



**Instituto Juan March**

Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Ciencias Sociales (CEACS)

**Juan March Institute**

Center for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences (CEACS)

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Author(s): Mann, Michael, 1942-

Date 1993

Type Working Paper

Series Estudios = Working papers / Instituto Juan March de Estudios e Investigaciones,  
Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Ciencias Sociales 45 (1993)

City: Madrid

Publisher: Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Ciencias Sociales

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THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN AUTHORITARIAN  
RIGHTISM AND DEMOCRACY, 1920-1975

Estudio/Working Paper 1993/45

February 1993

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## **The Struggle between Authoritarian Rightism and Democracy<sup>1</sup>**

The settlement of the 1914-1918 War attempted to institutionalize democracy across the Western world. The three authoritarian monarchies of Austria, Germany and Russia were replaced by a number of ostensibly democratic regimes. In the peace settlements all the nations' delegates committed themselves to representative government. By early 1920 Europe did seem democratic. Of its 28 states, 26 possessed parliamentary regimes with elected governments, a choice between competing parties and some guarantees of individual rights. True, few enfranchised women, many still limited the male suffrage, some constitutions were still untried and some practices were corrupt. But representative government was generally considered desirable, morally and because it was modern. If one was not democratic, one should at least be moving toward democracy. If one was not moving toward it, one should at least *pretend* to be democratic, as Spain did. Even both deviant cases, the Soviet Union and the Bela Kun regime in Hungary, claimed they had a more genuine democracy than did bourgeois-liberal regimes. Fledgling Third World liberation movements also espoused democracy. Democracy was progress, the politics of the future.

Today that future has been largely realized. The Third World is more complicated, but lies outside of my scope here. But the West itself now seems securely democratic. Its north and west have been firmly democratic for several decades. The authoritarian regimes of southern Europe were gone by 1975. The communist regimes of the east collapsed suddenly in 1989-91. In early 1993 *all* of Europe's states are formally committed to democracy -- though some Eastern regimes are unstable and none of the regimes of the former Yugoslavia are truly democratic.

But in between 1920 and 1945 democracy did not rule. It steadily retreated. By 1938 16 of the 26 parliamentary regimes had succumbed to dictatorships, all through domestic political upheavals. Thus Spain was no deviant case in the inter-war years. The 1938 count was 12

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on ongoing, uncompleted research. Its data and arguments are thus highly provisional.

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democracies, 16 dictatorships. Then by late 1940 7 of the remaining 12 democracies had fallen to Nazi aggression: only the UK, Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Switzerland remained intact.<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere the four majority-white former British colonies -- the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand -- had not wavered from democracy (at least for whites). But Europe seemed lost.

But we must distinguish the cases where democracy fell because of foreign conquest from those where internal forces overthrew it. In fact none of the 12 democracies of 1938 had been moving toward authoritarianism and none then looked vulnerable. Thus 1938 saw two fairly evenly-matched "Wests", each comprising about 16 states, the one democratic, the other authoritarian.

Let me first examine the democratic West. Looking at the map, we see it was regionally concentrated. 12 democracies were located in the northwest of Europe and the remaining 4 in its colonial offshoots -- in Scandinavia, the British Isles and its former white colonies, the Low Countries, France and Switzerland. They were contiguous, and had it not been for Nazi Germany they would have constituted a very solid bloc of countries in Europe. They were also culturally and religiously fairly homogeneous. Except for France and Belgium they were majority Protestant -- and except for Germany they constituted *all* the majority Protestant countries. Conversely, the non-democratic regimes also constituted a solid bloc in the East and the South and they constituted *all* the majority Catholic countries except for France and Belgium, and *all* the Eastern Orthodox countries. I am not suggesting that a particular religious dogma necessarily favoured democracy or rightist authoritarianism (later I make a rather different argument about their relations). I merely note that each bloc tended to share a religion, any religion. The two blocs were thus rather homogenous. The West actually comprised two separate regions, one Democratic, the other Rightist Authoritarian. Thus the inter-war experience of Spain was quite typical of its Region.

There are two main cases spoiling this very neat division, France and Germany. The

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<sup>2</sup> Lee (1987) provides a useful count and straightforward historical survey of these regimes.

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map would be perfectly divided if France had gone authoritarian and Germany democratic. France did not really waver from its republican Constitution after 1889, though Germany tottered spectacularly in the interwar period. Yet both these geographically deviant countries can in a sense be explained away. Both were big countries whose "heartland" lay not in its geographical centre, but toward one end of its territories. The political centre of France lay in its north, and the more advanced parts of its economy had also always looked north. France was thus as integrated into the British -- Low Countries -- Swiss sphere as into the Catholic Southeast. Germany's political capital, Berlin, lay far to the East, in Prussia, as did its traditional ruling class and its army. It is conventional for historians to describe 19th and early 20th century Germany as the hijacking of the West by the East. Thus France and Germany were both pulled toward the other Region.

