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The flak tower in the Augarten in Vienna (constructed 1944/45) as a concrete symbol of fascist modernity: bellicose, monumental, and mythical. Photograph: MCMoses, 7 May 2013. Source: Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 3.0 AT)

Fascism – Concepts and Theories

by Fernando Esposito

Introduction

In view of the success – throughout Europe – of right-wing populist and extremist parties and movements such as the Alternative für Deutschland, the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, the Front National, or Jobbik as well as the conflict in the Ukraine and the spread of IS terrorism, the term fascism has experienced a renaissance. However, its use as a discursive weapon threatens to blunt the concept's analytical incisiveness, a development that has had precursors. As Karl Dietrich Bracher noted in 1976, "over time, important historical and political terms [...] not infrequently suffer the fate of undergoing such significant changes in their original content and meaning, of being utilized in such different ways, and of being deployed and extended as discursive weapons in such a way that their academic value becomes highly questionable. This is especially true of the frequently employed term fascism."^[1] Thus, Bracher criticized the inflationary use of the concept of fascism that had taken root in the wake of the "renaissance of western Marxism" in the context of "1968". In keeping with Max Horkheimer's dictum – whoever is not prepared to talk about capitalism should also remain silent about fascism – fascism had become a "commonplace expression" in the student movement.^[2]

Entrenched feuding in West Germany between left and right and between young and old were detrimental to comparative analysis of fascism. This was also true of the use of the fascism concept by the leadership and by academic circles in East

Germany, which situated West Germany in direct continuity with Nazi Germany. Consequently, attempts to determine what fascism was and is were long overshadowed by the ideological conflicts of the Cold War era.

Fascism studies' research questions

These ideological battles between Marxists and anti-Marxists are (for the time being) a thing of the past. The end of such controversies lent momentum to research on fascism, first in American and British scholarship and then to a certain extent in Germany. The questions of what fascism is and whether use of fascism as a generic term is justified, stood at the center of this work. Is National Socialism a form of fascism? If so, does the singularity of the crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis remain evident, even when National Socialism is subsumed under the generic term fascism? How useful are neologisms such as para-fascism for distinguishing between "fascistized" authoritarian-conservative regimes – for example, in the Baltic states or Salazar's Estado Novo in Portugal – from forms of fascism in the strict sense? ^[3] Should the concept of fascism be applied only to Europe or can it also be used for comparable phenomena around the world? Is referring to neo-fascism justifiable in cases of right-wing populist, extremist, and terrorist movements in the post-1945 era? ^[4] Does it make sense to apply the concept of fascism to intellectuals and their writings from the period before World War I? ^[5]

This text does not aim to give conclusive answers to these nor to a series of further questions, as it is not likely that definitive answers will ever be forthcoming. However, it hopes to demonstrate that the concept of fascism opens the way to asking meaningful questions and enables comparisons, thus generating valuable new insights in scholarship. To this end, this article attempts to provide one answer to the question of what phenomenon has come into view and been characterized in the many analyses of fascism that have been conducted since the 1920s.

Although Italy's Fascists and Germany's National Socialists were the only movements that succeeded in establishing fascist regimes on their own, the interwar period spawned numerous other fascist movements. Spain's Falange^[6], Hungary's Arrow Cross^[7], and Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael (later Iron Guard)^[8] grew in the slipstream of the success of Italian and German fascism, but in contrast for example to Croatia's Ustasha^[9] or Norway's Nasjonal Samling or National Unity,^[10] they gained a certain level of significance in their respective countries without German military occupation. According to Robert Paxton, every European country "indeed all economically developed nations with some degree

of political democracy including the United States, Argentina, Brazil and Japan, had some kind of fascist movement and at least a rudimentary fascist organization or two in the twenty years after 1919".^[11]

The "crisis of the liberal system" (Nolte), excessive demands on newly created democracies, and anti-bourgeois and anti-Marxist sentiments affected all of Europe during the interwar period. Also the established democracies France and the United Kingdom saw the ascent of fascist movements: the Croix de Feu, the Chemises vertes, and die British Union of Fascists.^[12] Furthermore, several conservative authoritarian regimes, such as Franco's rule in Spain and Salazar's Portuguese Estado Novo, underwent partial "fascistization".^[13]

Structure of the article

The following survey of scholarship on the concept of fascism and theories of fascism has as its starting point Italian Fascism. Not only was the generic term derived from this first fascist movement and used to designate and understand similar movements. Italian Fascism was in fact the first model for comparable movements forming across Europe.^[14] As Arnd Bauerkämper has noted, "Although the attractiveness of the Italian model declined in the 1930s, the semantic extension of 'fascism' to a generic term ultimately reflected the contemporary realization that the movements and groups labeled in this way referred to the Italian model, albeit to varying degrees." ^[15] As is argued at the end of this article, the more radical National Socialism would eventually replace, in the course of the 1930s, Italian Fascism in the role of paragon.

This article addresses only "historical" fascism. In other words, it explores the ideology upon which European fascist movements were founded and by which they were fueled in the roughly three decades before 1945. However, by setting this limitation, several decisions have already been made that are by no means supported by all researchers of fascism. On the one hand, advocates of a "praxeological" approach to fascism deny that a meaningful definition of fascism based on ideology is possible. They instead propose an understanding of fascism as a lifestyle and habitus of violence that determines political action.^[16] On the other hand, restricting the scope of one's attention to Europe, focusing on Italy and Germany, and limiting the temporal framework to the "second Thirty Years War" can also be questioned, since the fascist movements that sprang up in Europe during the interwar period share various similarities with contemporary antisemitic, xenophobic, and homophobic militant groups as well as with imperial Japan in the 1930s and with Argentinian Peronism in the period from 1946 to 1955.^[17]

This article will first briefly examine the emergence of Italian Fascism and provide insight into Italian Fascists' self-perception. Understanding the meaning which Italian Fascists imparted to the concept reveals its original form, which has been modified since then. Second, taking the contemporary conceptualizations of fascism developed by its Marxist, liberal, and conservative opponents as a starting point, this article reviews research on fascism during the Cold War. Third, the approaches taken by more recent research on fascism will be discussed and a survey of current fields of empirical work will be presented. A concluding section summarizes the usefulness of the concept of fascism.

The Italian origins of Fascism

Fascio – From league to the lictorial fasces as a symbol

A brief look at post-Unitarian Italy reveals that, during the last third of the nineteenth century, the term *fascio* simply referred to a political alliance.^[18] In the early 1890s, for instance, Sicilian farm workers joined together in the *Fasci siciliani* to organize strikes and protests against landowners and unsustainable working conditions on their estates.^[19] In 1914, socialists and syndicalists of nationalist-revolutionary persuasion founded the *Fascio d'azione* to campaign in favor of Italy entering the war on the side of the British-French entente. This and other similar interventionist alliances were the origins of the Fascist movement, which was founded in 1919 and would bring to light other aspects of the term *fascio*.

The latter is derived from the Latin word *fascis*. In the Roman Empire, this denoted a bundle of rods surrounding an axe that was "carried by the *lictors*, civil servants, as they marched in front of the Roman magistrates (consul, praetor), as a sign of the magistrates' *imperium*" or power to command.^[20] The symbolic meaning of the bundle of rods in antiquity was supplemented in more recent history – in particular in the iconography of the French Revolution but also in the United States – primarily by unity and power. For the Fascists, who made it a state emblem in



In December 1926, the fasces became the emblem of the Italian state. It is shown here on a coin together with a text that asserts: "Better to live a day as a lion than one hundred years as a sheep." Photograph: Sailko (14 July 2011). Source: Wikimedia Commons (GNU).

1926, it also signified discipline and order, as well as a new beginning and reconnection with the Roman past.^[21] Among the nationalist renegades who campaigned in favor of Italy's entry into World War I on the side of the entente during the so-called maggio radioso – the "radiant May" of 1915 – was former socialist Benito Mussolini (1883-1945).^[22] Together with various futurists, syndicalists, former Arditi (elite storm troopers) and other veterans, he founded the Fasci italiani di combattimento, a leftist nationalist anti-party, on 23 March 1919 in Milan's Piazza San Sepolcro.^[23] Militant nationalist activism, a propensity for violence radicalized by war, anti-bourgeois and anti-Marxist attitudes, and contempt for the established political caste and practices served as the unifying elements of this extremely disparate alliance.

Fascism as the "third way"

The initially slight yet growing fascination which Fascists exerted was based on the aura of renewal, on the proclaimed "third way", which was neither right nor left, and on the idea of unity and power of the nation that they advocated.^[24] The latter was to be (re)generated through violence, if necessary.^[25] This vision of a "Volksgemeinschaft", i.e. of the national and/or ethnic community", in which social conflicts between workers and the bourgeoisie, as well as discontent with industrial modernity, would be overcome, proves to be one of the core similarities that can be discerned between different forms of fascism.^[26]

At this point one can already identify a key benefit of the concept of fascism: it offers a means of grasping the ultra- or radical-nationalistic model of political order that became established alongside liberalism, conservatism, and communism – for the first time in post-World War I Italy. Fascism studies' various approaches help to outline more clearly this model of a modern societal order based on the idea of an absolutized nation or people and to differentiate it from the competing liberal, Marxist, or conservative-authoritarian models. Moreover, the concept makes it easier to compare the specific solutions proposed for dealing with the



Italian postage stamp from 1934, depicting three men riding through the Libyan Desert, flanked on both sides by the fasces. Source: iBolli (public domain). Source:Wikimedia Commons / iBolli (public domain).

challenges of modernity. It also serves to identify the differences that existed between the many specific national variants.^[27]

In Italy, the envisaged "third way" was initially embodied by the charismatic poet, war hero, and comandante Gabriele D'Annunzio, who campaigned against Italy's liberal political caste and the Allies' "mutilated victory".^[28] But after D'Annunzio's attempt to annex the Croatian port of Fiume (Rijeka) failed at the end of 1920, the Black Shirts and their local leaders increasingly rallied around Mussolini instead. The election victory of the Socialists in November 1919 marked the beginning of a two-year phase of intensified class conflicts, the *biennio rosso*. Still struggling with the aftereffects of the war effort and subsequent demobilization, the political and economic system was now confronted with a growing wave of strikes and land occupations. To ward off the specter of a Bolshevik revolution, but also to take action against national minorities in the northeastern part of Italy, the *squadre d'azione*, paramilitary squads, formed and brought fascism an increasing number of followers.^[29] In so-called punitive expeditions, these squads brutally attacked agricultural workers and local socialist institutions, especially in the Po Valley.

It was in the course of this violence and of the ideological turn towards the right during the years 1920 to 1922 that the very *fascismo* emerged that was the basis for all later mutations. Attention should therefore be paid to the self-perception of these Fascists, who in November 1921 founded a militia party, the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF) and established the first fascist regime during the 1920s. They were the first to define fascism.

