We can also think about it as opportunistic.

The second thing that I would observe about anti-Muslim hate crimes, unlike every other strand of hate crime we know—and we still need to know more and to disaggregate those hate crimes by police force so we can compare them—is that anti-Muslim hate crime tends to be male on female. Hate crime is almost overwhelmingly male on male; anti-Muslim hate crime, especially where a victim is wearing visibly Muslim clothing, has tended to be male on female.

Hate crimes tend to target the most vulnerable in society. I think that we see in many societies that Jews historically have been vulnerable—“out groups” is the term that’s used. I think that attendance to the vulnerable, the needy and the people who are most exposed is, to me, at the heart of hate crime responses. It’s supporting the vulnerable and saying that the dignity of the person is absolutely non-negotiable, and the persons who need it most are oftentimes those minority communities. Also we know, of course, that something like 0.5% of Britain is the Jewish community. That is one tenth of the Muslim community, at present. Both of them are seriously minority communities and in certain circumstances are potentially vulnerable. Yet we do have a dearth of statistics on all of this stuff. Let’s say you are a non-white, Muslim woman. You might be attacked for any one of a number of multiple identities. Avoiding a top-down approach and listening to local knowledge and local people seems to me to be a useful thing.

In terms of monitoring the far-right, the horrors of 7/7 were such that it is understandable that people in the Government and the security services said, “We are going to put almost all our energies into looking at the threat posed by jihadi Islamist terrorism.” Looking back, I don’t think anybody would turn around and say that that was an unreasonable response to what happened on 7/7, and of course 21/7 being thwarted. However, there is a limited amount of resource and a limited amount of people who can do these kinds of jobs.

Something like National Action will appeal to less than 1% of this country, but a group like Britain First, if it got its act together, could appeal to a much larger section, because they are not saying Hitler was right; they are saying they love British bulldogs and other things, and “Click like if you like puppies” and things like that. In a sense, it is a rather more savvy approach than, “We’re going to double down on Nazism.” National Action are the first group to be banned on the extreme right; they are also the 85th group to be banned in this country. Again, if we are talking about whether it is going to work or not—we crossed that Rubicon 10 or 12 years ago. We can look at different banned groups. The one thing I think is not a viable concern is the idea that they could change their name from National Action to National Faction. That has already been sutured up after the stuff with Anjem Choudary playing games with names and so forth. I do not think that that is necessarily the concern.
Terrorists cannot end democracy; we can only do that to ourselves. I do not believe that terrorism has ever been an existential threat in this country. That is not to say that there are not terrorists seeking weapons of mass destruction—that is a serious concern. But you are also more likely to be killed by a cyclist in this country than by a terrorist, and I think we need to keep that in perspective, not overreach and continue being reactive. So let’s get ahead of this—this rise of the far right, this greater visibility of the far right, or whatever we want to call it. Let’s have some toolkits. Let’s talk to people locally and work with local knowledge. Let’s try to break this completely wrong idea that there are certain communities within Britain that need to be especially watched. I don’t think that helps anybody. It doesn’t help those communities and it doesn’t help other groups that might be getting away with more than they should.
The Mainstreaming of the Far Right after Brexit

Dr Paul Stocker

My book, English Uprising: Brexit and the Mainstreaming of the Far Right, due to be published in September, assesses the Brexit vote within the context of a history of anti-immigrant political movements in Britain. It argues that Brexit, a vote driven more by immigration than any other single issue, was achieved as a result of anti-immigrant and xenophobic ideas becoming increasingly normalised and part of everyday political discourse in 21st century Britain. Following the rise of the BNP and then Ukip, mainstream political actors were less and less prepared to confront myths perpetuated about immigration by the radical and extreme right. In many cases they co-opted their rhetoric, egged on by an influential and hysterical right-wing press. An early example of this was Home Secretary David Blunkett’s claim that schools were being ‘swamped’ by asylum seekers in 2002. More recent examples include David Cameron’s ‘multiculturalism has failed’ speech in 2011 or Theresa May’s Orwellian ‘Go Home’ vans, rolled out in 2013.

‘Mainstreaming’ is described by Aristotle Kallis as the ‘(partial or full) endorsement by political agents of the so-called political ‘mainstream’, and/or by broader sectors of society, of ‘extreme’ (in some cases even taboo) ideas and attitudes without necessarily leading to tangible association [...] with the extremist parties that advocate them most vociferously’. For Kallis, this process changes the way we understand far right ‘success’ and threatens ‘to unleash previously unthinkable levels of social demand for some extreme ideas that were originally considered taboo but which have, in the process, become, allegedly, more legitimised and more acceptable to a wider audience’.

One would perhaps expect that after Brexit, this process would slow down as voters angry about immigration had their voices heard. Yet, we can see plenty of evidence for its continuation since Theresa May became Prime Minister after the vote in July 2016. May immediately sought to embark on a ‘hard Brexit’ – principally designed to curb immigration into the country. At the Conservative Party conference in October, May opted not to bridge the divide between Remain and Leave or attempt to unite the country but embarked on an attack directed against the ‘elite’ in a manner highly derivative of radical right wing populists across Europe. She promised to:

put the power of government squarely at the service of ordinary working-class people [. . .] because too often that isn’t how it works today. Just listen to the way a lot of politicians and commentators talk about the public. They find your patriotism distasteful, your concerns about immigration parochial, your views about crime illiberal, your attachment to your job security inconvenient. They find the fact that more than seventeen million voters decided to leave the European Union simply bewildering.

May failed to acknowledge that over 48 percent of the country had voted to Remain and that Brexit reflected a deeply divided country rather than an overwhelming mandate for leaving the European Union. She went on to argue that ‘too many people in positions of power behave as though they have more in common with international elites than with the people down the road, the people they employ, the people they pass in the street. But if you believe you’re a citizen of the world, you’re a citizen of nowhere.’ May’s ‘populist turn’ was not as new as some commentators believed it to be. May’s co-option of rhetoric normally used by the populist radical right was a continuation of the Conservative Party’s attempts to do the same prior to Brexit. For example, Immigration Minister James Brokenshire argued in 2014 at a speech to the Demos think-tank: ‘For too long, the benefits of immigration went to employers who wanted an easy supply of cheap labour; or to the wealthy metropolitan elite who wanted cheap tradesmen and services – but not to the ordinary, hard-working people of this country.’

Significantly, May’s strategy of winning over Ukip voters appears to have worked. In the 2017 snap general election, held in June, Ukip’s vote plunged. The party had won the 2014 European Elections and in 2015 won nearly 4 million votes – by far the biggest victory for a radical right party in British history. Ukip expert, Professor Matthew Goodwin had argued that the Labour Party was faced with an ‘existential crisis’ as a result of Ukip’s rise and that the party was ‘no flash in the pan’. Yet, in the election, their vote plummeted to around 600,000 – less than 2 percent of the national vote.

The Conservative Party, (who, despite losing their majority, won the most parliamentary seats) by adopting a hard Brexit stance designed to appease those concerned by immigration, had simply stolen any incentive for voting Ukip. Whilst the party may have been decimated, its ideas on immigration and multiculturalism most certainly have not been. When Ukip’s one MP – Douglas Carswell – left the party in March, claiming that following Brexit it was ‘job done’ for the party, he was in a sense correct. The Conservative Party has, on issues ranging from grammar schools to immigration, become indistinguishable from the insurgent radical right party.

The rise of the more moderate Ukip destroyed the far right British National Party after 2010, which is currently a husk of its former self. By making immigration a key issue in its programme, they had stolen a key incentive for voting for the neo-fascist BNP. The Conservative Party has now done the same to Ukip, thereby further normalising anti-immigration politics. This is how ‘mainstreaming’ functions and it should be a cause of concern for both the public and scholars. The far right, and now the radical right have failed at the ballot box, but only when their ideas are taken up by more centrist forces. More research needs to be done into the factors which instigate mainstreaming – particularly the role of the media. Its impact is slow and often barely noticeable, yet it is becoming an increasingly salient phenomenon both in the UK and Europe.

Terrorism and The Growing Threat of Anti-Muslim Hostility in the UK

Alex Carter

The past four months have borne witness to three deadly terrorist attacks in England. The assaults on London and Manchester by Islamic extremists between March and June have claimed the lives of dozens of people, and injured many more. These incidents have naturally sparked discussions about the state of British counter-extremism and counter-terrorism strategies, with Theresa May already stating that there was now a need to regulate the internet so as to ‘deprive the extremists of their safe spaces online’. However, given the obvious efficiency of the British counter-terrorism forces and security services (the armed Metropolitan police units arrived and intercepted the attackers at London Bridge in under ten minutes on 3 June 2017) and the potential danger to civil liberties that counter-terrorism policies designed in times of perceived crisis represent, a more fruitful avenue of discussion may be to focus on how these attacks may affect the vulnerable British Muslim community by generating hostility towards them.

