



The rise of fascism in Europe

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Introduction:

The fascism is a way of thinking and a political of far-right system which associate nationalism and totalitarianism. Every fascism regime was in the name of a supreme collective ideal. Most of those regimes are dictatorship, which suppress political opposition, they had strong regulations of society and economy. This type of regime has begun in Italy and spread to other European countries. This movement was born in the catastrophic circumstances created by the World War 1. The term come from an Italian word "fascio" which means bundle, it was the name given to the militias under Mussolini. How and when did the rise of fascism occurred in Europe?

I. The diffusion of fascism movements after World War 1

The first World War occurred in the beginning of the XX century. It originated in Europe and lasted from July 1914 to November 1918. It was one of the deadliest conflicts in history, with an estimated 21.5 million dead from direct result of the war. It has destroyed economies and societies of plenty of European countries, among which Italia, Germany, France or Spain. Moreover, the fascism came from frustration of the "war front generation", this is a generation mostly composed by young people who sacrificed everything to take part in war. When the war was concluded with peace treaties who submitted the loosing countries. This generation felt that the victory was stolen from them by the allies, that they did not achieve their war goals. Therefore, this frustration gave a referral spirit to a part of the population.

Consequently, the stolen victory, and the dissatisfaction generated by the peace treaties. There is also a social and political crisis, due to war which lead to inflation, unemployment. Those factors lead in Italy to Benito Mussolini to access power.

One of the acts undertaken by Mussolini to achieve power was the march on Rome. It is a paramilitary march lead by the Italian bundles towards Rome in 1922. The main goal of this operation was to impress the current liberal government and to put pressure on the political class. At the beginning it was only an illegal way to put pressure on the government, but it was a symbolic turning point for Mussolini and his supporters. In fact, in result of this walk the Italian leaders gave the power to the fascists. This later lead to the establishment of fascist dictatorship in Italy in 1925.

This brought fascism international attention. Particularly the early admirers of Mussolini, and specially the well-known one: Hitler. Indeed, Germany was following the same way that Italy did. One month after the March on Rome, Hitler had begun to model his actions and party upon Mussolini. This led to the March on Berlin, very similar to the Rome one. This action resulted in the failed Beer Hall Putsch in Munich. This action consisted of an invasion of a Beer Hall which hosted a speech of a German leader in front of 3000 people. The Nazi's party paramilitary army surrounded the hall with 600 units. A machine gun was set up in the auditorium. Then Hitler began a speech in front of the 3000 people present, which succeeded in rallying them to his cause. However, this "coup d'état" failed, and Hitler was charged with high treason and was sent to prison with his fellow conspirators. In the end, Hitler served only 8 months of prison and was released for good behavior.

Hitler was named chancellor by President Hindenburg, which gave him a lot of political power and legitimacy. Despite being powerful, Hitler did not have the full powers. That's why he masterminded "Night of the Long Knives". The goal of this operation was to eliminate everyone that posed a threat to Hitler from his own supporters to his political opponents. This has led to death of two hundred of people, and Hitler assuming the title Führer und Reichskanzler which means head of state, government, Nazi Party and Supreme commander of the Armed Forces.

Taking advantage of an economic and social crisis, these figures of authority rose to power, designating themselves as saviors. This leads to brutality and intolerance legitimized by governments in place. This rise of fascism continued until 1935 when these measures coming from Italy and Germany go beyond their borders and threaten the whole of Europe.

II. The rise of fascists movements during the XXI century

The National front reach to the second round of the presidential elections which took place in 2017. The extreme right seems to be becoming commonplace in France. This illustrates an observable trend in Europe. Indeed, in several European countries the fascist parties are growing at an electoral level. Above all, their ideas are spreading. The governments impose a

global State racism with security laws.

The development of the nationalism take its origin because of the economic crisis which hit Europe in 2008. This caused the States go into debt because they had to invest in the Banks to save the capitalist system on the brink. This is when the fascism started to become a true alternative for a major part of the population which lost trust in the political class because of the desperate situation of economy in a lot of European countries. Those extreme right political party have programs that are based on a nationalist economy, anti-European politics, and authoritarian's actions to stifle protests. Beside the strong measures, the nationalism helps restore order to rebuild the economy. These movements insist on the insecurity linked to the terrorist attacks that have hit Europe in recent years and on immigrant populations that populate the working-class neighborhoods. They denounce these populations to benefit from social assistance without working and to be a delinquent population. This immigrant population is the "scapegoat" designated by far-right movements. This "scourge" of society allows these movements to play on fears and insecurities to stir up hatred between different parts of the population. This divide and these fears, allow these parties to justify their identity and racist policies. In fact, most of the programs of these political parties are based on the reduction or even the complete cessation of immigration, the overhaul of the social system accused of encouraging immigrants to take advantage of unemployment benefits and strong security measures.

Along with all this, the alternation between left and right which created a sense of rejection against the traditional political parties lead to the citizens to move towards more extreme political parties. Taking advantage of an economic crisis, with a declining social situation, these identity-based parties bordering on fascism have managed to impose themselves as a real alternative to traditional political parties.

Conclusion

There are strong similarities between these two phenomena. These two periods were marked by strong economic and social crises. In both cases the population felt disinterested towards politics leaders, in one hand because of the loss of war despite great sacrifices, in another hand it was because of a lack of action and success in the moderate political parties. Moreover, these times were marked by great changes in the social and economic spheres, and a renewal of the political class embodied by the extreme right that embodied a true alternative. Those political parties gave hope through their political actions which were marked by satisfaction of the strong frustration of the population.

As for me I think that it's part of the fact that history is a cycle. In fact, we can see that those two stories have strong links, and they seem to be the same. This movement of the electorate shows a great frustration of the part of the population, which no longer recognizes itself in the political sphere, who no longer feels listened to, who are proud of their nationality but feel that the leaders favor immigrants before locals, who do not recognize themselves in the current population of Europe more and more mixed, who thinks that in encouraging

immigration there will be no more room for them.

Personally I strongly disagree with most of the ideas conveyed by those political parties, but when I note that people I knew, my best friends parents, took care of me, where friends of my parents so they are not racists at all, turn towards extreme right. I start to understand that it is not all about racism, hatred, but about being listened to, to recognize themselves. I try to understand their point of view. I try every day to understand the others, I strongly think that anyone has something to teach me, to put me in the shoes of my neighbor, and not only about politics, so that is why I cannot approve to vote for extreme right, but I try to understand it. In one hand I can get that a political leader has to fulfill his objectives to satisfy his electorate. But in the other hand, it may be a utopian vision of life and society, but I sincerely believe that by re-establishing dialogue, by trying to understand one another, I think we can solve the current problems of societies.