

European Dilemmas: Fascism Versus Social Democracy
Spring, 2022
Professor Leslie Anderson

Class meeting times and place:

consider adding to this syllabus a new book out of Yale, Eric Rauchway, *Why the New Deal Matters*, Yale, 2021. The book is short and accessible, about 179 pages. Students could skip the Chapter on the Navajo, Chap 3. The book is relevant for two reasons: 1) it shows that there was a progressive moment in US politics when the government and people believed that society owed care to those who were most vulnerable. This is also the Social Democratic rhetoric and it responds to Haley's contention that "this (Social Democracy) could never happen here." But also, 2) it shows an ideology coming from the federal government that was deliberately designed to combat what had come to be "an ideal of liberty shorn of shared purpose – an embrace of the notion of freedom at the individual level without regard for the consequences." FDR and the New Deal sought to return the country to a peaceable sense of national purpose." p 83 as opposed to the aggressive, racist, scapegoating sense of national purpose that Hitler espoused.

Also add to this syllabus Michael Ebner, *Ordinary Violence in Mussolini's Italy*, Cambridge, 2011. At a minimum undergrads should read chapters 1 and 7. I have a pdf of this book and may be able to upload it to Canvas without going through course reserves. In response to adding this book I should eliminate one book on Germany, either Momsen or Fritze. The problem here is that the syllabus is too heavy on everyday life in Germany and too light on same in Italy. This book changes that.

This course visits political ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Western Europe. Emphasis is upon the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany and upon the popular attraction of that ideology to citizens. The problems that fascism promised to address (anomie, fear, loss of job security, fear of rapid economic change) were also problems that Marxism wanted to solve. However, both would destroy democracy and did. Social democracy offered a third alternative, which would address these same problems but within a democratic polity. Social democracy spread throughout Western Europe but was particularly successful in Sweden. We will examine the historical basis of parties and political trends in Western Europe and to see why both fascism and Marxism were defeated by social democracy.

The course explores how modernization caused social dislocations, human suffering and social anomie that both fascism and Marxism purported to address. The problem with each was that the cost paid was the loss of liberal democracy itself. Social democracy then offered a democratic alternative to both fascism and Marxism, an alternative that was both humane in its attention to the human condition and compatible with democracy. Contemporary populism in Europe now threatens the social democratic compromise. The course finishes by visiting the currents of populism, xenophobia and right-wing extremism on the rise in Europe and challenging democracy there.

Books

Sheri Berman, *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006
Hans Mommsen, *The Rise and Fall of Weimar Democracy* originally published in German, Propylaen Verlag, Frankfurt, 1989, English translation, UNC, 1996
Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1998
Richard B. Freeman, Bergitta Swedenborg, and Robert H. Topel, eds., *Reforming the Welfare State: Recovery and Beyond in Sweden*, Chicago, 2010
Tim Tilton, *The Political Theory of Swedish Social Democracy: Through the Welfare State to Socialism*, Oxford, Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press, 1990, Introduction (pp 1-14), I will ask that this be made available through CDL.

Articles

E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Working Class," *Past and Present*, 1971, pp 1-71
Sheri Berman and Maria Snegovaya, "Populism and the Decline of Social Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol 30, Issue 3, July, 2019, pp 5-19

Recommended but not Required

Geoffrey J. Giles, *Students and National Socialism in Germany*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1985, 2014.

January 6: first class, pass out syllabus

The Problem: Poverty, Need and a Rapidly Changing Economy

January 11-13: E.P. Thompson, *Past and Present*, 1971: 70-page article

More on the Problem and Then the Solutions: Marxism, Fascism, Social Democracy

January 18-20; Berman, Introduction and Chapter 2, pp 20-28, pp 35-46 (skip France)

January 25- 27 Berman Chapter 4 pp 66-81 and 86-95

February 1-3 Chapter 5, pp 96-109 Chapter 6 pp 125-136

February 3: First Hourly Exam: Fascism in Italy

February 8-10 Berman, Chap 5, pp 109-115 and 136-151

February 15-24 Fritzsche, pp 1-136

March 1-3: Mommsen Chapter 3, 8, 9

March 8-10 no class, Spring Break

March 15: Second Hourly Exam: Nazism in Germany

March 22-24 Berman, Chapter 7 entire chapter and Chapter 8, pp 188-199

March 29-31 Tilton pp 1-69 Freeman et al Introduction, Chap 1, 2, 4 and 9

April 5-7 Berman, Conclusion

April 12-14 Berman and Snegovaya

April 19: Last class: Wrap up and Review

Final Think Paper Due April 25