



## **A Conference on the Extreme Right and Strategies for a new hegemony**

Europe is moving towards greater polarization and growing nationalism. We can observe a shift to the right in the political spectrum – albeit to varying degrees in different countries.

At the last election to the European Parliament in 2014 in France, Denmark, and Great Britain in particular, but also in Austria, Sweden, and Finland, as well as Hungary and Greece, a number of political parties that position themselves to the right of the conservativenationalist parties have gained seats in the European Parliament.

In France, the Front National (FN) became the strongest political force with 25 per cent; in Denmark, the Danish People's Party (DF) ranked first, receiving 26.6 per cent of the vote, and in Great Britain the UK Independence Party (UKIP) came in first. In Austria, the Freedom Party (FPÖ) won 20.5 per cent of the vote and in Hungary FIDESZ had a runaway victory with 51.5 per cent. Several parties such as Golden Dawn in Greece and Jobbik in Hungary should be classified as neo-fascist or neo-Nazi. There are thus considerable differences within the political right and extreme right. This rightward trend has been also evident in the national elections held after the European Parliament elections since.

The number of right-wing nationalist Members of European Parliament (MEPs) has grown to a good fourth which are belonging to different groups in the EP, the new right-wing group "Europe of Nations and Freedom" has been found and Hungary's FIDESZ despite exhibiting the characteristics of a right-wing radical party in many ways, has found its place in the European People's Party.

So "Radical Right" seems to be too vague as it applies to a spectrum including open neo-Nazis and right-wing parties having adapted their appearance to suit mainstream media.

### **Various faces and agendas of the right**

The extreme right is not uniform; it contains right-wing populist, neo-fascist and post-fascist parties and networks that struggle internally for hegemony. The various currents also respond to different

perceived threats and the focus of their political campaigns for closed national borders vary: just before the euro crisis, we saw a resurgence of an international anti-Islamic and counterjihadist milieu, who took parliamentary (Geert Wilders, Pro-Deutschland) extra-parliamentary mobilizing (English Defence League, Generation identitaire, Pegida) cultural struggle (Eurabia literature, blog-oriented counterjihadist networks) and terrorist expressions (Anders Behring Breivik). During the euro crisis, eurosceptic populism grew instead and a wave of violence against Roma swept across Europe, against internal migration within the Union. With the refugee crisis and the increase in asylum seekers from the civil war in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Eritrea, asylum seeking refugees have become the main target of right-wing populist parties, while refugee camps have faced protests and been exposed to attacks.

Added to this are the differences between the European Union's center and periphery countries, which are obliged by EU agreements as Schengen or Dublin as gatekeepers for Fortress Europe and are also the ones hardest hit by the economic crisis and austerity policies. While populist parties are growing strongly in the center countries, the openly neo-Nazi street violence and mobilisations in the European periphery countries, often in combination with parliamentary increases for nationalist parties. Another factor is the geopolitical orientation within the European extreme right approaching Russia, as a conservative support partner for their eurosceptic parties.

What is the interaction between the right-wing populist and fascist organizations fighting for "parliament, minds and the street", between the political parties, the meta-political ideological think tanks and the social mobilizations in society? What is the division of labor between the right-wings different parts, what does the far right's historical block look like and how do they cooperate with an increasing authorization of crisis politics Europe? And what role does the geopolitical situation play, with Russia trying to challenge an American (and European) hegemony and seeking allies in the European far right. What similarities and differences in the situation can we see in the center EU countries and the periphery, as well as the former Eastern and Western Europe?

### **Reasons for the rise of the right**

The left's historical experience in confronting it is substantial and extensive. But this observation must not mislead into overlooking the new factors.

No contemporary described hitherto the context of the right-wing development and the capitalist crisis more clearly than Karl Polanyi. In his principal work, *The Great Transformation*, he wrote that socialism and nationalism originated in the milieu of a crisis-ridden capitalism. Both they were the reaction to the collapse of the 'utopian endeavour' of constructing societies and international relations on the basis of a 'self-regulating market system'.

Nowadays increased votes for right-wing radical parties are often interpreted simplistically as the protest of frustrated underclasses. However as data for many countries show the electorates of far right parties embrace also middle strata and are even spreading among upper-income groups.

