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SERIE V HISTORIA CONTEMPORÁNEA
REVISTA DE LA FACULTAD DE GEOGRAFÍA E HISTORIA

NI TOTALITARISMO NI SOCIALISMO:
LOS REGÍMENES AUTORITARIOS IBEROAMERICANOS

GABRIELA DE LIMA GRECCO Y LUCIANO ARONNE DE ABREU (COORDS.)

UNED



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RESEÑAS · BOOK REVIEW

TRAVERSO, Enzo: *Las Nuevas Caras de La Derecha*. Buenos Aires, 2018, Siglo Veintiuno Editores Argentina, 157 pp., ISBN: 978-987-629-801-8.

Odilon Caldeira Neto¹

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Over the last few years, several countries «turned right» through electoral processes or with the gradual construction of organized pressure groups. With the clear advance of political parties, parliamentary leaderships and right-wing groups, the attempts to define conceptually, or at least define the appropriate words to categorize this phenomenon also increase.

However, there is a circumstantial, but also heuristic problem: how to establish a new concept (or the use of a concept that existed before) to a phenomenon as diversified as this one? Is there, today, an «essential» substrate inscribed in political realities of countries as diverse as USA, France, Hungary, Philippines and Brazil?

This is a core subject of the debate present in the book «*Las nuevas caras de la derecha*», by the Historian Enzo Traverso. Following the debate held over the past few years, Traverso is urged to think about the pluralities and specificities of the category «post-fascism». Out of this debate, an issue related to concepts, terms and categories that complement each other, like *fascism*, *neofascism* and *post-fascism* arises.

Fascism has been an object of study in the fields of Historiography and Social Sciences for decades, and remains an «open» concept, due to its multiple interpretations. Besides, this diversity is the result of the multiple approaches that coexist in the myriad of Fascism studies. Without a doubt, an interpretation more interested in an economic point of view will dissent deeply from analysis about the fundamentals of Fascism or the social and cultural instances of its practices.

How can one show the differentiation of a category (post-fascism) based on a concept (fascism)? For this differentiation, Enzo Traverso suggests an operation based in two complimentary axes. The first one is the idea that a historicity (non-normative and deterministic) of fascism, that meets also the perception of the existence of a political nature, that, on its turn, is based in ideological principles. This means interpreting fascism and post-fascism around more restricted definitions, but also around the possibilities of retakes and restructuring.

Even in diversified expressions, fascisms had similarities in a few core questions, such as the notion of an «end» to History, result of the creation of a New

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Man and a new humankind, based in the understanding of a revolutionary and national regenerative process. So, fascism was beyond a conservative agitation, although it had also clear conservative elements in its ideological composition and political practices.

So, if we can frame fascism as a political ideology, neofascism can easily be interpreted as a practice (or phenomenon) defined specifically by the multiple attempts to revive fascism. The main difference is that neofascism is inscribed in a period posterior to the historical experience of fascism, or a «post-fascist era».

«Post-fascism» can be described as a conservative practice and, in some moments, reactionary, and without a doubt, with authoritarian temptations. Based in a few elements brought from fascism, put together around a process of disenchantment with politics. From fascism, it carries a few inspirational elements, specifically in the creation of a political imaginary (and of its enemies).

Fascism, as a strong part of the collective memory of the XXth century, is an inspiration, but not a revivalism. So, «post-fascism» is, for Traverso, a category and not a concept, mainly due to its non-definitive character, that consolidates the aspect of interregnum. This interregnum is defined by multiple issues.

First, a strong part of the radical right (specifically the European one) went through an ideological reformulation/remodelation process, growing apart from the fascist referential, and anchoring in post-material agenda. This «new extreme right» advocates for, mainly, the use and defense of institutional ways of the liberal democracies. In other words, apparently it proposes an apparent acceptance of the rules of the game.

Besides, in specific perspectives beyond conjunctural aspects there is an «ideological hiatus». If fascism proposed an «end of History» in its terms, the post-fascism phenomenon is defined by the regime of historicity of presentism, that has for main characteristic the end of a horizon of expectations. With this, we can take in account that, to Traverso, a very important factor for the ideological definition of fascism was specifically anticommunism.

If there is no communism as a spectre haunting the world, which alternative can be proposed and contraposed? In that sense, there is no delimitation of a becoming by post-fascism. Unlike fascism in the XXth century, post-fascism doesn't propose a superior stage, and as such does not enunciate the ambition to mobilize constantly the masses, but for the articulations of resentment with the multiple «losers of globalization» (hence, in some cases, its social side).

