

New Revisionism: The Politics of Predecessor Selection in the 'Socialist Origins' of Nazism

Mintae Hwang

Práticas da História, n.º 22 (2026): 107-138

www.praticasdahistoria.pt

This journal is funded by National funds through FCT — Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the projects UID/HIS/04666/2013, UID/HIS/04666/2019, UIDB/04666/2020 (https://doi.org/10.54499/UIDB/04666/2020), UIDP/04666/2020 (https://doi.org/10.54499/UIDP/04666/2020), UID/4666/2025 (https://doi.org/10.54499/UID/04666/2025), UIDB/04209/2020, UIDP/04209/2020, UID/4209/2025 (https://doi.org/10.54499/UID/04209/2025) and LA/P/0132/2020 (DOI: https://doi.org/10.54499/LA/P/0132/2020)

Práticas da História, n.º 22 (2026): 107-138

Mintae Hwang

New Revisionism: The Politics of Predecessor Selection in the 'Socialist Origins' of Nazism

This article examines the socialist-origin narrative of Nazism as a renewed form of historical revisionism that has re-entered the conservative and far-right discursive spaces amid the heightened political antagonism of the twenty-first century. Rather than treating the narrative as a historiographic controversy to be settled through factual adjudication, the study approaches it as a sociological phenomenon whose recurrence and political utility require explanation. Acknowledging the complex historiographic debates concerning fascism's relationship to socialism, anti-liberalism, and revolutionary politics, this article examines the contemporary polemical reduction of that entanglement. Drawing on Charles Camic's reputational model of predecessor selection and Patrick Baert's positioning theory, this article analyses how the lineage that binds socialism, Nazism and the collective left wing of the present day can be constructed despite substantial ideological discontinuities. It argues that this manoeuvre constitutes an inverted form of predecessor selection, whereby actors designate the predecessors of their opponents not through doctrinal affinity, but through the negative moral reputation attached to Nazism in postwar political memory. Finally, the article also situates this narrative within discourses linking the collective left, Islamism, and Nazism, highlighting its function as a metapolitical instrument of coalition-building under polarised political conditions.
Keywords: metapolitics; sociology of ideas; far-right discourse; historical revisionism.

Neorrevisionismo: a política de seleção de antecessores nas "origens socialistas" do nazismo

Este artigo analisa a narrativa das supostas "origens socialistas" do nazismo como uma forma renovada de revisionismo histórico que voltou a entrar nos espaços discursivos conservadores e de extrema-direita no início do século xxi, num contexto marcado por um acentuado antagonismo político. Em vez de tratar a narrativa como uma controvérsia historiográfica a ser resolvida através da factualidade, o estudo aborda-a como um fenómeno sociológico cuja recorrência e utilidade política exi-

gem explicação. Partindo dos complexos debates historiográficos relativos à relação entre fascismo, socialismo, antiliberalismo e política revolucionária, este artigo examina a forma como essa relação é polemicamente reduzida. Com base no modelo reputacional de seleção de antecessores de Charles Camic e na teoria do posicionamento de Patrick Baert, o artigo analisa o modo como a suposta "linhagem" que une o socialismo, o nazismo e a ala coletivista da esquerda atual pode ser construída, apesar das substanciais descontinuidades ideológicas entre estes campos políticos. O artigo defende que esta manobra constitui uma forma invertida de seleção de antecessores, na qual os atores designam os antecessores dos seus oponentes não por afinidade doutrinária, mas por via da reputação moral negativa associada ao nazismo na memória política do pós-guerra. Por fim, o artigo também situa esta narrativa no âmbito dos discursos que ligam a esquerda coletivista, o islamismo e o nazismo, destacando a sua função como instrumento metapolítico de formação de coligações em condições políticas polarizadas.
Palavras-chave: metapolítica; sociologia das ideias; discurso da extrema-direita; revisionismo histórico

New Revisionism: The Politics of Predecessor Selection in the 'Socialist Origins' of Nazism

Mintae Hwang*

On January 10, 2025, Alice Weidel of the AfD attracted attention for her remarks on Germany's Nazi past during her conversation with Elon Musk. The AfD has repeatedly been associated with controversies concerning Germany's Nazi past, particularly concerning the legacy of National Socialism[1][2]. At the same time, what was noticeable in Weidel's comment was its deviation from the traditional form of post-war revisionism. According to her, Hitler and his party were, in fact, 'left-wing socialists'; "(it is an error to label Adolf Hitler as right and conservative) He wasn't a conservative. He was a communist, socialist guy... Adolf Hitler was a leftist"[3].

* Mintae Hwang (hmintae@gmail.com). https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5853-1273. Chung-Ang University. Original article: 29-01-2026; revised version: 5-06-2026; accepted: 1-07-2026.

1 Patrice Taddonio, "Why an Influential Figure in Germany's Far-Right AfD Party Is Accused of 'Whitewashing' Nazi Crimes," *PBS*, July 30, 2024, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/germany-afd-bjorn-hocke-far-right-thuringia-election.

2 Jessica Parker, "German far-right AfD in disarray after Nazi remark," *BBC*, May 22, 2024, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx88nwy934go.

3 Deutsche Welle, "Fact Check: AfD Head Called Hitler Communist. He Was Not," *DW*, January 11, 2025. https://www.dw.com/en/fact-check-afd-head-called-hitler-communist-he-was-not/a-71274756; Jessica Parker, "Musk interviews German far-right frontwoman," BBC, January 10, 2025, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cr7errxp5jmo.

The claim itself was widely rejected by fact-checkers, historians and commentators[4][5]. However, Weidel's statement was neither unprecedented nor isolated, making it one recent instance of a broader pattern that points toward a new form of postwar revisionism. For instance, on June 23, 2021, Éric Zemmour made a similar claim on his Twitter/X account that the "fascist movement is of left-wing by origin"[6]; a few years earlier, in 2019, then-president Jair Bolsonaro also made a similar remark during his visit to Jerusalem[7]. The recurrence of this historical narrative across particular national contexts hints at a transnational phenomenon that circulates across conservative and far-right discursive spaces in different national contexts, and points to a renewed and increasingly visible form of historical revisionism that distances itself from conventional Holocaust denial within postwar political sensibilities. This article refers to this pattern as new revisionism.

Despite its apparent breadth suggested by the prefix "new", the term is defined in a restricted sense. It does not set to explain every attempt to reinvigorate or normalise the history of Nazism, nor is it meant as another name for postwar repertoire of Holocaust denialism, minimisation or relativisation. Compared with those now familiar forms of revisionist intervention, the narrative examined in this article works in a more oblique manner. In most cases, it does not contest the criminality of National Socialism. On the contrary, it often depends on the continuing force of that criminality as a moral stigma. Its operation consists, rather, in confining that stigma to one section of the ideological spectrum. By recoding Nazism as exclusively left-wing, it redirects the moral and political burden attached to the Third Reich toward socialism, leftism, or the broader family of the contemporary political

4 Deutsche Welle, "Fact Check".

5 Thomas Vorreyer, "The AfD Leader's Fawning over Elon Musk Should Sink Her Party. Instead, It Will Boost It," *The Guardian*, January 10, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/10/afd-leader-elon-musk-livestream-chat-alice-weidel.

6 Agence France-Presse, "Non, le nazisme n'était pas un mouvement de gauche," *AFP Factuel*, May 25, 2023, https://factuel.afp.com/doc.afp.com.9D62N3.

7 valeursactuelles.com, "Bolsonaro: 'Le nazisme, sans aucun doute, un mouvement de gauche,'" *Valeurs actuelles*, April 8, 2019, https://www.valeursactuelles.com/monde/bolsonaro-le-nazisme-sans-aucun-doute-un-mouvement-de-gauche.

left. What is revised is not primarily the fact of Nazi criminality, but the ideological genealogy through which that same criminality is made to attach to actors in the present-day political debate.