In the political debate – including among the different tendencies of the left – the reasons for the success of right-wing and right-wing populist parties mostly remain hazy. The main case we would make is that in the course of the profound crisis which has seized European countries and the EU as a whole, political systems have also plunged into serious crisis. The ruling elites have proved

incapable of dealing with the collapse of traditional bourgeois civil society and its economic dynamic. At the same time, the widespread criticism of the system is not spontaneously generating progressive options. Profound disillusion, growing insecurity, and the feeling that politics is no longer able to deliver solutions affect the whole traditional political spectrum, including the political left.

Thus, neoliberalism's obvious defeat and the shock it caused do not lead generally to new dynamics for left political organizations (exemption is the Greek case, also Ireland, Portugal and partially Spain, where the left succeeds to gain on the basis of anti-austerity programmes), but create a space adroitly used by modernised right-wing populist and right-wing extremist groups in many countries. The mixture they have devised of criticism of capitalism, condemnation of the political system, and nationalism – an unambiguously right-wing populist position – has been very successful. Today, these parties intend to come to power and realise a profound transformation of the existing power relations. This means that we are no longer facing mere opposition groups, but protagonists who are posing the question of cultural and political hegemony. Moreover right-wing radical thinking is nearer to the neoliberal zeitgeist than one might think. As the Dutch political scientist Cas Mudde writes it is a 'pathology of normalcy' rather than a 'normal pathology'.

## **Challenges**

Millions of people are observing that states, as well as Europe as a whole, are failing to protect them from unemployment, from losing their homes, and from being excluded from social security systems. The inhabitants of Europe, who are still enjoying relatively comfortable living conditions, are told that the victims of the crisis are themselves to blame for their dire situation and that they are living off everybody's tax money now. Is it, therefore, really surprising that Euroscepticism and nationalism are sprouting up everywhere?

Here the left faces a twofold challenge. It has to uncompromisingly oppose populist nationalism, because never in history have discord between peoples and xenophobia helped in solving social problems. But the social problems caused by government policy, which millions of Europeans are forced to face, are real. That is why the left has to intransigently oppose the policies enacted in the member states in the name of Europe – policies responsible for the current misery. They have allowed nationalist and rightwing extremist groups to flourish.

How can we face this challenge?

Based on this analysis, we can begin to sketch out counter-strategies and lessons for a European left politics, that is able to both operate in the EU's crisis, relate to the geopolitical situation, mobilize the discontent against crisis policies and challenge the reactionary mobilization both in parliament, on the streets and culturally.

DATE: 13th-14th November

LOCATION: ABF-Study House, Sveavägen 41, central Stockholm (Metro: Rådmanstgatan).

## **SCHEDULE**

**Friday 13th November**

**15:00-20:00**

Room: Palmesalen

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15:00 PART 1: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Moderator: Shabane Barot

### **Classification**

Mathias Wåg (S): Presentation - When the left study Laclau on populism and the right Gramsci on hegemony

Markus Lundström & Tomas Lundström (S) - Classifications of the Radical right

### **European overview**

Walter Baier - Europe at the crossroads: Right populism and reactionary rebellion

Thilo Janssen - Beloved enemy - Extrem right partys and the European Union

### **East-West**

Anton Shekovtsov (Radicalism and New Media Research Group, Kiev) - European-Russian networking in the Extreme right

Daniel Platek – Poland

Adam Marcus - Hungary

### **UK and France**

Bernard Schmid - France

Ben Lear – United Kingdom

**Saturday 14th November**

**9:00-15:00**

Room: Beskowsalen

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9:00 Continuation Part 1 EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

**Populism in Scandinavia**

Li Andersson (Fin) - True finns

Tobias Alm (DK), Cordelia Heß (D) - Rightwing populism can be deadly

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10:30 Part 2: THE POSSIBILITY OF A EUROPEAN GENERALISATION

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13:00 Part 3: CONCLUSION

Open discussion with the panel, Transform network and conference participants.

## BOOKS

Tamir Bar-On: *Where have all the fascists gone?* Ashgate publishing 2007.

Julian Bruns, Kathrin Glösel, Natascha Strobl: *Die Identitären - Handbuch zur Jugendbewegung der Neuen Rechten in Europa*, Unrast Verlag, 2014.

Mats Deland, Michael Minkenberg, Christin Mays (ed): *In the Tracks of Breivik - Far Right Networks in Northern and Eastern Europe*, Lit Verlag, 2014.

Mats Deland, Charles Westin (ed): *Brunt! Nationalistisk och nazistisk mobilisering i vår närmaste omvärld under efterkrigstiden*, Atlas akademi, 2007 (in Swedish).