The self-understanding of Italian Fascists

In January 1928 Foreign Affairs published the translation of an article written by the erstwhile minister of public education in the Fascist government, Giovanni Gentile. Several versions of this article exist either as "Origins and Doctrine of Fascism" or "The Essence of Fascism"; the 1928 English translation was entitled "The Philosophic Basis of Fascism". In the text, Gentile stated: "In the definition of Fascism, the first point to grasp is the comprehensive, or as Fascists say, the 'totalitarian' scope of its doctrine, which concerns itself not only with political organization and political tendency, but with the whole will and thought and feeling of the nation."^[30] The "totalitarian character" was based not least on the fact that Fascism intended to bring about a different, greater Italy by creating a "New Man".^[31] Its aim was an "anthropological revolution": On the one hand, eugenic measures were to be implemented to physically strengthen the "Italian race" and make it fit for warfare. On the other hand, education and indoctrination were supposed to fundamentally change the mentality of Italians and produce

"modern Romans" – a warlike and disciplined people who placed the interests of the community before those of the individual.^[32]

In a speech in Perugia on 30 August 1925, Alfredo Rocco, the Italian minister of justice from 1925 until 1932, stated that fascist doctrine was the antithesis to the "liberal-democratic-socialist concept of society and the state". For fascism, the state was the "purpose and the individual the means".^[33] Fascism sought to replace the "atomistic and mechanical society" marked by class conflicts with an "organic and historical" community in which the individual served the community and was to be subordinated to it through "total sacrifice, if necessary". The Nazi motto "you are nothing, your people is everything" was prefigured here.

According to Ernst Nolte, fascism's key characteristics were – besides the Führerprinzip, the party army, and totalitarian claims – antithetical: it was anti-Marxist, anti-liberal, and anti-conservative.^[34] But what defined fascism, beyond its claim that it would totally transform society by creating a New Man, its declared opposition to other political groups, and its organizational specifics? Mussolini did not commit himself and stated in March 1921: "[...] we allow ourselves the luxury of being aristocratic and democratic, conservative and progressive, reactionary and revolutionary, legal and illegal, depending on the circumstances of the time, the place, the environment."^[35] In his speech at the Fascist Congress in November 1921, where the PNF was founded, Mussolini refused to be "a beardless Moses who tells you 'Here are the tablets of the law, swear by them!' [...] The concept of the 'nation' is our point of departure, which is for us a fact that can neither be obliterated nor overcome."^[36] Thus, whereas anticlerical and anti-monarchist convictions or corporatist visions of a different economic order might be given a lower priority or be sacrificed—the ultranationalist objective of renewing the nation was set in stone.

A dynamic concept of ideologies for a flexible world view

What do the first Fascists' efforts to describe their syncretistic ideology, i.e. a conglomerate of various, at times contradictory ideological elements, reveal? On the one hand, the Fascists proved to be flexible, for their goal was to gain power, which called for temporary pacts and abandoning previously held positions. Thus, speaking in Udine on 20 September 1922, Mussolini proclaimed: "Our program is simple: we wish to govern Italy."^[37] This statement is often quoted to substantiate the claim that ideology was irrelevant to Fascists. However, the rest of Mussolini's speech shows that the aim was not only power for its own sake. That power was to be employed to restore Italy to its former greatness, to renew the "immortal fatherland" that had appeared in ancient Rome, but also in the Risorgimento and

in wartime.

In keeping with the scientism that was typical of the second half of the nineteenth century, Marxism had made use of the term "scientific" to position itself in the field of political conflict. But it was precisely this "scientific" spirit that appeared, only a few decades later, strangely "anemic" and fruitless to a growing multitude of people seeking political orientation. As a reaction to the "disintegrating", historicist spirit of modernity, which deprived people of a transcendental point of reference, and before the backdrop of World War I, a decidedly antithetical ideology emerged that – building on Nietzsche's philosophy as well as Georges Sorel's teachings – stressed faith and myth, style, aesthetics, and action.^[38] This occurred, moreover, in the context of a transformation of the political in advanced industrial modernity, which was marked by the growing significance of the "masses", who had to be mobilized and whose desire for participation had to be met. Rather than relying on theoretical debates concerning political economy, on elections, strikes, and on parliament, the Fascists placed their bets on rites and cults, on myths, and on (violent) deeds on the street.

Due to both this transformation of the political field as well as to the convictions of fascism's contemporary opponents that it was "nothing but terror, violence, and indeed a bourgeois reflex of violence",^[39] later research also neglected analysis of fascist ideology. National Socialism was either dismissed – by functionalists – as a "propagandistic simulation", or reduced – by intentionalists – to Hitler's world view and the ideas of his entourage – Goebbels, Himmler, and Rosenberg.^[40]

Regarding Italian fascism, Wolfgang Schieder recently asked "whether in view of Fascism's conglomerate of political ideas it might be better considered a retrospective justification for a preceding praxis"?^[41]

These doubts regarding whether there is any such thing as a fascist ideology were and are also based on the fact that "scientific Marxism" was always regarded as the standard for ideology. But on closer examination, it becomes evident that Marxism was not a consistent, non-contradictory, static edifice of ideas either.^[42] Despite the supposedly firm foundation that Marx's and Engels' writings provided, Marxism spawned numerous mutations and a multitude of interpretations and heresies that were combated not least by Moscow. Consequently, it makes sense heuristically to bid farewell to an understanding of ideology based on the chimera of "scientific Marxism" and its supposedly static doctrinal edifice, and instead to approach ideologies, as Michael Freeden suggests, as a cluster of dynamic, mutually determined political concepts.^[43]

The combination of these political concepts – for example, the nation, the people, the state, the Führerprinzip, community, racism/anti-Semitism, and violence, as well as the antagonistic notions of fascism's political opponents, such as the individual, class, and freedom – appear in a particular constellation. On the one hand, this is specific and stable enough to allow us to distinguish between competing ideologies with their respective conceptual clusters. On the other hand, this constellation is sufficiently dynamic so that a diachronic development or adaptation of the ideology to prevailing circumstances is conceivable, as is a synchronic "pluralism". For a member of the Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM, League of German Girls) on the "home front", the word Volksgemeinschaft evoked ideas quite different than it did for an Einsatzgruppenführer from the "fighting administration" of the Reich Security Head Office. Thus, seen from a synchronic perspective we may have different fascists associating diverging and to a certain extent contradictory ideas with one and the same term. Moreover, central concepts such as the nation or violence could take on a varying range of meanings for one and the same fascist, depending on whether the movement was attempting to increase the number of its followers, gain power in the state, consolidate the power gained, or was conducting a war of extermination.^[44] This ideological "fluidity" and the "fuzziness" of central concepts would prove to be important factors for the success of fascist movements.

Due to this synchronic and diachronic pluralism, fascism – like the other "isms" – cannot be defined in essentialistic, rigid terms. Neither Marxism – which in contrast to fascism has identifiable "Bibles", primers, and theoreticians – nor fascism, which from the outset presented itself as an anti-intellectual ideology of action, can be grasped on the basis of a static understanding of ideologies. Criteria catalogs and ideal type definitions, some of which are presented below, are heuristically indispensable. But their static nature should not stand in the way of a perspective that recognizes fascism as a fluid and dynamic phenomenon.

From contemporary analyses of Fascism to research on Fascism in the Cold War

Fascism from the perspective of its contemporary political opponents

The earliest analyses of fascism came from its communist, social democratic, liberal, and conservative opponents.^[45] Communists saw fascists as the lackeys of capital.^[46] Despite fascism's "very diverse" social base, ranging from peasantry and (declassed) petit bourgeois to the working class, it pursued a "politics of the bourgeoisie". The social fascism theory, according to which, as Stalin asserted in

1924, social democracy could be regarded as a "moderate wing of fascism" and social democrats seen as "twin brothers" of fascists, was particularly disastrous.^[47]

Although the social fascism theory was officially rejected in 1935 – too late to avert the worst from happening in Germany – the definition of fascism formulated in December 1933 by the Georgi Dimitrov, who became head of the Comintern in 1934, remained the basis of official doctrine and research, even after World War II. "Fascism



The outward appearance and style of fascist movements and their "leaders" reveal numerous similarities; Benito Mussolini during his "March in Rome" (Marcia su Roma), 28 October 1922. Photographer unknown, Source: Wikimedia Commons / Photobucket (public domain).

in power" was "the openly terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinistic, and imperialistic elements of finance capital".^[48] The thesis that fascism was an agent of "state monopoly capitalism" (stamocap) became an unshakeable dogma in East German research. And although Western "materialistic" explanations of fascism – such as those proposed by the Frankfurt School, with its interpretations inspired by psychoanalysis and cultural criticism – should not to be reduced to this theoretical core, they too were rooted in and remained linked to nexus of capitalism and fascism mentioned above. It would prove to be an impediment to research on fascism.^[49]

Liberal, social democratic, and conservative anti-fascists drew another kind of parallel in the 1920s and 1930s when they drew attention to analogies between fascism and Bolshevism. The concept of totalitarianism was initially shaped in Italy by Giovanni Amendola, Lelio Basso, Francesco



Rally of the Nazi Party in Nuremberg 1927, from right: Franz Pfeffer von Salomon [Franz von Pfeffer], Adolf Hitler, Gregor Strasser, Rudolf Hess, Heinrich Himmler; on the left the SA banner. Photographer unknown, Source: Wikimedia Commons / Bundesarchiv Bild 146-1969-054-53A (CC-BY-SA 3.0).

Saverio Nitti, and Luigi Sturzo; in Germany, Waldemar Gurian and Paul Tillich, among others, but also the Marxists Herbert Marcuse, Franz Borkenau, and Richard Löwenthal were key figures.^[50] Both "totalitarian" systems, they argued, threatened freedom and undermined the rule of law and the parliamentary system. They aimed to monopolize power in the hands of a party and would unleash violence, and also resembled each other in their leadership cults and their efforts to penetrate every niche in society.

The communist, social democratic, liberal, and conservative analyses of the fascist political opponent were determined by the struggle against this new breed of adversary that had transformed the political landscape of Europe and circumvented established categories. Reducing the complexity of this range of analyses to a certain extent, two perspectives can be briefly outlined that determined the analysis of fascism in the phase of the rise of fascist movements and the establishment of the regimes in Italy and in Germany. These two approaches also remained formative in the period after the end of World War II:

First, independent of whether fascism was interpreted by orthodox communists as a counter-revolution in the name of the bourgeoisie and as an agent of capital, or as Bonapartism (by dissidents Franz Borkenau, August Thalheimer, and Leo Trotzki, or social democrat Otto Bauer),^[51] or as "class struggle of the petit bourgeois" (by the liberal Luigi Salvatorelli, for example) – what these interpretations always had in common was the referential framework, which consisted of categories of class and class struggle and questions of cui bono and

social constellations. Second, liberals, social democrats, and those conservatives who did not flirt or collaborate with fascism developed the concept of totalitarianism against the backdrop of a two-fold threat to the "principle of freedom or, more precisely, of civil and political liberties"^[52] posed by Bolshevism and fascism. This underlined the manifestly political characteristics of the new regimes: their terrorist, dictatorial, and belligerent form of rule, as well as the expanding hyper-state, which at least strived to penetrate all areas of society.