This restricted use of the term also clarifies the scope of the article. The argument does not attempt to settle the wider historiographic question surrounding fascism's relationship to a wide range of anti-liberal, revolutionary strands of political thought. As the following section briefly shows, this relationship is historically entangled and multilayered, and any serious account of it has to move through a series of ambiguities that a polemical narrative can afford to flatten. The object of analysis is, therefore, narrowed from the full history of those ideological entanglements to their contemporary conversion into a compressed moral genealogy in which Nazism, socialism and the collective left of the present political field are made to appear as parts of a singular line of descent. The central question is not whether this genealogy can withstand historical scrutiny in the form advanced by its proponents, but how, despite the historical and conceptual qualifications it requires, it acquires political utility.

To address this question, the article proceeds in four steps. The first section distinguishes the historiographic complexity of fascism's relationship to socialism from the polemical reduction examined here. The second section develops the concept of inverted predecessor selection to show how Nazism can be assigned as a compromised predecessor to the political left. The third section turns to positioning, examining how this reassignment allows conservative and far-right actors to distance themselves from the fascist burden while claiming anti-totalitarian credentials. The final section situates this narrative within broader discourses linking the left, Islamism, and Nazism, demonstrating how it can function as a metapolitical resource for coalition-building under conditions of sharp political polarisation.

Content and effect: From historiographic complexity to polemical reduction

Having defined new revisionism in this restricted sense, this section clarifies the difference between the historiographic complexity of fascism and the polemical reduction through which Nazism is recoded as exclusively left-wing or socialist. At the level of historiography, the socialist-origin narrative touches on broader debates concerning fascism's deep-running affinities with anti-liberal currents of socialist, syndicalist and revolutionary traditions. Yet, the article's concern is not with those wider debates as such, but with the contemporary form in which this complexity is compressed and reduced into a politico-historical lineage linking Nazism to the collective left of the present. For illustrative purposes, two recurring forms of this narrative can be identified.

The first relies on the term 'National Socialism' itself. In this version, the inclusion of 'socialism' in the official name of the party is treated as sufficient evidence that Nazism was socialist in origin. Dennis Prager, founder of the conservative media platform PragerU, argues in a video published on January 16, 2024, that "Hitler was left-wing in that he believed in socialism. Remember, Nazism is national socialism."[8] Dinesh D'Souza, who was interviewed by the channel the following year, reiterated that "the original fascism was a phenomenon of the political left. It was anti-capitalist, it was explicitly socialist, and hence the name Nazi...national socialism"[9]. Although D'Souza provides further detail this time to support the claim of left-wing origins of Nazism, the argument remains highly compressed. In his account, "this wasn't just Hitler using the term", because it is centred around "state control"[10], thereby treating state intervention and authoritarian control as sufficient indicators of socialism. This form of narrative, which rests

8 Dennis Prager, "Was Hitler far-right or far-left?", YouTube video, 00:18 – 00:26, posted January 16, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beKk6kNIJXE.

9 Dinesh D'Souza, "Dinesh D'Souza on How the Left Rebranded Fascism as 'Right Wing' | Real Talk | PragerU", YouTube video, 00:11 – 00:27, posted September 4, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1783nxCCYCU.

10 D'Souza, "Dinesh D'Souza on How the Left Rebranded Fascism as 'Right Wing' | Real Talk | PragerU", 00:29 – 00:54.

on a series of reductive equations between state control and socialism, and between socialism and National Socialism, is more prevalent in video format on online platforms, which corresponds to the brevity of the formulation and the politically charged keywords involved.

Compared with this emphasis on terminology, the second, more elaborate version of the argument draws on the language of political theory and intellectual history. Often articulated in libertarian or free-market US think-tanks such as the Foundation for Economic Education or the American Institute for Economic Research, this version invokes Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* (1944)[11] as the theoretical framework for linking socialism, central planning, and authoritarian politics. Here, the argument gains intellectual authority by drawing on a canonical figure in the history of ideas. Yet in its polemical redeployment, Hayek's critique of central planning is frequently translated into a simplified, broader critique of the political left as such. The result is not simply an argument about the dangers of a centralised economic model, but a compressed genealogy in which socialism, fascism, Nazism and contemporary left-wing politics are placed on a single continuum.

This distinction is necessary. As already mentioned, fascism, socialism and anti-liberalism are intertwined in a way that defies reduction to a simple opposition between academic debate and polemical distortion. A substantial body of academic literature has indeed treated fascism as an ideological formation produced not by the mere continuation of conservative reaction, but also by the incorporation of elements drawn from rivaling ideological traditions. In his analysis of the fascist tradition in France, Zeev Sternhell emphasised "the conjunction of elements of the nationalist, antiliberal, and antibourgeois right on the one hand and the anti-democratic and anti-Marxist socialist and quasi-socialist left on the other", while also highlighting the importance of the "continuous revision of Marxism" in making such a synthesis pos-

11 See *Hayek on the Socialist Roots of Nazism* by Byron Chiado (https://fee.org/articles/hayek-on-the-socialist-roots-of-nazism/) and *Why Hayek was Right about Nazis Being Socialist* by Richard M. Ebeling (https://thedailyeconomy.org/article/why-hayek-was-right-about-nazis-being-socialists/) for further details.

sible[12]. From this perspective, the point is not that fascism was simply socialism under another label, or still less, that Nazism can be folded into the socialist tradition without any qualification. Rather, the point is that certain socialist or socialist-adjacent currents, once detached from Marxist materialism, parliamentary democracy, class internationalism, and liberal pluralism, could enter into new combinations with nationalism, anti-liberalism, and admiration for the authoritarian state. Sternhell's own formulation is useful precisely because it marks this conditionality; "a revision of Marxism does not in itself necessarily entail a shift to the radical right", but when accompanied by "a deep 'antimaterialism,' an appeal to irrational values, an antiliberalism, and an appeal, beyond class interests, to national unity, the fascist equation was always possible."[13]

Similar complications can also be observed in the works of A. James Gregor and Roger Griffin, even though they arrive at the diagnosis through different routes. Gregor's insistence that the revolutionary traditions of the twentieth century cannot be neatly contained within the inherited left-right dichotomy leads him to argue that "Fascist concepts were neither of the Left nor the Right", but belonged instead to "a more complex conception of the nature of revolution in the twentieth century."[14] Griffin's intervention is particularly worth considering here, because it directly undermines any simple identification of fascism with conservative reaction. In his formulation, "fascism is best defined as a revolutionary form of nationalism," one that seeks "a political, social and ethical revolution"[15] in which tactical alliances with illiberal conservative forces against common enemies are possible. What is important in Griffin's argument is that it does not relocate Nazism to the left, but

12 Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), xvii–xviii.

13 Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left*, 41.

14 A. James Gregor, *The Faces of Janus: Marxism and Fascism in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 17.

15 Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1993): xi.

treats it as "an outstanding specimen of generic fascism" when analysed through the myth of national rebirth[16].

Taken together, these works do not settle the question by placing fascism securely on the left. They show instead why the question is historically serious in the first place; fascism emerged from a set of political-social conditions in which socialism, anti-Marxism, nationalism, anti-liberalism and revolutionary fever overlapped without becoming identical. This, however, is not the level at which the present article intervenes. Its object is the contemporary transformation of this complexity into a simplified political narrative, which is precisely what the scholarship above helps to dispel. In this sense, what is "new" about new revisionism is not the existence of the question itself, nor the recognition that fascism had complex and sometimes left-derived genealogical components, but the political function and contemporary circulation of its polemical form.

Once the object is specified in this way, the central question shifts. If the polemical version of the claim remains historically and analytically contested, how can its recurrence as a broader pattern be explained? What sustains its circulation despite its distance from mainstream historical scholarship? Factual correction is necessary, but an exclusive focus on historical accuracy is insufficient to explain the narrative's renewed prominence in contemporary political discourse. In the analysis of ideas, content alone does not fully account for circulation and political utility. The question, therefore, is not whether fascism's ideological formation involved complex relations with socialism or revolutionary anti-liberalism; it did. The question is how a simplified version of that complexity is mobilised by the actors invoking it, and the concrete political effects it produces.

This mechanism is not exclusive to the political right. Comparable forms of polemical uses of history appear elsewhere in the contemporary political terrain marked by sharp antagonism, particularly in the use of Nazi and Holocaust analogies in debates surrounding the

16 Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, xii.

