

# Populism for political theorists?

MARGARET CANOVAN

*Emeritus Professor of Political Thought, Keele University*

**ABSTRACT** *Political theorists do not in general pay much attention to populism; are there any good reasons why they should do so? This paper will consider a number of positive answers to this question. Most attention has so far been paid to issues of methodology—can we define ‘populism’? Recently there has also been some interest in the relation between populism and democracy, but there are two further topics that may be worth investigating, first the possibility of a distinctive political ideology that might be called ‘populist’, and second the meanings and significance of populism’s core concept, the elusive ‘people’.*

Few political theorists believe that populism deserves their attention. Echoing earlier fears of ‘the many-headed monster’,<sup>1</sup> recent students of politics have indeed tended to treat populist movements as pathological symptoms of some social disease.<sup>2</sup> The aim of this paper is to suggest some reasons why mainstream political theorists might nevertheless find it worth their while to take an interest in populism.

It may help to start with an analogy. Fifteen years ago, mainstream political theorists were not in the habit of paying any attention to nationalism. If they noticed it at all, they assumed that nationalist politics did not raise any interesting theoretical questions. However, when the collapse of communism prompted reflection by putting nationalism on the political agenda the issues it raised turned out after all to be intellectually interesting, generating a large and sophisticated theoretical literature. Now that populism in its turn is rising up the political agenda, is there scope for a similar development? Populism has a bad name among intellectuals, but there are some inducements for political theorists to overcome their distaste and take a serious interest in it. I shall argue that at least four aspects of the topic offer scope for theoretical investigation, though this paper can offer only a preliminary survey of the territory.

In summary, the four are as follows:

- I. Methodological issues involved in identifying ‘populism’.
- II. Issues to do with the relation between populism and democracy.
- III. The possibility of a distinctively populist ideological position.

IV. Issues raised by the meanings and ambiguities of populism's core concept, 'the People'.

**I. Methodological issues**

What is 'populism'? Do the various political phenomena labelled in this way add up to a distinctive general something? What sort of thing are we talking about, with what kinds of features?

The 'populism' that is most likely to be in the news today is the so-called 'New Populism' of the past decade or so: a collection of movements, broadly on the right of the political spectrum, that have emerged in many established liberal democracies, challenging existing parties and mainstream policies.<sup>3</sup> As political phenomena go, 'New Populism' may seem relatively easy to identify and characterise (although, as we shall see later, it raises interesting issues about the relationship between populist and democratic appeals to 'the people'). Typically confrontational in style, these movements claim to represent the rightful source of legitimate power—the people, whose interests and wishes have been ignored by self-interested politicians and politically correct intellectuals. These challengers do not in general call themselves 'populists', and despite some links they have not so far seen themselves as branches of an international ideological movement, but although there are many differences between their policy prescriptions, they do share a distinctive style and message. Cases generally recognised as falling into this category, despite many differences, include Ross Perot's 1992 Presidential campaign in the USA, Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party in Australia, and Preston Manning's Reform Party in Canada. Of the many European cases, the most long-lasting is Jean Marie Le Pen's *Front National* in France; other particularly conspicuous examples include Jörg Haider's Freedom Party in Austria; Umberto Bossi's Northern League in Italy, and the brief eruption in the Netherlands of the movement led by Pim Fortuyn. Fortuyn's assassination just before the Dutch general election in 2002 dramatically illustrated one of the typical features of these New Populist movements, their overwhelming dependence on personal leadership rather than institutional party structures.

Claiming to speak for the forgotten mass of ordinary people, New Populists take on the colour of their surroundings.<sup>4</sup> The positions they campaign for and the values they express depend on local concerns and the kind of political establishment they are challenging. Invariably critical of professional politicians and the media, they claim to say aloud what the people think, especially if it has been deemed by the elite to be unmentionable. New Populists often call for issues of popular concern to be decided by referendum, by-passing professional politicians and leaving decisions to the people. By way of emphasising their closeness to the grassroots and their distance from the political establishment, they also tend to use colourful and undiplomatic language. They are most comfortable in opposition, though some have had enough electoral success to find themselves sharing power. The strength of the populist challenge to

established liberal democratic politics was most dramatically symbolised by the success of Jean Marie Le Pen in reaching the second, decisive round in the 2002 French Presidential election.