The paradigm for this Leviathan in a state of exception or "behemoth" was the radical fascist regime that was established on the ruins of the Weimar Republic, a good ten years after Mussolini had come to power in October 1922, flanked by the Italian conservative elites.^[53] On 30 January 1933, the "Führer" of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP, National Socialist German Workers' Party), Adolf Hitler, became chancellor of the German Reich. Within 18 months of "national revolution", Hitler and the NSDAP were able to dissolve trade unions, ban oppositional parties, penetrate the state's organization and societal life to a considerable extent, and to rid themselves by force of their conservative alliance partners as well as the "revolutionaries" within the party army, the SA. With this "radical-fascist acceleration" and the level of Gleichschaltung in German society achieved within a year and a half, Hitler had already surpassed his Italian model at the beginning of his dictatorship.^[54]

Totalitarianism and political religion

Ernst Fraenkel's *The Dual State* and Franz Leopold Neumann's *Behemoth*, both written in American exile during World War II, were two pioneering analyses of National Socialism, which centered on the transformation of the state by the NSDAP into an "non-state" (Neumann) or "dual state" (Fraenkel).^[55] Although the fascist threat had been overcome by its complete defeat and the phenomenon could be examined in the post-1945 period from a more distanced position, the contemporary political context continued to determine the analyses of fascism that began to emerge. The Cold War and Stalinism as the "main object of observation" were decisive for the theories of totalitarianism developed by Hannah Arendt, Carl J. Friedrich, and Zbigniew Brzezinski as well as Raymond Aron.^[56] Totalitarianism theory's exculpating and relativizing connotations enabled it to become the quasi-official West German theory, as Wolfgang Wippermann observed in 1976, at the same time they also attracted criticism.^[57] After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the concept of totalitarianism experienced a renaissance. In particular for Emilio Gentile's interpretation of fascism, it forms an interpretational centerpiece: totalitarianism, he asserts, is an "experiment in

political domination", which is why the actual degree of "Gleichschaltung" and the regime's hegemonic penetration of society is not decisive, but rather the regime's aspirations.^[58]

In this context, the notion of "political religion", already developed at the end of the 1930s by Eric Voegelin, again became relevant.^[59] This interpretative pattern has faced substantial criticism, for one thing because of the notion of religion which underlies the concept but also because of fascist regimes' relationships to traditional religions.^[60] Nevertheless, the fascist emphasis on the "sacralization of politics" highlighted important aspects of fascist political style, its justification of violence, and the consensus it generated – not least thanks to the transfer of religious topoi such as redemption and rebirth to immanent and secular ideas such as the nation and the people.^[61]

From the fascist minimum to Fascism as a cultural revolution

But before this renaissance of the concept of totalitarianism there was criticism, expressed by Ernst Nolte and others: "The mutation cannot be understood, if it is subsumed under the general term."^[62] Accordingly one could conclude that National Socialism should not be subsumed under the generic concept of fascism. But the usefulness of these generic terms lies in the broadening of perspectives, as they enable us to transcend the narrowness of national contexts. In his book, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche*, first published in 1963, Ernst Nolte did just that and turned his attention to Italian Fascism and National Socialism as well as the *Action Française*. Nolte defined fascism as "anti-Marxism, which aims to destroy adversaries by forming a radically opposing and nonetheless contiguous ideology and by utilizing nearly identical but nevertheless characteristically reshaped methods, all of this, however, in the unbreachable framework of national self-assertion and autonomy". Nolte subsequently developed his "fascist minimum": anti-Marxism, anti-liberalism, and a tendency to anti-conservatism as well as the *Führerprinzip*, the party army, and the aim of totalitarianism were the central features of fascism.^[63] Nolte's attempt to find a least common denominator for various national forms of fascism was repeatedly taken up, adapted, and enhanced by Stanley Payne, Roger Griffin, and Roger Eatwell, among others.^[64]

Stanley G. Payne, who emerged as an expert on Spanish fascism in the early 1960s, aimed to develop a more precise typological description of generic fascism in his book, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition*, published in 1980, and in his subsequent, considerably extended book from 1995, *A History of Fascism*. He expanded Nolte's "fascist minimum" by adding several categories and

compiled a comprehensive catalog of attributes. In his succinct definition, fascism was "[...] a form of revolutionary ultranationalism for national rebirth that is based on a primarily vitalist philosophy, is structured on extreme elitism, mass mobilisation, and the Führerprinzip, positively values violence as an end as well as means and tends to normative war and/or military virtues".^[65] Payne supplemented this working definition by also shedding light on the contexts from which significant fascist movements emerged. Among the conditions necessary for the growth of a fascist movement were: "[...] strong influence from the cultural crisis of the fin de siècle in a situation of perceived mounting cultural disorientation; the background of some form of organized nationalism before World War I; an international situation of perceived defeat, status humiliation, or lack of dignity; a state system comparatively new that was entering or had just entered a framework of liberal democracy; a situation of increasing political fragmentation; large sectors of workers, farmers, or petit bourgeois that were either not represented or had lost confidence in the existing parties; and an economic crisis perceived to stem in large measure from foreign defeat or exploitation".^[66]

These attempts to determine a fascist minimum or create a catalog of characteristics were often criticized because the non-fulfillment of a criterion by a variant of national fascism was enough to falsify the definition. Mussolini's Italian biographer, Renzo De Felice, rejected the generic concept of fascism, for example, on the grounds that racism/antisemitism was obviously a characteristic feature of Nazism but "foreign to the nature" of Italian Fascism.^[67] The latter idea has been exposed since the 1990s as an Italian postwar legend, as will be discussed below, but De Felice and many other Italians sought to keep Italy out of the "scorching 'spotlight of the Holocaust'".^[68] Despite this apologist position, and due to his monumental Mussolini biography, which – when it was completed in 1997 – comprised eight volumes, De Felice was of great importance for Italian fascism research:^[69] on the one hand, because he drew attention to the "consensual" relationship between dictator/regime and the population, and emphasized the revolutionary drive of the Fascist movement – as opposed to the fascist regime; on the other hand, because he initiated a series of informative studies, particularly work by Emilio Gentile.^[70]

As early as 1975, De Felice's student pointed out the centrality of mythical concepts of renewal and the significance of the creation of a "New Man" for Fascist ideology.^[71] In 1993, Gentile published a synthesis of his previous research.^[72] Based on an analysis of various symbols (such as the fasces), rites

(such as the *leva fascista* or Fascist confirmation), myths (the rebirth of ancient Rome), cults (of the Duce), public celebrations (the anniversary of the March on Rome), and buildings (among others, the *case del fascio*, the local party houses), Gentile called attention to the sacralization of politics in fascist Italy and demonstrated the extent to which Fascism was best understood as a totalitarian experiment and political religion.

Gentile's works were in turn inspired by George L. Mosse's study *The Nationalization of the Masses*.^[73] Mosse, who had already begun looking at the *völkisch* origins of Nazism in the mid-1960s,^[74] focused on the religious dimension of fascist ideology as well as its style and aesthetics, by which fascism mobilized the masses.^[75] Like Nolte, who sought to understand fascism as a "transpolitical" phenomenon, Mosse argued in his 1990 book, *The Fascist Revolution*, a collection of earlier publications, that fascism could not be limited exclusively to the political arena but should instead be examined as a cultural movement and revolution. For Mosse, fascism research should focus on, first, the people's perceptions of fascism and fascism's self-representations as a reflection of these perceptions; second, nationalism and racism as belief systems; third, the birth of fascism from the First World War and its emphasis on war experience, comradeship, and masculinity; and fourth, the dialectic of Führer and population.^[76]

The "culturalistic" turn in fascism research that followed in the 1990s was rooted in Mosse's work. This – as paradoxical as it may sound – depoliticized concept of fascism, which marked the third phase of fascism research, was based on the theorizing, substantiation, and historicizing that emerged in the "second wave".^[77] In particular, the works of Mosse, Payne, and Gentile, but also Walter Laqueur,^[78] Juan Linz,^[79] and Zeev Sternhell^[80] were an important bridge between these two phases.

Recent approaches to research on Fascism

In the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, some of the conflicts between left and right that had impeded use of the fascism concept in analyzing the (now ended) "age of extremes" abated.

Moreover, in the course of the linguistic turn and the cultural turns that it spawned, a pluralization of perspectives and methods emerged in research. Against this backdrop, a third wave of comparative research on fascism began to take shape, now linked to the names Roger Griffin, Roger Eatwell, Robert Paxton, and Michael

Mann, among others.

Fascism as a palingenetic form of ultranationalism

In his 1991 book, *The Nature of Fascism*, Roger Griffin drew on the work of George L. Mosse, Stanley Payne, and Emilio Gentile to define fascism as "a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism".^[81] Ultranationalism and palingenesis, that is, the rebirth and renewal of the national or "racist-völkisch" community, lie at the core of Griffin's radically slimmed-down, heuristic ideal type. One advantage of Griffin's synthetic definition is the way it operates, in manner of speaking, with Ockham's razor, in keeping with the principle of greatest possible economy: it involves considerably less variables than previous definitions. A further merit is the fact that ultranationalism or radical nationalism has replaced criteria based on opposition to other political ideas.

Griffin's definition and the new consensus it has yielded have been at the center of extensive controversial discussions. Criticism has addressed the generic term itself, the ideal-type definition and its static nature, and the validity of a model based on fascist ideology.^[82] In *Modernism and Fascism*, published in 2007, Griffin in part took up these critiques but affirmed palingenesis as *differentia specifica*. He refers to fascism as a form of programmatic modernism "that seeks to conquer political power in order to realize a totalizing vision of national or ethnic rebirth. Its ultimate end is to overcome the decadence that has destroyed a sense of communal belonging and drained modernity of meaning and transcendence and usher in a new era of cultural homogeneity and health."^[83]

Fascism beyond right and left

In 1992, one year after Griffin's book was published, Roger Eatwell suggested approaching fascism as a "spectral-syncretic ideology".^[84] Fascism was a latecomer among ideologies, and thus, in order to carve out a position in the political field – i.e. within the traditional left-right spectrum –, fascism transcended this scheme and forged a synthesis of left and right ideologems. "Amongst the most important were: between a conservative view of man constrained by nature and the more left-wing view of the possibilities of creating a 'new man'; between a commitment to science, especially in terms of understanding human nature, and a more anti-rationalist, vitalist interest in the possibilities of the will [...]; between the faith and service of Christianity and heroism of Classical thought; between private property relations more typical of the right and a form of welfarism more typical of the left."^[85] Eatwell also emphasized the adaptability of fascism, which, although it is a fundamentalist ideology, is also a pragmatic-opportunistic program. Thus,

Eatwell asserted, its many faces resulted on the one hand from its having emerged from diverse national contexts, whose specific nature shaped the national variants. On the other hand, fascism had proven to be flexible and thus capable of diachronic transformation.

Fascism as process and practice

This capacity for diachronic transformation is also at the center of Robert O. Paxton's five-tiered model of fascism, which is comparable to Wolfgang Schieder's three- and four-tiered model.^[86] Paxton suggests that process should take priority over essence. In other words, study should focus on fascism in motion, and the contexts out of which it emerged and within which it developed should be afforded greater weight in research. Moreover, Paxton has advocated utilizing the formable and volatile nature of fascism, which precludes static definitions, for comparative work: movements that are still in their formative phase should only be compared with fascisms that are in a similar "developmental stage". Paxton's five-tiered model identifies the following stages: (1) the creation of fascist movements; (2) their rooting in a political system; (3) their seizure of power; (4) the exercise of power; (5) and, finally, the long duration, during which the fascist regime chooses either radicalization or entropy."

Paxton's dynamic understanding of fascism as well as his "anti-ideological assumption" that "the ideas that underlie fascist actions are best deduced from those actions", were the foundation for Sven Reichardt's 2002 study of "Fascist Combat Leagues".^[87] The empirically-rich comparison of the Italian Squadre d'Azione and the German SA elucidated the central role of the praxis of violence in fascism: "There was no need to justify the presence of violence in the conceptual world of fascism—after all, a positive value was attached to it. [...] The ubiquity of this self-justifying, self-referential violence is a key characteristic of fascism." In Reichardt's assessment, the "practical implementation", the "quotidian, voluntary life in violence" was fascist.^[88] Thanks to this innovative "praxeological" approach, Reichardt was able to revive the German discussion about the value of fascism as a concept. Fascism was to be addressed not as a consistent ideology but rather as a habitus, a way of life, and as a specific praxis of violence. Fascism constituted itself in actu: not anticommunist attitudes but rather anticommunist actions were specifically fascist.