There is now a well-established pattern of Islamist terrorist attacks in Europe provoking waves of anti-Muslim hate crimes and large mobilizations of the so-called ‘counter-jihad’ social movement. The murder of British soldier Lee Rigby on 22 May 2013 by the Islamic extremists Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale in London provided a massive boon to the ailing fortunes of the anti-Muslim English Defence League (EDL). The same incident, as well as the 7 January 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris and the 14 February 2015 shootings in Copenhagen, precipitated significant spikes in reported anti-Muslim hate crimes in the UK. Perhaps predictably, there has already been a similar reaction to the recent terror attacks in Britain. After the bombing in Manchester, reported Islamophobic hate-crime in the city doubled, while in London since the 3 July there has been ‘a fivefold increase in Islamophobic attacks’. Similarly, the EDL attempted to hold an anti-Muslim protest on 23

May at the Arndale Shopping Centre in Manchester (although were outnumbered by counter-protestors).  

Anti-Muslim activists may do well to consider, though, what the ultimate aim of the Islamic extremists who carry out these attacks is. The social psychologist Clark McCauley has posited that a terrorist may intentionally provoke an enemy into attacking their own social group so that in response they will be radicalized into joining them. McCauley cites the actions of the terrorists involved in the 9/11 attacks on America as being an example of this strategy, in that their goal was to provoke counter-attacks from the US so as to radicalize the wider global Muslim population (which, to a greater or lesser extent, it did). McCauley writes:

State response, to the extent that it hurts or outrages those less committed than the terrorists, does for the terrorists what they cannot do for themselves. This is jujitsu politics: using the enemy’s strength to mobilize against the enemy.  

Of course, it need not necessarily be the response of the state – increasing hostility to a minority community from the wider population of their country can have a similar effect. Indeed, the renowned expert on Jihadism Peter R. Neuman has argued that the British Islamic extremist group Al-Muhajiroun - to date the largest and most significant domestic Islamist organisation - managed to successfully grow its pool of activists by ‘provoking British public opinion’. Similarly, Joel Busher has observed that when the EDL holds a demonstration it makes it easier for Islamists to recruit in that area. The relationship between Islamic extremism and anti-Muslim extremism, then, takes the form of the Ouroboros – it is (to a degree) self-sustaining, reacting to and generating itself. The hostility and violence aimed at the British Muslim community serves to fuel feelings of isolation, alienation and anger: a potentially rich seedbed for radicalization and extremism. The result of this can be an increase in Islamic extremism, which then can itself of course provoke the ‘counter-jihad’ into mobilizing.

Shortly after Lee Rigby’s murder in 2013 Matthew Goodwin argued that this dynamic – dubbed ‘cumulative extremism’ by the Political Scientist Roger Eatwell – had the potential to escalate dangerously:

The risk is that cumulative extremism leads to a spiral of mobilisation and then counter-mobilisation … While at first this may produce hardened rhetoric or discourse on Facebook, it may have more serious long-term effects, by strengthening feelings of collective identity and loyalty among activists, sparking violent and sporadic reprisals and, at the

22 McCauley, Clark, ‘Jujitsu Politics: Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism’, in Paul R Kimmel and Chris E. Stout (eds.), Collateral Damage: The Psychological Consequences of America’s War on Terrorism, p.49.
absolute extreme, an enduring cycle of violent or terrorist action. We have seen this dynamic in cases such as Northern Ireland.26

The probability of this happening any time in the foreseeable future remains low, for a number of reasons. Unlike in Northern Ireland (NI) during the onset of the Troubles, in Britain there is high engagement with, and trust in, the political system (even amongst the Muslim community);27 there is not a long history of community-based organisations using lethal political violence; nor is there the same levels of deprivation experienced in contemporary Britain as was in NI in the 1960s. Further, unlike republican and loyalist groups in NI, anti-Muslim and Islamic extremist organisations do not enjoy relatively wide support from their target constituencies – indeed, they are, on the whole, seen as pariahs and shunned. Of course, this will not necessarily remain the case. Macklin has argued that while the “anti-Muslim” scene [is] currently politically marginal, [it] will not disappear, and that it is entirely possible that it could enjoy a groundsowll of support due to some ‘future and, as yet, unseen “catalytic event” such as that which originally led to the mobilization of the EDL’.28 One such ‘catalytic event’ could, of course, be a focused and sustained terrorist campaign by Islamic extremists in Britain. In 2016 Neumann argued that ‘[l]arge scale attacks in the West do not (yet) interest the Islamic State, but its strategic calculations could change at any time.’29 Moreover, Pantucci argues that ‘there remains a persistent threat from al-Qaeda in Pakistan, one that can still tap into radical networks in the United Kingdom.’30 The incidents in Britain between March and June could feasibly be the beginnings of just such a campaign, though it is of course too early to tell at this point the numbers, identities or capabilities of the actors involved.

For the time being it is well worth remembering that, even after recent events, the chances of being killed by a terrorist attack in Britain are staggeringly low, and have been steadily declining since 1972 (the bloodiest year of the Troubles).31 These recent attacks have inflicted horrific pain and damage on the country, but the circumstances described by Goodwin probably remains a significant way off. Right now, it is crucial to be aware that for every Islamist attack the already vulnerable British Muslim community faces increased hostility, fear and violence. While reminding people that generating anti-Muslim sentiment is exactly what the Islamist extremists are aiming to do is unlikely to deter the more committed ‘counter-jihad’ activists, perhaps it may temper others reactions to recent developments. Either way, this is a time when cooler heads are needed to prevail.

26 Goodwin, Matthew, 'Woolwich attack and the far right: three points to consider when the dust settles (23/5/2013)', Guardian Online (https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/may/23/woolwich-attack-far-right-three-points), [Accessed: 5/2/2017].


31 Kirk, Ashley, ‘How many people are killed by terrorist attacks in the UK? (7 June 2017)’, The Telegraph (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/0/many-people-killed-terrorist-attacks-uk/), [Accessed: 7 June 2017].
Countering Far Right Narratives in the North East: Reflections from a Home Office-Funded Pilot Project

Will Allchorn

Recently, CFAPS has been involved in a collaborative project looking at how the creative arts can be used to counter far right narratives. Delivered in conjunction with County Durham’s constabulary, this has involved a number of engagement sessions with students from two further education colleges in Darlington and Bishop Auckland as well as an educational pack aimed at educating teenagers about the threat of the UK far right. In this article, research associate, Dr William Allchorn, offers some reflections about the opportunities and challenges associated with this particular form of non-academic engagement, and where the project is headed next.

What are Counter Narratives?

Counter narratives have become an important policy buzzword over the past five or so years. Indeed, it has become a key tool in combating both far right and Islamic extremism. Aimed at ‘picking apart extremist ideologies by undermining their intellectual framework’, counter narratives have ‘become a catch-all term for a wide range of activities with different aims and tactics, everything from public diplomacy and strategic communications by government, to targeted campaigns to discredit the ideologies and actions of violent extremists.’ More specifically in the UK context, those actively involved in delivering the Government’s Prevent programme use it as a tool to stop individuals becoming radicalised and recruited by extremists through deconstructing, delegitimising and demystifying their propaganda. In particular, counter narratives have become increasingly important when focusing on the UK far right – with right-wing extremists comprising nearly a quarter of referrals to Prevent’s reform-focused Channel Programme.

At the start of this year, I was given the opportunity to help deliver such a project to a group of teenagers in the North East of England. As someone who’s PhD examined effective responses to the UK far right, it was a great chance to step out from the role of academic to practitioner and experiment with what works when combating far right extremism. Moreover, it was my first experience of non-academic impact – using scholarly knowledge and applying it to a totally different context. I therefore felt that I had a lot to give (in terms of academic expertise) but also a lot to learn (in terms of the practicalities of the project).

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What were the Main Outputs of the Project?

The first set of outputs for the project were two engagement sessions with creative arts students at Darlington and Bishop Auckland FE colleges. These January sessions were a lot of fun – with students clearly engaged with the subject matter and also very lively. They were structured to engage with the attitudes and prejudices of the students around far right related issues but also to deliver information about the Far Right more locally, in the North East of England. Moreover, the function of the sessions was to give students initial ideas for their creative arts performances. In practice, both groups responded to the engagement sessions in very different ways – with one group a bit less ‘vocal’ but getting on with the activities well and the other being a bit more ‘chatty’ but less focused. All in all, both groups had a range of ideas that they were able to develop into a creative arts project that they performed to large audiences in early April.