Israel-Palestine conflict. In the context of the British Labour Party, the Chakrabarti Inquiry raised concerns about antisemitism within the party, articulated through the use of metaphors of "Hitler, Nazi and Holocaust"[17]. Indeed, antisemitic rhetoric is increasingly gaining traction among certain left-leaning circles "under the guise of 'criticism of Zionism'"[18]. A notable example that draws a parallel between Nazism and Zionism is the term "Zio-Nazi", which has been described as an "offensive slur" rather than a sober criticism[19]. Such examples matter because they show that the degradation of historical specificity is not confined to one ideological family. Across different political contexts, Nazism can be detached from its historical location and redeployed as a condensed marker of political and moral illegitimacy, with variation only in the direction of the analogy, the actors mobilising it, and the adversary to whom the stigma of Nazism is assigned. The present article therefore does not suggest that right-wing and far-right discourse is uniquely prone to such polemical use of history, but focuses on one particular case of a broader recurrent pattern.

On this basis, the article suggests shifting the focus from the 'truth-content' of the claim to the political effects produced by its circulation. Rather than treating the narrative primarily as a historiographic proposition to be verified or falsified, the article examines the dynamics in the field of ideas that make such an intervention possible. This shift does not require a definitive account of the narrative's truthfulness or of the actors' underlying intentions. As Patrick Baert notes, grounding the analysis in presumed intentions is often counterproductive[20]. An approach informed by the sociology of ideas instead makes it possible to identify the mechanisms through which this polemical

17 House of Commons Home Affairs Committee. "*Oral Evidence: Antisemitism, HC 136*," UK Parliament, July 4, 2016, p.11, Q271.

18 Fiamma Nirenstein. "Jews and the Left," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 31, n.º 1-2 (2020): 265.

19 Tali Feinberg, ""Hit back hard," Holocaust scholar says of "Zio-Nazi" slur", *Jewish Report*, November 11, 2021, https://www.sajr.co.za/hit-back-hard-holocaust-scholar-says-of-zio-nazi-slur/.

20 Patrick Baert, "Positioning Theory and Intellectual Interventions", *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 42, n.º 3 (2012): 318.

recoding of Nazism acquires political utility despite its historical and analytic limitations.

To this end, the analysis develops the argument through three concepts, each used for a specific purpose. Charles Camic's notion of predecessor selection explains how historical lineages can be constructed regardless of contested substantive ideological continuity; Patrick Baert's positioning theory clarifies how assigning such lineage to opponents simultaneously repositions the speaker and their adversary. Lastly, Randall Collins's account of intellectual conflict provides a broader background for understanding how ideas circulate through relations of opposition and coalition[21]. These concepts provide a compact vocabulary for analysing the contemporary form of revisionist narrative as a political use of history, rather than as a fully developed historiographic argument.

A brief clarification is necessary regarding the term 'intellectual'. The actors examined here are not treated as intellectuals because they are academics. While academics are among the major representatives of the intellectual class, they occupy only one portion of the vast array of professions that together constitute the intellectuals as a social group. As Régis Debray remarked, the "social and geographical density"[22] of the center of knowledge production has been decreasing with the advent of mass media, which makes it impossible to study contemporary knowledge production within the walls of university[23]. Today, various forms of non-academic 'intellectual workers' such as media commentators, authors, and journalists play a major part in the production, circulation and public contestation of ideas, making them key actors in shaping political discourse beyond the formal confines of scholarly institutions, as this study also highlights.

21 Randall Collins, *Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 7.

22 Régis Debray, *Le pouvoir intellectuel en France* (Paris: Folio, 1986), 122.

23 Thomas Osborne, "On Mediators: Intellectuals and the Ideas Trade in the Knowledge Society," *Economy and Society* 33, n.º 4 (2004): 436.

Compromised Origins: Predecessor Selection and the Politics of Ancestry

Seen from this perspective, the socialist-origin narrative is not merely a disputed description of Nazism's ideological formation, but an operation on political ancestry. In the form examined here, new revisionism functions to delegitimise the moral authority of the broader political left by retrospectively compromising its historical genealogy. Drawing on the case study of Parsons, Camic demonstrates that intellectual lineages are not constructed solely through substantive similarity between two bodies of thought. Rather, predecessor selection is an active process that includes both the selection of figures to be included and the omission of others, and directly reflects the specific interests of the actors[24][25]. In this model, what matters is not only doctrinal proximity, but also the reputation that chosen figures enjoy within the context in which the actor operates[26].

Camic develops this reputational model to explain Parsons's selection of European social thinkers as his intellectual predecessors over American institutionalists, despite the latter's closer substantive similarity to his work. The logic at work in the contemporary socialist-origin narrative is comparable, but inverted. Whereas Camic's theorisation of predecessor selection explains how actors choose their own intellectual predecessor, the actors examined here designate the predecessors of their ideological opponents; namely, the collective left-wing ideological tradition. Beyond the shift in standpoint, the more decisive inversion concerns the kind of reputation that drives the selection. In the case of new revisionism, the selection of predecessors is not based on the positive reputation of the selected predecessors as in Camic's study, but on the negative moral charge attached to Nazism in twenty-first century political memory.

24 Osborne, "On Mediators", 424

25 Charles Camic, "Reputation and Predecessor Selection: Parsons and the Institutionalists," *American Sociological Review* 57, n.º 4 (Aug. 1992): 421-445.

26 Camic, "Reputation and Predecessor Selection", 435-436.

This is also a key point that distinguishes the new revisionist narrative from its conventional forms. In the decades following the end of the Second World War in Europe, postwar far-right and neo-fascist engagements with the legacy of the Third Reich often took the form of denial, minimisation, relativisation, or normalisation. Figures such as David Irving and Robert Faurisson among other fringe-right movements and figures, sought, in different ways, to challenge the moral and historical consensus surrounding Nazi Germany and its crimes. It would be difficult to argue that these defences took on a singular identical form. For instance, the historical revisionism of Ernst Nolte, whose clash with Jürgen Habermas in the 1980s caused major controversy[27], belonged to a more scholarly and comparative register, which cannot be said of Le Pen's provocation and minimisation on the subject[28]. Even when accounting for this internal plurality of positions, however, these interventions shared a tendency to contest, relativise, or diminish the moral burden attached to Nazi Germany, rather than fully displacing that burden onto an opposing ideological tradition.

Compared with these conventional forms of postwar far-right and neo-fascist engagement with Nazi history, the new revisionist narrative adopts a different approach centred on an open recognition and explicit condemnation of the crimes of Nazi Germany. Returning to the right-wing and conservative media figures discussed above, Prager, even before his video on the alleged left-wing origins of Nazism, described the Holocaust as "a system of genocide" and emphasised its distinctiveness[29]. Likewise, in his PragerU interview with Marissa Streit, D'Souza also emphasised the criminality of the Nazi regime and its ideology[30]. In the

27 Jürgen Habermas and Jeremy Leaman, "Concerning the Public Use of History", *New German Critique* 44, Special Issue on the Historikerstreit (Spring-Summer 1988): 40-50.

28 Marc Daou, "Le Pen repeats slur that Nazi gas chambers were a 'detail'", France24, March 25, 2009, https://www.france24.com/en/20090325-le-pen-repeats-slur-nazi-gas-chambers-were-detail-; Agence France-Presse, "France: Le Pen fined over Holocaust remarks", BBC, April 6, 2016, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35979522.

29 Dennis Prager, "Why Isn't Communism as Hated as Nazism? | 5 Minute Video", YouTube video, 1:42 – 1:49, posted May 1, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUGkKKAogDs.

30 D'Souza, "Dinesh D'Souza on How the Left Rebranded Fascism as 'Right Wing' | Real Talk | PragerU", 1:29 – 1:39.

altered historical trajectory of new revisionism, the criminal nature of Nazism is fully acknowledged, while responsibility for it is now symbolically transferred to the political left.

