

Review of: "From Baking Competitions To Forced Repatriations: Patriotic Alternative And The Hybridity Of The Radical Right"

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The article is valuable from the point of view that it provides an approach to a novel and somewhat successful and growing movement of the British radical right, the Patriotic Alternative. However, the author starts from a distinction between "authentic" or "good" nationalism and "inauthentic" or "bad" nationalism that is taken from the British far right itself, and specifically from the founders of the National Action movement, Alex Davies and Ben Raymon. Given this starting point, I ask myself: why assume this classification by scholars? These are not categories that we can consider scientific, or at least rigorous. In fact, it is a language borrowed from the very object of study that we are trying to investigate. Therefore, I believe that a greater conceptual distance should be adopted with respect to the object of study itself, always distinguishing very clearly between the assessments made by the protagonists themselves and the concepts adopted by the researcher or scholar. The latter should be taken from the body of social science, and should therefore have a certain universality (as is the case with all scientific concepts) in order to be able to approach a multitude of phenomena thanks to them, even if they all naturally contain their own peculiarities.

In my view, care should be taken with this question because it could lead to certain interpretations, such as that the article would try to justify the label of "bad" nationalism that both leaders of National Action would have given to the Patriotic Alternative organisation just because it has its own brand of 'British Tea' or because it organises baking competitions.

As far as the article can tell, 'authentic' nationalism is one that continues to view race as a threat, and specifically the Jewish race, while 'inauthentic' nationalism seems to target Muslim immigration as its main objective. This idea is defended by the author on the basis of the ideological shift that the British National Party is said to have made at the turn of the century. This "ideological transformation" (which would not really be such because the traditional racist discourse would remain in the shadows) would be adopted by other radical right-wing groups to capture new audiences by taking advantage of the waves of hostility towards Islamic immigration. However, the author himself makes it clear at some point in his discourse that this rejection of Muslim immigration continues to have a racist basis. Therefore, what is happening (as the author also admits) is that the radical right and the extreme right are adapting their discourse to what they consider to be the new "evil", or at least the most immediate one, and also to the new social trends (which show less tolerance towards an openly racist discourse, although deep down there is still a fear that may sooner or later feed racist or pseudo-racist justifications). But all this does not make a movement "inauthentic," as is the case with Alternativa Patriótica. The fact that it adopts new, "contemporary" forms does not make it inauthentic as long as it retains what is

essential to a radical right or extreme right movement: exclusionary nationalism.

Why should nationalism that is considered "authentic" be anti-Jewish just because it has constituted a long tradition in European or American nationalist tendencies? Anti-Semitism may be a "classic" form of nationalism, given its long duration, its impact, and its profound consequences, but, I repeat, anti-Semitism is not the core of the nationalist phenomenon, but its hostile stance towards any foreign race, nationality, or identity (even if bound by a particular creed, as is the case with Islam) that is seen as threatening one's own status quo.

In my view, linking Muslim immigration to the possibility of later Jewish domination of the white population does not make this right-wing thinking any more "authentic." It simply connects it to its own tradition, to its historical roots, pretending to give credibility (both to the new manifestations and to its roots or origins, which give it "pedigree"). As I have allowed myself to argue, whether or not anti-Semitism is taken as an argument does not make a radical or extreme right-wing movement authentic or not. It is xenophobia and racism, not the specific nationality targeted, that are the hallmarks of these movements.

The same applies to organisational forms or to certain image and communication strategies. One can perhaps speak of renewal or new tactics, but not of "authenticity" or "inauthenticity". In the same vein, I think the category of "hybrid" should be taken with care if it refers to these same concepts of "authentic/good" or "inauthentic/bad".

Therefore, perhaps one of the researcher's tasks is to clarify why this dichotomy and positive and negative assessments between the radical and extreme right-wing movements themselves exist. Also, to describe what the arguments of both are. Moreover, is there really a 'classical' anti-Jewish nationalism in Britain today (as in other similarly situated Western countries) that is not hostile to Muslim immigration?