Methodological problems arise not so much in recognising similarities among these movements as in trying to decide what is 'populist' about them and what, if anything, they have in common with other past and present political phenomena known by the same label.

Even within contemporary Western politics, the term 'populism' is used not only for the confrontational politics that mobilizes ordinary people against the establishment but also for a classic tactic available to political insiders: a kind of 'catch-all' politics that sets out to appeal to the people as a whole. Like New Populism, this kind of politics is often highly personalised. A professional politician who is an effective communicator sets out to appeal across old demarcations, playing down divisions along the lines of party, class or ideology and stressing the unity of the whole people. This inclusive language of 'the people' has been much used by Tony Blair, who successfully repackaged Britain's Labour Party as 'New Labour', shorn of its exclusively socialist and working-class associations. Discussing 'Blairism', Peter Mair speaks of populism as 'a form of governing in which party is sidelined or disappears; where the people are undifferentiated, and in which a more or less "neutral" government attempts to serve the interests of all'.<sup>5</sup>

What does Blair-style 'populism' have in common with Le Pen's, and what links either of them with all the other so-called 'populisms'? These range from nineteenth-century English Chartism<sup>6</sup> to Russian Narodniks<sup>7</sup> and from the US People's Party of the 1890s<sup>8</sup> to Latin American regimes such as those of Juan Peron and Hugo Chavez.<sup>9</sup> What justification, if any, is there for putting all these into a single pigeonhole marked 'populism'? The term's form suggests affinities with ideological movements like socialism, liberalism or nationalism, but although all these other 'isms' encompass a wide range of variation, each gains a degree of coherence from a continuous history, willingness on the part of most adherents to identify themselves by the name, distinctive principles and policies and so on. Populism does not fit this pattern. There is no acknowledged common history, ideology, programme or social base, and the term is usually applied to movements from outside, often as a term of abuse. Members of the US People's Party were unusual in calling themselves 'Populists', for most of those conventionally given the label do not themselves embrace it. It is hard to imagine there being any mutual acknowledgement of political kinship between (say) Tony Blair, Hugo Chavez and Jean Marie Le Pen, nor the three of them joining in common veneration of ancestors among the *narodniki* and the US People's Party.

All attempts at a general characterisation of populism have been contentious, with some analysts offering definitions or lists of essential characteristics, others finding only more tenuous connections and loose family resemblances between the different candidates.<sup>10</sup> Earlier analysts often assumed that the common ground they were looking for must be a socio-economic base; more recent

studies tend to focus on populist discourse, a rhetoric of appeals to ‘the people’.<sup>11</sup> More broadly, what is it that defines an ‘ism’, and is the answer the same for populism as for other ‘isms’? Theorists with an interest in such questions surely ought to add ‘populism’ to their list of problematic cases.

Meanwhile, the recent stress on populist rhetoric raises an issue that goes beyond matters of definition. If populism is indeed characterised by appeals to ‘the people’; if, moreover, these appeals are finding an audience within mature Western democracies, then how is populism related to democracy? Populist movements are widely regarded, especially in Europe and Latin America, as threats to democracy. Yet New Populists explicitly claim to be true democrats, setting out to reclaim power for the people.

## II. Populism and democracy

This area has already prompted some interesting work, particularly in connection with European politics.<sup>12</sup> The dominant approach relies on what might be called the two-strand theory of democracy. According to that theory (current in many versions) modern liberal democracy is an uneasy combination of two fundamentally different sets of principles, liberal on the one hand and populist/democratic on the other. ‘Liberalism’ is concerned with individual rights, universal principles and the rule of law, and is typically expressed in a written constitution; whereas the ‘democratic’ strand is concerned with the sovereign will of the people, understood as unqualified majority rule and typically expressed through referendums.

According to the two strand theory, modern liberal democracies always have tensions between these two strands, and populist movements threaten the fragile compromise by insisting on undiluted democracy. ‘All populist movements speak and behave as if democracy meant the power of the people and *only* the power of the people.’<sup>13</sup> The impression given by the two strand theory is, however, that although populism raises practical problems for liberal democracy, its theoretical significance is limited. But the two-strand theory, while persuasive in some respects, is in other ways a misleading oversimplification, for reflections on populism raise wider questions about democracy.