The second main output for the project was an educational pack. This was a follow-on from the initial engagement sessions and was requested by CFAPS’ lead contact at Durham Constabulary. The brief for the document was something that could be used to support similar creative arts projects across the UK. This morphed into two packs (one for educators and one for learners). Both packs, however, included the same core content. This included exercises, examples and activities focused on developing a creative arts project; information about what we mean by the ‘far right’; as well as warnings about the negative consequences and impacts of engaging in such activism.

What are the Key Opportunities and Challenges of Non-Academic Engagement?

Finally, the opportunities and challenges of conducting such a form of non-academic engagement were numerous. The main opportunity was to share scholarly content about the far right to a new audience divorced from the University context. Another opportunity was to learn the concerns of practitioners on the ground and try to fit content around their needs. Thirdly, one of the most interesting parts of the project was the opportunity to learn about more localised forms of far right activism. For example, students in Bishop Auckland had either heard - or had direct experience - of a local anti-Islamic group, called ‘Bishop Auckland against Islam’.

In terms of challenges, these tended to revolve around audience and learning new modes of delivery outside of the University context. As someone who was used to teaching university students, I was on a steep learning curve about how to ‘pitch’ material to an audience that I wasn’t necessarily familiar with. For example, during the engagement sessions, I ended up blending seminar-style and lecture techniques whilst also making it as interactive as possible – using peer-to-peer interviews and cue card exercises to help inspire and develop ideas. Similarly, another challenge was a clear ‘social bias’ when talking to students about racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia. For example, it was hard to elicit whether students were rejecting these views simply because they were socially unacceptable or because they were genuinely held beliefs.

Turning to the education pack, two challenges presented themselves when compiling the pack. The first was again around audience. As someone used to expressing thoughts,
opinions and findings to an academic audience, it was a worthwhile challenge trying to communicate ideas from the academic literature in a more straightforward and impactful way. The second challenge was again around learning a new mode of delivery. As someone who hadn’t been involved in creative arts education beforehand, I had to largely think outside the box when suggesting scenarios that the students could follow when applied to the UK far right.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, the project was a lot of fun but it also challenged me in a positive way. It required me to step outside of my comfort zone and be flexible to the requirements of the stakeholders involved. The trade-offs of this particular form of non-academic engagement were worth it, however – allowing me to learn more about subject matter I’m researching and accruing new skills along the way. Having completed its pilot stage, the Home Office has now granted funding to further develop this particular far right counter-narratives project. It will be interesting to see the scope and effectiveness of the project going forward, and how we can use the creative arts to combat the rise of far right extremism in the UK more broadly.
The Thoughts, Challenges, and Opportunities of Regulating Extremism Online

Dr Mark Littler

It is beyond dispute that computerisation and the rise of digital communication has transformed human life, arguably more than any force since the industrial revolution. The growing ubiquity of mobile devices over the last decade has been accompanied by a tectonic shift in the nature of social relationships, with technology offering us novel ways of interacting with each other, building geographically and socially disperse communities bound by shared social and political identities and bonds of common interest.

The transformative impact of this change has been subject to much academic debate, with a significant volume of literature highlighting the many pro-social benefits of digital communications. Indeed, the power of information technology is widely recognised as having helped support the growth of nascent protest movements fighting autocratic and despotic states, while the ability to connect isolated and geographically disperse individuals has enabled communities to flourish that would not be viable offline. Alongside the benefits to political campaigning, education, and commercial transactions, the positive transformation of the ‘information age’ is hard to dispute.

However, as Castells (2011) notes, all technologies have a ‘downside’, and in this - despite the optimism of ‘techno-utopians’ - an increasingly interconnected society is no exception. While the opportunities for criminality and hate-speech are well documented, in the context of political activism there is a substantial research literature highlighting the role played by the digital space in respect of extremist groups. Indeed, research indicates that the technologies allowing groups to organise around common interests or topics have been employed by extremists to support the forming of national and transnational communities (Bartlett et al, 2011), with some evidence highlighting that these technologies have also facilitated the establishment of sophisticated networks and linkages between groups (Chermak et al, 2013), the organisation of offline action, and - in some cases – violent radicalisation (Kohler, 2012).

Against this backdrop it is perhaps unsurprising that policymakers have moved to develop unique responses to these risks. The increasing level of importance accorded to online threats can be found in the recent launch of the EU’s Radicalisation Awareness Network, with a brief to respond to the risk posed by digital communications as part of the European Agenda on Security, and national policy shifts in the UK (for example, through the promulgation of the National Counter Terrorism Security Office’s Online Radicalisation Guidance).

However, while it is perhaps tempting to view the adoption of digital communications technologies as a sui generis shift in practice on behalf of extremist groups, it is important to place any changes in the context of a long-running process of technological innovation that reaches back to the early days of print media, progressing through ham and pirate radio, BBS systems, and the beginnings of the ‘public’ internet to the launching of some of the first generation of extremist websites in the mid-1990s (Berlet and Mason, 2015). Despite continuing evolution in their use of technology, the goal for extremists continues – as
always - to be effective “social movement mobilization and growth” (Berlet and Mason, 2015:21).

This insight raises several interesting questions in respect of the nature of our response, particularly when taken alongside evidence highlighting the increasing entanglement of – and overlap between – online and offline spaces (Kavada and Dimitriou, 2017). Against this backdrop, moves by policy makers to respond to online radicalization as a challenge discrete from ‘offline’ radicalisation are, perhaps, short-sighted and naïve.

In a policy paper to be published by the Turkish think-tank SETA later this summer, I argue that policymakers need to develop responses to online radicalisation that acknowledges the unique features and challenges of the digital space – its rapidity, cross-border reach, and transnational architecture, as well as the risks of autodidactic radicalization, ‘cumulative extremism’, and unreliable/unverifiable content – while also recognising the relationship with ‘offline radicalisation’ and embedding any responses within the structures provided by existing counter-extremism policy.

I argue that, in the context of the UK, such a response could be achieved by revising the Channel guidance framework, expressly adding indicators around use of the online space into the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF). Such indicators could include regularly visiting extremist sites, the sharing/dissemination of extremist content, or favourably interacting with (for example, ‘Liking’) extremist content on social media.

However, to facilitate the identification of these behaviours existing policy needs to be amended to recognise that – unlike with ‘offline’ radicalisation – ‘online’ radicalisation often occurs out of the sight of referring agents. In this, the multi-agency referral framework embedded in Channel is unlikely to provide effective coverage for individuals radicalised online, and while the use of bulk data surveillance can, to some extent, address this deficiency, the capacity of state actors to review collected content is far outstripped by its prevalence. Indeed, as data from Eurostat identifies, over 60 percent of Britons are daily internet users, with billions of discrete communications passing through UK servers every day. Identifying which communications contain ‘extremist’ content requires fine, and subjective (Sotlar, 2004), judgements that are not easily automated. The handling of this data possesses a unique challenge.

To respond effectively, state actors need to work closely with content hosts to develop more sophisticated automated processing systems capable of reducing to a manageable volume the number of cases requiring human intervention. While moves have been made towards this goal, there is still much work to do.

However, while these changes will have a tangible impact on our response to radicalisation in the UK, the global nature of the threat means that they will remain, at best, partial solutions. To truly tackle online radicalisation we need to build an international consensus around its regulation, establishing international institutions tasked with managing online content in a way that respects both fundamental rights and domestic legal norms. This may prove difficult to achieve given the significant divergence in outlooks across internet-using
states, however – as with all global challenges – the potential benefits outweigh the complexity of the task.

This article draws on content from a forthcoming paper to be published by SETA, more details of which can be found on their website, at: http://setav.org/en
References


Micronesia and the Beginning of Germany’s Second Reich

Dominic Alessio

This paper examines how and why the Spanish East Indies were sold by Spain to Germany. The former consisted of what is today the Republic of the Marshall Islands (which were sold in 1884), and the Carolines (today’s Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and the Marianas), which were sold a short while later in 1899. The purchases are significant for this appears to be the first time that Germany acquired non-contiguous imperial territory outside of the European continent.

As Kahn and Wilke point out, ‘[a] critical discussion of German involvement in the Pacific […] is long overdue’ (2007: 293). As a result, when it comes to places such as the Marshalls, as Mückler highlights, there is ‘little information’ (2016). A few names relating to Germany and Micronesia sometimes appear, including Ballendorf, Bennett, Hempenstall, Hezel, Hiery, Quanchi and Mückler. Yet these commentators have contributed to subjects primarily within the sphere of Micronesian history.