Who were the fascists?

A new, synthetic approach was presented in 2004 by the sociologist Michael Mann.^[89] Mann sought to overcome the schism between materialism (the classic theoretical approach of Marxists) and idealism (with ideology as its starting point)

by drawing attention to his view that fascism could only be understood as a social movement when all "all four sources of social power" were considered. Mann continues: "To attain their goals, social movements wield combinations of control over ultimate meaning systems (ideological), control over means of production and exchange (economic), control over organized physical violence (military), and control over centralized and territorial institutions of regulation (political)."^[90] Mann defined fascism as "the pursuit of a transcendent and cleansing nation-statism through paramilitarism".

The centerpiece of Mann's analysis was the question of who became a fascist in Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, and Spain – and why. He examined the social backgrounds of individuals but went beyond consideration of the aspects addressed in materialist theories – their occupation or the class to which they belonged. Mann also illuminated their age and gender, whether their background was military or civilian, urban or rural, religious or secular and, moreover, whether they were economically successful or not and from what region they originally came. Generalizations are, of course, difficult in view of such a criteria catalog and a body of data of varying quality from six different countries. Thus, it is ironic that Mann's generic conclusions refer to ideological aspects: what made fascism so attractive was "the intensity of its message". This was a magnet for young men with nationalistic and militant leanings, who found the paramilitary form of organization with its clearly defined hierarchies, camaraderie, and sense of community appealing.^[91] The success of each movement was, he reported, especially dependent on the strength and stability of the old conservative regime. If it was strong enough, as in the case of Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria, Greece, the Serbian core of Yugoslavia, the Baltic republics, Poland, and Albania, authoritarian-conservative solutions to the post-war crises held sway over the fascist alternatives. However, in some instances, fascist elements were integrated into these political orders.

Scholarship since the 1990s has not only been marked by intensive work on the generic concept of fascism. This has also been a phase of highly productive empirical work on specific issues. Some of these fields of empirical research and representative studies will be briefly addressed in the following section.^[92] But since there is an ongoing dearth of comparative empirical studies, it should be noted that the focus of much of this work is limited to Italian fascism.

Topics of empirical research

Consensus and the social practice of dictatorship

When Renzo De Felice asserted in 1974 that consensus had reigned between Italy's population and the country's fascist regime in the years 1929 to 1936, the Italian public was forced to revise the image of the dictatorship and its own participation in it that had taken shape in the post-war years.^[93] The fascist regime was rooted in force, violence, and exclusion, but it was also underpinned by what was at times a high level of support and participation from below, which resulted from a variety of disparate motives. This consensus was not only generated by repression and the "fabbrica del consenso" (propaganda factory). It also grew out of the grassroots fascism adhered to by numerous Italians as well as the attractive opportunities and upward mobility that fascism offered.^[94]

Paul Corner recently addressed this "real, existing" fascism on a local level and highlighted the deep divide that emerged between the programs of the PNF in Rome and actual practices in the provinces.^[95] The fascist revolution by no means abolished corruption and nepotism; rather, the beneficiaries changed. This caused a significant drop in the regime's credibility and popularity already in the second half of the 1930s. A collected volume edited by Giulia Albanese and Roberta Pergher and published in the same year as Corner's book also paints a complex portrait of the relationship between the regime, in the midst of ongoing transformations, and diverse groups within the population with their own dynamic interests and levels of agency. The authors argue in favor of abandoning the inadequate dichotomy of consensus versus repression and violence.^[96]

Consensus, according to a provocative argument proposed by Götz Aly with respect to the German dictatorship, could also be bought by dividing the spoils of occupation and genocide. And Michael Wildt has asserted that consensus was also based on racist exclusion and deadly violence, i.e. by allowing the "Volksgenossen" – those defined by the Nazis as belonging to the German people – to make use of the space for violence opened up by the regime.^[97] It is to be hoped that these new perspectives on "consensus" in Fascist Italy as well on Volksgemeinschaft as an analytically defined category will stimulate and inform future research on the fascist dictatorships of mobilization.^[98] The "social practice" of fascism, how it is objectivized in everyday life^[99] and how it is written into the bodies and minds of people, for example in the many mass organizations, are all topics that warrant much more comparative research.^[100]

Fascism and modernity

A great number of Italian artists participated in establishing the fascist consensus,

whether due to convictions or for opportunistic motives. They were important cogs in the propaganda machinery of the fascist regime and generated the image of a new, modern, and fascist Italy. The "aestheticization of politics"^[101] and the role of modernism – in the more narrow, cultural sense of the word – in Italian Fascism have attracted broad attention from researchers in the context of the cultural turn.^[102] Most recently, a key focus of this work has been on how the Italian regime staged itself architecturally by building new cities, for example in the Pontine Marshes, and by unearthing the *romanità* of the "eternal city" for the purpose of rooting the regime in tradition and delineating its monumental future.^[103]

These references to the Roman and Germanic past and the "atavistic" violence that fascism unleashed meant that, for many years, the notion of a fascist modernism let alone a fascist modernity was considered at best an oxymoron and a paradox; it was only conceivable as "reactionary modernism".^[104] Before the backdrop of modernization theory, debates emerged in the 1960s regarding the modernizing effects of National Socialism on German society and of Italian Fascism as a "developmental dictatorship".^[105] These discussions were rekindled in the late 1980s in the context of Rainer Zitelmann's revisionist attempts to characterize Hitler as a revolutionary, but by then they proved, *ex post*, to be anachronistic, since the positive connotation of modernity and modernization had already been called into question.^[106]

Of greater relevance was a new perspective on modernity that developed from a critique of the normative foundations of modernization theory and revealed diverse multiple modernities.^[107] Seen from this critical approach to modernity, the murder of millions of European Jews, as Zygmunt Bauman asserted, was not "an irrational outflow of the not-yet-fully-eradicated residues of pre-modern barbarity" but rather the product of a dialectic of order inherent in modernity and of a specifically modern "gardening state".^[108]

Once the liberal-democratic ideal type (in a dual sense) was no longer applied as the sole yardstick of modernity, the long *fin de siècle* emerged as a "laboratory".^[109] "Here social experts and intellectuals, artists and politicians, engineers and entrepreneurs designed new patterns of order, new forms of politics, new ways of life and environments", writes Lutz Raphael. And he continues: "Planning and utopia became important forms of expression for this intense interaction between anonymous developmental trends and modern visions for order."^[110] Fascism must be seen within the context of this "explosion of modernity" and the longing for order that resulted from it.^[111] From this

perspective, fascism emerged from the perception that the existing order was fractured, rigid, outmoded, and decadent.^[112] It therefore had to be destroyed through revolutionary violence and, as Roger Griffin repeatedly emphasized, the rebirth of the "eternal" – be it ancient Rome, the Germanic people, or legionary Romania – had to be initiated.^[113] Through a bonifica (melioration, valorization) of the nation's population, i.e. the anthropological revolution already mentioned earlier, the foundation would be laid for the long-awaited permanent, "truly" stable order, which was rooted in the myth of an absolutized nation or people.^[114]

Violence, war, and the Holocaust

The consequences of the myth of a "German people" or "Aryan race", envisaged as something absolute, are completely clear: Nazi Germany was responsible for the murder of about 5.7 million European Jews. These murders were planned, coordinated, and brutally implemented by the National Socialists. Moreover, their exterminatory policies led to the deaths of approximately two hundred thousand Sinti and Roma and "about one million non-Jewish Polish civilians, some 2.8 million Soviet prisoners of war, three to four million Soviet civilians, and half a million non-Jewish civilians in the other countries occupied by Germany and in Germany itself."^[115] Nonetheless – and great care must be taken in phrasing this issue, to avoid making a statement that lends itself to being abused for apologetic or revisionist goals – social engineering, eugenic biopolitics,^[116] violence, "ethnic cleansing", and mass murder were not exclusively German phenomena.^[117] The high-modernist ideology of a "gardening state" that "weeded out" certain people was a hallmark of the era, and murderous ultranationalistic, ethnically-racist motivated violence had been ubiquitous since World War I.^[118]

Thus, it is unsurprising that the extent of violence and murder perpetrated by other fascist movements, by "fascisticized", authoritarian regimes, and by the regimes that collaborated with the Germans has become increasingly apparent in recent years.^[119] Besides the violent repression of political opponents in Italy itself, this included fascist Italy's conduct of the war and its occupation practices in Europe, which have been the subject of several studies.^[120] Attention has also been paid to the deadly colonial regime of the Italian Fascist state, which led to an estimated one hundred thousand victims in Libya. The racist violence unleashed in Ethiopia to revive Fascism cost between 350,000 and 760,000 lives. As a result, the postwar legend of *italiani brava gente* (Italians, good people) has been replaced by references to the "first fascist war of extermination".^[121]

But what role did racism and antisemitism play in Italian Fascism, as well as in the other forms of fascism?^[122] Antisemitism's pivotal role in National Socialism – be it "völkisch", "racial-biological", "eliminatory" (Goldhagen), or "redemptive" antisemitism (Friedländer) – and the murder of millions of European Jews perpetrated by Germans, made the categorizing of National Socialist ideology under the generic term of fascism appear questionable to scholars in both Germany and Italy.^[123] To a certain extent due to Renzo De Felice's exculpatory reading, Italian Fascism's

antisemitism, which was expressed in the Manifesto della razza (Charter of Race, July 1938) and in the leggi razziali (race laws of November 1938), was long considered a result of the emulation of Nazi German policies by the Italian regime in the wake of the rapprochement between the dictatorships in the late 1930s.^[124] The zealous Italian support for Germany's deportation of Jews from the Repubblica Sociale Italiana, which had become the "Third Reich's" "occupied ally" in September 1943, was also largely seen as being purely reactive.^[125]

But since the 1990s, perceptions of Italian Fascism have shifted, as it became clear that biopolitical and eugenic thinking were also firmly rooted in fin de siècle Italian academia. And Italian racism – both as it was manifested with respect to the Slavic minorities in Italy's eastern regions and as it targeted the African inhabitants of the Italian colonial empire – proved to be murderous.^[126] The notion of antisemitism as a purely imported phenomenon, in particular, has been disproved.^[127] While Mussolini's perception of the now more radical and totalitarian northern successor did play a role, his regime's antisemitic policies were intrinsically motivated. Like the racist war launched by Italy against Ethiopia in October 1935, antisemitism was unleashed as a means of reviving the flagging revolutionary/antibourgeois spirit of Italian Fascism. Ultrnationalism or radical



The racism and antisemitism of Italian fascists was autochthonous. The magazine *La difesa della razza*, first published in 1938, aimed to enhance Italians' "racial consciousness".
Source: Wikimedia Commons (public domain).

nationalism were not necessarily accompanied by antisemitism, but generating or integrating antisemitism as an element was always easy for ultranationalists, since in their worldview "the Jew" quickly mutated into the embodiment of the nation's Other.^[128]

Does the singular role of National Socialist Germany in the Holocaust remain apparent when the participation of, for example, Italian Fascists, Croatian Ustascha, or the Hungarian Arrow Cross in the implementation of antisemitic policies and their autochthonous antisemitism is considered?^[129] Is the radical character of National Socialism reduced if it is subsumed under the generic term fascism? If we refute an essentialist concept of fascism and instead make use of the Michael Freeden's flexible and dynamic morphological model of ideology mentioned above, then it seems possible to do justice to the prominent significance of antisemitism within National Socialism without abandoning the generic concept of fascism.^[130] Within the conceptual cluster of National Socialism, antisemitism occupied a more central position than it did within Italian Fascism, for example. Moreover, it was marked by different and stronger links to Marxism, Bolshevism, and liberalism and also to the concepts of Volksgemeinschaft and Lebensraum. The generic term does not imply that any two phenomena labeled in this way, which always develop within their respective national cultural contexts, are identical, but rather that they involve (family) resemblances, which are heuristically useful to address.