*All* the Democratic West had *long* been democratic. All its peoples had been represented in sovereign political assemblies since at least 1871 -- though Ireland and Norway had to put up with limited rights in other countries' assemblies. The Democratic West had also institutionalized parliamentary assemblies with collective legitimate powers distinct from those of the present majority party. Thus their parliaments had succeeded in restraining political corruption -- the ability of the governing party to distribute the spoils of office. Yet *none* of the countries of the Authoritarian West had shared this previous history. Some (like Serbia or Portugal) had possessed rather advanced democratic constitutions in the early 19th century, but then regressed from them; most had made only late and tentative democratic moves. Moreover, any democratic constitutions were undermined by considerable party corruption.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the geopolitical boundaries between the two "Wests" had been clearly drawn some time before the inter-war period. We can now begin to appreciate the difficulty of

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<sup>3</sup> Such very bold statements generally need at least a little qualification. Czechoslovakia, for example, was probably a functioning, viable liberal democracy during the inter-war period -- probably because under Habsburg domination in the pre-war period it had already possessed quasi-parliamentary institutions (its situation was perhaps comparable to Ireland's in the Democratic West).

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constitutionally establishing democracy by fiat, such as had been attempted in 1918. Without the tremendous reinforcement of historical traditions and of the culture of one's entire region and of all of one's neighbours, democracy seemed fragile. Most political parties were committed more to their distinctive value-goals than to the maintenance of a democratic regime -- as was true for the many parties of the Spanish Republic (Linz, 1978) and in the end for all the Weimar parties save the SPD. Where ends were considered to justify means, persistent violence and corruption both resulted. Conversely, with democracy as normal, even unthinking national and regional practice, it was resilient and difficult to dislodge.

Both conclusions reduce the usefulness of any pure type of comparative analysis. Each country was not an autonomous case to be compared on its internal characteristics to all others. Whatever its internal characteristics it was also part of a Region. It is true that most of the Democratic West was more economically advanced than the Authoritarian West. Thus studies attributing authoritarianism to an overdeveloped state amid economic backwardness (Janos, 1989 -- who also shows sensitivity to the "statism" emphasized here), to the presence of large agrarian landlords (Stephens, 1989) and to other aspects of class structure, yield results. But their correlations are low. Germany, with its spectacular Nazism, was as economically advanced as any country, interwar Austria not much less so. Most of Scandinavia, Ireland and Australasia were democratic yet still agrarian. Nor can we attribute the difficulties of fledgling democracies to capitalist slumps, since all countries experienced these. The inflation of the early 1920s and the slump at the end affected the Netherlands as much as Germany (since the two economies were so inter-dependent). Yet the old Dutch representative institutions remained secure while the new ones of Germany collapsed.

So there is little to explain in the Democratic West. These countries had already institutionalized liberal democracy. They withstood all the capitalist and geopolitical crises of the period until Hitler's armies marched upon them. And in a fairly steady incremental process stretching from before to after the Second World War they widened their democracies into universal suffrage and deepened them with welfare states and social democracy. But we do need to explain why, in the second West, democracy first collapsed before authoritarianism and then

revived. That is my task in this paper.

Since my argument will stress the particularities of state institutions let me briefly review the characteristics of states in the early 20th century. States were now large and diverse. Before 1914 just under half their budgets still went on their traditionally dominant military function, but just over half went on new, varied civil functions (for details see Mann, 1993: Chap 11). The Great War then enormously enlarged their military institutions, while the peace then suddenly reduced these (especially among the defeated Powers). The Democratic West had already institutionalized parliamentary sovereignty, and this tied together their large size and scope. Nearly all their state institutions were bureaucratized under Ministers who collectively constituted a Cabinet and were responsible to a sovereign parliament. Those states were unitary.

But the newly-constitutionalized states had not yet become unitary. In effect each comprised "two states". One was the state of the new or enlarged democratic assemblies and political parties, together with such areas of the administration as they could bring under their control. But most of the old regime administration proved resistant to democracy. Its practices had been institutionalized and its personnel recruited before the War. The new regimes could not imitate the new Soviet Union and massively purge. The armed forces were especially resilient, perhaps because their key values of discipline and hierarchy are not democratic. But other resisting institutions were state churches, higher education, some juridical institutions and even some civilian ministries. We shall meet all their personnel again a little bit later -- and not as democrats.

Now let me examine the institutional characteristics of the authoritarian regimes emerging in the inter-war years. By the end of 1920, apart from the Soviet Union, they shared four characteristics. I will argue that the first two help us explain their rise, the next two their fall.

(1) They were of the *Right*, not the Left. European conservatives turned nasty in this period -- we have to understand the mentality of the Right more than the Left.

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(2) They were *statist*. Conservatives wanted to enhance the powers of the central state. They explicitly rejected both federalism and democracy as political systems and as ideologies.<sup>4</sup> They valued order, discipline and inequality of rights -- and the state was the guardian of all these values. The deviant case of the Left, the Soviet Union, did not enshrine such values. Though in practice authoritarian and centralist, its principles were supposedly democratic and federalist. But for the Rightist regimes authoritarian statism was a moral virtue, protecting them from the "vices" of liberal democracy: unrestrained class conflict, social disorder and political corruption. The crucial questions in explaining the rise of authoritarianism thus becomes: why did extreme statism conquer the political right?