As suggested above, the polemical version of this narrative does not operate primarily through historiographic precision. To illustrate, D'Souza's book, *The Big Lie: Exposing the Nazi Roots of the American Left* (2024), relies on categorical slippage and a selective genealogy of state interventionism, while Prager rejects the accusation of racism against the contemporary right by stating that "(while Nazism is based on a racist view of the world) not one person I know (from the right-wing milieu) is a racist"[31]. For the purposes of this narrative, however, such weaknesses do not necessarily prevent its circulation. An academic analysis is constrained by disciplinary norms of evidence, methodology, and peer evaluation in its explanation of a given phenomenon. Such norms and procedures do not guarantee neutrality, but they do impose standards of substantiation and qualification. The renewed form of revisionism examined here, by contrast, circulates largely through polemical and media-oriented formats in which the constraints of scholarly validation are weaker. This does not render non-academic discourses analytically irrelevant. On the contrary, it is precisely in such formats that complex historiographic problems can be translated into simplified moral genealogies capable of wider circulation. The relative freedom afforded by these formats allows polemical essays to function as an effective vehicle for political commentators who, while being deeply involved in the production and circulation of ideas, remain outside the academic community; examples are plentiful in various forms, ranging from professional commentators such as Ben Shapiro or D'Souza to former academics such as Bernard Lugan[32].

31 Prager, "Was Hitler far-right or far-left?", 1:43.

32 Bernard Lugan is a historian specialising on Africa. Although he has numerous works on Africa, he is practically shunned from the academic community due to his ethno-reductionist (or 'racialist') views. Hence, he mainly operates in the far-right ecosystem; he is a major contributor/co-founder of the Institut Iliade, features frequently in far-right media platforms, and during the presidential campaign of 2022, he was appointed as an advisor to Éric Zemmour.

In this sense, rather than a primarily historiographic account, the polemical recoding of Nazism functions to weaken the moral authority of the contemporary left. It is therefore often mobilised less as a sustained historical argument than as a frame for evaluating the present, invoking history as the context for the alleged moral inadequacy of the contemporary left; the implied logic is that if the Nazis were socialists, contemporary socialists and progressives inherit part of that moral burden; as D'Souza states in his comparison between Nazis and the progressive left, "(the Nazis had a campaign platform based on state control)...does this sound more like Donald Trump or does it sound more like, let's say Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders?"[33]. Even though it presents itself as a historical analysis, the temporal gaze of new revisionism is fixed on the present, making it a metapolitical manoeuvre to diminish the moral legitimacy of the carriers of an idea and, by extension, weaken the appeal of the ideas they represent[34].

Taken together, the operational mechanism of the contemporary revisionist narrative can be understood as an aggressive inversion of Camic's reputational model of predecessor selection. Instead of selecting their own predecessors on the basis of a positive reputation, it allows actors in conservative and far-right discursive spaces to designate the intellectual origins of their opponents through a figure carrying a strong negative moral reputation, thereby compromising their moral credibility. Under this optic, the first key political effect of new revisionism is revealed, which is the shift from minimisation and denial, to the reassignment of moral responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi regime; not a denial of the existence of the crime, but the displacement of its authorship.

33 D'Souza, "Dinesh D'Souza on How the Left Rebranded Fascism as 'Right Wing' | Real Talk | PragerU", 00:57 – 1:03.

34 Patrick Baert, *The Existentialist Moment: The Rise of Sartre as a Public Intellectual* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 17.

Reassigning the Fascist Burden: Positioning and Moral Legitimacy

The reassignment of ancestry also has a second, relational consequence. Once Nazism is relocated within the genealogy of the left, the position of the speaker is altered as well. In his work on positioning theory, Baert describes the act of positioning as "the process by which certain characteristics are attributed to an individual or a group or some other entity[35]". An intellectual product, he argues, locates the speaker within an intellectual or politico-social arena while also situating others "as allies...or alternatively as intellectual opponents"[36]. Positioning is therefore a relational, dual movement; to define an adversary is also to define one's own position in relation to them.

Under Baert's account of positioning in the field of ideas, the second implication of new revisionism becomes clearer. When actors in right-wing and far-right ecosystems relocate Nazism within the historical lineage of the collective left, they also work to decouple the contemporary right from the position of inheritor of the twentieth-century fascism, thereby strengthening their self-positioning as the 'true' bulwark against fascism. To be sure, this is not the first attempt to reposition right-wing or far-right traditions by placing them in opposition to Nazism. One well-known project of this kind is Armin Mohler's notion of the German Conservative Revolution. Originally conceived as his doctoral thesis under Karl Jaspers, Mohler's exhaustive work can be understood as an attempt to craft a new position for interwar radical-conservative and fascist-adjacent currents. Rather than presenting these currents as mere variants of fascism, Mohler repositioned them as ideological opponents of Nazism, thereby offering them a form of postwar intellectual legitimacy in the aftermath of the Second World War. Although Mohler himself was a little-known figure at the time of the publication of his book, the work served, in Griffin's term, as a "surviv-

35 Baert, "Positioning Theory and Intellectual Interventions," 310.

36 Baert, "Positioning Theory and Intellectual Interventions," 311.

alist manual"[37] for those seeking to preserve elements of these ideological bearings in an anti-fascist era, and eventually found an audience. Once Alain de Benoist became thoroughly fascinated by Mohler's magnum opus[38], *The Conservative Revolution* – both its key figures and its anti-Nazi positioning – quickly became a core reference for Nouvelle Droite, and soon, of postwar far-right intellectual movements across Europe seeking forms of ideological continuity that could operate under postwar anti-fascist constraints.

The comparison is not to suggest that Mohler's project and the form of revisionism analysed here belong to the same intellectual register. Yet it does reveal a shared positional logic. In both cases, the relation to Nazism is reworked so that the far-right and neo-fascist milieus may distance themselves from the political burden of National Socialism under postwar anti-fascist conditions. The main difference lies in the form and audience of the intervention; Mohler's project operated through historical reconstruction and metapolitical patience, whereas new revisionist narrative circulates through more direct polemical and media-oriented forms.

Compared with Mohler's work and its subsequent canonisation within European far-right intellectual circles, new revisionism operates with a different level of conceptual elaboration. Although Mohler did not remain in academic life after his doctoral research, he did undergo academic training; while most of his fellow travellers such as de Benoist were not career academics, they were nonetheless deeply invested in theoretical works and debates[39]. In comparison, few actors associated

37 Roger Griffin, "Between Metapolitics and Apoliteia: The Nouvelle Droite's Strategy for Conserving the Fascist Vision in the 'Interregnum'," *Modern & Contemporary France* 8, n.º 1 (2000), 39.

38 In his epilogue of the English translation of *The Conservative Revolution in Germany*, de Benoist described his excitement as follows; "His book was a revelation...I saw a new landscape spreading out before me...I entered into that universe as if into an apartment that had been furnished in advance according to my tastes". Alain de Benoist, "Afterword to the English edition," in Armin Mohler, *The Conservative Revolution in Germany* (Augusta: Washington Summit Publishers, 2018), 235.

39 The key animators of Nouvelle Droite show, in general, great commitment towards intellectual work, regardless of their trade. The examples are as numerous as the number of people who have consistently contributed to the movement; to name a couple, Alain de Benoist and

with the socialist-origin narrative are trained academics, nor are they primarily engaged in the construction of systematic theoretical world-views through sustained theoretical production. Yet it represents a considerably more expansive political manoeuvre. In the case of Mohler and his allies, the political climate that was overwhelmingly hostile to overt fascist references prevented them from envisaging any immediate and direct impact on political reality, and encouraged a metapolitical strategy oriented toward long-term cultural and intellectual influence[40].

Unlike Mohler's metapolitical project, the contemporary revisionist narrative operates in a more favourable political environment. Rather than relying primarily on subtle rehabilitation or gradual normalisation, it seeks a more direct repositioning of the political field. It presents the broader family of the political right as occupying the morally legitimate side of the struggle for hegemony in a decades-long political and ideological struggle, while casting its opponents as morally compromised participants in public discursive space. The line that divides right-wing and far-right actors from their adversaries is, in this positioning, not political, but moral, rendered so by the left's supposed historical affiliation with the crimes of Hitler's Germany. Within this narrative, the collective left-wing is associated not only with communism, a familiar term of anti-left, anti-progressive denunciation, but also with Nazism; figures such as Hitler and Mussolini are thus added to an already familiar repertoire of anti-left historical accusation centred on Stalinism and Maoism. As memories of concentration camps and the Gulag are symbolically condensed into a singular image of systematic oppression and human suffering, the narrative draws a moral fault line between the collective right and the collective left that places

Guillaume Faye have both written numerous books that has since been canonised within far-right circles, with the former being awarded with the prestigious *Prix de l'essai* from *Académie française* in 1978 for his magnum opus *Vu de droite* (1977).

