

A Quest for Synchronicity: The Chronopolitics of Global Fascist Revolution in a Balkan Periphery

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Against earlier interpretations that saw fascism as anti-modern, the so-called ‘new consensus’ in fascism studies follows Roger Griffin (1991; 2007) in identifying it as a form of alternative modernity to the Western, liberal-capitalist model. Regarding the latter, the temporal positioning of the ‘periphery’ of South-Eastern Europe vis-à-vis this model, often articulated along the lines of ‘backwardness’ and temporal lag, has been the subject of extensive debate. One such reading (Mishkova and Daskalov 2014) identifies several stages in the trajectory of South-East European nationalisms, from 1) the indiscriminate adoption of ‘Western’ modernity in the early 19th century, through 2) its critique and call for adaptation to local realities in the second half of the 19th and the early 20th century, to 3) its wholesale rejection in favour of alternative modernities during the interwar period. Continuing my earlier work on the synchronicity of 19th century Balkan nationalisms with the European ‘core’ (Cârstocea 2022), my paper focuses on the ways in which the members of the interwar Romanian fascist movement, the ‘Legion of the Archangel Michael’, imagined a global fascist revolution and their place within it. I argue that despite the ultra-nationalism of the legionary movement (and of fascism more generally), its vision of palingenetic transformation never stopped at Romania’s borders, but was viewed by intellectuals who were members or sympathisers of the movement as having world-historical significance. The fascist temporal insurgency against the liberal notion of progress – with its corollaries of stages of development and ‘catching up’, which had helped construct ‘Eastern Europe’ as a ‘periphery’ – was seen as having the potential to redeem Romania from its peripheral latecomer status. Focusing on Romanian fascists’ temporal imagination and especially their “horizon of expectation” (Koselleck 2004), I further argue that examining the structural analogies between the self-perceived temporal lag characteristic of the ‘periphery’ and that of fascism as a latecoming ideology to ‘Western’, liberal-capitalist modernity opens new vistas that can lead to a better understanding of both.

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EDUCATION

2007 – 2011	University College London PhD History	London, UK
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ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE (selection)

2021 –	Maynooth University Position: Assistant Professor in Twentieth-Century European History	Maynooth, Ireland
2019 – 2021	University of Leicester Position: Lecturer in Modern European History	Leicester, UK
2017 – 2019	Europa University Flensburg Position: Lecturer in European Studies	Flensburg, Germany
2013 – 2017	European Centre for Minority Issues Position: Senior Research Associate	Flensburg, Germany

PUBLICATIONS (selection)

2025	<i>Ethnicizing Europe: Hate and Violence after Versailles</i> . West Lafayette: Purdue University Press (co-edited with Gábor Egry and Éva Kovács).
2022	Synchronous Nationalisms – Reading the History of Nationalism in South-Eastern Europe Between and Beyond the Binaries, <i>National Identities</i> 24(5): 481-503.
2021	Between Europeanisation and Local Legacies: Holocaust Memory and Contemporary Anti-Semitism in Romania, <i>East European Politics and Societies</i> 35(2): 313-335.
2020	Historicising the Normative Boundaries of Diversity: The Minority Treaties of 1919 in a <i>Longue Durée</i> Perspective, <i>Studies on National Movements</i> 5(1): 43-79.
2020	Bringing Out the Dead: Mass Funerals, Cult of Death and the Emotional Dimension of Nationhood in Romanian Interwar Fascism, in Maarten van Ginderachter, Xosé Núñez Seixas and Andreas Stynen (eds.), <i>Emotions and Everyday Nationalism in Modern European History</i> , Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 134-163.
2019	<i>Modern Antisemitisms in the Peripheries: Europe and its Colonies, 1880-1945</i> . Vienna: New Academic Press (co-edited with Éva Kovács).
2015	Breaking the Teeth of Time: Mythical Time and the ‘Terror of History’ in the Rhetoric of the Legionary Movement in Interwar Romania, <i>Journal of Modern European History</i> 13(1), pp. 79-97.

