

Zitierhinweis

Stibbe, Matthew: Rezension über: Andrea Mammone, Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, in: Neue Politische Literatur, 62 (2017), 3, S. 552-553, DOI: 10.15463/rec.1807444918, heruntergeladen über recensio.net

First published:  
<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/plg/npl/2017/000020...>

**neue politische literatur**

Berichte aus Geschichts- und Politikwissenschaft

copyright

Dieser Beitrag kann vom Nutzer zu eigenen nicht-kommerziellen Zwecken heruntergeladen und/oder ausgedruckt werden. Darüber hinaus gehende Nutzungen sind ohne weitere Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber nur im Rahmen der gesetzlichen Schrankenbestimmungen (§§ 44a-63a UrhG) zulässig.

um die Franco-Diktatur vor, der vor allem dem Nicht-Spezialisten einen Aufriss der Forschungsdiskussionen liefert, wobei allerdings die eher politikwissenschaftlichen Fragen um Charakterisierung und Einordnung des Systems (etwa als Faschismus) hier nur am Rande auftauchen.

Frankfurt a. M.

Reiner Tosstorff

## Legacies of Neo-Fascism

*Mammone, Andrea*: Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy, 305 pp., Cambridge UP, Cambridge 2015.

A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of the 1930s. The so-called 'devil's decade' is often invoked by political commentators looking for ways of dramatising the current shift away from established centre-ground parties towards populist movements of the far right. Yet if Andrea Mammone is to be believed, alongside the 1930s, we would also do well to examine the development of neo-fascist organisations in Western Europe after 1945. The Second World War, he maintains, did not end in a final, once-and-for-all victory over fascism. Rather, it is possible to draw significant lines of historical continuity from the right-wing extremists of the late 1940s and 1950s through to the present-day inheritors of the neo-fascist cause – not least Marine Le Pen's Front National (FN) in France.

Mammone's starting point is the revival of neo-fascism in Italy and France soon after the shockwaves of 1943–45 had settled down. Both countries stood out in the early Cold War period because, compared to other nations in Western Europe, they had relatively large domestic communist parties. Anti-American as well as anti-Soviet feeling was also perhaps stronger here. Yet Mammone is not just interested in exploring similarities between the two neo-fascist movements. Rather, his main focus is on the transnational ties between them. In the late 1950s, for instance, Italian neo-fascists maintained a sharp interest in the Algerian war. They were concerned about its impact on French and Italian politics and its supposed implications for the future of 'white' European civilization more generally. Later, at the end of the 1960s and 1970s, neo-fascists in both countries developed a counter-cultural movement in opposition to a perceived 'Marxist' domination of the

arts and youth media. In effect, they established a cross-border response to the challenge posed by the 1968 student uprisings. In line with these developments, neo-fascism became increasingly 'de-territorialised'. It was no longer about asserting the political identity or historical destiny of individual European nations, but rather about constructing a particular idea of Europe itself, a nationalist pan-Europa in opposition to America, Soviet communism, decolonisation, the New Left and/or the post-war ideal of universal human rights.

Another key turning point that Mammone identifies came in the 1980s. Previously the Italian Social Movement (Movimento Sociale Italiano, MSI) had offered a model for its French counterparts to aspire to – partly owing to its larger membership and superior performance in elections and partly due to its more coherent espousal of fascist traditions. But after the emergence of the FN in 1972 under Jean-Marie Le Pen, and its success ten years later in courting mass support while openly positioning itself as an anti-establishment party, the relationship changed. French neo-fascism became more unified and focused, especially around issues of cultural identity and hostility to non-European migrants, while Italian neo-fascism fragmented, particularly after the new MSI leader Gianfranco Fini took his movement in a more conservative direction, ending in the formation of the non-fascist, but right-wing Alleanza Nazionale (AN) in 1995. Even so, Le Pen continued to cultivate and profit from Italian links in the 1990s and beyond, and his daughter Marine has adopted a similar approach to cross-border co-operation since she took over as FN President in 2011.

Mammone's emphasis on the primacy of transnational elements in the development of late twentieth-century neo-fascism has something very compelling about it. It enables him to demonstrate that nationalist extremism and xenophobia in Western Europe after 1945 were not simply the product of nation-states. On the contrary, neo-fascism's transnational character was essential in allowing it to critique the post-war model of the law-abiding, democratic nation-state as well as the project for European integration launched by the architects of the common market and the EEC.