(3) They were *dictatorships*, essentially and avowedly one-man regimes (though some were riven in practice by competition between rival strongmen). Though some were supposedly party regimes, they did not institutionalize collective party control. The traditional notion that the most extreme regimes of both right and left were "totalitarian" long concealed the reality of these states. But research on the Hitler and Stalin regimes has revealed that the dictators did not sit atop a bureaucratic pyramid. Both ruled, amid a certain amount of chaos, by playing off faction against faction, institution against institution. Such divide-and-rule strategies were to be their first weakness.

(4) They were strongly *nationalist*, endowing their own nation with virtue, repressing ethnic minorities, denouncing foreigners. Since most were at first cautious in their foreign policies, this hostility rarely led to war. But nor did it lead to a benign international climate or to stable alliances. Authoritarian regimes showed little solidarity since their nationalism split them apart. Their nationalist isolationism proved their second and major weakness.

There were, of course, substantial differences among inter-war authoritarian regimes and parties. Many books have been written on the differences between fascists and conservatives.

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<sup>4</sup> Of course, as Linz (1987:21) reminds us, not all fascists viewed themselves as opposed to democracy per se. Many expected that their party would institutionalize substantial participation by the rank-and-file members in party decisions. The "leader" would not be an arbitrary dictator but embody the general will of the party and therefore of the nation.

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Linz (1976) has noted that, where already entrenched in quasi-parliamentary systems, conservatives usually managed to hold "latecomer" fascists at bay. Nonetheless, in that region I labelled the Authoritarian West, inter-war regimes tended to become more extreme in their rightism, though different countries stopped at different points. Spain was unique in interrupting its rightward drift with the Republic of 1930-36. Elsewhere the drift to more extreme rightism was continuous. We can identify four main stopping-points in this drift.

1. *Semi-constitutional*: This was the most moderate type of regime, resembling pre-war authoritarian monarchies. A traditional regime would manipulate a constitution -- fixing elections, repressing left parties, not routinely but pragmatically, when the situation seemed to call for such tactics, and recognizing certain civil rights such as partly autonomous law courts and press. It was easiest for monarchies to take this relatively relaxed path.

Examples of this type are the Rumanian regimes of the 1920s and (erratically) early 30s, the reign of Alfonso XIII in Spain and the rule of the Regent Admiral Horthy in Hungary during the 1920s. Yet such mild authoritarianism proved only temporary, as all regimes moved toward greater coercion.

2. *Traditional Authoritarian*. In this type traditional regime elements staged a military coup and then dispensed with the constitution, establishing a formally authoritarian regime. They repressed less tactically, more continuously, and severely curtailed civil rights. This might provoke civil war, which they won, since they had most of the army plus effective social controls over the rural areas and through dominant Churches. This type of regime showed little interest in social mobilization. If it cultivated a one-party system, its purpose was really to demobilize existing political parties (Salazar in Portugal, Pilsudski in Poland, Primo de Rivera in Spain). These regimes remained cautious and isolationist in foreign policy and largely orthodox in economic policy.

This was the most widespread type. Examples are the later regimes of Admiral Horthy in the 1930s (though some erratic parliamentarianism remained), the Primo de Rivera regime in Spain 1923-30, Pilsudski in Poland 1926-35 (and his weaker successors until 1939), Dolfuss in

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Austria 1932-34 (later Schusnigg), Smetona in Lithuania 1926-39, Ulmanis in Latvia 1934-9, Pats in Estonia 1934-9, King Zog in Albania 1928-39, Alexander in Yugoslavia 1929-34, in Bulgaria the Regent Paul and then after 1937 King Boris, King Carol in Rumania 1938-40, followed by King Michael and General Anonescu (though with some fascist flirtations). The Portuguese military regime from 1928 was of this type. So largely was the subsequent rule of Salazar from 1932 to 1968. Though Salazar added corporatist elements into the state, there was no mass party or mobilization and his motto -- *deus, patria, familia* -- revealed his traditionalism. These regimes had isolationist foreign policies and fiscal and economic orthodoxy.

3. *Corporate states*. Some regimes then went further, with further violence, to flirt with Fascist ideas and mobilizing organizations (though sometimes repressing actual Fascist parties). Yet their "fascism" was more opportunist than principled, and much traditionalism remained. Their foreign policies were a little less cautious and their fiscal and economic policies began to use the powers of the state to intervene in the economy. Some also preferred stability and order over economic dynamism.

Examples are Metaxas in Greece 1936-40, the Franco regime in Spain, Dolfuss' adoption of "clerico- or Austro-Fascism" and his Fatherland Front of 1934, and the Petain collaborationist regime in France.

4. *Fascism*. In the most extreme regimes, self-declared Fascists seized power. Their ideologies broke with traditional authoritarianism. They glorified violence and para-militarism. The Left was completely suppressed but Fascist relations with conservatives and capitalists were also problematic and sometimes violent. The fascist movement penetrated all organs of the state and its leader possessed considerable power autonomy from all traditional elites. Their foreign policy became aggressive; and they, more than capitalists, ruled the economy.