40 Metapolitics refers to a particular form of political engagement whose focus lies beyond immediate electoral results. Mainly consisting of collective intellectual works, it aims to act upon the general cultural and ideological landscape in the long term. Theorised primarily by Alain de Benoist, it was largely inspired by the Gramscian notion of cultural hegemony, which evolved into right-wing Gramscianism. For more, see Pierre-André Taguieff, *Sur la Nouvelle Droite* (Paris: Descartes & Cie, 1994).

the two sides towards the opposite sides of history; the right towards the 'right-side' of history, and the left under the moral burden of predecessors assigned to it by its opponents.

This positioning depends on the political flexibility of Nazism as a historical signifier. According to Federico Brandmayr, an idea is considered 'politically flexible' in its use when it can be deployed in various political contexts and purposes. Such flexibility relies on properties both internal to ideas such as generality or neutrality, and external conditions such as political and epistemological cultures[41]. In this sense, intensified political polarisation contributes to the flexibility of Nazism as a polemical category, allowing its conventional association with the far-right to be contested and recoded through the language of socialism, leftism and totalitarian ethos.

Indeed, the ethos of victimhood of new revisionism resonates with the narrative of 'left-wing liberal tyranny' of the public institutions prevalent in right-wing and far-right media spaces[42]. In the cases of D'Souza and Prager, the alleged dominance of left-wing intellectuals in academia and universities across the US and Europe is put forward as the cause of the 'original misclassification' of Nazism as a right-wing ideology[43]. As expressed by another revisionist YouTuber (TIKhistory), "no historian agrees with me...(academia is) heavily funded by the state, and thus biased (towards the left)".[44] In such usage, 'Nazi' functions less as a precise historical category than as a condensed term of moral

41 Federico Brandmayr, "Are Theories Politically Flexible?," *Sociological Theory* 39, n.º 2 (2021): 111-118.

42 The supposed 'resistance against the liberal censorship' has been one of the rallying cries of actors leaning towards the far-right, particularly since the debates surrounding the emergence of 'cancel culture'; see Patrick M. Garry, "The Left's Reversal on Free Speech," *Law & Liberty*, November 18, 2024, https://lawliberty.org/the-lefts-reversal-on-free-speech/; Jeet Heer, "The New McCarthyism Was Started by Liberals," *The Nation*, April 9, 2025, https://www.thenation.com/article/society/liberals-new-mccarthyism-dissent/; Liana Graham, "In the Wake of Charlie Kirk's Murder, Canadians Should Reject Liberal Censorship," *The Heritage Foundation*, October 3, 2025, https://www.heritage.org/progressivism/commentary/the-wake-charlie-kirks-murder-canadians-should-reject-liberal-censorship.

43 D'Souza, "Dinesh D'Souza on How the Left Rebranded Fascism as 'Right Wing' | Real Talk | PragerU", 1:43 – 1:49.

44 TIKhistory, "Hitler's Socialism: The Evidence is Overwhelming" YouTube video, 40:07 – 40:40, posted February 13, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLHG4IfYE1w.

accusation. While no underlying intention can be definitively established, what can be said with relative certainty is that it functions, at least for its audiences, to weaken the moral standing of the progressive left-wing ideas and actors. A decade of proximity to the Soviet Union was enough to critically endanger the moral legitimacy of the left-wing intellectuals that dominated the postwar French intellectual field of the 1950s and 1960s[45]; association with both communism and Nazism, once the narrative settles, suffices to render a position morally suspect in the public sphere.

Overall, new revisionism, in the restricted sense formulated here, marks a significant development of postwar right-wing and far-right engagements with fascist history. In the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Third Reich, some far-right and neo-fascist actors maintained explicit ideological continuity with fascist or Nazi regimes. Where such continuity was maintained with historical fascist regimes of the 1930s and 1940s (akin to the "nostalgic fascism" in Griffin's classification[46]), their political success was weighed down by the stigma attached to fascism beyond narrow extremist milieus. The contemporary revisionist narrative, by contrast, opens up a vastly different approach. Instead of clinging to an inheritance that functions more as a liability than an asset in the postwar political climate, it allows actors in right-wing and far-right discursive spaces to claim moral credibility by conforming to postwar political sensibilities. In doing so, the narrative does not merely loosen the political burden associated with fascist predecessors, but also transfers it to their adversaries across the ideological divide. In this renewed revisionist narrative, National Socialism and its crimes are no longer primarily denied; the crimes against humanity are acknowledged, and responsibility for them is symbolically reassigned to left-wing socialism, on the basis of an alleged shared root in socialism.

45 Daniel Lindenberg, "Controverse: Les intellectuels français vus d'outre-Atlantique (A propos d'«Un passé imparfait» de Tony Judt)," *Esprit* 191, n.º 5 (May 1993): 167; Daniel Brewer, "The French Intellectual, History, and the Reproduction of Culture", *L'Esprit Créateur* 37, n.º 2 (Summer 1997): 23; Emile Chabal, "French Political Culture in the 1970s: Liberalism, Identity Politics and the Modest State", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 42 (April- June 2016): 247.

46 Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 163.

Shifting targets and new coalitions

The political work performed by new revisionism becomes still more visible once it is placed within the broader realignments of contemporary conservative and far-right discourse. In his sociological inquiry into intellectual history, Collins emphasises that the conflicts that take place in the intellectual sphere are not, contrary to the heroic images of intellectual life, exploits of exceptional individuals[47]. Rather, it is a collective venture that is sustained through coalitions among different camps, which sometimes results in unexpected alignments. One example of this ideological syncretism is the case of the Nouvelle Droite, which, whilst navigating through the fragmentation and stagnation of the French intellectual field of the 1970s, managed to create opportunities for partial coalition with anti-liberal strands of the left-wing position. This cooperation should not, of course, be overstated. Despite their self-proclaimed aim to transcend the classic left-right division, Nouvelle Droite rarely involved sustained engagement with left-wing thinkers[48]; in reality, their interest in left-wing ideas generally extended only insofar as they overlapped with their own brand of anti-liberalism. Even so, the particular set of circumstances encouraged tactical proximity to otherwise opposed positions, however partial and superficial it may have been. The broader point is that intellectual conflict can generate temporary alignments among actors who remain divided on other grounds.

In a similar manner, a convergence of political conditions has opened space for alignments among otherwise unlikely actors, and this provides one context in which the contemporary revisionist narrative operates within the political rivalries of the twenty-first century in Western democracies. On the one hand, as we have discussed, the political landscape of the postwar era and its sensibilities placed positions associated with Nazism and its crimes on the outermost fringes of political legitima-

47 Collins, *Sociology of Philosophies*, 15.

48 For instance, despite its sympathy towards Marxism, it never did show deep-running intellectual commitment towards the question of labor and exploitation. When the theme of labor (or of other notions from the progressive left) is tackled, it is done so in a way that seamlessly supports its core thesis on anti-liberalism.

cy. There have, of course, been and still are actors who were unapologetic in their defence of the historical fascist regimes, with concerns on their rehabilitation and normalisation on the rise[49]. At the same time, however, the taboo around Nazism has not lost its strength, and this stigma is precisely what gives the contemporary revisionist narrative its political force. On the other hand, the figure constructed as an internal source of civilisational crisis in Western democracies has partially shifted. Whereas some twentieth-century far-right movements relied heavily on antisemitic conspiracy narratives, contemporary far-right populist discourse has increasingly directed its hostility toward Muslim populations in Europe and North America[50]. In particular, a series of events such as 9/11 and the 2015 Bataclan attacks, as well as the anxieties over the growth of Muslim immigrant communities in Europe made Islamophobia a recurrent element of far-right populist mobilisation[51].

