

R. Eatwell, 'Fascism' in M. Freeden et al (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideology* (2013) [available on Moodle]

Was there a fascist ideology before the founding of the Fasci di Combattimento in 1919 by Benito Mussolini - former leading socialist who renamed the group in 1921 the Italian national Fascist party (PNF).

At the heart of fascist ideology lay 3 partly overlapping core themes. The first in the 'new man' which has been central to most attempts to distinguish fascism from reactionary and reformist right. Second is the nature of its holistic nationalism which lies at the heart of debates about whether it is possible to discern a generic fascism which includes both fascism and the more overtly racist Nazism. The final theme is the quest for a new third way state which would reconcile classes and ensure prosperity a goal neglected by those who stress fascism more cultural and or negative side.

Fascist ideology was mercurial, seeking a broad set of syntheses around its core themes, including: a commitment to science, for example in understanding human nature, and a more anti-rationalist, vitalist interest in the possibilities of the will; between the faith and service of Christianity and the heroism of Classical thought; and between private property relations more typical of the right and a form of extensive welfarism more typical of the left.

The Origins of fascist ideology.

First fascist movements emerged only after 1918, have been attempts to trace it back further. Karl Popper traced the attack on the open society to Plato and what he termed historicism namely the belief that there were laws of history which could not be shaped by man - Mussolini kept Plato's work.

According to Sternhell, the first clearly fascist ideological synthesis took place in France immediately before 1914 (Sternhell 1994). It was spawned in the small Cercle Proudhon by the cross-fertilization of Sorel's 'anti-materialist revision' of Marxism and the 'integral nationalism' of Charles Maurras's Action Française, which sought to restore order based on the monarchy and the Catholic Church. - stemmed from a shared rejection of liberal political values and ethnic hostility to a growing capitalist materialism and plutocracy. - desire to reunite France after bitter divisions of the Dreyfus Affair. Maurras and Sorel shared strongly anti-semitic views, Sternhell does not explore the way in which nationalism was becoming increasingly linked to racism.

George Mosse, who has highlighted thinkers in the Romantic movement and their influence on the large Volkisch movement which had grown notably in Germany during the late nineteenth century. - They celebrated beauty, and identified the nature of people closely with their landscape. This led them to see Jews as an ugly, arid people of the desert.

Hitler was later to give Volkisch thought pride of place in the Nazi lineage, - however Nazism and Volkisch did differ.

Racism in the sense of the rejection of the outsider has been traced at least as far back as Greek thought; anti-semitism was also strongly rooted in the Christian churches. However, racism in the sense of a body of scientific thought which seeks to argue that peoples can be divided into a clear hierarchy on biological and/or cultural traits derives more from the late nineteenth century.

Fascist Ideology:

Roger Griffin's Weberian ideal typical claim that: 'Fascism is a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism' (Griffin 1991: 26).

Griffin held that fascism appealed to people suffering from a 'sense making crisis', a conclusion largely deduced from intellectuals' comments about 'decadence' and/or the isolation of the masses rather than the empirical study of public opinion. Moreover, some fascists, including leaders like Léon Degrelle in Belgium, Ferenc