The examples of fascism are few. Nazi Germany is the most clearcut case -- though many writers prefer to reserve the term for more corporatist regimes. Mussolini's regime declared more fascist and corporatist principles than Hitler's, but its actual practice was more

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cautious and more compromising with traditional elites. Some puppet governments during World War II also qualify, especially the Szalasi regime in Hungary in 1944-5 and the Croatian Ustashis. But the two major cases, Italy and especially Germany, became of decisive importance to all the other regimes. Their successes first encouraged others on authoritarian paths, their aggression forced others toward more fascistic and aggressive practices than their rulers really wanted. In the end this destroyed virtually all of them.

Despite their considerable differences, I want to emphasize that these regimes offered, in varying degrees, similar values -- order, discipline, nationalism, statism and hierarchical leadership. They offered them sincerely as positive moral virtues. They included plenty of gangsters, psychopaths and opportunists, but most extreme rightists believed what they preached.

Who came to support their values? I will argue that they drew support of two rather different kinds, based on class sentiments and on "statism". The first has been exhaustively studied, and there is no need to do more than mention it here. But the second is still seriously under-studied, and will occupy most of this paper.

As is well-known, authoritarians and fascists offered a distinctive solution to the class conflicts of capitalist society. They repressed it, while leaving capitalist property mostly alone. Though fascists especially were no capitalist stooges, rightist authoritarians did offer to the property-owning classes a means alternative to democracy to retain most of their privileges. And they offered the immediate inducement of simply eliminating leftist agitators. Thus their support had a class basis. We now know this did not centre on the petty bourgeoisie. Rather in most countries there was a positive correlation between social class and extreme rightism: the higher the social class, the greater their support (as Hamilton, 1982, has notably argued in the case of Germany). For the Nazis the class bias increases the higher up the party we go (Bessel, 1984: 33-46; Kater, 1983: 241-260; Pridham, 1973: 184-95). There are exceptions: In Rumania poor peasants, and in Hungary workers, gave disproportionate support to fascists (Nagy-Talavera, 1970: 152-4, 287; Vago, 1987: 308-15). But in general extreme right values were

class values.

Nevertheless, we cannot conclude in traditional Marxian fashion that fascism and authoritarianism were called in to save capitalism from the working class. The correlations are not particularly high. And since workers and peasants were the largest classes, extreme rightist movements which were popular drew considerable support from them. In most fascist parties half the members were peasants or workers. In Germany about a third of Nazi votes came from industrial workers alone. Nor, in most countries, did many industrial or finance capitalists actively support extreme rightists. They were ready enough to strike deals after these came to power, but faced with choices between moderate conservative regimes and traditional authoritarian ones, or between the latter and fascist ones, they went for the less extreme of the two (Mason, 1972; Turner, 1972; Hamilton, 1982: 393-419; Spain may differ here). This is not true of large landowners who gave much support to the extreme right (Stephens, 1989). But most industrial and finance capitalists saw that there was an alternative solution to class struggle which was already viable in the Democratic West. There the organized working class, whatever its rhetoric, was implicated in class compromise. Unions posed no threat to capitalist property relations, nor did socialist parties which invariably first came to power as a minority government or in coalitions, forced to compromise with centre parties.

Now obviously *today* we know that the destiny of the working class was to mildly reform capitalism, not to overthrow it. But how clear was this in the 1920s and 1930s? In the Authoritarian West parties of workers and peasants flourished extreme socialist, communist and anarcho-syndicalist rhetoric. And their extremist wing sometimes assassinated conservatives and hatched revolutionary plots. When added to the violence of the extreme right and perhaps also of separatists, as in Spain, endemic disorder might constitute a moderate level of threat to the social order (Linz, 1978). But most analysts of the period seem to agree that there was also major "over-reaction" by conservatives. Arno Mayer (1981) sees fascism as panicky over-reaction by old regimes all over inter-war Europe. Observers of Spain like Ben-Ami (1983) have identified a "bourgeois hysteria", a tendency to turn to the generals even when the objective level of threat or disorder from the Left was low. Indeed most of the German

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"Bolsheviks" so denounced by Hitler were actually highly-respectable Social Democrats, already governing in Prussia and several other German state governments for a decade. And if we turn to eastern Europe, to Hungary, Rumania or the Baltic states, the actual strength of socialists was pitiful compared to the level of the Right's anti-Marxist hysteria. Remember also that after 1920 there were 16 successful Rightist coups and not a single Leftist one. If communists, socialists and anarchists constituted such a serious threat, we would expect at least *one* Leftist success.