I have argued elsewhere that contemporary populist movements inadvertently highlight democracy’s complexities, which go further than the two strand theory allows. It is possible to analyse these complexities in different ways, taking slices that cut sections at different angles. Cutting one kind of slice, it may be illuminating to think of modern democracy in terms of Michael Oakeshott’s distinction between the politics of scepticism and the politics of faith, or as having pragmatic and redemptive faces. Populist mobilisations of the kind led by Pim Fortuyn or Ross Perot seem clear cases of the politics of faith—but then so do liberal mobilisations like the American Civil Rights movement; the faith/scepticism axis is separate from the populist/liberal axis.<sup>14</sup>

Cutting a different section across the complexities of modern democracy can lead one to what might be called the Bagehot Problem. In his book on *The*

*English Constitution*, talking about the role of the monarchy in parliamentary government, Walter Bagehot remarked that ‘The best reason why Monarchy is a strong government is, that it is an intelligible government. The mass of mankind understand it, and they hardly anywhere in the world understand any other.’<sup>15</sup> There are analogies with a difficulty that arises in contemporary conditions, and that amounts to a democratic paradox. The democratic project is to bring the mass of the people into politics; but making this possible requires institutional arrangements that are too complex for most people to grasp in imagination. The modern democratic mechanisms that can empower people—fair electoral procedures such as proportional representation, processes of consultation and discussion, channels through which issues can be raised and policies shaped—add up to a tangled network that cannot make sense to most of the people it aims to empower. Looking at the system from the grassroots, we see no evidence that we as individual members of the population are exercising power; neither can we see a collective people doing so on our behalf.

Ever since the advent of mass politics in the nineteenth century, the normal device for making politics comprehensible to the population has been ideology (in Michael Freeden’s sense)—a conceptual structure that provides a map of the world of public affairs and links theory to action.<sup>16</sup> But democratic ideology, which is centred on the notion of the sovereign people, generates expectations that are inevitably disappointed. Populists would say that the reason for those disappointed expectations is that power has been stolen from the people. The trouble is that if any power is to be effectively given to the people-as-population of a large and complex modern society, this can be done only by means of institutions and procedures that are intricate to the point of being baffling.<sup>17</sup>

I have argued in this section that reflection on the emergence of populist movements within established democracies can shed light on modern democracy itself, and do so more broadly than the ‘two strand’ theory allows. One of the disadvantages of that theory is that its focus on liberal fears of populism diverts attention from crucial issues to do with the nature and authority of the sovereign people. In claiming power for the people and calling on those people to redeem the polity, populists are after all highlighting fundamental assumptions of contemporary politics. Their insistence inadvertently shows up the embarrassing obscurity of those truisms of modern political culture. That is an argument to which I shall return in the final section of this paper. First, however, let us look briefly at a rather different reason why political theorists might take an interest in populism.

### **III. Populism versus progress**

There is a gap in the current ideological spectrum that could be filled by a distinctively populist picture. The key issue here is belief in Progress and the intellectual and political vanguardism that goes with it. Apart from religious fundamentalisms (and the kind of old-fashioned Burkean conservatism that is effectively extinct) all the influential modern ideologies promise some sort of

progressive liberation. They are all universalistic, promising that in the long run everyone is going to be liberated and made better off; but because they are progressive, someone or other has to be in the vanguard, showing the way to the rest.

This vanguardist way of thinking is so familiar that we rarely notice it: not only is it built into liberalism, socialism and feminism, it is present even in modern conservatism, as in the ‘trickle-down’ theory of economic growth. And yet belief in progress is very hard to reconcile with equal respect for all human beings. It has the inescapable effect of giving a privileged status to the advanced, thereby devaluing the opinions, beliefs and way of life of the mass of mankind. This is true even of the most egalitarian forms of liberalism and socialism; there is always a vanguard further up the escalator of progress, whereas most people are to be simply the recipients of liberation, education, welfare, Westernisation and so on. The version of liberal imperialism favoured by our present leaders is a striking example, but even the anti-growth, anti-globalisation agitators are not exempt.

