

Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi and his sympathy with Fascism: A Negative Side of the Pan-European Movement during the Interwar Period

August 7, 2021
9:00-10:30 (EDT)
Zoom Meeting

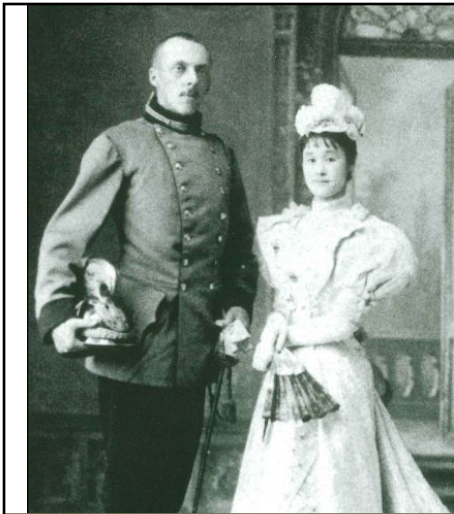
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1. Introduction

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- Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi (=RCK, 1894-1972)
 - Founder of the Pan-European Movement (1920s-)
 - A pioneer or father of European Integration?
 - His mother Mitsuko AOYAMA (1874-1941) was Japanese
- The Pan-European Movement
 - Bestselling book *Pan-Europe* (1923)
 - Active networking in Europe, also in the US
 - Brian's proposal for "an European federal union" (1929-30)
- RCK's approach to fascism (1930s- or 1920s-?)
 - Mussolini as a savior of Europe?
 - against the USSR in "Decline of the West"?

RCK Family



Right: RCK (1930s)
 Upper Left : Father Heinrich & Mother Mitsuko (1895)
 Bottom Left: Mitsuko & her 7 children (middle among 3 boys is RCK)(ca. 1903)
 Source: Vlasta Čiháková Noshiro, *Mitsuko: matka moderní Evropy?* (Brno: Jota, 2015), between pp. 80-81, 160-161.

2. Noblesse oblige and distrust of the masses

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- Education of RCK
 - “True European” & aristocrat of the Habsburg monarchy
 - Born in Tokyo (1894), moved to Bohemia (1896)
 - Ronsperg (Poběžovice, CZ) & Theresianum in Wien
 - Pessimism & *Decline of the West* after WWI (Spengler)
 - RCK’s *Pan-Europe* (1923) was welcomed as a great hope
- Elitism in the Pan-European Movement
 - New type of aristocratic rule by the spirit
 - Elite liberalism, against mass democracy
 - Centralized system in the Pan-European Union
 - Control from the HQ in Wien to each national branch
 - “Quality rather than quantity”

