CHAPTER 20

Fascism as a Social Movement in a Transnational Context

Kevin Passmore

To treat fascism[1] as a social movement in a transnational context is to buck the trend in studies of so-called 'generic fascism'. The purpose of the latter is to derive a 'model', 'definition', or 'ideal-type' of fascism from observation of its primary 'case', the Fascist movement in Italy, perhaps supplemented with features of German National Socialism. This model would capture the essence of the phenomenon and its dynamic and permit us to recognize 'cases' of fascism even where protagonists rejected the label. Theories of generic fascism suffer from general and specific problems. Generally, they exaggerate the explanatory power of models of any type and they take for granted that 'cases' of fascism are national variants of the same essence. They also harden concepts that were contested and fluid in practical politics. Specifically, and directly relevant to this essay, models of generic fascism rely unwittingly on understandings of social action derived from late nineteenth-century crowd psychology, from which social movement theory has—in principle—liberated itself.

[1] I use 'Fascism' to designate the Italian movement and regime and 'fascism' to refer to the generic concept.

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K. Passmore (✉)
Department of History, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK

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The fashionable political religions approach to generic fascism is especially dependent upon this reworking of crowd psychology, transmitted via Parsonian social science, concepts of mass society and totalitarianism theory.[2] For theorists of totalitarianism, fascism was a product of the classic strain–breakdown–disorientation–reintegration sequence: upheaval provokes disorientation (anomie) in the mass, making it vulnerable to a messianic, authoritarian movement that promises to restore meaning to the disrupted world. As Leonard Schapiro put it, a totalitarian movement entails leadership of an elite equipped with an impossibly utopian plan for revolutionary reorganization of society and an ideology able to appeal to the implicitly irrational 'mass' through its innate nationalism, 'the predominant and most primitive mass emotion'.[3]

When Schapiro wrote, totalitarian theorists were preoccupied with structures of rule. Then from the late 1980s, they embraced the scholarly fashion for the study of ideas. Roger Griffin depicted fascism as an ideology of national rebirth (palingenesis) after a period of crisis and decline.[4] In parallel, Emilio Gentile's political religions theory maintained that sacralization of the state and/or party provided the ideological and emotional re-integration that the mass craved; the agency of the 'mass' is limited to expressing the desire for charismatic leadership and political religion—it is 'disposed' to fascism.[5] The 'brutalization thesis' is another cousin of these theories.[6] According to this view, the trauma of war awoke a latent disposition to violence in the political culture (or mentality) of societies that had not fully modernized. Here too we see the debt to crowd psychology and the assumption of a unitary national character.[7]

[2] Kevin Passmore, 'The Gendered Genealogy of Political Religions Theory', *Gender & History* 3 (2008), pp. 644–668.

[3] Leonard Schapiro, *Totalitarianism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1972), pp. 45–58.

[4] Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991).

[5] Roger Griffin, '"Consensus ? Quel Consensus ?" Perspectives pour une meilleure entente entre spécialistes francophones et anglophones du fascisme', *Vingtieme Siècle: Revue d'histoire* 108 (2010), pp. 53–69; Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralisation of Politics: Definitions, Interpretations and Reflections on the Question of Secular Religion and Totalitarianism* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

[6] Annette Becker and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *14–18, retrouver la guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).

[7] Georg Mosse, *De la grande guerre au totalitarisme. La brutalisation des sociétés européennes* (Paris: Hachette, 1999); Antoine Prost, 'TheImpact of War on French and German Political Cultures', *Historical Journal* 1 (1994), pp. 209–217; for a critique see Benjamin Ziemann, 'Germany after the First World War—A Violent Society? Results and Implications

Another development has reinforced top-down tendencies in the aforementioned approaches to fascism. Influenced by Michel Foucault's concept of 'governmentality', researchers have been focussing on fascist regimes' social and racial projects. This approach emphasizes the way that fascist regimes infiltrate commercialized leisure, sport and cinema, and thus service and channel the 'utopian longings' of ordinary people, and ensure that people colluded in their own oppression.[8] There are clear parallels with crowd psychology and its avatars.[9]

Taken together, these trends have shifted scholarly attention away from fascist movements towards regimes, to their rituals, cultures, and, for Foucauldians, to their 'techniques of rule'. Even some of those who do study fascist movements select those aspects of them that prefigure the political religion of the regime, or they use a version of the brutalization thesis.[10] These theories are not entirely without value. They highlight the emotional component of fascism and potentially of social movements generally, which had been neglected in some earlier social interpretations. However, they reduce fascism to these aspects, essentialize it, fail to see its internal conflicts, and rule out legitimate alternative perspectives.