The similarity with the fascisms between wars happens, in great part, due to the construction of social imaginaries, anchored in identities believed unassimilable, in a way that those social imaginaries are projected in the national identities. France, in this case, is a paradigm not only by the ideological issues connected to the *Nouvelle Droite*, but also to the problems inherent to the political, social and cultural issues of the colonial processes.

Enzo Traverso's critic to the use of the term populism (and the derivation national-populism) is particularly interesting, because of the interpretation of populism as a «style», but also because it works with a historicity that puts the fascisms as inspirational to post-fascism.

Anyhow, some issues are left open, such as interpret those categories and conditions (post-fascism, national identity, political imaginary) in countries as Philippines and Brazil, countries in which authoritarian forms of extreme right are presently in power. The book is, then, a big invitation to the debate and the practice of interpreting our present in the light of a recent past.

Dossier: Gabriela de Lima Grecco y Luciano Aronne de Abreu (coords.): Ni totalitarismo ni socialismo: Los regímenes autoritarios iberoamericanos

15 GABRIELA DE LIMA GRECCO & LUCIANO ARONNE DE ABREU
Introducción Dossier

21 GABRIELA DE LIMA GRECCO
Ni vencedores ni vencidos. Zonas grises y resistencia(s) en ámbito de la cultura literaria durante el Primer Franquismo

39 DANIEL MACHADO BRUNO
Raíces del Brasil y sus intérpretes, ochenta años después: una crítica historiográfica de la visión democrática y autoritaria de las interpretaciones del ensayo sociológico

61 GABRIEL DUARTE COSTAGUTA
El Corporativismo como praxis de la construcción del modelo político-estadista en Brasil de los años 1930-1945

83 IGNACIO ALEJANDRO LÓPEZ
Frente a nuevos tipos de «absolutismos». Lecturas sobre los autoritarismos europeos de entreguerras desde la mirada de juristas argentinos (1920-1940)

109 CÁSSIO ALAN DE ABREU ALBERNAZ
Debates político-doctrinarios en Brasil: ¿un corporativismo a la brasileña

129 SARA MARTÍN GUTIÉRREZ
Entre agujas y catecismo. Representaciones de género y estrategias políticas en el trabajo. El Sindicato de Costureras de Buenos Aires y la campaña en defensa del trabajo a domicilio (1936-1946)

151 CARLOS DOMPER LASÚS
Ni liberales ni comunistas. La «democracia orgánica» y la integración del Franquismo y el Estado Novo en la Europa posterior a 1945

Miscelánea · Miscellany

175 SANTIAGO JAÉN MILLA
La democracia usurpada. Persecución, cárcel y exilio de los demócratas y republicanos jiennenses (1849-1923)

197 JUAN JESÚS MARTÍN IGLESIA
Andrés Borrego: precursor liberal de la participación ciudadana

219 LUZ MACEIRA OCHOA
Testimonios y memorias en la trayectoria de Villa Grimaldi

251 ALESSIA PUTIN
Política en Red: Entre la cosmopolítica y la pseudopolítica

281 NOEMÍ RAPOSO GUTIÉRREZ
La revolución de octubre de 1934 en el Andévalo onubense

Reseñas · Book Review

311 BELMAS, Élisabeth y NONNIS-VIGILANTE, Serenella (dir.): *L'orchestration de la mort. Les funérailles, des temps modernes à l'époque contemporaine* (SILVIA TANTIMONACO)

315 GÓMEZ BRAVO, Gutmaro: *Geografía humana de la represión franquista. Del Golpe a la Guerra de ocupación (1936-1941)* (FERNANDO JIMÉNEZ HERRERA)

319 GARCÍA FUNES, Juan Carlos: *A recoger bombas. Batallones de trabajo forzado en Castilla y León (1937-1942)* (FERNANDO JIMÉNEZ HERRERA)

323 TRAVERSO, Enzo: *Las Nuevas Caras de La Derecha* (ODILON CALDEIRA NETO)

327 LÓPEZ VILLAVERDE, Ángel Luis: *El Ventanuco. Tras las huellas de un maestro republicano* (HERMINIO LEBRERO IZQUIERDO)

331 SÁNCHEZ, Raquel & SAN NARCISO, David (coords.): *La cuestión de Palacio. Corte y cortesanos en la España contemporánea* (JORGE PAJARÍN DOMÍNGUEZ)

335 PATIÑO VILLA, Carlos Alberto: *Imperios contra Estados. La destrucción del orden internacional contemporáneo* (ISIDRO SEPÚLVEDA MUÑOZ)