Moreover, on the basis of an understanding of fascism in this vein, it seems possible to refer to National Socialism as radical fascism, while avoiding the pitfalls of the politically dubious "causal nexus" argument.^[131] As Aristotle Kallis has emphasized, the Nazi regime was "not just more extreme in its ideological synthesis between national-racial 'rebirth' and 'cleansing', but also unscrupulous and fanatical in its praxis".^[132] In the course of the "cumulative radicalization" of National Socialism and in conjunction with the widening military, political, and economic horizons of action as well as constraints that the regime faced as it waged war, the significance of antisemitism and the opportunities to implement antisemitic policies grew. Gradually, what was once unthinkable became thinkable and utterable and what was utterable became feasible.^[133] Because of the exterminatory policies the Nazi regime put into practice in the war it had unleashed, National Socialism became a catalyst for the radicalization of other fascist movements, Kallis argues. Whereas Italian Fascism had been a paradigm and template for other fascisms in the 1920s and in part in the 1930s, this role was subsequently assumed by the far more radical National Socialism. In this

vein, Thomas Schlemmer and Hans Woller recently postulated that National Socialism was a necessary prerequisite for the subsequent radicalization of the European fascists and that the war it unleashed was needed as a catalyst, but that in wartime all fascisms revealed "their true face as ruthless racists and violent anti-Semites, who up to that point in many cases had merely lacked opportunities for development". Under the leadership of and fueled by the National Socialists, the fascists were (re)radicalized, participated willingly in the extermination of the European Jews, and strived to establish a new supranational fascist-racist order in Europe.^[134] The transfer processes between the various European forms of fascism, their "entangled history", still await further study.^[135]

Conclusion

For more than ninety years, there has been an ongoing controversy on the content and the range of the concept of fascism. As Roger Eatwell has noted, "no other 'ism' has produced such conflicting interpretations".^[136] These in part heated debates were rooted in contemporary political conflicts – and sometimes in individual scholars' narcissism – and in an essentialist understanding of the fascism concept. If the generic term is understood as a Platonic universal, this results inevitably in dogmatic nominalist disputes. It thus seems more productive to employ the term as a heuristic construct that enables us to recognize "kinship relations". What family resemblances are revealed in synchronic perspective between the respective national fascisms, as well as in diachronic perspective between fascisms within one country, depends on which ideal type definition one chooses to work with.^[137] Since ideal type definitions by their nature highlight only certain aspects of phenomena and relegate others to the background, it is important to retain awareness of these limitations and to combine various ideal types and complementary approaches.^[138]

The value of the fascism concept lies, ultimately, in its capacity to facilitate analysis and understanding of those hybrid political phenomena that, in the period between World War I and World War II, not only moved beyond the previous left-right pattern but also transcended the traditional meaning of a number of nineteenth-century political categories. Similarly, political praxis was fundamentally transformed by the paramilitary combat groups and the prerogative state of the single-party dictatorship. The concept of fascism is a tool for elucidating these changes as well as the contexts in which they occurred: the explosion of modernity; World War I; the Bolshevik revolution; the crisis of the liberal system, and the resulting search for a purportedly stable order; the widespread discontent

with civilization (S. Freud) and the search for alternative models for living, as manifested most clearly in the Lebensreform and youth movements in Germany; the radicalization and ethnicization of nationalism in World War I and the venomous vehemence with which the "new nationalists" took action against their opponents and against the "Versailles system"; the strain on the existing political system that faced a plethora of problems for which no established strategies were available.

Comparable situations existed in a wide range of European countries. Not only Italy and Germany but also the nations that had emerged from the remnants of the Austro-Hungarian Empire faced similar challenges. The expectations that the war would purify, unite, and bring salvation had been disappointed everywhere in Europe, and liberalism failed to meet the hopes set in it. What remained was a longing for community, orientation, and order and a willingness to try radical solutions for the pressing issues of modernity. Fascism was a response that aimed to satisfy the desire for a new beginning, for a New Man, and for an alternative modernity – that fascism aimed to create on a drawing board, or rather on a tabula rasa created by murdering millions of people.

Translated from the German by Paula Bradish.

German Version: Faschismus – Begriff und Theorien, Version: 1.0, in: Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte, 06.05.2016

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 18. ↑ On this aspect and the following see Ernst Nolte, 'Art. „Faschismus“'. In: Otto Brunner (ed.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, Bd. II (Stuttgart 1975), pp. 329-336; Robert O. Paxton, 'The Anatomy of Fascism' (London 2005), pp. 4-8, 58-64. Available at: <https://libcom.org/files/Robert%20O.%20Paxton-The%20Anatomy%20of%20Fascism%20%20Knopf%20%282004%29.pdf> (accessed 3 April 2016).
 19. ↑ See Salvatore Francesco Romano, *Storia dei fasci Siciliani* (Rome and others 1959).

20. ↑ See Loretana de Libero, 'Fasces'. In: Hubert Cancik/Helmuth Schneider/Manfred Landfester (eds.), *Der Neue Pauly* (Brill online 2006). Available at: <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/der-neue-pauly/fasces-e12221810> (accessed 3 April 2016). See also Christian Gizewski, 'Lictor'. In: *Ibid.* Available at: <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/lictor-e705160?s.num=0&s.q=lictor> (accessed 3 April 2016).
21. ↑ See Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle. The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley 1997), pp. 95-99. Available at: <http://s1.downloadmienphi.net/file/downloadfile4/270/1393937.pdf> (accessed 3 April 2016); as well as Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del littorio. La sacralizzazione della politica nell'Italia fascista* (Bari 1993), pp. 74-80. The English edition was published in 1996 as *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy*.
22. ↑ Beside the canonical eight-volume Mussolini biography by Renzo De Felices discussed below see also Richard J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini* (London 2002); Wolfgang Schieder, *Benito Mussolini* (Munich 2014) and Hans Woller, *Mussolini. Der erste Faschist. Eine Biographie* (Munich 2016).
23. ↑ On this and the following see: Emilio Gentile, *The Origins of Fascist Ideology, 1918-1925* (New York 2005 [originally Bari 1975]); *Id.*, *Storia del Partito Fascista 1919-1922. Movimento e Milizia* (Rome 1989).
24. ↑ On fascism as the "third way" see George L. Mosse, 'Toward a General Theory of Fascism'. In: George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution. Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York 1999), pp. 1-44, p. 7c.
25. ↑ See Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence. The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown CT 1973).
26. ↑ On "Volksgemeinschaft" see Martina Steber/Bernhard Gotto (eds.), *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany. Social Engineering and Private Lives* (Oxford 2014).
27. ↑ See on this issue Lutz Raphael, *Imperiale Gewalt und mobilisierte Nation. Europa 1914–1945* (München 2016).
28. ↑ See Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht/Friedrich Kittler/Bernhard Siegert (eds.), *Der Dichter als Kommandant. D'Annunzio erobert Fiume* (Munich 1996) sowie Bettina Vogel-Walter, *D'Annunzio – Abenteurer und charismatischer Führer* (Frankfurt a.M. 2004).
29. ↑ On „squadrist“ see Sven Reichardt, *Faschistische Kampfbünde. Gewalt und Gemeinschaft im italienischen Squadristum und in der deutschen SA* (Cologne 2002).
30. ↑ Giovanni Gentile, 'Origini e dottrina del Fascismo [1928/1934]'. In: Hervé A. Cavallera (ed.), *Id.*, *Opere. Bd. 45, Politica e cultura 1* (Florenz 1990), pp. 373-457, quotation p. 396. English translation: 'The Philosophic Basis of Fascism'. In: *Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 2 (January 1928), available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/italy/1928-01-01/philosophic-basis-fascism> (accessed 24 April 2017).
31. ↑ See on this issue and the following: Emilio Gentile, 'Der „neue Mensch“ des Faschismus. Reflexionen über ein totalitäres Experiment'. In: Thomas Schlemmer/Hans Woller (eds.), *Der*

Faschismus in Europa. Wege der Forschung (Munich 2014), pp. 89-106.

32. ↑ On the “Romans of modernity” see Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del littorio*, p. 129c.
33. ↑ Alfredo Rocco, ‘La dottrina politica del Fascismo’. In: Id., *Scritti e discorsi politici* (Milan 1938), pp. 1093-1115, as quoted in Renzo De Felice, *Autobiografia del fascismo* (Turin 2001), pp. 230-247, p. 235c. The following quotations are from the same source. As the minister of justice and “attorney of the Crown”, Rocco was responsible for the *leggi fascistissime* (the fascist laws) upon which the Italian dictatorship was based.
34. ↑ Ernst Nolte, *Die Krise des liberalen Systems und die faschistischen Bewegungen* (Munich 1968), p. 385.
35. ↑ Benito Mussolini, ‘Dopo due anni’. In: Edoardo and Dulio Susmel (eds.), *Opera Omnia*, Bd. XVI (3rd edn Florence 1963), pp. 211-213, here p. 212.
36. ↑ Benito Mussolini, ‘Il Programma fascista’. In: Id./Edoardo and Dulio Susmel (eds.), *Opera Omnia*, Bd. XVII (2nd edn Florence 1963), S. 216-223, hier S. 219; For the English translation cf.: Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, p.63.
37. ↑ Benito Mussolini, ‘L’Azione e la dottrina fascista dinnanzi alle necessità storiche della nazione’. In: Id./ Edoardo and Dulio Susmel (eds.), *Opera Omnia*, Bd. XVIII (2nd edn Florence 1963), pp. 411-432, here p. 416. The following quotations from the same source, p. 421.
38. ↑ See on this Gentile, *The Origins of Fascist Ideology*; Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism. The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke 2007); Fernando Esposito, *Mythische Moderne. Aviatik, Faschismus und die Sehnsucht nach Ordnung in Deutschland und Italien* (Munich 2011), especially pp. 398-431.
39. ↑ Clara Zetkin, ‘Der Kampf gegen den Faschismus’. In: Id., *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften*, Bd. II: *Auswahl aus den Jahren 1918 bis 1923* (Berlin 1960), pp. 689-729, here p. 690.
40. ↑ See on this question and for a concise survey: Lutz Raphael, ‘Pluralities of National Socialist Ideology. New Perspectives on the Production and Diffusion of National Socialist Weltanschauung’. In: Steber/Gotto (eds.), *Visions of Community*, pp. 73-86. See also Hans Mommsen, ‘NS-Ideologie. Der Nationalsozialismus als eine ideologische Simulation?’. In: Hilmar Hoffmann/Heinrich Klotz (eds.), *Die Kultur unseres Jahrhunderts*, Bd. 3, 1933-1945 (Düsseldorf 1991), pp. 43-54, esp. p. 50.
41. ↑ Wolfgang Schieder, *Der italienische Faschismus 1919-1945* (Munich 2010), p. 58.
42. ↑ This impression is confirmed by, for example, Gerd Koenen, *Was war der Kommunismus?* (Göttingen 2010); Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (New York 2008 [Reprint]); sowie David Priestland, *The Red Flag. A History of Communism* (New York 2009).
43. ↑ See for example Michael Freeden, ‘Political Concepts and Ideological Morphology’. In: *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, no. 2 (1994), pp. 140-164; Id., *Ideologies and Political Theory. A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford 1996).
44. ↑ On this processual approach to fascism see Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism* sowie Wolfgang Schieder, ‘Faschismus’. In: Richard van Dülmen (ed.), *Fischer Lexikon Geschichte* (Frankfurt