The convergence of these two conditions – the moral stigma of Nazi association and the construction of Muslims as a civilisational threat – enabled parts of the far-right to reconfigure their relationship with certain Jewish actors and institutions around a shared opposition to Islamism or Muslim immigration. As the report on the recent development of the relationship between Jewish communities and far-right politics shows, this strategic philosemitism among parts of the far-right has attracted support from certain strands of Jewish voices, incorporating them as a 'wing' of a broader far-right coalition[52]. An important caveat here is that this partial cooperation marks neither the disappearance of

49 Aurelian Mondon's works are particularly insightful in understanding the mainstreaming of far-right worldviews in Western democracies; see Aurelian Mondon and Aaron Winter, *Reactionary Democracy: How Racism and the Populist Far Right Became Mainstream* (London: Verso Books, 2020).

50 For the shifting target of European far-rights, see Matti Bunzl, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds Old and New in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) or José Pedro Zúquete, "The European Extreme-Right and Islam: New Directions?", *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13, n.º 3 (2008): 321-344.

51 Lacin Idil Oztig, Turkan Ayda Gurkan, and Kenan Aydin, "The Strategic Logic of Islamophobic Populism," *Government and Opposition* 56, n.º 3 (July 2021): 446-464; Lacin Idil Oztig, "Islamophobic Discourse of European Right-Wing Parties: A Narrative Policy Analysis", *Social Currents* 10, n.º 3 (June 2023): 225-244.

52 Hannah Rose, *The New Philosemitism: Exploring a Changing Relationship Between Jews and the Far-Right* (London: ICSR, 2020), II.

antisemitism within far-right milieus, nor mass Jewish support for far-right populism; as illustrated by controversies surrounding figures such as Caroline Parmentier of RN or Matthias Moosdorf and Roger Beckamp of the AfD, antisemitism is a component that remains recurrent within far-right milieus in Western democracies[53]. In Hannah Rose's report, it is also stressed that rather than necessarily indicating a substantive reckoning with the history of Jewish persecution, philosemitism among parts of the far-right often relies on an image of Jewish communities filtered through far-right political priorities[54]. As studies by Shani Burke, Parisa Diba and Georgios Antonopoulos (2020) or Matti Bunzl (2007) point out, it is imperative to recognise that antisemitism and Islamophobia are two separate projects of exclusion, wherein hostility against one does not translate to an acceptance of the other[55].

While it is important to remind ourselves that the far-right milieu can be both antisemitic and Islamophobic at the same time without self-contradiction, some Jewish and far-right actors may nevertheless enter into selective tactical alignments around opposition to Islamism, Muslim immigration, or pro-Palestinian left-wing politics. In this configuration, new revisionism functions as one possible link that increases the apparent compatibility between otherwise uneasy partners that may otherwise endanger the stability of the coalition. This is achieved in two major ways. First, as we have so far discussed, the narrative assists in the repositioning of right-wing and far-right actors by providing a political alibi that allows them to further dilute their ideological proximity to Nazism. In Western Europe, the political memory of the Holocaust made the accusation of antisemitism the Achilles' heel of far-right parties

53 Nicholas Potter, "German AfD politicians meet militant neo-Nazis in Switzerland", *The Jerusalem Post*, December 31, 2024, https://www.jpost.com/international/article-835554; Fabrice Arfi and Antton Rouget, "Quand la deputée RN Caroline Parmentier célébrait le nazi Léon Degrelle", *Mediapart*, June 25, 2025, https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/politique/250625/quand-la-deputee-rn-caroline-parmentier-celebrait-le-nazi-leon-degrelle; Agence France-Presse in Berlin, "Member of far-right AfD party charged with making Nazi salute at Reichstag", *The Guardian*, December 15, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/dec/15/member-far-right-afd-party-charged-nazi-salute-reichstag-germany.

54 Rose, *The New Philosemitism*, 12-13.

55 Bunzl, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia*; Shani Burke, Parisa Diba and Georgios A. Antonopoulos, "'You Sick, Twisted Messes'," *Discourse & Society* 31, n.º 4 (July 2020): 374-389.

and constrained their entry to mainstream legitimacy[56]. The philosemitic reconfiguration of relations between parts of the far-right and Jewish communities, however, allows them to position themselves in a new role that helps deflect such accusations, which is that of the protector of Jewish communities from the antisemitism of the others[57]; namely, Muslim extremism and the collective left, as constructed in this discourse, now homogenised as a singular antisemitic force within their discourse[58].

This juxtaposition is visible in several examples. In her streamed interview with Musk, Weidel positioned her party as "the only protector of the Jewish people" in Germany by linking the Nazi Party to contemporary pro-Palestinian left-wing political groups[59]. Similarly, in D'Souza's PragerU interview, his claim about the left-wing origins of Nazism is immediately followed by a discussion of left-wing antisemitism[60]. Another notable figure in this arena is Melanie Phillips. As with the case of Weidel and D'Souza, her commentary frequently frames Muslim presence in Western societies as a political and civilisational problem, which has become a recurring theme in her work as a journalist, and then as a political commentator. In her discourse on Islamism, the political left is presented as a circumstantial ally of Islamism; "even though the society they (the left and the Islamist) want to have...are polar opposites" she remarked in an interview with John Anderson "they are bound by the common aim of destroying the West and hatred of Jews and Israel"[61]. Here again, Islamism is connected to Nazism and the memory of the Holocaust, as Phillips draws a parallel between the two based on their 'antisemitic genocide'[62]. The specific manner in

56 Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Parties in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 81 and 281.

57 Rose, *The New Philosemitism*, 31.

58 Rose, *The New Philosemitism*, 38.

59 David Gilbert, "Elon Musk and Far-Right German Leader Agree 'Hitler Was a Communist'," *Wired*, January 9, 2025, https://www.wired.com/story/elon-musk-far-right-german-leader-weidel-hitler-communist.

60 D'Souza, "Dinesh D'Souza on How the Left Rebranded Fascism as 'Right Wing' | Real Talk | PragerU", 4:32.

61 Melanie Phillips, "The Bizarre Union of Woke and Jihad | Melanie Phillips", YouTube video, 00:23 – 00:35, posted March 12, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Oi_ytuGoUI.

62 Melanie Phillips, "The Truth of Hamas's Genocidal Terrorism | Melanie Phillips", You-

which the narrative is articulated differs across contexts and milieus. But these cases nonetheless converge in a shared positioning of conservative, right-wing and far-right actors as a self-positioned moderate force, aligned with anti-totalitarian and anti-violence norms, and as defenders of Jewish communities against renewed persecution.

Secondly and perhaps more importantly for the present argument, this recoding of Nazism opens up a discursive space in which Islamism, the collective left, socialism, and Nazism can be brought into a single chain of association. This amalgamation does not result in a coherent genealogy in the historiographic sense, but an adversarial bloc in which distinct objects of hostility are configured for mutual reinforcement. The most substantial development that demonstrates this convergence is the emergence of the notion of Islamofascism, which entered wide circulation primarily after 9/11[63]. Initially circulated in journalistic, policy, conservative, and far-right milieus, it functioned as a comparative framework that casts Islamist movements as ideological analogues of fascist movements, emphasising a set of common features such as totalising worldviews, political violence and above all, antisemitism[6465]. As with the debates surrounding the socialist origins of Nazism, the logical and historiographical validity of the notion has also been called into question in academic discussions[66]. Despite these reservations, Islamofascism can be understood, following Hibbard, less as an analytic category than as an ideological discourse[67]; it enables actors to perform a political manoeuvre, namely, the delegitimation of ideological opponents in public debate.

In the Francophone context, *islamo-gauchisme* – a neologism of Islam and *gauchisme* ('leftism') – has also drawn considerable attention

Tube video, 3:37 – 3:41, posted October 8, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyUB_yD0zCE.

63 Tamir Bar-On, "'Islamofascism': Four Competing Discourses on the Islamism-Fascism Comparison," *Fascism* 7 (2018): 243.

64 Bar-On, "'Islamofascism'," 241-244.

65 Alexander Flores, "The Arabs as Nazis? Some Reflections on "Islamofascism" and Arab Anti-Semitism," *Die Welt des Islams* 52, n.º 3-4 (2012): 452-456.