Some writers have thus concluded that extreme rightism was irrational. They have seen fascists as demons, wielding mysterious powers over deep, disturbing, and extremely unpleasant human emotions. Faced with the Nazi Holocaust and with the crimes of other extreme rightists, this is a tempting explanation. But it is not a very good one. I prefer to analyze what looks like human irrationality as actually the outcome when more than one set of causal chains become entwined in non-systematic ways. There is a reason why rightists reached for the gun, and sometimes for fascism, "too early", when their survival was not really threatened. It is that conservatives had a separate attachment to *statism* and this interacted with class hostility in chaotic and violent ways. We need to understand both class *and* state to interpret authoritarian successes.

Let me list some of the other characteristics, besides class, of extreme rightists of the period. All these have been noted many times in the literature. What has not been noticed is that all these seemingly disparate characteristics involve the same essential quality, "statism". I now list five institutions or sites that encouraged authoritarian rightism among the young men who frequented them. Since the data on the German Nazis are so much richer than those on other movements, I perforce rely heavily on the German case (as have all comparative studies).<sup>5</sup>

(1) *State Churches*: though formally atheistic the Nazis were conspicuously drawn from Protestant backgrounds, that is from the Evangelical Lutheran Church established since 1815 as

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<sup>5</sup> Let me also acknowledge that my research is at present more solidly-based on Germany, and then on central and eastern Europe, than it is on southern Europe.

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the state church of Prussia, then of Germany. Hitler himself was from a Catholic background, but he was unusual. Party leaders, party rank-and-file, and SA and SS officers and men were disproportionately Protestant: whereas the ratio of Protestants to Catholics in the general German population was less than 2 to 1 (62% to 37%) in these Nazi groups it was between 3 to 1 and 5 to 1 (Jamin, 1984: 90; Wegner, 1990: 239-42; Merkl, 1980). In the mid 1920s the Nazi leaders found - somewhat to their own surprise - Lutheran churchmen joining the Party, prepared to endorse it from pulpit and party platforms. Allen shows that in small-town Lutheran Thalburg the local Nazis were happy to use their support - adding prayers and hymns to meetings, running a list of its candidates for school board elections as "Christian-Nationals" (Allen, 1965). Nazi leaders opportunistically added a Christian tinge to what was an essentially atheistical set of doctrines. Ecological voting data from 1930 show that Catholic areas were unlikely to vote Nazi (or for other parties of the extreme Right or Left). Religion slightly exceeded class as a predictor of voting for the Nazis (Hamilton, 1982: 38-42, 371-3, 382-5; Childers, 1983, Falter & Borrmann, 1989). Moreover, the electoral collapse of Weimar was a Protestant collapse. Thus class correlations were only partial: only the Protestant bourgeoisie, and only Protestant farmers, were drawn toward Nazism. The German Catholic community, 37% of the national population, rivalled the organized working class as a resistor of Nazism. The core Catholic community in Austria also seems to have been especially resistant to Fascism (Botz, 1987: 262).

Now obviously Protestantism is not a predictor of extreme rightism across the rest of Europe. Actually, the Democratic West was overwhelmingly Protestant and in almost all countries churches of all kinds tended to be somewhat conservative. But the Evangelical Church was the established Church of the old regime state. Its conservatism was statist. It had long supported the state, and its doctrinal and practical stance tended to be statist. It looked to the state for positive moral values and active social policy. We find similar connections in other countries. Where a Church was deeply implicated in the old regime state, its conservatism supported authoritarian tendencies when the monarchy was gone -- especially in eastern Europe, Austria, Spain and Portugal. Since most of these countries had one predominant church, it was

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not its adherents rather than the adherents of another church who were the authoritarians. Rather it was the most religious of that Church's adherents. In Rumania the main fascist organization was called the Legion of the Archangel Saint Michael, and in Hungary the Arrow Cross Movement. In Croatia and Slovakia Churches embodied both state and nation and became closely associated with extreme authoritarianism. Adherents of "statist" churches reached earlier for the gun, and sometimes for fascism, because they sincerely looked to the hierarchical institutions of the state to enforce positive moral values.

(2) *The Military*. It is often noted that army veterans, especially those who had had a "good war", were substantially over-represented among authoritarian rightists (e.g. Linz, 1976: 36-40. Nazi leaders and rank-and-file were drawn disproportionately from military backgrounds. Also, though tensions arose between the Nazis and the army, the SS came heavily from army family backgrounds. An unusual proportion of Nazi militants had also served as front-line troops in World War I. In striking contrast were the German army and navy mutinies and Soviets of 1918 which all occurred among reserve troops and inactive garrison or port forces. I am currently working on data suggesting that few leaders of either the German Communist Party or the Russian Bolshevik Party had served in the front-line, rather more in the reserves. And 57% of known Italian Fascist Party members in 1921 had served in the military (DeFelice, 1966:7) -- this was double the national percentage. Moreover, all the extreme rightist parties of Eastern Europe were drawn heavily from former army personnel (Nagy-Talavera, 1970: 69; Lacko, 1969: 35-6; Vago, 1987: 296-300). And obviously, the Spanish and Portuguese armies actually led the authoritarian movements in those countries.

