



CFP: The Right-Wing Parties and Intellectuals in Interwar South-Eastern Europe: between Conservatism and Fascism

Type: Call for Papers (Conference)

Date: 7-8 April 2022

Location: Belgrade, Serbia

Subject Fields: (South) Eastern European History, Balkan Studies, Modern European History, Political History, Nationalism, Fascism, Cultural History, Religious Studies

The conference is organized by the Institute for Balkan Studies SASA within the framework of the project *The Serbian Right-Wing Parties and Intellectuals in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1934-1941* supported by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, PROMIS programme, Grant no. 6062708, Acronym SerbRightWing.

Although in the shadow of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, the smaller states in South-Eastern Europe provide a number of case studies for examining the right-wing politics in the era of fascism. In general, these countries saw a mixture of conservative, radical right and outright fascist shades of right-wing political programmes, organizations and activism. A study of the most extreme, fascist variants have adopted what Roger Griffin has called the “new consensus”, an approach that prioritizes fascist ideology over structures and points out that generic fascism was a transnational phenomenon, emphasizing the common ground in various movements and regimes. From that transnational perspective, it is necessary to peruse not just the transfer of ideas and practices from the Axis Powers, but also to look more closely at the exchanges between the regional actors themselves. The dominant political force in the countries concerned, however, was conservatism, underpinning the authoritarian regimes of the regional monarchies; but the conservative core was also influenced by the fascist examples. To better understand the often tense relationship between the “old”, conservative and the “new”, radical/fascist right, António Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis have offered a theoretical model which views it as fluid and reflexive, involving a degree of mutual influence and selective borrowing, creating different hybrid forms of right-wing politics according to the national specifics and, ultimately, leading the conservatives towards radicalization of their policies. But this was an ambivalent process, since there were also domestic pressures at work to distance a political party, or government, from fascist ideology and practice. The antifascist

sentiment of public opinion, the need to define a political platform distinct from the pro-fascist opposition, conflicting interests in external affairs could all militate against the imitation and adoption of fascist models. On the other hand, the radicalization of the conservative right cannot be fully grasped without considering foreign policy pressures. The ascendancy of the Axis in the international arena, especially the undisputed economic and political hold over the neighbouring region of South-Eastern Europe, backed by military might, had the effect of forcing the governments in the region to acquire some fascist trappings in order to cultivate relations with Berlin and Rome and facilitate their own agenda in foreign affairs.

In turn, the radicalization of the conservative right created a more favourable atmosphere for further dissemination of fascist ideas and style. This was not just apparent in the outlook of political leaders and their party organizations, but also in the public sphere in which a number of prominent intellectuals showed an increasing sympathy for all things fascist. Those personalities, for example writers, journalists, clerics, expressed views, often in polemics with the dissenting voices, which provide more refined insights into the complex reality of right-wing attitudes than those obtained from studying political parties and government agencies. A closer scrutiny of such individuals, the trajectories of their intellectual development and political engagement can substantially contribute to our understanding of how elements of fascist ideology and practices penetrated conservative constituencies and blurred the boundaries between the “old” and the “new” right. Their input in the public sphere coloured, to a certain degree, the political milieu of right-wing politics, while their position on the political and social ladder might serve as something of a barometer of the level of acceptance of their views.

Starting from these considerations, the organizers are interested in papers that explore, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- how conservative parties and politicians dealt with the rise of fascism, what facets of fascism they appropriated, or refused to incorporate, and to what extent and purpose;
- how conservatives negotiated their political platform in the face of growing fascism at home and abroad, and how they positioned themselves on the right-wing political spectrum;
- did the impulse for fascistization come from above or below and, conversely, who among the conservatives offered the greatest resistance and why?
- how did local fascists introduce fascist ideology, practice and style to their own constituencies, and how did they harmonize them with the national interests of their own countries and local socio-political conditions?
- transnational networks and links among right-wingers in South-Eastern Europe;
- prominent personalities in the public sphere who voiced right-wing attitudes and had an impact on their shaping, reception and implementation;
- the effect fascist ideas had on the cultural scene, literature in particular, and the links between the living experiences of right-wing artists and their work;

- the rise of antisemitism, anti-masonic campaigns and eugenics, and the actors responsible for their propagation and development in South-Eastern Europe.

Deadlines and Procedure

We will organize a two-day international conference on Thursday and Friday, 7-8 April 2022. Given the Covid-related difficulties, it is safest to envisage a hybrid conference with both on-site and online participation. The participants are invited to deliver a 20-minute presentation in English. The deadline for submitting paper proposals (no more than 500 words and a short biography in English) is 24 December 2021. Please send your proposals in a single Word document with the subject "Belgrade Conference on Rightists" to: conference.belgrade2022@gmail.com

Proposers will be notified of acceptance by 15 January 2022.

We intend to publish the papers presented at the conference in an edited volume to be published by the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The deadline for submitting papers for publication (8,000-10,000 words, footnotes included) is 30 September 2022.

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