Fascism theories share a weakness of models in general. They assume that the 'properties' of the model can explain the actual history of the movement. Thus, Dieter Rucht contends that a 'real definition' includes a theory about the 'coming into existence, the consequences, and/or the "nature" ... of the phenomenon'.[11] A practical illustration is the commonplace in the historiography of fascism and Nazism that their dependence on charismatic authority necessitated the continual performance of miracles and made self-destruction inevitable. In fact, definitions cannot explain the actual history of a movement because they involve selection among the many features of a given movement, and elements not included in the definition will always influence the movement's history. Moreover,

of Recent Research on Weimar Germany', *Journal of Modern European History* 1 (2003), pp. 80–86.

[8] Geoff Eley, *Nazism as Fascism: Violence, Ideology, and the Ground of Consent in Germany 1930–1945* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 212–213.

[9] There is no space here to explore the complex relationship between Foucauldian theory and modernization narratives.

[10] For example, Christopher Duggan, *Fascist Voices: An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 22, pp. 47–52.

[11] see Dieter Rucht, 'Social Movements—Some Conceptual Challenges', Chap. 2 in this volume.

those who joined fascist movements rarely saw themselves simply as fascists. Most often, they brought with them multiple agendas and visions of what fascism was or should be, their degrees of commitment carried, as did their sympathies for other movements. Of course, some activists were fanatics, but even fanaticism requires historicization.

Another difficulty with the generic approach is the assumption that the world is really divided into entities, even 'fuzzy' ones, that await modelling. It is perfectly legitimate to make a conceptual distinction between social and political movements, but we must remember that reality itself is not divided in that way. The example of fascism demonstrates the point well, since depending on perspective one could see it as a political or social movement or both. One cannot solve the problem by dividing fascist organizations into social and political components either, or indeed by distinguishing between fascism-movement and fascism-regime. To be useful, definitions must be open and potentially compatible with other definitions, and we must be precise about what they show and what they do not show.

The French school of political sociology develops social movement theory in ways that is useful to the study of fascism. Like totalitarian and political religion theorists, its leading exponent, Michel Dobry, situates fascism in relation to crisis and the mobilization of groups outside the political system. However, the resemblance ends there, for social breakdown is not total, and although circumstances and options are harder to read, people do not become irrational, and they do not necessarily abandon old objectives.[12] Therefore Dobry focuses on the actions of protagonists, on the available ideas that they use and adapt to understand the situation, and on the strategies that they use to achieve their objectives and anticipate the responses of rivals and opponents.[13] Dobry's method shifts attention to the 'constructed rationality' of protagonists. His concept is open in that is does not pretend to identify necessary causes of crises or predict outcomes. It does not attempt to find a common denominator among the activists in a social movement, and does not believe it possible to establish *the* model of fascism or of a social movement.

[12] Crisis occurred in France in May 1968 without prior economic catastrophe or de-legitimation of the system.

[13] Michel Dobry, *Sociologie des crises politiques : la dynamique des mobilisations multisectorielles*, 3rd edn (Paris: Science Po, 2009), pp. 170–171; Michel Dobry, 'La thèse immunitaire face aux fascismes', in Michel Dobry (ed.), *Le mythe de l'allergie française du fascisme* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003), pp. 17–67.

Notwithstanding, we cannot abandon definitions—this approach has nothing to do with the postmodern claim that historical writing is merely linguistic emplotment. First, we must define the limits of study—our *explicandum*—without pretending that the movements included within its scope share something essential. My choice is to discuss aspects of Italian Fascism, Nazism, Hungarian movements, the French leagues, and the reception of fascism in India, China and South America. While these countries conventionally figure in discussions of generic fascism, I do not enter into the (irresolvable) debate about whether or not they actually were fascist or indeed whether or not they were social movements.