However, I find the case that he makes for continuities from the late 1940s to the present to be less convincing. Starting from an understandable desire to label current right-wing populist movements in Europe and further afield as 'neo-fascist', he underestimates how much has

changed since the global financial crash of 2008 and the launch of austerity politics across much of the western world. A long-term decline of social democracy has been followed by a more recent crisis of conservatism as both movements struggle to defend themselves against charges from the authoritarian right that they are crooked, self-serving, elitist and out of touch with the thoughts and feelings of ordinary people. Populist parties of left as well as right are succeeding where neo-fascist parties failed in the past, and they are succeeding by dint of one alarmingly effective 'post-truth' claim: that all mainstream politicians are frauds.

This is exactly what was missing in the Cold War era, when moderate conservative parties like the Democrazia Cristiana (DC) in Italy and the Gaullist Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) in France were able to hold the extremists at bay by putting forward popular, centrist policies of their own (rather than by spouting populist rhetoric). Periodic temptations to move rightwards were also held in check by the threat posed by viable social democratic and/or communist alternatives. By contrast, European conservatism today, from Fidesz in Hungary to the Law and Justice Party in Poland, and in the French case, from Nicolas Sarkozy to François Fillon, is itself in danger of surrendering to an authoritarian brand of populism, abandoning many of its core principles in the process, including automatic respect for international conventions and the rule of law. In the wake of this new 'post-truth' politics, the old categories that we used to work with, including 'neo-fascism', are beginning to fall apart.

In sum, Mammone's book falls uncomfortably between two stools. On the one hand, as a work of history, it does not pay sufficient regard to the historicity of the Cold War period. And on the other hand, the rapid pace of developments in 2016 and 2017 already makes it look out-dated as an explanation of the politics of our time.

Sheffield

Matthew Stibbe

### Ein neues Zeitalter?

*Kolář, Pavel:* Der Poststalinismus. Ideologie und Utopie einer Epoche, 370 S., Böhlau, Köln u. a. 2016.

Pavel Kolář verspricht uns mehr als nur eine neue Perspektive, wenn er die Zeit zwischen 1956 und

1968 in Osteuropa zukünftig als Poststalinismus verstanden haben will. Der Poststalinismus soll sehr viel mehr sein als lediglich eine „Zwischenphase“ (S. 9), die den „utopischen Sozialismus“ unter Stalin ablöste, um schließlich im „Realsozialismus“ (S. 11) oder „Spätsozialismus“ (S. 321) zu enden. Geht es nach Kolář, so spricht derjenige der Poststalinismus sagt, von einer „Epoche“, die sich durch eine spezifische Sinnwelt auszeichnet. Zentral an dieser Sinnwelt sei eine neue Form des utopischen Denkens und der Zukunftsorientierung, die er als „prozessuale Utopie“ (S. 10) verstanden haben will. Als zentrales Thema seiner Untersuchung definiert Kolář das „Verhältnis zwischen der zukunftsorientierten Programmatik und der gegenwartsorientierten Prozessualität“ (S. 14), das die Zeit des Poststalinismus geprägt haben soll. Kolář verspricht uns grundlegende neue Erkenntnisse, die uns den utopischen Gehalt des historischen Kommunismus (er-)öffnen und ihn anders als bislang verstehbar werden lassen.

Seine leitenden Fragen sind derer drei. Erstens: Wie veränderten sich die kommunistischen Vorstellungen über den Zweck der Geschichte nach 1953? Was passierte zweitens mit der „utopischen Energie“ (S. 13) des Kommunismus nach der sogenannten Geheimrede Chruščevs auf dem XX. Parteitag im Jahre 1956? Und drittens: Welche Zeit- und Zukunftsvorstellung herrschte bei den Parteikader\_innen vor Ort? Kolář möchte dezidiert eine Geschichte des kleinen Mannes, respektive des kleinen Kommunisten/der kleinen Kommunistin schreiben. Nicht dem Sozialismus, sondern den in ihm lebenden und handelnden Menschen möchte der Autor ein „menschliches Antlitz“ (S. 24) verleihen; ihre Taten und ihre Geisteshaltung möchte Kolář erklären und verstehbar machen. Er gesteht den Mitgliedern der kommunistischen Partei zu, den Stalinismus überwinden und einen anderen Sozialismus leben zu wollen. Aus diesem Interesse an der Weltsicht des gemeinen Parteimitgliedes ergibt sich folgerichtig eine entsprechend zugeschnittene Quellenbasis: Kolář sichtete die Protokolle lokaler Parteisitzungen. Den regionalen Fokus legt er auf sehr wenige ausgewählte Ortgruppen aus Polen, der ČSSR und der DDR.

Ironischerweise brachte es der real existierende Sozialismus zustande, dass derjenige, der über die Zukunft reden wollte, sich zunächst einmal der Vergangenheit, oder genauer: der Geschichte zu widmen hatte. So sehr das einerseits ein Axiom des Marxismus-Leninismus war, so notwendig