There are two conventional ways of interpreting this. The first is that Europe was filled with unemployable ex-soldiers who wanted to carve out careers for themselves in a new state. Yes, but why did they go to the far *right* (and Bessel, 1988, doubts that the German veterans were unemployable except by their own choice)? And why the difference between the front-line rightists and the reserve leftists? The second conventional interpretation is that officer corps were drawn from dominant classes and so naturally supported them. Yet in almost all countries

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these ex-military rightists explicitly denounced the old dominant classes and the new capitalists as degenerate, unable to impose necessary discipline on society. They also came from all ranks, especially from middle level down to junior officers and NCOs. Nor is the difference between front-line and reserve troops reducible to class.

Thus I place a different interpretation on such findings. Many of those persons who had experienced successful military discipline, routinely imposed and obeyed, as it was in the frontlines until the last months of the war, had internalized its norms and values. They reached earlier, not only for the gun, but also for a supposedly classless discipline, order and hierarchy as the solution to social problems. They were not those who benefitted most from the suppression of dissidents, but those who believed in it most strongly, on moral grounds and as a theory about how human beings sharing different goals and interests might be nonetheless coerced into harmony. Conversely, those soldiers experiencing unsuccessful military discipline -- the military disintegration which occurred at the end of the war especially among the non-active troops of the Central Powers -- were most likely to become revolutionaries.

To explain the anger and ferocity of some of the fascist militants, we only have to read the autobiographies which Theodore Abel (1938) managed to draw from Nazi militants. Those who had served in the front-line carried appalling memories of their return home to Germany in 1918. Marching into their home-towns they had their medals and epaulettes stripped off them by jeering socialists.

(3) *The Civilian State*. In Germany, Austria, Rumania, Hungary and Italy civil servants appear to have been substantially over-represented among the fascists. It is difficult to be absolutely certain (and Linz, 1976: 56 comes to the opposite conclusion) because several postwar states prohibited civil servants from joining such parties and much membership remained clandestine. However, once rightist sympathizers became party functionaries, there was no need for concealment. Of the 54 Nazi Gauleiters in office 1925-28, an absolute majority, 56%, had previously worked as civil servants or as state-employed teachers. This rose to 64% among the Gauleiters of 1929 and 61% among those of 1930. Remember, this is before the

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Nazis became the ruling party and before any significant material advantage might be obtained from party position. In fact, after the seizure of power, the proportion with civil service backgrounds declined gradually to 51% in 1942. As we descend the Nazi hierarchy the proportions decline. Of 163 Nazi agency heads in 1941 47% had been public employees. Among 246 mid- to higher-level party functionaries in 1929, 301 Kreisleiters (sub-regional bosses) in 1941 and 4,404 local Nazi deputies in 1933, 22 - 28% had been public employees. There are only patchy local records of ordinary party membership -- obviously affected by clandestinity. But even here, discarding one rural party (where farmers dominated), we find public employees constituting 10-25% of membership (all the above data from Kater, 1983). In 1933 5.7% of the German employed population worked in the public sector. Public employees were always the most over-represented occupational group at every level of the party - as they had been in pre-war extreme nationalist pressure groups. Around 10% of German civil servants had joined the Nazis by 1933, rising to 18.4% by 1935. They were also over-represented in the authoritarian rightist parties of Austria, Hungary, Italy (Botz, 1987: 260; Lacko, 1969: 37, 42, 72; Revelli, 1987). Fascists also recruited heavily in all these countries from public sector manual workers -- mostly from railway and postal workers (Linz, 1976: 70; Lacko, 1969: 44).

Some attribute this over-representation to material group interests. Obviously, those employed by the state tend to support parties who favour public expenditure. But, as is the pattern in contemporary Europe, they could have supported leftist pro-state parties rather than rightist ones. Moreover, Childers (1983) has tested the hypothesis that Nazism among German civil servants might be attributable to discontent at their material conditions of employment. After lengthy analysis of the entire Weimar period, he finds virtually no support for the hypothesis. Their rightism was not mere material self-interest. It was rather ideological support for a particular kind of state. All these states, except for Italy, had previously been ruled by authoritarian monarchies and had also long recruited public sector manual workers from army veterans. Extreme nationalists had been well-entrenched in the administrations of pre-war authoritarian monarchies (Mann, 1993: Chap 16). It is not surprising that they and their successors emerged as authoritarians and fascists in the inter-war years. Perhaps this might not

be so of a state with a more mixed tradition, including more liberalism. In Spain, for example, civil servants seem to have supported parties right across the political spectrum (though quantitative studies seem lacking).

(4) *Higher Educational Institutions.* In Germany and central and eastern Europe most universities and higher-level schools were state-run. Universities nourished extreme rightism. Their professors were rightist but rarely participated much in politics. Yet the students did. Students contributed a substantial number of the shock-troops and the leaders of the early authoritarian and fascist movements in Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria, Rumania and Hungary (Botz, 1987, Payne, 1980: 426, Revelli, 1987, Vago, 1987: 286-97). Perhaps a fifth of the Italian student population were fascist party members; up to a half of German students were Nazis by 1930 (Linz, 1976: 67; Kater, 1975, 1983: 44; Giles, 1978, is more sceptical, believing that much fewer committed Nazis were able to manipulate an essentially docile student population into minimal support). The Nazis won a majority in the national student elections of 1930.

