

FROM FASCISM TO NEO-FASCISM?

(DIS)CONTINUITIES BETWEEN CLASSICAL FASCISM AND 21st CENTURY'S FAR-RIGHT

FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTO
27-28 APRIL 2026



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CALL FOR PAPERS

The debate on the political, ideological and social nature of contemporary far-right, especially the one active in the 21st century, has been ongoing for a long time. Academic debate, in this case more than in others, closely follows the public debate on political developments that are perceived to have dramatic consequences for the future. A large number of positions have been proposed and a wide range of concepts offered, applicable to specific cases, whether national or regional in scope, or to the global phenomenon itself – because, let us start here, it is a global phenomenon we are dealing with. Just as fascism was a hundred years ago. However, research is almost always forced to take a position on the question of continuities (Finchelstein, 2019; Palheta, 2022) and discontinuities (Forti, 2024) between, on the one hand, classical fascism (1922-1945) and what were in those days other ultra-reactionary phenomena that in the interwar years became by-products of fascism through the process of fascistization, and, on the other hand, the new forms adopted by the far-right since 1945 and, above all, since the turn of the 20th century to the 21st century. In the name of the urgency of a scientific approach to what appears to be the most serious crisis of liberal systems since the 1930s, at this conference we intend to discuss how the new extreme right of the 21st century positions itself in relation to the legacy of classical fascism, because “we need to explain the continuity between historical fascism and contemporary right-wing populism as a radicalization of post-liberal politics based on the erosion of democratic participation and the emergence of a new politics of fear” (Woodley, 2010).

In line with this position, this conference will also welcome studies on the anti-fascist political cultures, starting with those that emerged in reaction to the fascist wave of the 1930s and its political success (Kallis, 2015). The aim here is to make room for studies on the variety of forms of resistance to fascism. Anti-fascism is also a transnational movement (Traverso, 2004), and it did not lose its political effectiveness in 1945 or become a community of memory of a past encapsulated in time. It has re-emerged over the last 80 years whenever the extreme right has reappeared in force. As is the case today.

We welcome different possible areas for papers and panels on:

- (i) Fascism(s), neo-fascism, far-right, reaction and modernity. Concepts and theory.
- (ii) The nation, the West, white supremacy: one hundred years of far-right worldvisions.
- (iii) Hypermasculinity, anti-feminism and misogyny: social reproduction and fascism.
- (iv) One hundred years of far-right political culture: continuities, discontinuities, adaptation, networks.
- (v) Fascism, neo-fascism and the other(s): specificities of fascist and global far-right political articulation of xenophobia and racism.
- (vi) Party, State, movements, militias, welfare, associations. The organisational dimension of the far-right.
- (vii) Violence, war, and genocide: far-right and political action.
- (viii) Fascism and crisis: context and causality of far-right boosts in history.
- (ix) Anti-fascism as a transnational political culture: resisting fascism, preserving democracy, rebuilding democracy, from the 1920s to the 2020s. Intersections with anti-colonialism, anti-racism and feminism.
- (x) Neo-fascism, far-right and anti-fascism in collective memory: uses of the past, memory, “culture wars” and political action.

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Keynote speakers:

Ugo Palheta is a sociologist and professor at the University of Lille. He holds a PhD from Sciences Po (Paris) and is a researcher at the Centre de recherches sociologiques et politiques de Paris (Cresppa) and an associate researcher at the Institut national d'études démographiques (INED). He is co-editor of the journal *Contretemps* and the podcast *Minuit dans le siècle*. Author of several influential academic works, his research addresses ethno-racial inequalities and neo-fascist dynamics, analyzing, in particular, the political effects of neoliberal counter-reforms, the process of authoritarian hardening of capitalist states, the rise of nationalism driven by growing racism, theories of fascism, and the sociology of the contemporary far-right. Among other books, he is the author of *La Nouvelle Internationale fasciste* (2022).

Virgínia Fontes is a historian and holds a PhD in Philosophy from Université Paris X. She is a professor at the Escola Nacional Florestan Fernandes/Landless Workers' Movement (ENFF/MST) and a retired professor from the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), while she keeps collaborating as a coordinator and professor in the master's program at the Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública (Fiocruz/ENFF). She coordinates the History and Marxism Working Group of the National History Association (Anpuh). She is a member of the Interdisciplinary Nucleus of Studies and Research on Marx and Marxism at the Universidade Federal Fluminense (Niep-Marx/UFF) and a columnist for *Boitempo*. Virgínia Fontes has a vast body of published work and is a fundamental theoretical reference in contemporary debates on capital-imperialism, class struggle, state violence, the far right, and fascism. She is the author of *O Brasil e o capital-imperialismo: teoria e história* (2010) and editor of *Capital-imperialismo, dominação e luta de classes* (2025), a recent work that deepens the discussion on current forms of class domination and resistance.