We are so used to thinking in these terms that it is quite hard to imagine questioning them, and yet we need only recall the history of the twentieth century to see that it is not absurd to have doubts about vanguardism. We could all draw up a list of projects that seemed obviously ‘progressive’ at the time, and that were imposed by vanguards on the population. There was Soviet collectivisation, for instance—recall Sidney and Beatrice Webb coming back from Russia in the 1930s and saying, ‘We have seen the future, and it works’. Eugenics was supported by all ‘progressive’ opinion in the 1920s and 1930s; nuclear power was the wave of the future and the answer to all our energy problems; rehousing people in tower blocks seemed a good idea at the time. So it might be worth considering alternative ways of thinking, including a populist mind-set.

An anti-vanguardist populism can be conceived in a number of different ways. One of them might provide a rationale for direct democracy, in Ian Budge’s sense of continual electronic referendums,<sup>18</sup> but there are other directions in which one might go. There is for example the version of anti-vanguardist populism explored in the 1990s in the American journal *Telos*, which denounces top-down rule by a supposedly enlightened ‘New Class’ of intellectuals and bureaucrats, and proposes devolution of power to local communities, whether or not they choose to run themselves in ways that are politically correct.<sup>19</sup>

A more far-reaching version was suggested in the early twentieth century by G. K. Chesterton.<sup>20</sup> The intriguing thing about it is that in attacking belief in progress and vanguardism it also questions the assumption that the latest *generation* are the most ‘advanced’ and that we can ignore older arrangements and convictions. It casts doubt therefore on the sovereignty of those people who are in power now, even if they happen to have majority support at present. For Chesterton, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind means that we cannot write off previous experience, as modernists habitually do: we have to pay serious attention to tradition. ‘Tradition’ may sound like the slogan of Burkean

conservatives, but Chesterton makes it into a principle of populist democracy. This is what he says:

Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about. All democrats object to men being disqualified by the accident of birth; tradition objects to their being disqualified by the accident of death.<sup>21</sup>

The implication of this populist way of thinking is that instead of assuming that the latest way of doing things must be the best, long-standing popular customs and traditions need to be taken seriously.

The occupational hazard of intellectuals who do pay attention to populist ideas is that they are inclined to make fools of themselves idealising ‘the People’, like the Russian *Narodniks* in the 1870s who ‘went to the people’, expecting to find ideal community and revolutionary fervour. Despite this danger, the nexus of populism with scepticism about progress and vanguardism may be worth thinking about. For one thing, it has affinities with the issues that arise in trying to spread liberal democracy to non-Western countries, especially those with deep-rooted popular religion, above all Islam. Perhaps we need to consider what it would actually mean to pay decent respect to the opinions of mankind.

What the outcome of such reflections might be is hard to say; for the present, I simply raise the issue and leave it hanging in the air as I go on to a fourth and last aspect of populism that should interest political theorists: populism’s central concept, ‘the people’.

#### IV. ‘The People’

It seems astonishing that so little attention has been paid by political theorists to this term and its meanings. It is after all a key term not only within populist politics but in modern politics more generally. Unlike ‘freedom’, ‘justice’, or even ‘nation’, ‘people’ has attracted hardly any analysis, even by theorists of democracy. But is conceptual analysis actually the right way to approach it? ‘People’—‘the people’, ‘a people’—is extraordinarily open and variable in its significance. What the term signifies is perhaps not so much a concept as a series of discourses about political identity, discourses used by partisans of many different causes to fight many different political struggles. I have no quarrel with that view: the various forms of discourse-based approach to ‘people’ are highly illuminating,<sup>22</sup> but there is room also for a different kind of approach, one more akin to the literatures on concepts such as ‘freedom’.

