

The following work analyses the historical evolution of the radical right wing movement, beginning from the immediate postwar period to the 1980s. It presents four sections.

The first section studies the reorganization of the Italian right wing movement after the establishment of the Republic in 1946. It focuses on two main events: the birth of far right movements whose goal was to inherit the ideological legacy of the Fascist regime, and, on an institutional level, the creation of the Italian Social Movement. The study of these two phenomena is contextualized socially and economically in order to provide a better grasp of the development of these ideologies and political events.

The second section focuses on how the ideologies of radical groups were restored and on the emergence of the so-called “historical groups” in the early 1950s. Following to a historical contextualization, the section analyses the strategies attending to these early extraparliamentary radical groups, with a particular focus on the establishment of two major movements: Ordine Nuovo and the Avanguardia Nazionale. These movements are themselves contrasted and compared.

The third section of this study focuses on the events that marked the period of so-called “strategia della tensione.” From this perspective, the study provides a historical and economical contextualization as well as focuses on political factions and the major figures associated with them. A central investigation is devoted to a particular event in the Italian history of that period, an event destined to mark the political, institutional, and social climate of the time: The Piazza Fontana Bombing of 1969. The chapter concludes with the reconstruction of the most acute phase in the “strategia della tensione,” which led to the creation of new movements from within the radical right movement and, at the same time, to the dissolution of the so-called “historical groups.”

The fourth and last section, focuses on the right wing extremism of the 1970s and 1980s. The study here takes its cue from the “1977 movement,” which has marked an acceleration in the ideological evolution of the militant right. It focuses on the massacre of Acca Laurentia because, it is argued, it can be maintained that the this event in fact marked a fracture between traditional militancy (sometimes violent) and the so-called “spontaneismo armato” of more recent years. Thus, the last part of this section is dedicated to the “spontaneismo armato” and to its protagonists; the fast paced rise (and fall) of some of its most important groups: for example, “Costruiamo l’Azione”, NAR, and Terza Posizione.

The argument developed in this dissertation stems from the desire to delve deeper into an aspect of the history of Italian politics that has for a long time been neglected by historiography.

The Italian Social Movement was throughout the second half of the twentieth century the fourth Italian party. At its peak, it managed to secure ten percent of the electorate. It amounts to the oldest and most longlasting neofascist party in Europe, and yet, the first study devoted to this topic by an Italian scholar was published only 1989: Piero Ignazi’s *Il polo escluso*.

Alongside the institutional far right, a radical right extraparlimentary movement developed and remained active, with different intensity, in Italy from the immediate postwar period until the 1980s. The path of this eversive right movement has covered different fields and goes from the sheer violence of the squadristi, to social upheaval, to terroristic events. Among all the advanced countries that have known social-revolutionary terrorism, Italy is the only nation to have had such a long history of Fascist or far right terrorism.

Of course, terrorism, in its general acceptance, has been the object of many studies. Yet, while many relevant studies exist about left wing terrorism, we still rely on journalistic information for our knowledge of the right wing terrorism.

The greatest difficulty in writing this study stems from the fact that we still do not see clearly on many of the events concerning the far right in Italian politics.

This holds true even after the incredible amount of trials, leading to condemnations and, eventually, to acquittals, for the most famous massacres for which the right wing movement has been investigated; none have led to a definitive sentence. For this reason, given that the events of this particular historical period are so intricate, we have opted for a straightforward, chronological reconstruction of the events.

In light of this research, it behooves us to note that in the past few years in many European countries, nationalist, xenophobic, and ethnocentric tendencies are again on the rise. They are presented as solutions to the need to restore the traditional identities of given countries against modernization and the correlated establishment of universal and global models. These phenomena, today, present themselves almost spontaneously, and sporadically. The economic crisis that has invested the Western world in the last few years could, however, lead to a success of these tendencies, endangering, for the sake of national interests, the long lasting efforts for the European unification as well economic integration in a global world.