In spite of this spasmodic treatment, ‘the South Pacific had held an important place in the German imagination’ (Conrad 2012: 54). Nationalist sentiment after unification in 1871, as well as emigrant communities who wished to remain connected to the Reich and Germans back home fascinated by the exotic, were all factors in an end-of-century evolving imperial enthusiasm. Many argued that in order to compete with other nation-states formal colonies were necessary (Friedrichsmeyer, Lennox and Zantop 1993: 10). As early as 1806 a secret society inspired by the French Revolution had been operating in Tübingen with the intention of creating a German colony in Tahiti (Kahn and Wilke 2007: 294). Other early suggestions of areas ripe for German colonization included: Taiwan (1867), the Nicobar Islands (1867), and Saigon (Knoll and Hiery 2010: 11). However, post-unification Bismarck resisted formal colonialism, preferring ‘trading colonies, where commercial interests would incur most of the expense and effort’ (Friedrichsmeyer, Lennox and Zantop 1993: 10).

It is generally thought, therefore, that a zeal for formal German colonies was not acquired until the so-called Scramble for Africa of 1884-1885. Knoll and Hiery argue that Germany began its overseas empire in Namibia when Franz Adolf Lüderitz established a merchant business (2010: 27). However, fearing British annexation in 1884, Bismarck placed it under the protection of the German empire. Nevertheless, an earlier history of intervention can be seen when Germany took control of the Marshalls in the late 1870s after German merchants established trading stations there. In 1878 a German gunboat arrived at Jaluit Atoll in the Marshalls. Despite the archipelago having been recognized as Spanish the Germans obtained formal control after landing a detachment of marines; treaties were signed with a local ruler giving Germany the right to establish a coaling and naval station. Thus, ‘German control over Jaluit Atoll in 1878’ was formally achieved (Hanlon 1994: 94). Hezel states that 1878 was without doubt ‘a hesitant first step toward outright annexation’ (2003: 47).

The purpose of these early Pacific colonies is not always immediate. Some argue that Germany’s motive was economic (Quanchi and Adams 2003: 116). Indeed, the islands were a lucrative source of copra. In the case of Jaluit it is noteworthy that annexation occurred
shortly after the British had taken control of Fiji in 1874, leaving many German traders there bankrupt and without property. A similar colonial seizure occurred in Hawai‘i when the United States established a privileged trading position by way of a new 1875 treaty, hurting German commerce (Kennedy 1972: 264). So the annexation of Jaluit needs to be seen in a wider context and could have been an attempt by Germany to fend off future foreign annexations – the same rationale for their later take-over of Namibia.

A short while after other merchants brought increasing pressure on the German government for outright annexation of all the Caroline Islands. Pressure to take these areas might have arisen from other sub-imperial agendas, for in 1883 there had been a failed attempt by Queensland to annex New Guinea. There were also anxieties about New Zealand’s ambitions over Samoa. Although near confrontation ensued with Spain the Carolines remained Spanish as both parties sought mediation from the papacy. Despite German attempts to argue at the Conference of Berlin that signatory powers required effective occupation of a territory to claim possession the Pope made the case that this agreement was limited to Africa (Elizalde 1991: 17). Yet the story does not end here. In 1885 another German gunboat appeared at Jaluit and Bismarck formally concluded another agreement. Later that year, Spain, wanting to save face, sold the remainder of the Marshalls for 4.5 (US) million dollars. In 1899, following Spain’s defeat by the United States, most of its other island territories in the region were also sold to Germany. Consequently, *beginning in the Pacific* Germany had become the third largest European colonial power. What is intriguing about this Micronesian starting point is that 1885’s Berlin Congress was not a sudden change in policy direction. These Pacific possessions would remain under German control until seized by Japan at the start of World War I. Nevertheless, for Germany, taking control of Micronesia was significant as it helped to set the groundwork for the Second Reich.
References


Protecting Democracy by Shutting Out Far-Right Demagogy

Professor Dr Samuel Salzborn

There is currently much debate in many European countries about the best way to deal with public expressions of nationalistic, racist and antisemitic positions. Just a few years ago, it was still the case in democratic societies that one would publicly discuss racism, but not talk to racists; however, this has been changing for some time now. In Germany, it is once again possible for far-right demagogy to be openly expressed in everyday public life. In particular, TV talk shows—an important forum for German debates—have been giving a great deal of space to far-right demagogy for months now. It’s about time for us to understand that a basic cornerstone of democracy involves shutting out such demagogy—and that it’s dangerous to act as if racism and antisemitism are simply opinions that can be put forward in everyday discussion.35

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, democracies have seen an acceleration of everyday life, largely driven by digitalization, causing political actors to feel pressured into publicly reacting to every event both quickly and forcefully—a pressure affecting actors from every party. In this regard, the important thing is not the form of the message’s vehicle (i.e. populism), but the content that is thereby conveyed; the question is about what goals are being pursued, and whether these are democratic or anti-democratic.36 Here, the understanding of democracy should not be reduced to a purely formal dimension, in which a system is considered democratic solely because it holds elections. In judging whether a political message’s content is democratic or anti-democratic, it is important to consider the essential core of democracy. The minimum constitutional consensus is based on an understanding of the relationship between demos (‘the people’) and kratein (‘to rule’). In reconciling the two elements, most European democracies reject a völkisch (or ‘ethnonationalist’) conception of the people, and structure governance through a representative system. But this also means that a democracy—which Germans today describe as ‘wehrhaft’, or ‘defensive’—cannot be so naive as to believe that populist demands, simply because they exist, should be given a hearing, let alone our acquiescence.37 It cannot be that whoever shouts the loudest is allowed to prevail; instead, it can only be whoever achieves majorities through the representative system. This is precisely why a defensive democracy must shut out anti-democratic positions: they violate the essential core of democracy and actually want to abolish it, in its very essence.

Connected to this is the key question of whether the rise of populism indicates deficits in democracy, be they in terms of form or content, i.e. structure or agenda. With structural deficits, for example in regards to process, it must be said that if people are uninterested or unskilled in participating in democratic structures, this alone does not necessarily indicate a procedural flaw. Instead, it simply shows that among those who do not know how to effectively participate, there exists insufficient knowledge, due to insufficient civic education. However, if procedural flaws actually do exist in western democracies (which may very well be the case), then it should be possible to delineate them clearly and rationally—

but far-right agitators never do this. Although far-right parties are (once again) achieving electoral successes, their core concern is not about building majorities through constructive efforts, but instead about finding ways to impose their own narrow interests. It is not about the real will of the people, but about what they—fraudulently—claim it to be; it is not about that which is empirically provable and truly existing, but about what far-right activists allege is ‘the people’s will’, namely their own völkisch worldview, which understands ‘the folk’ as an ethnically homogeneous monolith. At the core of the antiparliamentary stance of the populist far right is what Carl Schmitt, a key political theorist who prepared the way for Nazism, also demanded during the Weimar Republic: a guided democracy based on a perceived ‘people’s will’ (meaning one dictated by the far right), defined by an ethnic homogeneity and a militarized, categorizing dichotomy of friend versus foe.

In contrast, a parliamentary representative democracy argues over deficits in the political agenda within a pluralistic framework, one marked by regularly shifting majorities. There exists a basic consensus on pluralism, which is fundamentally questioned by the far right: this is precisely why their demands are anti-democratic, in terms of both form and content. As a democrat who supports the constitution as a basic consensus, as well as the principle of pluralism with its rejection of völkisch thinking and every form of essentialism, it is therefore important to clearly state that far-right populists are not really discussing deficits in the political agenda either, but instead want to destroy this basic democratic consensus, namely that we can be in disagreement, but not in an entirely arbitrary way, because democracy is still a governance system that must judge whether someone is violating its basic rules.

Disagreement is based on the principle of political and social pluralism. Whoever does not accept this, including supporters of all essentialist fantasies of homogeneity, as expressed in ethnonationalism, racism, antisemitism and antifeminism, has abandoned this foundation of freedom and equality. This is why the demands of far-right populists are unacceptable, in terms of both form and content, as a way to delineate a democracy’s actual deficits, let alone solve them; democracy must, for its own sake, rigorously shut out these demands, and what’s more, fight against right-wing populists for what they really are: not simply political opponents, but actually enemies of democracy. Here, elevating right-wing populist positions to public podiums like TV talk shows does not in fact contribute to pluralism, but instead helps those who want to destroy it, by giving them its own tools to fight against it.