Mats Deland (ed): *Det vita fältet I, Samtida forskning om högerextremism*, Upsala Historica Upsaliensis 41, 2010. (In Swedish)

Mats Deland (ed): *Det vita fältet II*, Arkiv - Tidskrift för samhällsanalys, nr 2, 2013. (in Swedish)

Mats Deland (ed): *Det vita fältet III*, fall 2015 (In Swedish)

Mattias Gardell: *Islamofobi*, Leopard, 2010. (in Swedish)

Cordelia Hess, Tobias Alm: *Rechtspopulismus kann tödlich sein!*, edition assemblage.

Marlene Laruelle: *Russian Eurasianism - An ideology of Empire*, Johns Hopkins University Press (2008)

Review: <http://www.usak.org.tr/dosyalar/dergi/xICXyXkQ1grtmH0DPPeiUtKx5BNoHn.pdf>

Helene Lööw: *Nazismen i Sverige 2000-2014*, Ordfront, 2014 (in Swedish)

Cas Mudde: *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Bernhard Schmidt: *Die neue Rechte in Frankreich*, Unrast Verlag, 2009

Bernard Schmid: *Distanzieren, leugnen, drohen – Die europäische extreme Rechte nach Oslo*. edition assemblage (2011).

Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Beacon Press; Boston, 2002 (1944), p. 31.

## ARTICLES

Li Andersson: Den framgångsrika fascistiseringen av Finland <http://www.fria.nu/artikel/91452>

Li Andersson: Dags att bryta tystnaden om Sannfinländarnas politik <http://www.nytid.fi/2015/03/dags-att-bryta-tystnaden-om-sannfinlandarnas-politik/>

Joachim Bischoff, Elisabeth Gauthier, Bernhard Müller:  
<http://www.transform-network.net/journal/yearbook-2015/news/detail/Journal/right-wing-extremism-and-modernised-right-wing-populism-in-europe.html>

Mattias Gardell: The roots of Breivik's ideology: where does the romantic male warrior ideal come from today?

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/mattias-gardell/roots-of-breiviks-ideology-where-does-romantic-male-warrior-ideal-come-from-today>

Mattias Gardell: Terror in the Norwegian Woods (2011)  
<https://overland.org.au/previous-issues/issue-205/feature-mattias-gardell/>

Pietro Castelli Gattinara, Catarina Froio, Matteo Albanese: The appeal on neo-fascism in times of crisis : the experience of CasaPound Italia, Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies, 2013.

[http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/28683/CasaPound\\_2013\\_PUBLISHED\\_VERSION.pdf?sequence=2](http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/28683/CasaPound_2013_PUBLISHED_VERSION.pdf?sequence=2)

Cordelia Hess: Rechte Frontkämpferinnen  
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-09/frauen-dominieren-spitze-rechtspopulistische-parteien>

Cordelia Hess, Tobias Alm: Högerpopulism vilse mellan historia och konservatism (in Swedish)  
<http://www.fria.nu/artikel/94605>

Interview with Benjamin Lear: »Die Linke würde von einer antinationalen Kritik profitieren«  
<http://jungle-world.com/artikel/2014/19/49836.html>

Cas Mudde: Why the new far-right political group in the European Parliament is a political failure, Open Democracy (2015)

Cas Mudde: Electoral Winners and Political Losers in the Right-Wing Eurosceptic Camp, Open Democracy (2014)

Cas Mudde: Fighting the System? Populist Radical Right Parties and Party System Change, Party Politics (2014)

Daniel Platek: Mobilizing on the extreme right in Poland. Marginalization, institutionalization, radicalization. <http://www.academia.edu/14436182/>

MOBILIZING\_ON\_THE\_EXTREME\_RIGHT\_IN\_POLAND.\_MARGINALIZATION\_INSTITUTIONALIZATION\_RADICALIZATION

Anton Shekhovtsov: Blogg <http://anton-shekhovtsov.blogspot.se/>

Anton Shekhovtsov: "Aleksandr Dugin and the West European New Right, 1989-1994", forthcoming.

Anton Shekhovtsov: (Co-authored with Andreas Umland) "Ultraright Party Politics in Post-Soviet Ukraine and the Puzzle of the Electoral Marginalism of Ukrainian Ultranationalists in 1994-2009", *Russian Politics and Law*, Vol. 51, No. 5 (2013), pp. 33-58. Download: PDF (subscription required).

Anton Shekhovtsov: "Apoliteic Music: Neo-Folk, Martial Industrial and 'Metapolitical Fascism'", *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 43, No. 5 (2009), pp. 431-457.