Secondly, I ask instead what treating fascism as a social movement can tell us. I use Dieter Rucht's definition: 'a network of individuals, groups and organizations that, based on a sense of collective identity, seek[s] to bring about social change (or resist it) primarily by means of collective public protest'.[14] I qualify the definition with a stress on conflict concerning the movement's nature and objectives. Indeed, social movement concepts are most revealing when they allow for the convergence of multiple mobilizations in a heterogeneous movement. My definition is therefore open, and is compatible with other perspectives. Only an open concept allows for the fact that the movements I consider both share the major features of social movements (as *I* have defined them) and were dedicated to winning political power (along with other objectives), often through participation in the political system. I shall therefore discuss and compare the place of movements in the quest for power.

Thirdly, following Michel Dobry, we may ask how protagonists used their own concepts and categories in specific contexts. However sceptical we might be about fixed concepts, protagonists believed fascism to have precise characteristics, and so we may ask how the term figured in the systems of classification of the period, what was at stake in its use, and how it related to the disposition of social power. The history of fascism involved sometimes lethal conflicts about the 'true meaning' of the word, which were sometimes folded into disputes about whether fascism was a movement or a party. The same considerations apply to crowd psychology, for it too was essential to the way that protagonists understood collective behaviour, classified and recognized allies and enemies and defined strategies.

Tracing the history of categories also implies following them transnationally. Whereas generic fascism theorists see discrete national move-

[14] Rucht, 'Social Movements—Some Conceptual Challenges', Chap. 2 in this volume.

ments as variations of a core, a transnational approach recognizes that protagonists used and transformed ideologies in quite different contexts for different purposes. That is not to deny the importance of the national framework. Nations were another essential part of the classificatory systems that protagonists used, and were very important to the distribution of social power. Fascists privileged the nation (though inconsistently and never unproblematically) and sought power in territorial states. Moreover, transnational exchanges were as likely to reinforce boundaries as dissolve them.[15] For instance, fascists proselytized internationally to advance the cause of their own nation, and this nationalism created barriers to the diffusion of fascism. The history of fascism, though beyond the scope of this essay, is incomprehensible if we forget that fascists endeavoured to use the immense power of the nation-state to re-structure a world that was stubbornly transnational. I also suggest that the social movement aspect of fascism was important in the way that Italian Fascism was received internationally. The groups that I consider were 'entangled' as social movements.

War, Political Crisis and Social Movements

One can hardly deny that the Great War was a traumatic experience. The contention that the war permanently brutalized all veterans or caused individuals to surrender to anomie and yearning for political religion is more contestable.[16] As well as anxiety and isolation and loss, the war provoked enthusiastic engagement in civil society organizations, charities and trade unions.[17] These groups were largely committed to winning the war (at least because they saw winning it as better than losing it), but they were politically heterogeneous and pursued multiple objectives. The more right-wing of these groups often glorified violence and adopted a Manichean view of the conflict as one between civilization and barbarism. But not all of those who espoused such ideas engaged in practical violence after the war or became fascists.

In 1919, the strains of war provoked political crisis and social mobilization even in the victorious countries, while defeat brought down the Empires of Central Europe. Bourgeois self-defence organizations, often paramilitary, emerged in many countries. They were strongest in the ethnically diverse borderlands of Eastern Europe from the German frontier

[15] Patricia Clavin, 'Defining Transnationalism', *Contemporary European History* 4 (2005), pp. 421–440, p. 431.

[16] Ziemann, 'Germany after the First World War', pp. 80–86.

[17] Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 39–82.

with the Baltic States through the Hungarian borderlands, to the Italian frontier with Yugoslavia, where the Central Powers had lost territory and state authority had collapsed. Frontier conflicts folded into the fight against domestic socialism. Paramilitaries fought Béla Kun's revolution in Hungary, the socialists in Germany, and rural strikes and factory occupations in Italy. Violence was particularly serious in western Hungary, where Jews and allegedly politicized women were targeted.[18] Significantly, in October 1921 one paramilitary group, the Hungarian National Defence Union (MOVE) led by Gyula Gömbös helped the reactionary Miklos Horthy regime to fend off an attempt by the deposed Habsburg king to reclaim his throne—thus revealing political divisions within the counter-revolution, for the Protestant Gömbös despised the Catholic royal family. The reaction was politically heterogeneous everywhere; true, every group opposed communism, but not necessarily for the same reasons.