Andreas Önnerfors

In November 2015, I visited Götz Kubitschek, a prolific publisher of the German Nouvelle Droite (ND), at his chivalric estate in the tiny village of Schnellroda, far outside Leipzig in rural eastern Germany to interview him on his interest in the “right-wing movement of indignation” PEGIDA. While describing the benefits of moving to the countryside as a form of inner exile awaiting the political meltdown of Germany, Kubitschek simultaneously and enthusiastically presented the launch of a new World Wide Web online-platform with the aim to coordinate ‘resistance’ against the corrupt elites who were steadily working on the downfall of Germany: einprozent.de. He described the website as the outcome of a successful collaboration of different actors on the right wing of German politics: people from PEGIDA, the protest party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), the Identitäre Bewegung (IB) and his own conservative circles around the think-tank Institut für Staatspolitik (IfS).

‘Ein Prozent’ states on its website (‘Über Uns’) that its purpose is to provide a “professional platform of resistance for German interests”, the “first serious lobby organization for responsible citizens loving their homeland [heimatliebend]” with the aim to finally give “a tacit majority of discontent democrats” a voice. According to their own assessment, ‘Ein Prozent’ has forty thousand supporters, has raised 166,000€ for “patriotic projects” (during 2016), has “enlightened the Germans” with 450,000 flyers, and reached half a million through their website. Declaring their mission statement, two aims are stressed in particular: the “patriotic protest” against “the irresponsible politics of mass immigration” and the “growing abyss between the governing political cast and the true sovereign – the people”. This protest is channelled by ‘Ein Prozent’ and thus brought to “the centre of society”, helping the people “down there” to be taken seriously by those “up there”. This requires tools of grass-root activism: “Networking, funding and organization are the essential pillars of professional resistance.”

Developing its activities further, ‘Ein Prozent’ claims to “offer resistance against a political class that no longer protects the interests of its own population and even claims there is no ‘genuine’ people.” ‘Ein Prozent’ links individuals and “groups of citizens who dare to search for alternatives in times of no alternatives.” Contacts and ideas for “courageous citizens” are mediated, front line activists are supported and relief brought to those in need. “Not everyone can be an activist and offer resistance”, but everyone can contribute according to his own capacity. The object of resistance is exemplified as follows: “The refugee invasion [Flüchtlingsinvasion] is a catastrophe for Germany and Europe.” Therefore, people are called to support legal and political actions and those geared towards the media are tasked to disseminate information that is not to be found elsewhere. Assistance is also provided to those in local communities who defend themselves “against the dissolution of our state”.

42 Ein Prozent, website, which is referenced throughout this section.
The goal is to recruit one percent of all Germans, eight hundred thousand, to sign up behind the initiative that has three general aims: to protect German borders against unlawful entry, to register and extradite all illegal immigrants and to protect the property of the people [Volkeigentum] and individuals. Moreover, ‘Ein Prozent’ demands to be included in discussions about the future of Germany and more forcefully: “Those responsible for the dissolution of the constitutional state and our natural order of life [Lebensordnung] have to resign.”

‘Ein Prozent’ asks its readers to support the initiative financially through micro-donations, by spreading the word, engaging locally or by contributing with unique competence. These four building blocks clearly represent different levels of interactive engagement, from chipping in with a few Euro to voluntary conscription to the resistance movement. Particularly interesting to notice are the different options combining traditional offline and online approaches. Donations can be made through the conventional banking system, but also through Paypal. Information can be disseminated through physical leaflets and social media or subscribing to the electronic newsletter. An interactive map of Germany allows the readers to find local activism IRL (in real life) and conversely to pinpoint their IRL-activities on the online map and to send reports to the ‘Ein Prozent’ team for online publication. No less than 130 groups (together with their statements of purpose) are listed mostly in Germany and Austria, many of them related to the IB. Some of the groups have other revealing names such as ‘Reconquista’, Völkerfreunde (‘Friends of the People’), Patriotic or Courageous Citizens, Patriotische Departure, the ‘Shield’, Heimatliebe (‘Love of the homeland’), Resistance, Awakening, Counterculture, Pro Patria and so on. It is impossible to assess the real existence or the size of these groups and initiatives, but they generate the impression that resistance is organized across the country. And only by offering services “can our civilian protest grow into a serious antagonist of the establishment”. Interlinked citizens are asked to contribute with their specific competences and thus to sign-up to the resistance. ‘Ein Prozent’ has thus created an ambitious online-form where personal data can be submitted for a “register of supporters”. It is obvious that computer and social media literacy are part of the resistance evoked.

As of June 2017, ‘Ein Prozent’ also runs a Facebook-page (‘Ein Prozent für unser Land’ @einfrozentfuerunserland) which is ‘liked’ by almost fifty thousand people, a Twitter-account (@ein_prozent) with 707 tweets and followed by more than 5,800 users and a YouTube channel ‘Einprozent-Film” which has around 3,000 subscribers, around forty videos and almost four hundred thousand views. Furthermore, the website itself also includes a blog with around 270 posts which explores many subjects and events since November 2015.

Taken together, the material on the platform einprozent.de (and its various social media offshoots) unfolds its narrative power through a peculiar interplay between online and offline dramaturgy that mutually reinforces the message of the decline and resistance it aims to disseminate. ‘Ein Prozent’ persistently exploits the image that Germany is under attack from inside (staged by corrupt elites) and outside (through an orchestrated refugee ‘deluge’). Against this, ‘resistance’ is evoked as a legitimate idea to promote political change. As harmless as the low-key citizen protest might appear that creates the backbone of ‘Ein Prozent’s media strategies, an important question to follow up is: Where are the borders of ‘resistance’ in terms of radicalization and (accepting and endorsing) the use of violence? Germany has in the immediate past been growlingly exposed to a host of far-right groups
that all have engaged with or have plotted lethal violence: NSU, the ‘Gruppe Freital’, the ‘Reichsbürger’ movement and most recently a ring of radicalized German soldiers who were setting up a plot for terrorist attacks under false flag. In this setting, ‘Ein Prozent’ contributes to cognitive radicalization through the promotion of the idea that German politics is derailed and in desperate need of a reboot from the right.
Whilst writing my revised and updated book on the Treblinka death camp in Poland, I decided to include some of my personal correspondence with two Treblinka survivors Kalman Teigman and Eliahu Rosenberg.

In November 2004, Kalman had pointed out to me, that in his letter Eliahu stated that ‘there were only two diesel engines, one for the three gas chambers and one for the ten gas chambers. He also said there was no machine-haus, but the engines were covered outside the gas chambers.’

When Treblinka started its murderous activity in July 1942, the gassings were carried out in three gas chambers with the gas supplied by a single diesel engine. Jankiel Wiernik, one of the survivors, wrote a detailed description of the old gas chambers. He said ‘There were three gas chambers with the gas supplied by a single engine’. Wiernik also described the new gas chambers at Treblinka: ‘It turned out we were building ten additional gas chambers... the motor which generated the gas in the new chambers was defective’.

We have two Jewish eyewitnesses, Wiernik and Rosenberg, who witnessed daily the gas chambers. They stated that there were ten chambers and the gas was supplied by one diesel motor. Both are very credible witnesses in my opinion.

First, let’s examine the number of gas chambers:

For some strange reason, none of the SS men seem to agree with the number ten. Firstly, Arthur Matthes, head of the Upper Camp, where the gas chambers were located said, ‘Later, in summer 1942, the new gas chambers were built. I think that they became operational only in the autumn. All together six gas chambers were active.’ Franz Suchomel, in his interviews with Claude Lanzmann for the film Shoah, stated, ‘The Jews say there were five on each side, I say there were four, but I am not sure.’ Kurt Gerstein, head of the Waffen-SS Institute in Berlin, said he visited Belzec death camp in August 1942 but it is more likely the visit took place a few months later. He claimed the day after Belzec he visited Treblinka accompanied by Christian Wirth. He said he saw eight gas chambers there. However in August 1942, there was only the old gas chamber building with three gas chambers. The new gas chambers (eight or ten) were built in the autumn, thus meaning that Gerstein’s visit was probably later in 1942. Pavel Leleko, a Ukrainian Trawniki man (Trawniki Camp in Lublin District) who was a guard at Treblinka, testified on 20 February 1945 that ‘Eight chambers out of the ten existing in the gas chamber were used to poison people. In the two remaining ones, there were two powerful German engines about 1.5 metres high — two engines in all. Each engine fed gas to four gas chambers.’