- a.M. 2003 [originally 1990]), pp. 199-221.
45. ↑ On early fascism theories see Ernst Nolte, *Theorien über den Faschismus* (Cologne 1967).
46. ↑ O.A., *Der Faschismus in Deutschland*. XIII. Plenum des EKKI (Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale) (Dezember 1933, Milan 1967 [originally Moskau 1934]), p. 10; the following quotations from the same source.
47. ↑ Josef W. Stalin, 'Zur internationalen Lage'. In: Id., *Werke*. Bd. 6 (Berlin 1952), pp. 251-269, here p. 253. Cf. Bernd Faulenbach, 'Zur Rolle von Totalitarismus- und Sozialfaschismus-„Theorien“ im Verhältnis von Sozialdemokraten und Kommunisten in den zwanziger und frühen dreißiger Jahren'. In: Mike Schmeitzner (ed.), *Totalitarismuskritik von links. Deutsche Diskurse im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen 2007), pp. 119-131.
48. ↑ O.A., *Der Faschismus in Deutschland*, p. 9c. On the following question see Hans-Ulrich Thamer, 'Nationalsozialismus und Faschismus in der DDR-Historiographie'. In: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte B 13* (1987), pp. 27-37 sowie Werner Röhr, 'Faschismusforschung in der DDR. Eine Problemskizze'. In: *Bulletin für Faschismus- und Weltkriegsforschung* 16 (2001), pp. 3-74.
49. ↑ See for example Otto Bauer/Herbert Marcuse/Arthur Rosenberg et al. (ed. by Wolfgang Abendroth), *Faschismus und Kapitalismus. Theorien über die sozialen Ursprünge und die Funktion des Faschismus* (Frankfurt a.M. 1967).
50. ↑ Some of these texts are to be found in Nolte's *Theorien des Faschismus*. On earlier fascism theories see also Wolfgang Wippermann, *Faschismustheorien. Die Entwicklung der Diskussion von den Anfängen bis heute* (7th edn Darmstadt 1997) sowie Richard Saage, *Faschismus: Konzeptionen und historische Kontexte. Eine Einführung* (Wiesbaden 2007). On the history of the totalitarianism theory and the following issues cf. i.a. Eckhard Jesse (ed.), *Totalitarismus im 20. Jahrhundert. Eine Bilanz der internationalen Forschung* (2nd edn Baden-Baden 1999); Hans Maier (ed.), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen. Konzepte des Diktaturvergleichs*, 3 Bde. (Paderborn 1996-2003); Id.: '„Totalitarismus“ und „politische Religionen“'. In: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte (VfZ)* 43 (1995), pp. 387-405, available at: http://www.ifz-muenchen.de/heftarchiv/1995_3.pdf (accessed 26 June 2017); Wolfgang Wippermann, *Totalitarismustheorien. Die Entwicklung der Diskussion von den Anfängen bis heute* (Darmstadt 1998).
51. ↑ On Bonapartism see for example Jost Dülffer, 'Bonapartism, Fascism and National Socialism'. In: *Journal of Contemporary History (JCH)* 11 (1976), pp. 109-128.
52. ↑ Luigi Sturzo, *Italien und der Faschismus* (Cologne 1926), p. 207.
53. ↑ On Leviathan in crisis see Charles S. Maier: 'Leviathan 2.0: Inventing Modern Statehood'. In: Emily S. Rosenberg (ed.): *A World Connecting. 1870-1945*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and others 2012), pp. 29-282, esp. pp. 264-272.
54. ↑ On the concept of "radical-fascist acceleration" see Ernst Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche. Action française, Italienischer Faschismus, Nationalsozialismus* (5th edn Munich

2000).

55. ↑ Ernst Fraenkel, *The Dual State. A Contribution to the Theory of Dictatorship* (New York 1941) and Franz Neumann, *Behemoth. The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (2nd edn New York 1944 [originally 1942]).
56. ↑ Maier, “Totalitarismus” and “politische Religionen”, p. 395. See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York 1951); Carl J. Friedrich/Zbigniew Brzezinski (eds.), *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge 1956); Raymond Aron, *Démocratie et Totalitarisme* (Paris 1966).
57. ↑ Wolfgang Wippermann, ‘The Post-War German Left and Fascism’. In: *Journal of Contemporary History* 11 (1976), S. 185-219, here p. 193. See also Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism. The Inner History of the Cold War* (New York 1995).
58. ↑ See Emilio Gentile, ‘Der Faschismus. Eine Definition zur Orientierung’. In: *Mittelweg* 36 16 (2007), pp. 81-99, here p. 94.
59. ↑ On the concept of “political religion” see, besides the works of Hans Maier mentioned above, Hans Maier (ed.), *Wege in die Gewalt. Die modernen politischen Religionen* (Frankfurt a.M. 2000).
60. ↑ See Martin Baumeister, ‘Faschismus als „politische Religion“’. In: Thomas Schlemmer/Hans Woller (eds.), *Der Faschismus in Europa. Wege der Forschung* (Munich 2014), p. 59-72.
61. ↑ Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics*. See also the later section in this text on Mosse and Gentile. Emilio Gentile refers to political religion as a “form of sacralization of politics that is exclusive and integralistic in nature; it does not accept coexistence with other ideologies and political movements, negates the autonomy of the individual in relation to the collective, considers adherence to its commandments and participation in its political cult to be mandatory, sanctifies violence as a legitimate weapon to be employed against its enemies and as a means of renewal; it assumes a adversarial stance towards traditional, institutionalized religions, seeks to annihilate them or to establish a relationship of symbiotic coexistence with them, insofar as the political religion aims to incorporate the traditional religion into its own system of beliefs and myths and assigns it a subordinate and serving position”. Emilio Gentile, *Le religioni della politica. Fra democrazie e totalitarismi* (Rome 2001), p. 208. For an interpretation of National Socialism as a “political religion”, see Michael Burleigh, ‘National Socialism as a Political Religion’. In: *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 1 (2000), pp. 1-26, also id., *The Third Reich. A New History* (London 2000).
62. ↑ Nolte, *Faschismus in seiner Epoche*, p. 34; the following quotation from the same source, p. 51. This statement also applies to individual forms of fascism, but it makes a difference whether the focus is on an understanding of discrete forms or the phenomenon in general.
63. ↑ Ernst Nolte, *Die Krise des liberalen Systems*, p. 385. For a survey and a critique of Nolte’s books on fascism published in the 1960s see Thomas Nipperdey, ‘Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche. Zu den Werken von Ernst Nolte zum Faschismus’. In: *HZ* 210 (1970), pp. 620-638.

64. ↑ See Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914-1945* (2nd edn London 1997); Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*; Roger Eatwell, 'On Defining the „Fascist Minimum“: The Centrality of Ideology'. In: *Journal of Political Ideologies* 1 (1996), pp. 303-319.
65. ↑ Payne, *A History of Fascism*, p. 14.
66. ↑ *Ibid.*, p. 494.
67. ↑ See for example Renzo De Felice, *Le interpretazioni del fascismo* (Rome 2005), p. XVI also *id.*, *Der Faschismus. Ein Interview von Michael A. Ledeen* (Stuttgart 1977 [originally Bari 1975]).
68. ↑ Jens Petersen/Wolfgang Schieder, 'Das faschistische Italien als Gegenstand der Forschung'. In: *Id.* (eds.), *Faschismus und Gesellschaft in Italien. Staat, Wirtschaft, Kultur* (Cologne 1998), pp. 9-19, here p. 11.
69. ↑ Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini*, 8 Bde. (Turin 1965-1997).
70. ↑ For a survey of other publications from the 1960s and 1970s, including work from Germany, see Wolfgang Schieder, 'Faschismus und kein Ende?'. In: *Neue Politische Literatur* 15 (1970), pp. 166-187; *Id.* (ed.), *Faschismus als soziale Bewegung. Deutschland und Italien im Vergleich* (2nd edn Göttingen 1983); Charles S. Maier, 'Some Recent Studies of Fascism'. In: *Journal of Modern History* 48 (1976), pp. 506-521; Bertrand Perz/Hans Safrian (eds.), 'Wege und Irrwege der Faschismusforschung'. In: *Zeitgeschichte* 7 (1979/80), pp. 437-459. The 1980s, in contrast, are perceived as a period of "deep crisis in comparative research on fascism", according to Sven Reichardt, 'Neue Wege der vergleichenden Faschismusforschung'. In: *Mittelweg* 36 16 (2007), pp. 9-25, here S. 10, available at: http://www.his-online.de//fileadmin/verlag/leseproben/978-3-93609-630-9_01.pdf (accessed 26 June 2017).
71. ↑ Gentile, *Origins of Fascist Ideology*.
72. ↑ Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del littorio*. See also *id.*, *Fascismo. Storia e interpretazione* (Rome 2002).
73. ↑ George L. Mosse, *Die Nationalisierung der Massen. Politische Symbolik und Massenbewegungen in Deutschland von dem Napoleonischen Krieg bis zum Dritten Reich* (Berlin 1976 [originally New York, NY 1975]).
74. ↑ George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (London 1966). The key role of völkisch movements for National Socialism cannot be addressed here. See instead Stefan Breuer, *Die Völkischen in Deutschland. Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik* (Darmstadt 2008); Uwe Puschner/Clemens Vollnhals (eds.), *Die völkisch-religiöse Bewegung im Nationalsozialismus. Eine Beziehungs- und Konfliktgeschichte* (Göttingen 2012); Uwe Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich. Sprache, Rasse, Religion* (Berlin 2001).
75. ↑ See Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*. Together with Walter Laqueur, Mosse founded the *Journal of Contemporary History* in 1966, subsequently the source of numerous impulses for fascism research. See Stanley G. Payne, George L. Mosse and Walter Laqueur on the History

of Fascism, in: JCH 50 (2015), pp. 750-767. Regarding Mosse himself see Stanley Payne/David J. Sorkin/John S. Tortorice (eds.), *What History Tells. George L. Mosse and the Culture of Modern Europe* (Madison, WI 2004).

