Rehearsals for fascism: Populism and political mobilization in Weimar Germany

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Abstract

In this compelling and ambitious study, Peter Fritzsche analyzes the dramatic transformation of bourgeois politics before the Nazi breakthrough in 1930. Examining the local texture of civic life--market square protests, small town patriotism, and social clubs--as well as political parties and interest groups, Fritzsche provides a crucial perspective for understanding the fate of the Weimar republic, one which has been largely neglected by German historians. Even before the Great Depression the traditional bourgeois parties were eclipsed by a new breed of populist politicians who not only resisted the left but also embraced public activism and attacked big business, German conservatism, and the Weimar state itself. It was this populist sentiment to which the Nazis appealed with such consummate skill, not so much seizing power as assuming the ambitions and prejudices of middle class voters while transcending the limitations of the political organizations.

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Dive into the research topics of 'Rehearsals for fascism: Populism and political mobilization in Weimar Germany'. Together they form a unique fingerprint.
The dynamic of right-wing populism interacting with and facilitating fascism in interwar Germany was chronicled by Peter Fritzsche in Rehearsals for Fascism: Populism and Political Mobilization in Weimar Germany. Fritzsche showed that distressed middle-class populists in Weimar launched bitter attacks against both the government and big business. This populist surge was later exploited by the Nazis which parasitized the forms and themes of the populists and moved their constituencies far to the right through ideological appeals involving demagoguery, scapegoating, and conspiracism.


Like in Weimar Germany, we can find in today's Russia fascist actors and widespread nationalism among the population. In current Russia, in distinction to inter-war Germany, however, the party system is manipulated and the third sector underdeveloped. The continuing political presence of a strongly authoritarian, yet non-fascist "national leader" Vladimir Putin creates hindrances for the country to become a liberal democracy, but makes it also improbable that the Russian regime will transgress into fascism. View. Show abstract.