Now we will examine the number of engines:

A number of the Ukrainian SS guards who were trained at the Trawniki camp provided a number of statements regarding the gas chamber ‘machinist’ Ivan Marchenko and his role at Treblinka, which provides further information. We have the views of one of them, Pavel
Leleko, above and a number of them supported the two engines/motors theory but others claimed there was one engine/motor:

**One Motor/Engine:**

**Prokofi Ryabtsev 17 April 1961:** The filled chambers were hermetically sealed, and then Shalayev and Marchenko engaged the motor from which the gas entered the chambers.

**Grigoriy Skydan 26 May 1950:** Shalayev and Marchenko turned on the diesel and fed the exhaust gas from it, into the gas chamber and after about fifteen minutes the people in the gas chamber would die.

**Nikolai Kulak 23 December 1946:** Together with the Germans he herded the Jews into the gas chambers of the ‘bath-house,’ closed the doors. Later he switched the gas from the motor into the chambers. (See the entry for 27, February 1947).

**Aleksander Parashenko 6 August 1951:** While in the death camp he worked as a motorist. He started the powerful motor the gas of which rose to the chambers of the ‘dushehubka’ killing the people in the chambers.

**Pyoter Goncharov 6 March 1951:** Took part in the extermination of the prisoners in the gas chambers, in that he worked with the diesel motor from which he fed exhaust gasses into the gas chamber, killing the prisoners.

**Ivan Shevchenko 8 September 1944:** Motorist of the gas chamber Marchenko, Ivan, former Red Army serviceman, started the motor which by means of installed pipes fed gas into the chambers of the gas chamber and killed the people.

**Trofim Zavidenko 2 February 1951:** When the chambers were filled with Jewish people he would engage the motor, let out the gas which caused the massive annihilation of people.

**Samui Prits 2 August 1961:** In the Treblinka death camp Marchenko was motorist of the gas chambers, that is, he turned on the motor the exhaust gas of which, was fed by pipes into the gas chambers.

**Nikolay Shalayev 28 August 1951:** His responsibilities as a motorist included safeguarding the functioning of the motor which produced the carbon monoxide, which entered the chambers.

**Ivan Shvidkoy 28 August 1951:** When the dushehubka was full, he shut the doors, turned on the motor, the exhaust gas of which entered the chambers and killed the prisoners.

**Ivan Terekhov 13 September 1961:** Besides turning on the motor which fed gas into the gas chamber, he himself herded the people into the gas chamber.

**Nikolay Skakofdub 3 May 1961:** Their primary responsibility was herding the condemned into the gas chambers and turning on the motor.
Two Motors/ Engines:

Filip Levchishin 20-31 March 1962: There was an attached shed near the gas chambers located in which were the motors which produced the exhaust gas used to kill the people.

Emmanuel Schultz: The exhaust gas came into the gas chambers from the motors which were turned on by Wachman Marchenko and Shalayev.

Nikolai Kulak 27 February 1947: Then motorists Marchenko and Shalayev turned on the motors which fed the gas.

Nikolay Shalayev 20 December 1951: The Jews re-fuelled and turned on the motors, the exhaust gas of which was fed into the chambers.

Nikolay Malagon 18 March 1978: Pipes carrying exhaust gas from running diesel motors were installed in the gas chambers...near the diesel engines by the gas chambers there worked a guard by the name of Marchenko.

Hoss, the commandant of Auschwitz Concentration Camp, most likely visited Treblinka during September 1942. In his memoirs he wrote: ‘A motor room had been built next to the gas chambers, equipped with various engines taken from large lorries and tanks. These were started up and the exhaust gases were led by pipes into the gas chambers, thereby killing the people inside.’ Franz Suchomel, a member of the Treblinka staff, confirmed in an interview with Claude Lanzmann ‘In the ‘funnel’ the women had to wait. They heard the motors of the gas chambers.

So in conclusion lots of conflicting statements. Of course we don’t know if some of the eyewitnesses were talking about the new gas chambers or the old gas chambers, as sometimes both gas chambers were used – one motor in each.

We may never know the truth.

Note: Dushehubka – ‘Soul Destroyer’
How the Polish government’s ‘historical policy’ creates a point of contact and overlap with the far right

Dan Tilles

Since returning to power in late 2015, Poland’s national-conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party has been accused by critics of giving greater license to radical nationalists. While there is no evidence of any direct support from the government for such groups, there are clear areas of overlap in aspects of ideology and policy. The most obvious has been on the issue of Muslim migration, where PiS has appropriated the rhetoric and framing of the far right, in a manner typical of the process of ‘mainstreaming’ described by Aristotle Kallis. A similar pattern can be observed in the government’s ‘historical policy’, a centrepiece of its programme, which overlaps with and borrows from narratives cultivated by radical nationalists. The policy has two overarching themes: drawing greater attention to Polish suffering and heroism during German and Soviet occupation in WWII (while downplaying episodes that portray Poles in a bad light); and, with regard to the postwar period, attempting to create a new pantheon of Polish anti-communist independence heroes.

Regarding the first of these aims, the most significant action has been the government’s successful effort to take control, via the courts, of the major new World War II Museum in Gdańsk. Created in consultation with leading domestic and international scholars, the museum’s exhibition presents the war in a global context. The government, however, has made clear it wants the institution to offer a more ‘Polish perspective’. A PiS senator, commissioned by the culture ministry to review the exhibition, criticised its ‘left-liberal, pseudo-universalist narrative’, saying that it does not do enough to explain that Poles are ‘Catholics and patriots’ and to demonstrate ‘our exceptionality’. Another reviewer, a historian close to the ruling party, complained that the museum presented a ‘communist-era’ message that war is a bad thing. Instead, it should do more to show how war contributes to ‘the toughening of man, demonstrating his noblest motives, patriotism, citizenship, sacrifice for others’. The new government-appointed director of the museum has said that he intends to incorporate the suggestions of the reviewers and ‘give visitors the opportunity of knowing the specific Polish history’.

Another, related, focus has been to distort, downplay or deny Polish involvement in anti-Jewish actions during the war. On the anniversary of the Jedwabne massacre – in which over 300 Jews were burnt to death at the hands of their Polish neighbours under German occupation – the education minister claimed that suggestions of Polish involvement are just an ‘opinion’. She added that those responsible for the later Kielce pogrom were not Poles,

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45 ‘Those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it (19 April 2017)’. Poland.pl, polish.pl/tourism/history-poland/those-who-do-not-know-history-are-doomed-repeat-it/.
but rather ‘antisemites’ who were ‘not completely Polish’. In a similar vein, President Andrzej Duda, during a state visit to Israel, claimed that Poles who participated in pogroms ‘expelled themselves from the Polish people’. This rhetorical trick avoids outright denial but effectively absolves the Polish nation of any response to grapple with historical responsibility for such crimes. Previously, during his election campaign, Duda condemned his rival, the sitting president, for apologising on behalf of Poles for Jedwabne.

The second strand of the government’s policy – focusing on the history of the postwar struggle for independence from Soviet dominance – has involved, on the one hand, downplaying the importance of the Solidarity movement, and in particular its leader Lech Wałęsa, who has been accused of collaborating with the communist authorities and of playing a less important role than commonly believed. At the same time, attention has been shifted towards other heroes of the struggle against communism – above all, the so-called ‘cursed soldiers’, underground fighters who waged a guerrilla campaign against the imposition of communism after the war and were violently quashed by the authorities. While their ranks include many figures who merit greater recognition (their history having been suppressed under decades of communist rule), the indiscriminate nature of commemorations means that among the honoured are often individuals accused of involvement in the massacre of civilians from non-Polish ethnic groups.

To some extent this historical policy is a long term project of PiS, one that they set in motion when briefly leading a governing coalition in 2005–7. This time, however, their efforts are more far-reaching and extreme. This is epitomised in particular by the new emphasis on the cursed soldiers, a group previously on the margins of Polish public consciousness but whose memory has been assiduously cultivated by the far right. Images of the soldiers have long been common at nationalist rallies, on banners, t-shirts and tattoos. Now that PiS has also taken up the cause, commemoration has become a point of contact and overlap with the radical right.