Since fascism was also a generational phenomenon, it is possible that young men in general, not just highly educated young men, were drawn to the authoritarian right. Yet other data suggest that a high level of participation in educational institutions also led to rightism among older groups. The Germanic census category of "Academic Professionals" were over-represented in both the party and the SS officer corps, compared to the rest of the middle class. The "academic" or "liberal" highly credentialled professions were also over-represented in most European countries (e.g. Botz, 1987: 257). In some countries teachers were especially extreme rightist. Others have noted all this, but are still drawn to class labels when explaining it. Linz believes "the humanistic bourgeoisie" was drawn to fascism, Salvatorelli "the intellectual bourgeoisie". If we are to describe such persons as bourgeois, better we label them as "the state bourgeoisie".

Wegner's (1990: 240-1) study of SS officers of the rank of colonel or above, demonstrates the presence of this generalized "statism": an enduring close connection between

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militarism, higher education and the state in Germany. 32% had been previously in the army, 15% had been police officials, 22% teachers and 6% other civil servants -- a total of 59% in the public sector. Of their fathers 14% had been soldiers or police officials, 8% teachers and 25% other civil servants -- a public sector total of 47%. The state of the pre-Nazi era contributed half the personnel which ran the Holocaust.

(5) *State Territories: Inner Core and Far Periphery.* Two geographical locations encouraged extreme rightism. In states riven by regional\ethnic conflict, the inner core regions most commanded by the state supported stronger national integration, if necessary imposed by state coercion. This is obvious in Spain, for example. But extreme rightism also thrived among nationals living in the far periphery, in frontier or in foreign lands. Germans from the Baltic areas and other "lost territories" of 1918 were substantially over-represented among Nazi militants, as were Hungarians and Rumanians from frontier areas.

I have thus identified as key supporters of the extreme right young men drawn from established churches, members and ex-members of efficiently-functioning armed forces, public employees of all levels, students and teachers and residents of both central core and far periphery territories. I have suggested that these seemingly disparate groups shared similar values -- all favored an unusually strong, coercive national state. Except for the exiles, all had been previously socialized in "statism". They were the occupants of "the second state" I identified earlier and they were busy undermining the first, democratic state. These were people genuinely committed to a non-democratic vision of society, to whom order, discipline and a national solidarity organized by the state were highly-valued. All sent out institutions and socialization practices into civil society resonating among much larger numbers of people. Rotating conscription systems, grand public buildings, parades, uniforms, flags, public schooling could all stir emotional patriotic responses among the mass public. Indeed, they still can do so.

In the interwar Democratic West "statist" emotions were ambiguous, since the sovereign nation-state was substantially liberal. But across the other Europe many state institutions

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remained authoritarian even where the constitution was nominally democratic. Their democracies were indeed partially subverted from without, by the class struggle of civil society. But they were also subverted from within, by their own state administrations.

One problem of interpreting extreme rightism as merely a class phenomenon is that interest, indeed capitalism itself, is pragmatic, calculative and unemotional. Interests can be compromised, interests do not obviously lead us to risk death or to perpetrate holocausts. The extreme rightists only usually addressed interests indirectly, *through* an ideology of national statism. But their advocacy of statism also brought substantial support in itself, from those groups just specified. It was the combination of class and national statism that led rightists to their successes and their atrocities, most specifically their promise to use the power of the state to *abolish* the spectre of class conflict from modern society. Since the values of national statism so resonated in the West's Authoritarian Region, they could strike against class before it was strictly plausible to do so in terms of class interest. Class interests would not have led to such ferocious violence at such an early stage; entwined with fervent statism they could. There was, as is well known, a "crisis of capitalism" in the 1920s and early 1930s. But this became conjoined to another contemporary crisis, that of the modern state. We need to analyze both economic and political power relations to explain the inter-war triumph of the extreme right.

I have explained their rise. Why did they fall? This seems easy. They fell for geopolitical reasons. They lost the Second World War. Only those regimes which managed to stay out of the war -- Spain and Portugal -- survived longer than 1945. All the rest perished, their leaders usually executed, as Hitler fell. Since their fall was geopolitical, we must find geopolitical reasons. Those in the east were little more than geopolitical pawns once the war started. Their countries would likely become puppet states of either Nazi Germany or Communist Russia. But the two major Fascist states had made geopolitical choices, and these were both aggressive and disastrous.

Far more than the states which had precipitated World War I, these were aggressive states, intent on war. But they actually lost the war because they were also foolhardy. Why did

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they fight everyone at once? Why did Hitler so misjudge both the British and the Russian will to fight? Why did he attack Russia before he had finished off Britain? Why did he show such little interest in conciliating the United States? Why did he actually declare war on the United States, when he could not effect one realistic act of aggression against it? And though Mussolini at times showed rather more caution, he too threw caution to the winds. When he also declared war on the United States, what did he expect he could do about it? Get the American Mafia to help him?

