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Fascism in Different Places

Fascism is “a political ideology that includes a positive attraction to war and power, a belief in the natural inequalities among categories of people, and a tendency to see democracy and freedom as human weakness” (Charon 322-323). For years fascism was studied by looking at the Nazi model as the only model for fascism, but recently more information has become available allowing a better understanding of how fascism develops and how it becomes dominant in different societies. During the late 1920s and early 1930s fascism emerged in countries like Italy, Japan, and Germany. Since fascism was a general term for years it was thought that each of these countries had the same conditions that made it possible for fascism to take control, that no country was different from another (Turner 563). With recent studies this has been found to be both correct and incorrect. By examining each country and how the fascist party came into power and what occurred during that time, we can see that even though there were similarities there are also differences.

In Germany, Italy, and Japan fascism came to power after World War I because of social problems. Each of these countries had “societies where traditional conservatism is unable to cope with such changes and where liberalism is not deeply rooted, fascism (conservative extremism) has its greatest chance of success,” (Keeserich 139). Fascists are anti-modernist, they believe that “modern industrial society was unholy and unavoidable incompatible with what they held to be the only true wellspring of social life: the folk culture,” (Turner

550). Fascist regimes believe “that war is not merely an acceptable means for the pursuit of political aims, but a positive and essential good,” (Turner 552). But to do this they faced the reality that they wanted “products of industry, but without an industrial society,” (Turner 557) which is not possible. In Germany and Italy “both brands of fascism were stronger in rural areas than in urban areas,” (Szymanski 402). In these three countries fascism had leverage because in these areas “rapid modernization spurred on by the power of the state had brought a relatively high level of development but also severe social and economical dislocations,” (Wilson 404).

Fascism in Germany came to power because of social problems, the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, and high inflation in the economy after World War I that was made worse by the Great Crash of 1929. Most Fascists recruitments were Northern Germany farmers that were usually on the worst land, (Szymanski 402). Unlike Italy “there was a negative correlation between the Socialist/Communist vote and the Nazi vote, (Szymanski 402) in Germany. Rural Nazism was against big banks, cities and the encroachments of capitalism, (Szymanski 403). Because of this in the beginning, instead of slowing down production, taking control of the economy, or halting production like other fascist regimes, the Nazis wanted a transformation to the past. They wanted to “escape from the modern World by means of a desperate backward leap toward a romanticized vision of the harmony, community, simplicity, and order of a world long lost,” (Turner 550). Eventually Nazis Germany like Fascist Italy had to allow

the industrial society to continue but they kept a close eye and restricted the production and power of the industrial elite.

In Italy, fascism came to power because of social conflict especially between the working class and northern farmers. For farmers fascism was “a tool to push back the offensive of their workers and restore the old labor conditions,” (Szymanski 403). These farmers were usually better off economically than their counterparts in Northern Germany and their “activities were principally against the working class and its organizations,” (Szymanski 403). In this area Fascism tended to be stronger in areas where socialism was the strongest. Because of this the Fascist party in Italy recruited a majority of its members “were small landowners and large sharecroppers and tenants ... who had been pressed by the Socialist-organized Agricultural Leagues,” (Szymanski 401).

In Japan the appearance “first of fascist movements, then of a full-blown fascist regime, was a function of objective class conditions and a desperate form of last-ditch defense on the part of Japanese capitalism against the menace of social and economic revolution,” (Wilson 401). Similar to Germany and Italy in definition but instead of becoming a fascist regime because of wanting revolution, the capitalist became fascist to prevent a revolution. Unlike European fascism Japanese fascism got its roots “from above, by transforming the existing state structure into an ‘emperor-system’ or ‘military-bureaucratic’ fascism which acted in main like its European counterparts,” (Wilson 404) this is because Japan was lacking a bourgeois class that brought about the change to fascism in other countries. Another reason fascism had to come from above is because Japan

was already deeply involved in war which is believed to bring “more rapid fascist consolidation from the top,” (Wilson 405). Since power came from above Japan had no successful takeovers because the “government operated as before under the control of the same elites, chosen largely from among Tokyo Imperial University graduates and, in the military, from among regular staff officers, who had gradually become dominant early in the twentieth century,” (Wilson 406). Instead of being anti-modernist like most fascist states Japan encouraged rapid modernization.

Fascism is an ideology that comes about because of social, economic, and sometimes racial issues. After reading these articles I believe that most fascist nations follow the general definition of fascism which according to the articles involves a moment against socialism, economic problems or social problems. Fascism can involve discriminating against all other races to make one's race superior. All fascist countries also have a centralized government with a figure head or dictator. Fascism might develop differently in each nation but each regime will contain the fundamental elements of Fascism. Fascism came in power in Germany because the Germans were tired of being humiliated and frustrated because of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. The Germans wanted to be powerful again not weak so they listen to the Nazi party and Hitler when they said they could make Germans great again (Turner). Italy was frustrated with the outcome of the ending of World War I, they had wanted more. Fascism in Italy was about frustration with the Socialist party in Italy (Szymanski). Japan became fascist by the elite to retain power not from the masses to

redistribute it (Wilson). As we can see each nation has different priorities, history and circumstances, which influence how fascism develops.

Works Cited

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