Fernando Rosas is a historian and holds a PhD in Contemporary History from NOVA University Lisbon, where he is Professor Emeritus. He is a researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History (NOVA FCSH / IN2PAST), of which he was the founder and president until 2011. A retired Full Professor, his work is widely recognised in Portuguese and European historiography; he is the author of a varied bibliography regarding the 19th and 20th-century history of Portugal and Europe, specifically regarding the Portuguese Estado Novo dictatorship and the study of fascism as an international historical phenomenon. Among other books on these topics, he has published *Salazar e os Fascismos* (2019) and *Direitas Velhas, Direitas Novas* (2025). He is the author of several documentary series on Portuguese public television and was a Member of Parliament for the Left Bloc (Bloco de Esquerda) (2000-01 and 2005-10). Among other distinctions, he was awarded the Order of Liberty in 2006 by the President of the Republic, Jorge Sampaio.

The conference programme will also include a **debate with:**

Paula Godinho holds a PhD in Anthropology from the NOVA School of Social Sciences and Humanities (NOVA FCSH), is a researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History (NOVA FCSH / IN2PAST) and a professor also at NOVA FCSH. She was the founder of the Ibero-American Network Resistance and Memory (RIARM) and participates in several working groups of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO). She has several years of fieldwork experience in Portugal, on the border, in Galicia, in Ceará (Brazil), and in Mexico, researching, among other topics, resistance, social movements, transitions to democracy and building the future, political uses of memory, and the topographies of power. Among many other works, she published *Usos da Memória e Práticas do Património* (2012) and co-edited (with Miguel Cardina and Pablo Pozzi) *Resistencia juvenil, dictaduras y políticas de memoria* (2025).

Maria Inácia Rezola holds a PhD in Contemporary History from the NOVA School of Social Sciences and Humanities (NOVA FCSH) and is a professor at the School of Communication and Media Studies of the Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa. She was a researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History (NOVA FCSH / IN2PAST), where she coordinated the research groups «Comparative Political History- Regimes, Transitions, Colonialism and Memory» (2016-2019) and «Revolution and Democracy» (2008-2012). Since

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2023, she is the Executive Commissioner of the National Committee for the Celebrations of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the April 25 Revolution in 1974, responsible for an impressive series of academic events, publications and exhibitions. She is one of the most prominent historians of the Salazar dictatorship and the Portuguese Revolution. Among her works, she co-edited (with Irene Pimentel) *Democracia, Ditadura, Memória e Justiça Política* (2014) and (with António Reis and Paula B. Santos) the *Dicionário de História de Portugal – o 25 de Abril* (2016, 8 volumes).

Xosé M. Núñez Seixas is PhD in Contemporary History at the European University Institute of Florence and professor in the same subject at the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. He is one of today's most prominent European historians in areas of research such as the comparative and transnational history of nationalism and territorial identities in Europe, the social and cultural history of war, the history of fascism, and the memory of war and dictatorships. His recent books include *Wolf's Lairs: Memories of Authoritarian Europe, 1945-2020* (Editorial Crítica, 2021), *Back to Stalingrad. The Eastern Front in European Memory, 1945-2021* (Galaxia Gutenberg, 2022). He is vice-president of the Consello da Cultura Galega.

Submission and presentations:

Researchers interested in attending or contributing to the conference should send an email with a title, an abstract (350 words max.), short bio, and contact information to **congresso.neo.fascismo.2026@gmail.com** no later than **4 January 2026**.

We welcome individual papers as well as panel proposals in English. We will also welcome proposals for creative/artistic interventions that are built on an interdisciplinary intersection with the social sciences, which will be subject to peer review in the same way as proposals for papers and panels. In this case, proposals must include a description of the performance (specifying the means and time) and an abstract of objectives. Acceptance will depend on the actual and practical possibilities for integration into the programme.

Presentations should be done in-person in Portuguese, English or Spanish. There will be no online presentations.

Notification of acceptance by 8 February 2026.

No registration fees will be charged.

Organising committee:

Manuel Loff (FLUP / IHC – NOVA FCSH / IN2PAST)
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