66 Stefan Wild, ""Islamofascism"? Introduction," *Die Welt des Islams* 52, n.º 3-4 (2012): 225-241.

67 Scott Hibbard, ""Islamo-Fascism" as an ideological discourse," *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture* 12 (2010): 10-23.

in the public sphere in recent years. Although it is not identical to Islamofascism, it operates through a structurally comparable association. What is notable here is the degree of symbolic legitimacy attached to the notion. Compared with more overtly polemical uses of Islamofascism or the narrative of the socialist origin of Nazism, *islamo-gauchisme* is a more concerted effort to theorise an alleged affiliation between the contemporary left-wing and Islamism, through actors exercising greater intellectual or institutional authority. Although the term's precise genealogy is debated within reactionary, conservative and right-wing intellectual contexts[68], the elaboration of its contemporary form is often associated with Pierre-André Taguieff[69], a CNRS researcher known for his research on the far-right, racism and antisemitism. If Taguieff is one of the key figures in the term's formulation, Pierre-Henri Tavoillot, a philosopher at Sorbonne University, contributed to the popularisation of the notion in the French political debate. Compared with Taguieff's relatively less media-centred profile, Tavoillot maintains an active presence in the discursive space through public engagement, contributions to outlets such as *Le Figaro* and participation in public events. The key function of the intellectual intervention of the actors producing and circulating concepts such as islamofascism and Islamo-gauchisme, is particularly well demonstrated in one of his presentations in the Patronage Laïque Jules Vallès on the subject of secularism[70]; whatever their level of conceptual elaboration, these notions can function as discursive tools for reactionary, conservative, and right-wing self-positioning as defenders of 'moderate Western secularism' against the 'oppressive' religious fanaticism attributed to Islamists, allegedly enabled by the contemporary left.

In this configuration, the association among Islamism, the political left, socialism and Nazism should not be read as an attempt to articulate a coherent historical or ideological argument. It functions in-

68 Notably, see Michel Onfray, *L'autre collaboration: Les origines françaises de l'islamo-gauchisme* (Paris: Plon, 2025) or *Revue des Deux Mondes* (October 2018).

69 Jacques Juillard, "Islamo-gauchisme, c'est la haine de l'identité française," *Revue des Deux Mondes* (October 2018): 10.

70 Pierre-Henri Tavoillot, "Quel est le contraire de la laïcité | Pierre-Henri Tavoillot", YouTube video, posted September 10, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYJVg0V9XPg.

stead as a form of discursive condensation, one that flattens the moral topology of contemporary political conflict by merging figures endowed with heavy normative charge into a singular adversarial bloc. Through this manoeuvre, new revisionism allows actors in right-wing and far-right discursive spaces to shape and occupy their own moral position that condenses multiple norms of contemporary political grammar; as anti-fascist, as philosemitic, and as defenders of a civilisational space portrayed as being under threat. Their opponents, by contrast, are placed in a position of historical and moral continuity with totalitarian violence, regardless of the substantive heterogeneity of the actors and traditions thus amalgamated.

From this perspective, attempts to engage notions such as Islamofascism or *islamo-gauchisme* primarily on the basis of their validity as analytic categories, valuable as such efforts certainly are, encounter clear limits. These notions operate less as explanatory frameworks than as symbolic shortcuts, whose function includes stabilising emergent coalitions and redrawing the boundaries of legitimate political belonging. The significance of the contemporary revisionist narrative therefore extends beyond the reassignment of historical responsibility alone. It operates as a metapolitical resource through which ideological realignments are rendered possible under conditions of intensified polarisation, enabling otherwise heterogeneous actors to converge around a shared figure of enmity, even as deeper and unresolved antagonisms remain intact.

Conclusion

Through Camic's notion of predecessor selection, the article has shown how the reformulation of Nazism's ideological genealogy constructs a historical continuity between socialism and Nazism that does not depend on substantive ideological continuity. The operation rests instead on the reputational weight attached to Nazism in postwar political memory, allowing actors within conservative and far-right discursive spaces to designate the predecessors of their ideological opponents and, in doing so, to retrospectively compromise the moral standing of the

political left. Baert's positioning theory further clarifies the relational effects of this manoeuvre. By relocating Nazism within the political genealogy of the left, actors in right-wing and far-right discursive spaces do not merely displace historical responsibility. They also loosen the association between their own political position and the fascist past, while repositioning themselves as bearers of anti-totalitarian, and more importantly, anti-fascist credentials. In its contemporary polemical form, new revisionism thus operates less as an alternative reading of fascist history than as a redistribution of symbolic burden.

Seen from this perspective, the persistence of the contemporary socialist-origins narrative cannot be explained by historiographic plausibility alone. Its effectiveness lies in its capacity to function within a polarised discursive space in which historical references are mobilised as condensed moral signifiers rather than as objects of analytic scrutiny. As such, content-based refutations, while necessary, remain structurally limited in their reach. What is at stake is not only the reconstruction of the past, but the metapolitical struggle over moral legitimacy in the present; over who may speak from the "right side" of history, and whose position can be marked as morally compromised.

In this sense, new revisionism exemplifies a broader transformation in the political uses of history. When detached from the constraints of scholarly validation, historical categories become flexible instruments through which alliances are stabilised, adversaries are delegitimised, and the boundaries of acceptable political belonging are redrawn. The question raised by the contemporary revisionist narrative is therefore not only whether Nazism can meaningfully be described as socialist – in the simplified sense advanced by the actors examined here – but how such an assertion can nonetheless operate as an effective political resource in contemporary ideological conflict, precisely by displacing historical inquiry with moral adjudication.

Bibliography

Baert, Patrick. "Positioning Theory and Intellectual Interventions." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 42, n.º 3 (2012): 304–324.

Baert, Patrick. *The Existentialist Moment: The Rise of Sartre as a Public Intellectual*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015.

Bar-On, Tamir. "'Islamofascism': Four Competing Discourses on the Islamism-Fascism Comparison." *Fascism* 7 (2018): 241–274.

de Benoist, Alain. *Vu de droite: Anthologie critique des idées contemporaines*. Paris: Labyrinthe, 2001.

de Benoist, Alain. "Afterword to the English edition." In *The Conservative Revolution in Germany*, by Armin Mohler. Augusta: Washington Summit Publishers, 2018.

Brandmayr, Federico. "Are Theories Politically Flexible?." *Sociological Theory* 39, n.º 2 (2021): 103–125.

Brewer, Daniel. "The French Intellectual, History, and the Reproduction of Culture." *L'Esprit Créateur* 37, n.º 2 (Summer 1997): 16–33.

Bunzl, Matti. *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds Old and New in Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Burke, Shani, Parisa Diba, and Georgios A. Antonopoulos. "'You Sick, Twisted Messes'." *Discourse & Society* 31, n.º 4 (July 2020): 374–389.

Camic, Charles. "Reputation and Predecessor Selection: Parsons and the Institutionalists." *American Sociological Review* 57, n.º 4 (August 1992): 421–445.

Chabal, Emile. "French Political Culture in the 1970s: Liberalism, Identity Politics and the Modest State". *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 42. Jahrg., H.2, Die 1970er Jahre in Westeuropa (April–June 2016): 243–265.

Collins, Randall. *Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

D'Souza, Dinesh. *The Big Lie: Exposing the Nazi Roots of the American Left*. New York: Regnery, 2024.

Debray, Régis. *Le Pouvoir Intellectuel en France*. Paris: Folio, 1986.

Flores, Alexander. "The Arabs as Nazis? Some Reflections on "Islamofascism" and Arab Anti-Semitism." *Die Welt des Islams* 52, n.º 3–4 (2012): 450–470.

Gregor, A. James. *The Faces of Janus: Marxism and Fascism in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000.

Griffin, Roger. *The Nature of Fascism.* London: Routledge, 1993.

Griffin, Roger. "Between Metapolitics and Apoliteia: The Nouvelle Droite's Strategy for Conserving the Fascist Vision in the 'Interregnum'." *Modern & Contemporary France* 8, n.º 1 (2000): 35–53.