76. ↑ Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, pp. XI-XVII.
77. ↑ On the the phases of research on fascism see Sven Reichardt, 'Was mit dem Faschismus passiert ist. Ein Literaturbericht zur internationalen Forschung seit 1990, Teil 1'. In: NPL 49 (2004), pp. 385-406.
78. ↑ See for example Walter Laqueur (ed.), *Fascism. A Reader's Guide. Analysis, Interpretations, Bibliography* (Berkeley 1976).
79. ↑ Juan Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian regimes* (Boulder, CO 2000 [originally Reading, MA 1975]).
80. ↑ Sternhell was instrumental in elucidating the French and Marxist roots of various ideologems of fascism and drawing attention to some of the intellectual fathers of "national socialism". However, he did not subsume National Socialism under the fascism concept. See, besides Ni droite ni gauche mentioned above, Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barres et le nationalisme français* (Paris 1972); Id., *La droite révolutionnaire* (Paris 1978); Id., *Ni droite, ni gauche. L'idéologie fasciste en France* (Paris 1983); Id./Mario Sznajder/Maia Asheri, *Die Entstehung der faschistischen Ideologie. Von Sorel zu Mussolini* (Hamburg 1999).
81. ↑ Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, p. 26. In a recently published explanatory text, Griffin writes: "My definition emphasizes that the birth of fascism was shaped by an ideology and a worldview that its activists and leaders sought to apply and to put into practice in permanent interaction with conditions in society and, moreover, that we can only comprehend fascists' individual habitus and convictions, as well as fascist rule and politics, if we grasp fascism, first and foremost, as an ideology. Furthermore, my understanding of the term also underlines that the emotional driving force of this ideology, its "mythical core", lies in the idea that the nation —however it is defined— is in a state of decadence or decay, from which it must be redeemed through revolutionary action; in other words, in a process of rebirth, renewal, and regeneration driven by a movement and, ultimately, by a state or a new order. Reference in this context to the 'various permutations' of fascism makes clear that every historical variant of fascism is unique and that there are significant differences between these variants, as a result of divergent national traditions and constellations." Roger Griffin, 'Palingenetischer Ultrationalismus. Die Geburtswehen einer neuen Faschismusdeutung'. In: Schlemmer/Woller (eds.), *Faschismus in Europa*, pp. 17-33, here p. 18. See also the following document collection, which is highly useful für students, Roger Griffin (ed.), *Fascism* (Oxford 1995) and the five-volume anthology coedited by Griffin and Matthew Feldman that offers key interpretative approaches: Roger Griffin/Matthew Feldman (eds.), *Fascism. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, 5 vols. (London 2004).
82. ↑ See on this point the summary of critiques of Griffin's definition in Constantin lordachi,

- 'Comparative Fascist Studies. An Introduction'. In: Id. (ed.), *Comparative Fascist Studies. New Perspectives* (London 2010), pp. 1-50, here pp. 21-25. Also see Roger Griffin, 'Introduction'. In: Id., (ed.), *International Fascism. Theories, Causes and the New Consensus* (London 1998), pp. 1-20; Id., 'The Primacy of Culture: The Current Growth (or Manufacture) of Consensus within Fascist Studies'. In: *JCH* 37 (2002), p. 21-43, and texts reflecting the in part quite intense debate in *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* 15 (2004), no. 3 and Andreas Umland, 'Refining the Concept of Generic Fascism'. In: *European History Quarterly* 39 (2009), pp. 298-309.
83. ↑ Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, p. 182. Also see Emilio Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity. Nationalism, Futurism and Fascism* (Westport, CT 2003).
84. ↑ On the following point, see also Roger Eatwell, 'Towards a New Model of Generic Fascism'. In: *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 4 (1992), pp. 162-194; on p. 189 there the following quotation. See also id., *Fascism. A History* (London 1995).
85. ↑ See also Kevin Passmore, *Fascism. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford 2002), p. 25c., especially p. 31. Drawing on the work of Ernesto Laclau and in agreement with Eatwell, Passmore develops the following definition, which has, as its most striking characteristic, the role ascribed to anti-feminist elements in fascism: "Fascism is a set of ideologies and practices that seeks to place the nation, defined in exclusive biological, cultural, and/or historical terms, above all other sources of loyalty, and to create a mobilized national community." Fascist nationalism is, Passmore continues, reactionary insofar as it is antisocialist and antifeminist. Moreover, the establishment of a mobilized nation depended on a new elite, which organized itself as a militarized mass party headed by a charismatic leader. All aspects of fascist politics, Passmore asserts at the end of his definition, are steeped in ultranationalism.
86. ↑ See Robert O. Paxton, 'The Five Stages of Fascism'. In: *The Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998), pp. 1-23, available at: http://w3.salemstate.edu/~cmauriello/pdf/European/Paxton_Five%20Stages%20of%20Fascism.pdf (accessed at 26 June 2017); Id., *Anatomy of Fascism*; the following quotation is on p. 23. See also Wolfgang Schieder, *Faschismus* sowie id., 'Faschismus'. In: *Sowjetsystem und Demokratische Gesellschaft. Eine vergleichende Enzyklopädie*, Bd. 2 (Freiburg 1968), col. 438-477.
87. ↑ Robert O. Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, p. 218
88. ↑ Sven Reichardt, *Faschistische Kampfbünde*, p. 718c.
89. ↑ Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge 2004). Available at: http://socioline.ru/files/5/283/mann_michael_-_fascists_-_2004.pdf (accessed 26 June 2017).
90. ↑ Mann, *Fascists*, p. 5; the following quotation is from the same source, p. 13.
91. ↑ Mann, *Fascists*, p. 364. See also on the following point Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*.
92. ↑ It must be noted that, due to limited space, this text only considers studies that were explicitly presented as or can be viewed as contributions to research on fascism. Consequently, the focus is more on Italy than Germany or other cases of fascism.

93. ↑ See Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il duce. Gli anni del consenso, 1929-1936* (Turin 1974). See also Patrick Bernhard, 'Renarrating Italian Fascism. New Directions in the Historiography of a European Dictatorship'. In: *Contemporary European History* 23 (2014), pp. 151-163.
94. ↑ On fabbrica del consenso see Philip V. Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso. Fascismo e mass media* (Rome 1975); also Petra Terhoeven, *Liebespfand fürs Vaterland. Krieg, Geschlecht und faschistische Nation in der italienischen Gold- und Eheringsammlung 1935/36* (Darmstadt 2003).
95. ↑ Paul Corner, *The Fascist Party and Popular Opinion in Mussolini's Italy* (Oxford 2012).
96. ↑ Giulia Albanese/Roberta Pergher (eds.), *In the Society of Fascists. Acclamation, Acquiescence, and Agency in Mussolini's Italy* (New York, NY 2012). Cf. also Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory. The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge 1987).
97. ↑ See Götz Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat. Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus* (Frankfurt a.M. 2005) and Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung. Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939* (Hamburg 2007).
98. ↑ On „Volksgemeinschaft“ see: Nicole Kramer, *Volksgenossinnen an der Heimatfront. Mobilisierung, Verhalten, Erinnerung* (Göttingen 2011); Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann (ed.) ‚Volksgemeinschaft‘. Mythos, wirkungsmächtige soziale Verheißung oder soziale Realität im ‚Dritten Reich‘? (Paderborn 2012); Frank Bajohr/Michael Wildt (eds.), *Volksgemeinschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt a.M. 2012); Dietmar von Reeken/Malte Thießen, ‚Volksgemeinschaft‘ als soziale Praxis. *Neue Forschungen zur NS-Gesellschaft vor Ort* (Paderborn 2013); Steber/Gotto (eds.), *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany* und Martina Steber/Bernhard Gotto et al., ‚Volksgemeinschaft und die Gesellschaftsgeschichte des NS-Regimes‘. In: *VfZ* 62 (2014), pp. 433-467.
99. ↑ On the experience of fascism in everyday life see for example Kate Ferris, *Everyday Life in Fascist Venice, 1929-1940* (New York 2012).
100. ↑ On this question see for example Daniela Liebscher, *Freude und Arbeit. Zur internationalen Freizeit- und Sozialpolitik des faschistischen Italien und des NS-Regimes* (Cologne 2009); Kiran Klaus Patel, ‚Soldaten der Arbeit‘. *Arbeitsdienste in Deutschland und den USA, 1933-1945* (Göttingen 2003); Alessio Ponzio, *Shaping the New Man. Youth Training Regimes in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Madison, WI 2015); Luca La Rovere, *Storia dei GUF. Organizzazione, politica e miti della gioventù universitaria fascista, 1919-1943* (Turin 2003).
101. ↑ Walter Benjamin emphasized this aesthetic dimension of fascism as early as the 1930s. See Walter Benjamin, ‚Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit‘. In: Id. (eds. by Rolf Tiedemann/Hermann Schweppenhäuser), *Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. I.2* (Frankfurt a.M. 1980 [originally 1936]), pp. 471-508, here p. 506.
102. ↑ See for example Jeffrey Schnapp/Barbara Spackman (eds.), ‚Fascism and Culture. Special Issue‘. In: *Stanford Italian Review* 8, no.1-2 (1990; Andrew Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism*.

- Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde (Stanford 1993); Walter L. Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence. From Modernism to Fascism* (Cambridge, MA 1993); Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle*; Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State. Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton, NJ 1998); Emily Braun, *Mario Sironi and Italian Modernism. Art and Politics under Fascism* (Cambridge 2000); Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities. Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley 2004); Mark Antliff, *Avant-Garde Fascism. The Mobilization of Myth, Art, and Culture in France, 1909-1939* (Durham, NC 2007); Frank Vollmer, *Die politische Kultur des Faschismus, Stätten totalitärer Diktatur in Italien* (Cologne 2007); Monica Cioli, *Il fascismo e la 'sua' arte. Dottrina e istituzioni tra futurismo e Novecento* (Florence 2011).
103. ↑ See Federico Caprotti, *Mussolini's Cities. Internal Colonialism in Italy 1930-1939* (Youngstown, NY 2007); Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra* (Rome 2007); Aram Mattioli/Gerald Steinacher (eds.), *Für den Faschismus bauen. Architektur und Städtebau im Italien Mussolinis* (Zurich 2009); Harald Bodenschatz (ed.), *Städtebau für Mussolini. Auf der Suche nach der neuen Stadt im faschistischen Italien* (Berlin 2011); Antonio Pennacchi, *Fascio e martello. Viaggio per le città del Duce* (Rome 2011); Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity. The Roman Past in Fascist Italy* (Ithaca, NY 2012); Aristotle Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922-43. The Making of the Fascist Capital* (Basingstoke 2014).
104. ↑ See the more comprehensive discussion of this question in Riccardo Bavaj, *Die Ambivalenz der Moderne im Nationalsozialismus. Eine Bilanz der Forschung* (Munich 2003) and Fernando Esposito, 'Faschismus und Moderne'. In: Schlemmer/Woller (eds.), *Faschismus in Europa*, pp. 45-57, which lists literature for further reading. On reactionary modernism see Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism. Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA 1984).
105. ↑ See especially Ralf Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland* (Munich 1965); David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution. Class and Status in Nazi Germany 1933-1939* (London 1966); A. James Gregor, *Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship* (Princeton, NJ 2014 [originally 1979]). For a survey of the debate with respect to Italy see Tim Mason, 'Italy and Modernization. A Montage'. In: *History Workshop Journal* 25 (1988), pp. 127-147.
106. ↑ Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler – Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs* (Hamburg 1987); Michael Prinz/Rainer Zitelmann (eds.), *Nationalsozialismus und Modernisierung* (Darmstadt 1991). For a survey see Axel Schildt, 'NS-Regime, Modernisierung und Moderne. Anmerkungen zur Hochkonjunktur einer andauernden Diskussion'. In: *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 23 (1994), pp. 3-22.
107. ↑ Especially pertinent on this aspect is Detlev J.K. Peukert, *Max Webers Diagnose der Moderne* (Göttingen 1989); Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY 1989); Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Oxford 1991).
108. ↑ Zygmunt Bauman, *Dialektik der Ordnung. Die Moderne und der Holocaust* (Hamburg 1992), p. 31. Also see Paul Nolte, 'Abschied vom 19. Jahrhundert oder Auf der Suche nach einer