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2025	European Research Council (ERC) Consolidator Grant 2024, Maynooth, Ireland
2020	Research England Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Grant, Leicester, UK
2018	Imre Kértesz Kolleg Jena Research Fellowship, Jena, Germany
2012	Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies Research Fellowship, Vienna, Austria

COMMISSIONS OF TRUST

2021 –	Editor, Book Series <i>A Modern History of Politics and Violence</i> , Bloomsbury
2020 –	Editor, <i>S:I.M.O.N (Shoah: Intervention, Methods, Documentation)</i> , Vienna, Austria

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Racial Chronopolitics and Capitalist Modernity: Roma and Sinti in Austria-Hungary

Case studies in the intellectual history of time and anthropology of time have demonstrated that imperial and colonial regimes legitimized the exploitation and expropriation of subjugated populations by defining the racialized Other as *non-coeval* to the imperial centre. By withdrawing coeval status, the imperial centre categorized the racialized Other as pre-modern, thus rendering them a justifiable target for punitive modernization efforts. Temporal Othering was not just a discourse of imperial officials and scientists but also a material process. It affected the power relations between dominant and marginalized groups. Philosopher Charles W. Mills called this discursive and material dynamic “racial chronopolitics” (Mills 2020).

This conference contribution uses Mills’s concept of racial chronopolitics to examine the link between discursive and material marginalization of Roma and Sinti in Austria-Hungary. Using racial chronopolitics as an interpretative tool, I connect the analysis of anti-Roma discourse and material practices. The denial of coevalness was key to anti-Roma rhetoric and punitive governance during the empire’s transition to capitalist modernity. This exclusion from contemporaneity was evident in various ways: for instance, Roma and Sinti were barred from benefitting from significant events of radical emancipation, such as the anticipated national equality after 1848.

Moreover, I assert that the denial of coevalness inherently included a project of *enforced coevalness*: by categorizing a particular population group as non-coeval, the government could legitimately impose punitive modernization. In the context of capitalist modernity, this involved coerced participation in specific sectors of the labour force. Strategies to limit mobility and hinder mobile economies of Roma were employed as mechanisms to compel Romani and Sinti communities into waged or forced labour. As the non-coeval internal Other, therefore, Roma and Sinti were assigned a specific role in the racialized original accumulation of capital within Habsburg labour regimes.

**The Politics of Peripheral Timeliness:
Fin-de-Siècle Central and Eastern European Antisemitism
in a Transnational and Global Context**

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The present paper aims to examine the ways in which, on both a regional and a trans-regional scale, political actors in late nineteenth century CEE could recast their peripheral position on a global stage as timeliness, rather than “backwardness”. One surprising vector for this transmutation was antisemitism, either through similar arguments deployed in neighbouring countries even in the absence of regional cooperation – or, through the mediation of Western European actors, in a triangular relationship.

The first half of the paper will consider how, in the 1870s and 1880s, the “Chinese Question” of immigration control and exclusion in the United States was imagined as an appealing precedent for dealing with the “Jewish Question” of emancipation and citizenship in fin-de-siècle Romania, Hungary, and Austria. Thinking in terms of “questions” enabled historical actors to place themselves within a “global moment” by highlighting structural similarities that would justify the analogy. Rhetorically turning to an America that was placed at the forefront of “liberal” progress yet which now began to explicitly place limits to its inclusiveness, politicians in Central and Eastern Europe sought, in synch, to present their own exclusionary policies as timely and acceptable, rather than anachronistic affronts to the spirit of the age.

The second half of the paper will focus on the “International Antisemitic Congress” held in Bucharest in 1886 as an instance of how the agenda of a nascent pan-European antisemitism allowed actors from CEE to present themselves as the early adopters – even the pioneers – of a new, antisemitic *Zeitgeist*. Reuniting Romanian, Hungarian, and French delegates, the congress failed to institutionalise and strengthen the networks connecting West and East, still less to fully reconcile neighbours over a shared antisemitic agenda. Yet, I argue, the congress was nevertheless symptomatic for how marginal yet rising forces in France, Romania, and Hungary sought mutual legitimisation in internationalising the “Jewish Question”, and presenting said internationalisation as timeliness.

In sum, the present paper makes the case that, whether turning toward comparison or connection as a frame of historical analysis, antisemitism offered a shared language of timeliness to actors in the region, yet also going beyond it – be it by tapping into a broader global imaginary of exclusion, or by renegotiating hierarchies of innovation with Western Europe. Even as antisemitism itself was optimistically imagined by many fin-de-siècle observers to be an anachronic passing frenzy, the view from the periphery shows just how alluring proclaiming its timeliness could be.