Habermas, Jürgen, and Jeremy Leaman. "Concerning the Public Use of History". *New German Critique* 44, Special Issue on the Historikerstreit (Spring–Summer 1988): 40–50.

Hayek, Friedrich. *The Road to Serfdom*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Hibbard, Scott. ""Islamo-Fascism" as an ideological discourse." *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture* 12 (2010): 10–23.

Juillard, Jacques. "Islamo-gauchisme, c'est la haine de l'identité française." *Revue des Deux Mondes* (October 2018): 10–23.

Lindenberg, Daniel. "Controverse: Les intellectuels français vus d'outre-Atlantique (A propos d' "Un passé imparfait" de Tony Judt)." *Esprit* 191, n.º 5 (May 1993): 167–170.

Mondon, Aurelian, and Aaron Winter. *Reactionary Democracy: How Racism and the Populist Far Right Became Mainstream*. London: Verso Books, 2020.

Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Nirenstein, Fiamma. "Jews and the Left." *Jewish Political Studies Review* 31, n.º 1–2 (2020): 265–270.

Onfray, Michel. *L'autre collaboration: Les origines françaises de l'islamo-gauchisme*. Paris: Plon, 2025.

Osborne, Thomas. "On Mediators: Intellectuals and the Ideas Trade in the Knowledge Society." *Economy and Society* 33, n.º 4 (2004): 430–447.

Oztig, Lacin Idil. "Islamophobic Discourse of European Right-Wing Parties: A Narrative Policy Analysis." *Social Currents* 10, n.º 3 (June 2023): 225–244.

Oztig, Lacin Idil, Turkan Ayda Gurkan, and Kenan Aydin. "The Strategic Logic of Islamophobic Populism." *Government and Opposition* 56, n.º 3 (July 2021): 446–464.

Rose, Hannah. *The New Philosemitism: Exploring a Changing Relationship Between Jews and the Far-Right*. London: ICSR, 2020.

Sternhell, Zeev. *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986.

Taguieff, Pierre-André. *Sur la Nouvelle Droite*. Paris: Descartes & Cie, 1994.

Wild, Stefan. ""Islamofascism"? Introduction." *Die Welt des Islams* 52, n.º 3–4 (2012): 225–241.

Zúquete, José Pedro. "The European Extreme-Right and Islam: New Directions?". *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13, n.º 3 (2008): 321–344.

Media coverages, online and other sources

Agence France-Presse. "France: Le Pen fined over Holocaust remarks". *BBC*. April 6, 2016. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35979522.

Agence France-Presse. "Non, le nazisme n'était pas un mouvement de gauche." *AFP Factuel*, May 25, 2023. https://factuel.afp.com/doc.afp.com.9D62N3.

Agence France-Presse in Berlin. "Member of far-right AfD party charged with making Nazi salute at Reichstag". *The Guardian*. December 15, 2025.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/dec/15/member-far-right-afd-party-charged-nazi-salute-reichstag-germany.

Arfi, Fabrice, and Antton Rouget. "Quand la deputée RN Caroline Parmentier célébrait le nazi Léon Degrelle". *Mediapart*. June 25, 2025. https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/politique/250625/quand-la-deputee-rn-caroline-parmentier-celebrait-le-nazi-leon-degrelle.

Chiado, Byron. "Hayek on the Socialist Roots of Nazism." *Foundation for Economic Education*. January 8, 2018. https://fee.org/articles/hayek-on-the-socialist-roots-of-nazism/.

Daou, Marc. "Le Pen repeats slur that Nazi gas chambers were a 'detail'". France24. March 25, 2009. https://www.france24.com/en/20090325-le-pen-repeats-slur-nazi-gas-chambers-were-detail-.

Deutsche Welle. "Fact Check: AfD Head Called Hitler Communist. He Was Not." *DW*. January 11, 2025. https://www.dw.com/en/fact-check-afd-head-called-hitler-communist-he-was-not/a-71274756

Ebeling, Richard M. "Why Hayek was Right About Nazis Being Socialist." *The Daily Economy*. December 8, 2020. https://thedailyeconomy.org/article/why-hayek-was-right-about-nazis-being-socialists/.

Feinberg, Tali. ""Hit back hard," Holocaust scholar says of "Zio-Nazi" slur." *Jewish Report*. November 11, 2021. https://www.sajr.co.za/hit-back-hard-holocaust-scholar-says-of-zio-nazi-slur.

Garry, Patrick M. "The Left's Reversal on Free Speech." *Law & Liberty*. November 18, 2024. https://lawliberty.org/the-lefts-reversal-on-free-speech/.

Gilbert, David. "Elon Musk and Far-Right German Leader Agree 'Hitler Was a Communist'." *Wired*. January 9, 2025. https://www.wired.com/story/elon-musk-far-right-german-leader-weidel-hitler-communist.

Graham, Liana. "In the Wake of Charlie Kirk's Murder, Canadians Should Reject Liberal Censorship." *The Heritage Foundation*. October 3, 2025. https://www.heritage.org/progressivism/commentary/the-wake-charlie-kirks-murder-canadians-should-reject-liberal-censorship.

Heer, Jeet. "The New McCarthyism Was Started by Liberals." *The Nation*. April 9, 2025. https://www.thenation.com/article/society/liberals-new-mccarthyism-dissent/.

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee. "*Oral Evidence: Antisemitism, HC 136*." UK Parliament. July 4, 2016.

Parker, Jessica. "German far-right AfD in disarray after Nazi remark." *BBC*. May 22, 2024. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx88nwy934go.

Parker, Jessica. "Musk interviews German far-right frontwoman." BBC. January 10, 2025. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cr7errxp5jmo.

Potter, Nicholas. "German AfD politicians meet militant neo-Nazis in Switzerland." *The Jerusalem Post*. December 31, 2024. https://www.jpost.com/international/article-835554.

Taddonio, Patrice. "Why an Influential Figure in Germany's Far-Right AfD Party Is Accused of 'Whitewashing' Nazi Crimes." *PBS*. July 30, 2024. https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/germany-afd-bjorn-hocke-far-right-thuringia-election.

valeursactuelles.com. "Bolsonaro: 'Le nazisme, sans aucun doute, un mouvement de gauche.'" *Valeurs actuelles*. April 8, 2019. https://www.

valeursactuelles.com/monde/bolsonaro-le-nazisme-sans-aucun-doute-un-mouvement-de-gauche.

Vorreyer, Thomas. "The AfD leader's fawning over Elon Musk should sink her party. Instead, it will boost it." *The Guardian*. January 10, 2025. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/10/afd-leader-elon-musk-livestream-chat-alice-weidel.

Audiovisual materials

D'Souza, Dinesh. "Dinesh D'Souza on How the Left Rebranded Fascism as 'Right Wing' | Real Talk | PragerU". YouTube video. Posted September 4, 2025. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1783nxCCYCU.

Phillips, Melanie. "The Bizarre Union of Woke and Jihad | Melanie Phillips". YouTube video. Posted March 12, 2025. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Oi_ytuGoUI.

Phillips, Melanie. "The Truth of Hamas's Genocidal Terrorism | Melanie Phillips". YouTube video. Posted October 8, 2025. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyUB_yD0zCE.

Prager, Dennis. "Was Hitler far-right or far-left?". YouTube video. Posted January 16, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beKk6kNIJXE.

Prager, Dennis. "Why Isn't Communism as Hated as Nazism? | 5 Minute Video". YouTube video. Posted May 1, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUGkKKAogDs.

Tavoillot, Pierre-Henri. "Quel est le contraire de la laïcité | Pierre-Henri Tavoillot". YouTube video. Posted September 10, 2025. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYJVg0V9XPg.

TIKhistory. "Hitler's Socialism: The Evidence is Overwhelming". YouTube video. Posted February 13, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLHG4IfYE1w.

Referência para citação:

Hwang, Mintae. "New Revisionism: The Politics of Predecessor Selection in the 'Socialist Origins' of Nazism". *Práticas da História, Journal on Theory, Historiography and Uses of the Past*, n.º 22 (2026): 107-138. https://doi.org/10.48487/pdh.2026.n22.45028.