- anderen Moderne'. In: Jürgen Osterhammel/Dieter Langewiesche/Id. (eds.), *Wege der Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Göttingen 2006), pp. 103-132.
109. ↑ See Ulrich Herbert, 'Europe in High Modernity. Reflections on a Theory of the 20th Century'. In: *Journal of Modern European History* 5 (2007), pp. 5-21; Lutz Raphael, 'Ordnungsmuster der „Hochmoderne“? Die Theorie der Moderne und die Geschichte der europäischen Gesellschaften im 20. Jahrhundert'. In: Id./Ute Schneider (eds.), *Dimensionen der Moderne. Festschrift für Christof Dipper* (Frankfurt a.M. and others 2008), pp. 73-91.
110. ↑ Raphael, *Imperiale Gewalt*, p. 11.
111. ↑ See on this question Esposito, *Mythische Moderne*; Peter Fritzsche, 'Nazi Modern'. In: *Modernism/Modernity* 3 (1996), pp. 1-21, available at: http://www.uni-konstanz.de/kulturtheorie/Texte/Fritzsche_Nazi%20Modern.pdf (accessed 26 June 2017); Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*. Cf. also Christof Dipper, 'Faschismus und Moderne. Gesellschaftspolitik in Italien und Deutschland'. In: Lutz Klinkhammer (ed.), *Die „Achse“ im Krieg. Politik, Ideologie und Kriegführung 1939-1945* (Paderborn 2010), pp. 49-79; Wolfgang Schieder, 'Die Geburt des Faschismus aus der Krise der Moderne'. In: Christof Dipper (ed.), *Deutschland und Italien 1860-1960. Politische und kulturelle Aspekte im Vergleich* (Munich 2005), pp. 159-179.
112. ↑ See Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*.
113. ↑ See Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity. The Roman Past in Fascist Italy* (Ithaca, NY 2012); Fernando Esposito (ed.), 'Fascist Temporalities. Special Issue'. In: *Journal of Modern European History* 13 (2015) and Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*. See also the latter's essay, in which he summarizes the discussion: Roger Griffin, 'Modernity, modernism, and fascism. A "mazeway resynthesis"'. In: *Modernism/Modernity* 15 (2008), pp. 9-24.
114. ↑ On bonifica see Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*.
115. ↑ Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte Deutschlands im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich 2014), p. 482.
116. ↑ On population policies in fascist Italy, for example, see Victoria de Grazia, 'Die Radikalisierung der Bevölkerungspolitik im faschistischen Italien. Mussolinis „Rassenstaat“'. In: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 26 (2000), pp. 219-254.
117. ↑ See for example Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy. Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge 2005); Michael Geyer/Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds.), *Beyond Totalitarianism. Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge 2009); Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York, NY 2010).
118. ↑ Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* sowie James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT 1998), available at: <https://libcom.org/files/Seeing%20Like%20a%20State%20-%20James%20C.%20Scott.pdf> (accessed 26 June 2017).
119. ↑ For a survey see Aristotle Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism. The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist*

Europe (New York, NY 2009).

120. ↑ On the key role of violence see Michael Ebner, *Ordinary Violence in Mussolini's Italy* (Cambridge 2011). For surveys and further literature on the conduct of war and the occupation see Lutz Klinkhammer et al. (eds.), *Die „Achse“ im Krieg. Politik, Ideologie und Kriegführung 1939-1945* (Paderborn 2010); Amedeo Osti Guerrazzi, '„Schonungsloses Handeln gegen den bössartigen Feind“. Italienische Kriegführung und Besatzungspraxis in Slowenien 1941/42'. In: *VfZ* 62 (2014), pp. 537-567; Davide Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire. Italian Occupation during the Second World War* (Cambridge 2006); Thomas Schlemmer (ed.), *Die Italiener an der Ostfront 1942/43. Dokumente zu Mussolinis Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion* (Munich 2005). See also Enzo Collotti/Lutz Klinkhammer, 'Zur Neubewertung des italienischen Faschismus. Enzo Collotti im Gespräch mit Lutz Klinkhammer'. In: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 26 (2000), pp. 285-306.
121. ↑ This is the title of a study authored by Asfa-Wossen Assefate/Aram Mattioli (eds.), *Der erste faschistische Vernichtungskrieg. Die italienische Aggression gegen Äthiopien 1935-1941* (Cologne 2006); Patrick Bernhard, 'Behind the Battle Lines. Italian Atrocities and the Persecution of Arabs, Berbers, and Jews in North Africa during World War II'. In: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 26 (2012), pp. 425-446; Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana* (Bologna 2007); Aram Mattioli, *Experimentierfeld der Gewalt. Der Abessinienkrieg und seine internationale Bedeutung 1935-1941* (Zurich 2005).
122. ↑ See, for a survey, Sven Reichardt/Armin Nolzen, 'Editorial'. In: Id. (eds.), *Faschismus in Italien und Deutschland. Studien zu Transfer und Vergleich* (Göttingen 2005), pp. 9-27, pp. 19-23; Robert S.C. Gordon, 'Race'. In: Richard J. B. Bosworth (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (Oxford 2009), pp. 296-316.
123. ↑ On the role of antisemitism in National Socialism, see for example George L. Mosse, *Die Geschichte des Rassismus in Europa* (Frankfurt a.M. 2006 [originally New York 1978]); Saul Friedländer, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden*, 2 vols. (Munich 1998/2006); Ulrich Herbert, 'Vernichtungspolitik. Neue Antworten und Fragen zur Geschichte des „Holocaust“'. In: Id. (ed.), *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik. Neue Forschungen und Kontroversen* (Frankfurt a.M. 1998), pp. 9-66, pp. 31-40. Herbert writes in the latter text (p. 18): "German occupation policies in Europe, the policies of 'völkisch consolidation' in nearly all of Europe, and most importantly the murder of millions of Jews as well as inhabitants of the occupied territories in Poland, the USSR, and south eastern Europe could not be appropriately labeled with a term that was developed to be applied to the situation in Italy under Mussolini and to the repression of domestic opposition and the restoration of rule by traditional elites with the help of massive violence and the staging of populist politics."
124. ↑ See on this and the following aspect and for further literature Thomas Schlemmer/Hans Woller, 'Der italienische Faschismus und die Juden 1922 bis 1945'. In: *VfZ* 53 (2005), pp. 164-201.

125. ↑ On the “occupied allies” see Lutz Klinkhammer, *Zwischen Bündnis und Besatzung. Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Republik von Salò, 1943-1945* (Tübingen 1993).
126. ↑ See for example Alberto Burgio (ed.), *Nel nome della razza. Il razzismo nella storia d'Italia 1870-1945* (Bologna 1999); Aaron Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy* (New York, NY 2002); Maria Sophia Quine, ‘Racial “Sterility” and “Hyperfecundity” in Fascist Italy. Biological Politics of Sex and Reproduction’. In: *Fascism 1* (2012), pp. 92-144.
127. ↑ For further literature and a precise survey, see Hans Woller, *Geschichte Italiens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich 2010), pp. 154-161. On autochthonic Italian antisemitism and the persecution of the Jews in Italy, see Enzo Collotti, *Il fascismo e gli ebrei. Le leggi razziali in Italia* (Rome 2003) sowie Michele Sarfatti, *Gli ebrei nell'Italia fascista. Vicende, identità, persecuzione* (Turin 2000); Joshua D. Zimmerman (ed.), *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule, 1922-1945* (Cambridge 2005); Frauke Wildvang, *Der Feind von nebenan. Judenverfolgung im faschistischen Italien 1936-1944* (Cologne 2008).
128. ↑ See Klaus Holz, *Nationaler Antisemitismus. Wissenssoziologie einer Weltanschauung* (Hamburg 2001).
129. ↑ On the involvement of Croatians, Romanians, and Hungarians in the Holocaust see for example Alexander Korb, *Im Schatten des Weltkrieges. Massengewalt der Ustaša gegen Serben Juden und Roma in Kroatien 1941-1945* (Hamburg 2013); Armin Heinen, *Rumänien, der Holocaust und die Logik der Gewalt* (Munich 2007); Radu Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania. The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944* (Chicago, IL 2008); Margit Szöllösi-Janze, *Die Pfeilkreuzlerbewegung in Ungarn. Historischer Kontext, Entwicklung und Herrschaft* (Munich 1989).
130. ↑ Besides the already mentioned works of Freedens, see also Michael Freedens, *Ideology. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford 2003), especially pp. 51-55.
131. ↑ In the opinion of Ernst Nolte, the specific form of German antisemitism was an element of anti-Marxism/anti-Bolshevism, which determined every variant of fascism. See Andreas Wirsching, *Vom Weltkrieg zum Bürgerkrieg? Politischer Extremismus in Deutschland und Frankreich 1918-1933/39. Berlin und Paris im Vergleich* (Munich 1999), pp. 518-525.
132. ↑ Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, p. 139.
133. ↑ On “cumulative radicalization” see Hans Mommsen, ‘Der Nationalsozialismus. Kumulative Radikalisierung und Selbstzerstörung des Regimes’. In: *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon*, Bd. 16 (Stuttgart 1976), pp. 785-790. See also the concise presentation of the many steps leading up to the point, in fall 1941, when the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” seemed to become “something that could be thought and then also done”: Herbert, *Geschichte Deutschlands*, pp. 467-482. See also Bundesarchiv/Institut für Zeitgeschichte/Lehrstuhl für Neuere und Neueste Geschichte der Universität Freiburg (eds.), *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933-1945*, 8 vols. to date (Munich 2008-2015).

134. ↑ Thomas Schlemmer/Hans Woller, 'Essenz oder Konsequenz? Zur Bedeutung von Rassismus und Antisemitismus für den Faschismus'. In: Id. (eds.), *Faschismus in Europa*, pp. 123-144, hier p. 143c.
135. ↑ See also on this point Patrick Bernhard, 'Konzertierte Gegnerbekämpfung im Achsenbündnis. Die Polizei im Dritten Reich und im faschistischen Italien 1933 bis 1943'. In: *VfZ* 59 (2011), pp. 229-262; Id., 'Hitler's Africa in the East. Italian Colonialism as a Model for German Planning in Eastern Europe', *JCH*, published online before print 31 March 2015, DOI: 10.1177/0022009414561825.
136. ↑ Eatwell, *New Model of Generic Fascism*, p. 161. In the same text, Eatwell notes (p. 166): [...] "ultimately, any 'ism' is a heuristic construction, whose value derives from generating more insights than confusion".
137. ↑ On "family similarities" and "kinship relations" see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (Frankfurt a.M. 1977), I 65c. In keeping Wittgenstein's useful metaphor, (I 67), the various kinds of fascism can be referred to as individual filaments that can be spun together to create a thread: "And the strength of the thread does not depend on the fact that any single filament runs through the entire length of the thread but rather on the way many filaments overlap. [...] something runs through the entire thread, namely, the uninterrupted overlapping of these filaments.""
138. ↑ See Arnd Bauerkämper, 'A New Consensus? Recent Research on Fascism in Europe'. In: *History Compass* 4 (2006), pp. 536-566, here p. 539.