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51 ‘Litewska zbrojna majora „Lupaszki” (10 May 2016), Gazeta Wyborcza, wyborca.pl/1,75398,20046370,litewskia-zbrojna-majora-lupaszki.html.
At the local level, for example, PiS representatives and far-right groups have jointly attended, and even co-organised, events in memory of the cursed soldiers. At the national level, a ceremonial reburial last year of two cursed soldiers was given great prominence by PiS, with the president, prime minister and other senior government figures attending the service. Outside the church, some among the large crowd of nationalists confronted and forced away members of an anti-government protest group, the Committee for the Defence of Democracy (KOD), which had also turned up to pay its respects. In the aftermath, the government came down firmly on the side of the nationalists, claiming that KOD’s presence was a deliberate ‘provocation’. The rationale behind this view was telling. The government argued that the fact KOD was displaying its symbols was inherently provocative, therefore making the nationalists’ violent response understandable. Yet numerous nationalist groups, including those who confronted KOD, also attended the event carrying their own flags and banners. The government’s double standard was a tacit acknowledgement of its view that the history of the cursed soldiers belongs to conservatives and nationalists, and that any attempt to commemorate them by liberals (who, as will be explained below, are also seen as traitors to the nation) is inherently offensive.

As this excuse-making indicates, another aspect of the government’s historical policy that brings it closer to the far right has been giving a more positive role to violence. As we saw above, the new WWII museum was criticised for not doing enough to emphasise the positive spiritual effects of war. The new director of the museum – a young scholar with no publications on WWII or apparent experience working in the museum sector – appears to have been chosen on the basis of his activism in promoting the memory of the cursed soldiers. This included one campaign in which he encouraged people to wear t-shirts (of the type favoured by the far right) bearing the image of Zygmunt ‘Łupaszko’ Szendzielarz, a cursed soldier who commanded a Home Army unit that was found by a historian at Poland’s Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) to have conducted a massacre that killed dozens of Lithuanian civilians (mainly women and children) in 1944. The new head of the IPN, appointed by the government last year, recently published a children’s book about the Warsaw Uprising that celebrated the bravery of an 11-year-old child soldier who fought and died in the operation. In June this year, the IPN – which is meant to be a research institute – co-organised a ‘fun day’ of gun handling and shooting for children aged eight and up, with the aim of ‘strengthening patriotic and social values’. This increased emphasis on ‘patriotic’ education has also been reflected in schools, where a reworked history curriculum will be introduced this year. One state school recently asked a group of 11-year-olds to re-enact the execution of a group of cursed soldiers, with one child playing a

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member of the communist security services and ‘shooting’ the other students one by one in the back of the head.\textsuperscript{57}

Taken together, this represents an attempt to shift the memory of anti-communist resistance towards the more ‘patriotic’ and violent (although failed) efforts of the cursed soldiers, and away from Solidarity, a peaceful protest movement that is regarded by PiS – in the conspiratorial outlook central to its worldview\textsuperscript{58} – not to have genuinely brought down the communist regime, but to have allowed its elites to secretly remain in power behind the scenes after 1989. Thus, violent, but ultimately futile, defence of the nation is imbued with moral superiority to peaceful compromise with its enemies. And it is here that PiS’s message finds common ground with radical nationalists. The question here – and with the government’s appropriation of the far right’s rhetoric and framing of the refugee issue – is whether this will boost the radical nationalists by legitimising and mainstreaming their message, or if, instead, it will ensure their continued marginalisation as PiS poaches another issue from them. The fact that far-right parties have consistently failed to make an electoral impact in Poland is often attributed to the fact that PiS has been effective at offering enough nationalism to attract those who might be tempted to vote for more radical groups, while remaining within the political mainstream itself. However, the party’s historical policy is further evidence of the fact that this mainstream has itself in recent years been shifting in a much more nationalist direction.


\textsuperscript{58} Christian Davies, ‘The conspiracy theorists who have taken over Poland (16 February 2016)’, Guardian, www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/16/conspiracy-theorists-who-have-taken-over-poland.
The Roots of Fascism in ‘Classicism’

Henry Mead

Fascism is often traced to a discourse of ‘classicism’ that developed through the late 19th century, but became most virulent in the years after the Dreyfus Scandal in France, when it became identified with a sense of racial purity, calling back to a largely fabricated myth of the Hellenic roots of European culture, and contrasting the liberal tendencies of post-Reformation Christianity with a former stage of moral rigour and institutional strength.

Most notably, the French Neo-Royalist group Action française were advocates of a new nationalist ‘classicism’, as theorised by leading figures such as Charles Maurras (1868-1952) and Pierre Lasserre (1867-1930). Action française called for the restitution of the Bourbon monarchy and condemned the weak liberalism of the Third Republic. They blamed the deterioration of French culture since the 18th century on an influx of foreign ideas – most egregiously, the romanticism of Rousseau, which brought about the disaster of the Revolution. This cataclysmic event disrupted a native tradition of noble rule, identifiable with a Mediterranean, Hellenic spirit of ‘classicism’, and set a national trajectory towards compromise and enervation. Galvanised by the Dreyfus case, Maurras’s movement made the case against modern liberal democracy from 1908 through polemical books, weekly and monthly journals, and through the activism of the movement’s youth wing, the Camelots du Roi who used acts of violence against culpable liberal figures, including academics and politicians, to make their point. Also among Action française’s enemies were Jews and foreigners; Henri Bergson (1858-1941), a philosopher prone to progressive interpretation, whose ideas and ethnicity were viewed as suspiciously foreign, was a prime target.

It is worth looking back to the roots of these ideas. As René Wellek has shown, the distinction between romanticism and classicism generated a huge amount of debate from the late eighteenth through to the nineteenth century. The political identities of either side were ambiguous. During the Third Republic in France, its meaning hardened. Recent scholarship has established a widespread, nationalist use of the term ‘classicism’ in early twentieth century France. Historians of art, in particular, have recently paid close attention to the rise of the idea of ‘classicism’ from 1870 through to the 1930s. As Neil McWilliam puts it, the usage of ‘classicism’ was ‘ideologically inspired, and predominantly, though not exclusively associated with the integral nationalism of Action française.’ As he notes, ‘in many respects the ideological ramifications of royalism’s appeal to a classical tradition

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extending back to the ancient Mediterranean cultures of Greece and Rome remain imperfectly understood.\textsuperscript{61}

Charles Maurras’s achievement was to establish a seemingly natural association of classicism with the right. This had been less clear over the previous century as conservatives like Edmund Burke, Joseph de Maistre, Ernest Renan, and Hippolyte Taine railed against the follies of the classically minded Enlightenment, and their fruition in the Terror.\textsuperscript{62} Meanwhile, the right had previously been identified with romanticism. Maistre, the leading conservative critic of the Revolution, borrowed ideas from German romantic texts via Madame de Stael.\textsuperscript{63} As Maurras noted, the Republicans of 1830 identified (in his view erroneously) their Royalist enemies as ‘romantics’: ‘A combatant from the barricades of July 1830 is said to have rushed victorious and powder-blackened to a friend and cried, “We have beaten the romantics.” [...] it is very much in this sense that Taine sees the spirit of revolution take form and grow within the classical tradition’.\textsuperscript{64} Taine’s history of modern France had identified the origins of revolution, both in 1789 and 1870, in a misguided ‘esprit classique’, originating in the superficial rationalism made fashionable by Enlightenment writers. Condemning the classical posturing of Marat and Robespierre, he warned against the Jacobin attitude as a continuing danger to French culture. Maurras, in many ways the inheritor of Maistre and Taine’s counter-revolutionary rhetoric, hesitated only to reject their attack on what he saw as the quintessentially French tradition of ‘classict’ rationalism: ‘Taine’s error astounds us! [...] Where [he] saw affinity, there was therefore but contradiction.’\textsuperscript{65} Yet in drawing a line from seventeenth century neo-classicism and Cartesian rationalism, through the purer, native elements of the Enlightenment, to the positivism of Comte, Maurras’ history was selective and tendentious.