Their defeat was thus self-inflicted. It emanated from the two defects of authoritarian rightist regimes. First, the statism and the nationalism of these regimes insulated them from geopolitical realities. For them virtue was to be found in the nation, embodied in the state. Evil and degeneracy lay abroad. The national will, they repeatedly affirmed, could triumph against all odds. Even their own alliance, and that with Japan, was far more fraught, contingent and calculative than was the alliance between Britain, its Commonwealth, the United States and the Free French, Poles etc. The democracies did not fight better in narrow military terms, since they could not match the authoritarian martial virtues of Germany or Japan (the Italian armed forces were different). But being more internationally-oriented they fought better as an alliance -- and so could ally effectively with a regime they hated, that of the Soviet Union. Martial virtues tend to be the virtues of authoritarian regimes, diplomatic ones of democracies. Luckily for democracy in both world wars of the 20th century martial virtues proved inferior to diplomatic ones.

Second, their sovereignty remained divided since decision-making remained divide-and-rule. Of course, far more than any monarch, Hitler and Mussolini took major decisions personally. Yet beneath them lay multiple divided institutions of sovereignty. Recent research on the Nazi state has reversed the old image of totalitarianism -- according to Mommsen (1991), Kershaw (1991: Chaps 5 & 6) and others the Nazi state was chaotic. In Germany, the Ministries, the Nazi Party, first the S.A. then the SS, and later the army competed ferociously, murderously at every level of the state. Hitler kept them deliberately divided, encouraging rivalry and even bloodletting between them, to keep his own power intact. There was

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deliberately no sovereign cabinet. To get what one wanted, access to the Fuhrer was all-important. But this involved deception and flattery. People told the inner circle, and especially Hitler, what they believed would please. The Holocaust went apace because Nazis knew that was the way to please Hitler. The military campaigns began to go badly wrong because the generals darent tell Hitler reality. Mussolini's decision-making was a little more collective. He did have a Cabinet. But again there was divided sovereignty, since his own powers did not depend on it, and it was frightened of him.

In contrast Britain and the US had cabinet government, a cabinet now composed of all the main parties. Attlee, Bevin and some Conservatives were habitually blunt with Churchill, so were the military men admitted to the War Council. Sovereignty concentrated in one place to which the principal collective power actors all have open access provides more effective government than divided sovereignty. By the mid-20th century that meant democracy.

I have only talked of foreign and military policy, not domestic policy. But that is what mattered most in this recent period of history. The triumph of democracy over rightist authoritarianism might appear evolutionary, but if it was, then the evolutionary logic was not the economic development of industrial or capitalist society but warfare. As a result of two world wars, especially the second, the map was redrawn and the Democratic West was extended. After World War II, as Charles Maier has shown, the democratic Powers were very conscious of how they might avoid the mistakes of the peace settlement of World War I. Thus their armies physically occupied the main defeated powers. Under their guns, they wrote the new constitutions. They systematically attacked the powers of the extreme right and the extreme left, while -- most fundamentally -- giving major incentives for conservatives to move into the political centre. Only in the single case where a civil war prevented this strategy, that of Greece, did conservatives ever again reach for the gun. Thereafter, the tremendous success of the postwar Western capitalist economy, whose practices were set in democracies, reinforced the victory.

West of the Iron Curtain all the regional pressures were now on the two remaining,

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isolated authoritarians, Franco and Salazar. Were they exceptions to what I have argued? They did stay out of the war and they did show rather more caution in foreign policy. Serrano Suñer, the Spanish Foreign Minister of the period, reports that Franco offered to join the Axis powers in 1940, but his price (French North Africa) was too high. Mussolini also wanted it, but Hitler needed it to keep his French client-state happy. But for Hitler's refusal, Franco would also have fallen in 1945 (though Franco may have counted on this refusal in advance). Salazar is also reported to have restrained Franco from foreign adventures, though his own regime later fell on its colonial foolhardiness. Weakness in foreign policy may be a more general attribute of authoritarian regimes.

Finally, after the verdict of World War II was safely institutionalized -- say by the mid 1950s -- authoritarianism in Portugal and Spain was largely doomed. This might seem to demean the bravery of those who continued to fight for democracy there as well as the good sense of those conservatives who made their vital decisions (in Spain) in 1975 and 1981. Indeed, it might have been otherwise and democracy might have been delayed. But this had become increasingly unlikely. Since few wanted another Civil War, and since a Cold War still gave him certain geopolitical advantages, Franco was able to die in his bed. But by then the entire West was democratic. Almost all Westerners believed, probably wrongly, that the modern state was necessarily a democratic state. I have argued that the outcome of what I identified as a major crisis of the modern state was more contingent, depending on the outcomes of wars. They also believed, probably wrongly, that advanced capitalism was necessarily democratic. I believe that capitalism is compatible with more authoritarian regimes as well. But the opposite beliefs dominate contemporary conceptions of modernity. Spain wanted to be modern, so it became democratic. The main battle had been fought and won already, elsewhere. Like all battles, it might have gone otherwise.

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