

Europe and America Between the Wars The Eschenburg Thesis Revised

I. Four Zones (Modified Eschenburg Thesis)

A. First Zone—Stable Democracies

1. democratic before 1914, industrialized, high rate of literacy
2. Great Britain, Ireland, France, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, U.S., and Canada

B. Second Zone—Unstable Democracies

1. democratic in form before 1914, agrarian economy, high rate of illiteracy
2. Spain, Portugal, Italy, & Greece

C. Third Zone—Authoritarian-Industrial States

1. authoritarian before 1914, industrialized, high rate of literacy
2. Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia

D. Fourth Zone—Authoritarian-Agrarian States

1. authoritarian before 1914, agrarian economy, high rate of illiteracy
2. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia

II. Fascism

A. The Fascist Negations

B. Ideology and Goals

C. Style and Organization

D. Some Examples

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| 1. Germany—National Socialist Democratic Workers' Party (NSDAP) | |
| 2. Ireland—Blueshirts (Army Comrades Assoc.) | |
| 3. Hungary—Arrow Cross | 4. Latvia—Thunder Cross |
| 5. Mexico—Silver Shirts | 6. Poland—Falanga |
| 7. Portugal—National Syndicalists | 8. Romania—Iron Guard |
| 9. South Africa—Gray Shirts | 10. Spain—Falange Español |
| 11. Yugoslavia—Ustaši (Insurgents) | 12. Italy—Party of National Fascists (PNF) |

Recommended reading:

- Theodore Eschenburg, “The Collapse of Democratic Regimes between the First and Second World Wars,” *The Road to Dictatorship: Germany 1918–1933*, London, 1962, pp. 7–23.
- Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition*, Madison, WI, 1980.

III. National Socialist German Workers Party

A. Usual Reasons Given for Nazism in Germany

1. Logic of German History
 - a. militarism
 - b. authoritarianism
 - c. Hegelianism
 - d. Romanticism
2. National Psychosis—fatal flaw in German character
3. Nazi leaders—Psychopathic and/or Evil
 - a. Hitler
 - b. Himmler
 - c. Göring
 - d. Göbbels
4. Germany was Betrayed by Weimar Leaders
 - a. Ebert
 - b. Stresemann
 - c. Kurt von Schleicher
 - d. Franz von Papen

B. Myth of Nazi Totalitarianism

1. “Wolf-robots killing lamb-robots”
2. Bottom-Up Nature of Decision Making in Third Reich
 - a. Domestic Decision Making vs. Foreign Policy and Military Decisions
 - b. “Final Solution of the Jewish Problem”
3. Self-Limiting Attitudes in Atmosphere of Terror

IV. Fascism Disguised as Communism — the Soviet Union between the Wars

A. The New Economic Policy

B. The Succession Struggle: From Lenin to Stalin

1. Leon Trotsky
2. Nikolai Bukharin
3. Lev Kamenev
4. Grigorii Zinoviev

C. Industrialization Debate

D. The Five-Year Plans (First = October 1, 1928–December 31, 1932)

1. Wrecking
2. Initial Estimates → Optimal Variants → Super-Optimal Variants
3. Fulfill “the Five-Year Plan in Four Years”
4. Effects of Super-Industrialization

E. Collectivization

1. 25,000ers; “Dizzy with Success”
2. Man-Made Famine

F. The Purges (1934–1941)

1. 17th Party Congress — the “Congress of Victors” (1934)
2. Sergei M. Kirov (assassinated December 1, 1934)
3. Gulag