One long-overdue task is simply clarification. ‘People’ has many different political senses, and very few of those who use it notice when they slip from one sense to another.<sup>23</sup> It is worthwhile to map those ambiguities, and doing so brings interesting things to light. In the first place it highlights the peculiarities of the English term ‘people’. Like its equivalents in many languages, it is derived from the Latin *populus* and has three basic senses: the people as

sovereign; peoples as nations, and the ‘common people’ as opposed to the ruling elite. Uniquely, however (as far as I know) ‘people’ in English also means human beings as such, individuals in general. Although this use of the term is grammatically distinct, its meaning seeps into and colours the other uses, and that introduces two extra elements of political ambiguity. It makes the sovereign people look like a collection of individuals as well as a collective body, and it implies that ‘people’ and their rights are universal, crossing the boundaries that confine particular ‘peoples’.

That extra dimension of Anglophone ambiguity is connected with a second feature that comes to light once one maps the meanings of ‘people’. Those ambiguities turn out to be the key to important and neglected issues for democratic politics in particular. For the various political struggles that have stretched and shaped ‘people’ to accommodate different political identities have also made it the repository of a series of unresolved political problems that are half-articulated and half-concealed by the term’s contradictions. The central problem (to which all the others are connected) has to do with the collective authorisation by the sovereign people from which governments derive their legitimacy.

This is a notion that is boringly familiar but at the same time problematic in all sorts of ways. For convenience’s sake one can divide up the problems it poses into two pairs of issues, the first two concerned with boundary issues and the others with issues of authority.<sup>24</sup>

### **Identifying the people**

Who are the ‘people’ who form the ultimate source of political authority? The adult population of each state in the United Nations? That is much too simple. Externally, we cannot take for granted that a state’s borders correspond to the boundaries of a people; internally, at the same time as referring to the polity as a whole, ‘the people’ as a category has often been narrower than the population, sometimes because it referred to an exclusive group of privileged citizens, and sometimes (conversely and confusingly) because it meant precisely those excluded from that elite, the ‘common people’. Externally and internally, the blurred boundaries of the people reflect conflicts and dilemmas that continue to bedevil democratic politics.

### **Ourselves and others: external boundaries**

The ‘peoples’ credited with the right to self-determination may at times be defined by existing state boundaries; much of the notion’s force, however, is the plausibility with which it can be used to challenge such boundaries. The most bitterly contested claims to self-determination are often those where (it is claimed) frontiers and people do not coincide. In some cases a ‘people’ is held to extend across an existing border. ‘We are the people’, the chant of the Leipzig demonstrators in 1989, changed rapidly into ‘We are *one* people’—one people



with the population of West Germany. In contrast to that unifying conception of the true boundaries of the people, the collapse of communism in Yugoslavia led rapidly to secessionist movements by minorities claiming to be separate peoples, and thence to civil war and to the horrors of 'ethnic cleansing' against those thought to belong to a different 'people'.

In the cases both of Germany and Yugoslavia, 'people' was understood in ethno-national terms, and there are powerful reasons why this should be so, but republicans and internationalists claim that a self-governing 'people' does not have to fit that pattern. It was in city-states, not nations, that the conception of popular sovereignty was first articulated; more recently, the example of the USA has seemed to some to show that a single people with powerful political solidarity is possible in conditions of ethnic diversity. Can the EU bind its component peoples into a single people, as European visionaries hope, and how can it, or any other polity claiming authority from the people, justify closing its borders against migrants who are themselves people? Should not popular sovereignty and self-determination include all people everywhere? Defining 'the people' raises important issues, in theory as well as practice.

### **Whole and part: internal boundaries**

By immemorial tradition, 'people' (like *populus* and *demus* before it) has meant both the whole political community and some smaller group within it. Odder still, it has often happened that one group identified as 'the people' was a political elite from which most were excluded, while the term 'people' was at the same time used to denote those same excluded lower orders. From the point of view of radicals challenging the existing political order, these ambiguities have been a godsend. The long struggle for the vote in Britain hinged on claims by the 'common people' that they were by rights the largest part of the true sovereign people—the whole polity—and therefore entitled to join and outvote the privileged political 'people'.