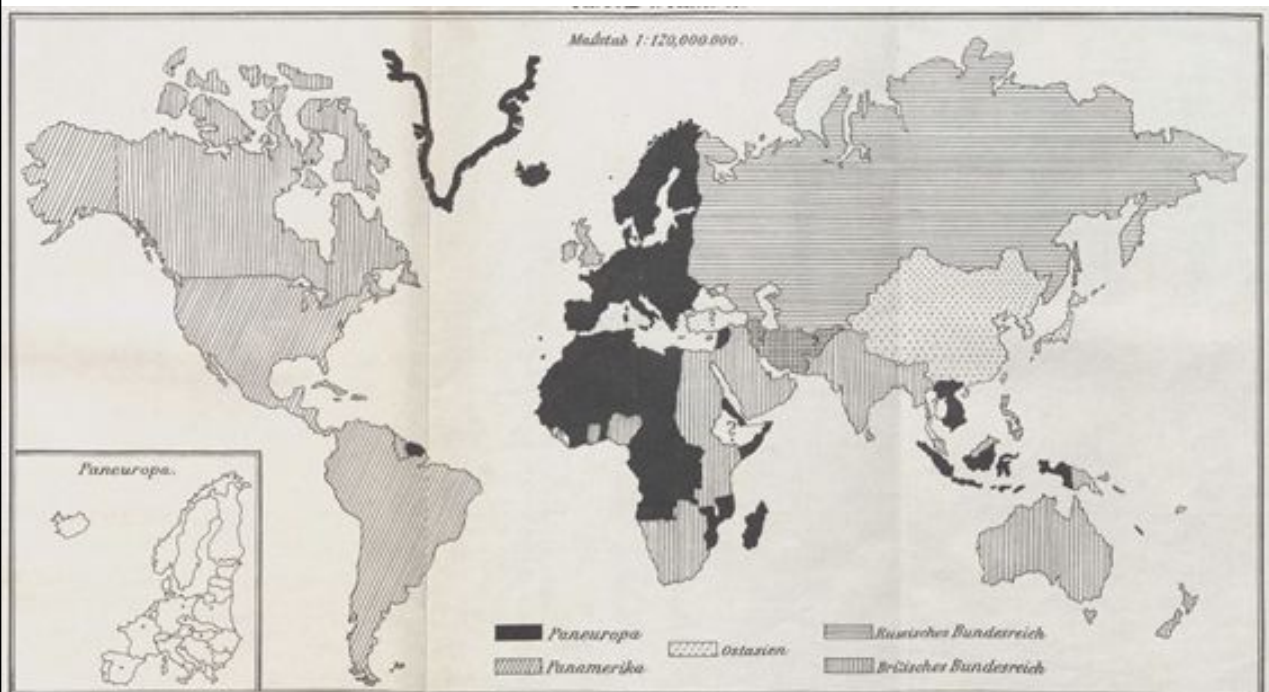
3. The Concept of Pan-Europe

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- A proposal: Pan-Europe (Nov. 1922)
 - Map: Pan-Europe in the World (see next slide)
 - Pan-Europe (with colonies), the British Empire, the Americas, Russia (the USSR), East Asia
 - Colonialism & Eurafrica
 - Pan-Europe as a colonial development union
 - Cooperation between France & Germany
 - France's colonies & Germany's human resources
 - Russia (the Soviet Union)
 - Europe must unite against Stalin's state capitalism
 - USA: model of federation, technology, economic sphere
 - UK: a global empire different from Pan-Europe

Pan-Europe in the World

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Source: RCK (1923), at the end of the book.

4. Approach to Fascism

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- An open letter to Mussolini (Feb. 1923)
 - “Please save Europe!” only fascist Italy could do that..
 - for “the United States of Europe,” but no answer
- Negative image of Democracy
 - Dysfunctional parliamentary democracy?
 - Unstable new democratic nation-states?
 - Socialism or fascism as alternatives for democracy?
- RCK’s antagonism to Nazism and Hitler
 - Hitler to RCK: “cosmopolitan bastard” (Allerweltsbastard)
 - RCK’s objection against anti-semitism & Jewish wife

5 (1). Relationship with Fascism on the eve of the War

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- Bolshevik drugs for Italy against Bolshevism?
 - Italy as a breakwater against the USSR & Nazis
 - It [fascism] rejects the Bolshevik domination of class just as it rejects the National Socialist domination of race. Its object is a strong Italy based on the capitalist economic system and Western civilisation, free from Bolshevik influence and from the unstable equilibrium of a parliamentary system poisoned by class warfare (RCK 1938: 103; RCK 1937: 106)
- Corporative system in Italy and Austria as alternative
 - Functional representation in parliament
- RCK’s effort to keep Italy on the Allied side
 - RCK’s audiences with Mussolini (May 1933, May 1936)
 - *Anschluß* and Italy’s entering the War on the Axis side

5 (2). Relationship with Fascism during WWII

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- Changes in evaluation of fascism
 - RCK's two books in Europe and in the US
 - *The Totalitarian State against Man* (RCK 1937, 1938)
 - *Crusade for Pan-Europe* (RCK 1943)
- *Crusade for Pan-Europe* in the US during the War
 - Aimed to spread the movement in the US
 - no overt sympathy with fascism demonstrated
 - Mussolini in an independent chapter alongside Masaryk
(the first Czechoslovak president)
 - reposting the open letter to Mussolini (1923)
 - with a notation: Nobody could know about him [Mussolini] precisely at that time....

6. Conclusion

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- RCK's 5 autobiographies & his self-revealing desire
 - RCK (1943, 1949, 1953, 1958, 1966)
- RCK in grey zone between democracy & fascism
 - No excessive idealization, no complete denial
 - No binarism between democracy and fascism?
- How to reappraise RCK now?
 - Emergence of populism and "backsliding" of democracy
 - Liberal democracy as the EU standard is in danger?
 - Particular context in the postwar Europe
(ex. Jan-Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy*, 2011)
 - Cold War, rapid economic growth, establishment of welfare state regime, stable middle class, etc.

Selected Bibliography

11 (1) Works of RCK

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12 (2) Secondary sources

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2. Conze, Vanessa (2004), *Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi: Umstrittener Visionär Europas*, Zürich: Muster-Schmidt Verlag.
3. Fukuda, Hiroshi (2012), "Central Europe between empires: Milan Hodža and his Strategy for 'small' nations," in Tomohiko Uyama (ed.), *Empire and After: Essays in Comparative Imperial and Decolonization Studies* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2012), pp. 35-51.
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6. Ziegerhofer-Prettenthaler, Anita (2004), *Botschafter Europas: Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove-Kalergi und die Paneuropa-Bewegung in den zwanziger und dreißiger Jahren*, Wien/ Köln/ Weimar: Böhlau.