Maurras had first moved in symbolist circles, but his involvement with the Félibrige movement, founded by Frédéric Mistral to defend and promote Occitan language and literature, revealed his nationalist priorities early on.\textsuperscript{66} A visit to Athens in 1896 inspired Maurras’s vision of a classical tradition inherited uniquely by France, and he soon afterwards joined Jean Moréas’s École Romane, which repudiated Symbolism and free verse, and called for a return to strict Alexandrine metre and classical subject matter. Having witnessed Dreyfus’s second trial and pardon in 1899, Maurras began publishing the polemical writings that made his name.\textsuperscript{67} His survey of popular opinion on the restoration, published as L’Enquête sur le monarchie (1900), was a key text for the Neo-Royalist

\textsuperscript{61} McWilliam, ‘Action française’, p.269.
\textsuperscript{66} Osgood, French Royalism, p.57.
\textsuperscript{67} Weber, Action française, pp.3-43; Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism, pp.54-68; Osgood, French Royalism, pp.54-68.
movement, as was his influential essay collection, *L’Avenir de l’Intelligence* (1905). Behind these texts lay a historiography and worldview encapsulated in the early essay ‘*Idées françaises ou idées suisses*’, which appeared in *Action française* in 1899.\(^{68}\) This text is frequently cited as a representative statement of Maurras’s beliefs, in which he locates himself in the French Right tradition, distancing himself for example from Taine’s attack on *l’esprit classique*. Maurras reworked the essay as the preface to his 1922 collection *Romantisme et révolution*, which included *L’Avenir de l’intelligence* and *Trois idées politiques*.\(^{69}\)

Maurras’s collaborator, Pierre Lasserre, expanded upon Maurras’s ideas in his doctoral dissertation, later published as *Romantisme français* (1907). Lasserre’s history of romanticism was particularly indebted to Maurras’s ‘*Idées françaises ou idées suisses*’, describing the penetration of romantic ideas into France, first through the German influence of the Reformation; later, through the misguided intellectual curiosity of Montesquieu and Voltaire; and, most egregiously, through the interventions of the Swiss Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The corruption of pure French classicism did much to bring about the events of 1879, and it continued to poison French culture through the nineteenth century. Lasserre added elements drawn from Nietzsche, particularly from *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887); his later book, *La Morale du Nietzsche* (1902) recommends a classical morality of *virtu* rather than the Christian morality of self-abnegation. Tied to this was the Nietzschean vision of the aristocracy of *Übermenschen*. We can see how Lasserre could superimpose these ideas upon Maurras’s history of a French classical tradition contaminated by Romanticism, blaming the brand of Judeo-Christian morality promulgated by the Protestant Reformation.\(^{70}\)

Zeev Sternhell, among many other historians, has identified this set of ideas in Third Republic France as the seedbed of fascism; indeed, it was Georges Valois, one of Maurras’s disciples, who formed the first French *Faisceau* party in 1928.\(^{71}\) However, Valois’s key intellectual contribution came earlier, in his 1911 formation of the radical group Cercle Proudhon, which added a new ingredient to the mixture: an attempt, briefly supported by Maurras, to combine Action française’s ‘classicism’ with a rhetoric of class war and invigorating combat deriving from Georges Sorel’s seminal work of Syndicalist theory, *Reflections on Violence* (1908).\(^{72}\) It would be the admixture of Sorel’s revolutionism with Maurrasian classicism that would create the closest conceptual precedent to Mussolini’s fascism and, later, Hitler’s Nazism.

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Robert May

This year marks a quarter century since Roger Griffin’s *Nature of Fascism* made its splash into the academic ocean of what now goes by the name of ‘fascist studies’. It needs hardly to be added that this book became widely referenced for Griffin’s contribution to the hotly contested debate over ‘generic fascism’. There, Griffin proposed his definition of the fascist minimum: ‘Fascism is a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism’. That sentence and its elucidation in the 1990s reinvigorated interest in the subject and divided scholars into ‘Griffinites’, who broadly agreed with his culturalist premise, and a range of sceptics, who are either unconvinced or vehemently disagree with his single sentence definition. Consequently, the debate over ‘what is fascism?’ continues to this day and remains as important as ever.

*Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe 1919-1945* moves away from the rigid focus on ideology, by Griffin and others, which has largely dominated scholarship on the interwar radical right. Instead, this collection focuses upon the political dynamics that are constructed from a hybrid of historical, nation-centred factors as well as impacts and influences from abroad. The chapters in this edited volume concentrate on the interwar European movements construed by historians as authoritarian, possibly semi-fascist or, from the Marxist prospective, perhaps fascists, successfully arguing that the neat taxonomies that they attempt to map these ‘ideal-types’ are considerably more complex on the ground than previous research has accommodated.

The book is categorised into two parts. Part I consists of four chapters each attempting to move away from the narrow ideologically centred viewpoint by examining the theoretical and comparative perspectives of radical right regimes’ and their complex (inter-) relationships. Aristotle Kallis’s opening chapter explores the similarities and differences between two methodological approaches of the study of fascism: one based on an ‘ideological weighted’ heuristic concept; the other, which Kallis endorses, combines primary research as well as ideology. By adopting the latter, he suggests that Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy are ‘key facilitators of the wider inter-war post-liberal/anti-socialist “departure”’ (36) stressing that the ‘demonstration’ effects from the two regimes remains inadequately under-explored. In Chapter 2 David D. Roberts explores the relationship between fascism and ‘parafascism’. He suggests that historians have been too ‘hung up’ (44) on definitions and correspondingly suggests more flexible approaches, even with the possibility of ‘jettisoning’ static classifications altogether. The chapter’s focus is heavily weighted towards the Italian model and highlights interactions between Fascism and other European dictatorial regimes. This results in interesting observations like the suggestion that ‘parafascist’ regimes were more innovative than has previously been thought; for example, aspects of the Italian model could be viewed more ‘parafascist’ than fascist when compared with Nazi Germany.

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Chapter 3 is a contribution from another leading scholar in the field, Roger Eatwell. He argues that as a result of the cultural turn, recent ‘ideal types’ used by scholars to categorise the anti-liberal, anti-democratic and anti-socialist political players in the decades between the wars are inadequate and problematic. He suggests that the concepts historians have formed are constructed overwhelmingly upon static ideology, thus overlooking the ‘mercurial and syncretic’ (83) elements that are prominent in every interwar radical right-wing group’s ideological make up. What is needed, Eatwell contends, is a considerably more complex approach that takes into consideration the ‘feedback between different parts of political systems’ (68). In the final chapter of Part 1, Antonio Costa Pinto re-evaluates the role of corporatism as a tool used against liberal democracy arguing that this socio-political organisation of major interest groups was one of the leading agents in the process of transnational radical right diffusion. Pinto suggests that corporatism played a vital role in the hybridisation processes of interwar radical-right regimes.

Part II then focuses on six specific countries (Austria, Portugal, Spain, Austria, Greece, Hungary and Romania). This section is not as thought-provoking as Part I but the shift from discussing concepts to examining individual countries compliments it well. In chapter 5 Gerhard Botz examines the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg dictatorship in Austria between 1933 and 1938. He aims to describe the regime as a ‘hybrid comprising different elements and theoretical models in an ever-shifting mixture’. (122) To accomplish this, he explores the main protagonists of this ‘mixture’: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and the indigenous Heimwehr ‘fascist’ movement. In chapter 6 Goffredo Adinolfi and Pinto analyse the Portuguese Estado Novo (New State). They explain how Salazarism and its political institutions amalgamated with the Portuguese blue shirts party organisations. They pay particular attention to the cross border relationships that influenced Salazar’s dictatorship.

Keeping with the Catholic focus in these middle chapters, Miguel Jerez and Javier Luque examine Spanish Francoism (1936-45) in chapter 7. The article provides an insight into the political climate before General Francisco Franco became supreme leader and how his brutal regime operated while in power, alluding occasionally to the influence from the two main fascist regimes on the continent. Jerez and Luque explain the different dynamics and actors that contributed to the rise of El Caudillo, including how he manipulated these forces throughout. Included is the interesting role that the fascist Falange had in the period and the group’s relationship with Franco. In chapter 8, Mogens Pelt’s case study moves across the continent to General Ioannis Metaxas’s dictatorship in Greece in the late 1930s. Pelt investigates the regular periods of change and the ways in which these changes affected the internal balance of power at the time, for example, between Metaxas and the king. In addition, external impacts are analysed, most notably the Third Reich’s relationship with Greece. In chapter 9, Jason Wittenberg turns attention on Hungry. He highlights the complexity of the political climate in the interwar period and how it affected the emergence of dictatorial practices, including that of the fascist Arrow Cross. Wittenberg argues that Hungary’s shift to the right had as much to do with transnational influences as national. In the final chapter, Constantin Iordachi investigates the colourful political life of Romania between 1937 and 1944. He analyses the hybridisation of each regime during the period. This includes events occurring outside of Romania that affected the complex interaction within the country at the time.
Whether this collection will result in a new wave of scholarship on the interwar right remains to be seen. Yet the innovative methodology at the heart of this collection looks beyond conceptual dichotomies that have dominated historiography for some time. The contributors make a convincing case that existing taxonomies need to be reworked far more than has been the case to date encouraging experts to embrace the hybridity that is clearly highlighted throughout the book. Through undertaking this line of inquiry they also enhance the emerging but vitally important field of transnational fascism by uncovering pathways between continental regimes in Italy and Germany, but also within democratic nations, such as the US and Great Britain. On this count alone, Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Interwar Europe should become a valuable addition to the field of generic (para) fascist studies.
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