Although universal suffrage has put paid both to the notion of the common people and to the old notion of a privileged 'people', the elastic inner boundaries of 'people' still have great political significance. The populist call to 'give politics back to the people' exploits the ambiguity according to which 'the people' is first understood by contrast with the power-holders (and therefore as something less than the population at large) and then expanded to wield the authority of the sovereign people as a whole. Populists seem to suppose that nothing could be clearer or more straightforward than the project of 'giving power to the people'. Instead of curling our lips at such simplicity, we might be wise to look more closely at the complexities of the sovereign people. All I shall try to do here is to indicate something of the range of that investigation.

### **The sovereign people in action and in myth**

How—if at all—could the people who are the source of legitimate authority actually exercise that ultimate sanction, and what, in any case, is the nature of this supposed authority? Is it (in the strictest sense) mythical? What prompts these questions is that ‘the people’ as sovereign refers to two apparently quite different things. On the one hand it refers to something collective, abstract, dignified and mysterious: an entity—‘the British people’ or ‘We, the people of the United States’—that has a continuous existence and history, transcending and outliving its individual members. On the other hand it refers to those individual members themselves, a collection of ordinary, ever-changing people with their separate lives, interests and views. The English language matches this ambiguity with grammatical uncertainty. In English, any collective noun can take either a singular or a plural verb—‘the team *has* won the trophy’ and ‘the team *have* lost the match’, but the issues involved here are not merely linguistic. Although in French and German ‘*peuple*’ and ‘*Volk*’ may be unambiguously singular, the problem of relating this collective entity to its collection of individual members remains.

This problem has two aspects. In the first place, can the notion of the people as source of political authority have any clear or practical meaning? Are there any circumstances in which we can say that actions by some individual people really do carry the authority of the people as a whole? Second, what is it about this people (composed, after all, of ordinary individual people) that makes it authoritative? How large a role in sustaining the notion is played by myths, and do those myths have any more solid basis?

### **The sovereign people in action**

If ‘the sovereign people’ refers both to a collection of transitory individuals and to a collective entity that continues over the generations, how are we to understand the relation between collection and collectivity? Crucially, what does it mean to say that the people have/has exercised their/its authority? Can we make sense in theoretical terms of the notion that individual people form an authoritative collective people? There are plenty of other collective bodies—from firms to football clubs—that seem to be able to possess and exercise powers in a comprehensible and effective way; why is it so much harder to give a clear account of ‘the people’ as a collectivity?

Supposing that we can form a clear idea of an authoritative ‘people’ that is both a continuing whole and a collection of individuals, can we point to actions in which its authority has been exercised? Do general elections transfer that authority to politicians? Do referendums reveal the will of the sovereign people? Might popular consent be more authentically revealed by the outcome of a public debate on some issue—or perhaps in the mass demonstrations dubbed ‘people power’? Should we perhaps conclude that popular authorisation can never be given adequate institutional form because it belongs to a more fluid

aspect of politics, in which brief episodes of popular mobilisation are encapsulated in myths?

### **Myths of popular authority**

What is there about the people to make them the ultimate political authority? If we think of ‘the people’ simply as the population—a collection of ordinary ignorant human beings—then their claim to be regarded as the fount of political legitimacy is not obvious, as anti-democrats since Plato have pointed out. It is of course possible to make a negative case for the involvement of the general population in decision-making, on the grounds that this can limit rulers’ abuse of power by making them take notice of as many interests as possible, but the political discourse of popular sovereignty has always had a more positive tone, asserting or implying that the attribution of sovereign authority to the people is much more than a prudential device. Thinking about the enthusiasm that greeted the outbreak of people power in Eastern Europe in 1989, or about the pathos of the first post-Apartheid election in South Africa, we must recognise that the notion of the sovereign people is credited with a quality that lifts it far above people as ordinary human beings. It is that numinous quality that encourages so many to claim that they are the true voice of the people, and this special quality also finds expression in myths.

We can examine myths of past foundation and future redemption in which the people figures, and the way in which such myths colour our view of popular movements happening before our eyes, but how we should regard that mythic sovereign people? We could take a robustly cynical view, treating the notion simply as a manipulative device. A less dismissive response might perhaps suggest that our familiar myths of the people as founder and redeemer of polities have rather more substance than that. If there is a kernel of truth hidden in the myths, it might be a truth about the basis of political power and political community. On that view, the hidden truth of the myth is that ordinary individual people do have the potential (however rarely exercised) to mobilise for common action. On occasion, such grass roots mobilisations generate formidable power, bringing down a regime; more rarely, they sometimes manage to make a fresh start and to lay the foundations of a lasting political community.<sup>25</sup> Seen in that light, it might be the rarity, contingency and brevity of such momentous events that makes popular authority so hard to pin down, and ‘the sovereign people’ so mysterious and vague a notion, but these speculations cannot be developed here.

What I have tried to do in this paper is merely to sketch some topics connected with populism that political theorists might do well to explore. The topics I have mentioned are those that happen to interest me, and do not by any means exhaust the possibilities. Let me therefore conclude with an invitation to political theorists. Instead of adding to the literature on the few fashionable topics, why not have a look at populism?

## Notes and references

1. C. Hill, 'The many-headed monster', in C. Hill (Ed.), *Change and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), pp. 181–204.
2. H.-G. Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1994); H.-G. Betz, 'Conditions favouring the success and failure of radical right-wing populist parties in contemporary democracies', in Y. Mény and Y. Surel (Eds), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002); S. Immerfall, 'Conclusion: the neo-populist agenda', in H.-G. Betz and S. Immerfall (Eds), *The New Politics of the Right—Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies* (London: Macmillan, 1998).
3. P. Taggart, 'New populist parties in Western Europe', *West European Politics*, 18, 1 (1995), pp. 34–51; P. Taggart, *Populism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000).
4. Taggart, *ibid.*
5. P. Mair, 'Populist democracy vs party democracy', in Y. Mény and Y. Surel (Eds), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002), p. 96
6. C. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle—Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982); G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class—Studies in English Working Class History 1832–1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); P. Joyce, *Visions of the People—Industrial England and the Question of Class 1848–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
7. F. Venturi, *The Roots of Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1960); R. Wortman, *The Crisis of Russian Populism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).
8. L. Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); J. D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961).
9. Di Tella, 'Populism into the twenty-first century', *Government and Opposition*, 32 (1997), pp. 187–200.
10. G. Ionescu and E. Gellner (Eds), *Populism: its Meanings and National Characteristics* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969); E. Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory—Capitalism—Fascism—Populism* (London: Verso, 1979); M. Canovan, *Populism* (London: Junction Books, 1981); M. Canovan, 'Two strategies for the study of populism', *Political Studies*, 30, 4 (1982), pp. 544–552; D. Westlind, *The Politics of Popular Identity—Understanding Recent Populist Movements in Sweden and the United States* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1996).
11. M. Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Y. Mény and Y. Surel, *Par le peuple, pour le peuple—le populisme et les démocraties* (Paris: Fayard, 2000); M. Canovan, "'People", politicians and populism', *Government and Opposition*, 19, 3 (1984), pp. 312–327; Westlind, *ibid.*
12. Y. Mény and Y. Surel (Eds), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002).
13. Mény and Surel, *ibid.*, p. 9.
14. M. Canovan, 'Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy', *Political Studies*, 47, 1 (1999), pp. 2–16.
15. W. Bagehot, *The English Constitution* (London: Henry S. King, 1872).
16. M. Freedon, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
17. M. Canovan, 'Taking politics to the people: populism as the ideology of democracy', in Mény and Surel, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12.
18. I. Budge, *The New Challenge of Direct Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996).
19. K. Anderson, R.A. Berman, T. Luke, P. Piccone and M. Taves, 'The empire strikes out: a roundtable on populist politics', *Telos*, No. 87, 1991, pp. 3–37; *Telos* staff: 'Populism vs the new class', No. 88, 1991, pp. 2–36.
20. M. Canovan, *G. K. Chesterton—Radical Populist* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977).
21. G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (London: Fontana, 1961).
22. Laclau, *op. cit.*, Ref. 10; Kazin, *op. cit.*, Ref. 11; Westlind, *op. cit.*, Ref. 10; Mény and Surel, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12.
23. Canovan, *op. cit.*, Ref. 11.
24. These arguments are further explored in my forthcoming book on *The People* (Cambridge: Polity Press, to be published).
25. H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963).

Copyright of Journal of Political Ideologies is the property of Carfax Publishing Company and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.