There was no direct line between this paramilitary counter-revolution and fascism. First, fascism did not win power where paramilitary violence was most unrestrained, i.e. in Hungary. Secondly, fascism would develop from the whole range of veteran, religious and charitable groups, bourgeois clubs, women's groups, *et cetera* that had developed during and after the war. While many of them were very right wing, they were not necessarily committed in practice to the use of violence for political purposes. There was, after all, more to fascism than physical violence. Thirdly, fascism enjoyed some support from senior functionaries, business and generals, who shared enemies, and who had become fascinated with the manipulation of massive numbers of soldiers and workers, and thus with projects for economic, social, and eugenic engineering. These networks, which were not distinct in practice, would battle to define fascism.

Following Michel Dobry's schema the post-war years witnessed a 'multi-sector mobilization', producing a 'fluid situation', as the new forces described above took the political initiative. Disruption of routine meant that circumstances were harder to read, but far from becoming irrational, protagonists continued to act rationally in the light of their inherited ways of understanding their circumstances.[19] The groups involved were often mutually antipathetic, but they could also coalesce into broader movements. Either way they disrupted existing political alignments and rou-

[18] Robert Gerwarth, 'The Central European Counter-Revolution: Paramilitary Violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary after the Great War', *Past & Present* 1 (2008), pp. 175–209; Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, 'Vectors of Violence: Paramilitarism in Europe after the Great War, 1917–1923', *The Journal of Modern History* 3 (2011), pp. 489–512.

[19] Dobry, *Sociologie des crises politiques*, p. 140, pp. 150–158.

tines, and shifted politics away from the state and parliament towards the streets and villages. Multi-sector mobilization also potentially undermined the usual solidarity between the sectors of the state, as economic and military powers were tempted or constrained to deal with the popular mobilization. These developments were especially dangerous where important sections of the population did not accept existing regimes.

Italy

In 1919, Benito Mussolini was looking for a new place in the political landscape. Since 1914, his advocacy of intervention in the Great War had cut him off from the left while his calls for revolution had alienated the right. He also faced competition from the more prestigious interventionist leader, the poet and auto-proclaimed Nietzschean superman, Gabriele D'Annunzio. The term *fascio* was attractive because it meant 'close union' in a popular movement and because its first political use, by Sicilian peasant socialists in the 1890s, lent it an air of radicalism. In 1915, dissident leftists, including Mussolini, formed the *Fasci d'azione interventista* to persuade the proletariat that only intervention in the war could bring revolution. Interventionists nevertheless possessed friends in high places. In December 1917, around 150 parliamentarians formed the *Fascio parlementare di difesa nazionale*. This group was largely conservative, but it won the backing of most interventionists, including the syndicalists (revolutionary trade unionists) and the inevitable Mussolini. Local *fasci* also appeared, and by 1919, the term was an interventionist commonplace, used by Futurists (a modernist art movement) and veterans in particular.[20]

Mussolini owed his eventual primacy partly to events that were beyond his control, and which had little to do with his charisma or the programme or actions of Fascist leaders. In 1920, the movement expanded rapidly as an anti-socialist force in the countryside, thus provoking the Fascists to modify their programme in a more antisocialist direction. Meanwhile, an attempt by D'Annunzio's 'legions' to seize the border city of Fiume fizzled out. And just as the poet was restoring his reputation, he fell from a window while high on cocaine. Mussolini benefited also from his dual position as a figure of national stature and leader of the fascist movement. He established his credentials nationally by confining his journalistic output to foreign policy

[20] Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919–1929*, 2nd edn (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. 28, p. 42; Richard J. B. Bosworth, *The Italian Dictatorship. Mussolini and Fascism* (London: Arnold, 1999), p. 38.

matters, and by negotiation with conservatives, notably in the parliamentary elections of 1921.[21] But he did not abandon Fascism to his conservative allies. On the contrary, he feared that the unrestrained anti-socialist violence of the squads would reduce his movement to a reactionary force. He continued to stress social radicalism and even revolution, and negotiated a 'Pacification Pact' with the moderate socialist Prime Minister. The regional leaders of the squads, the ras, saw that as an affront to their own idea of revolution, which entailed elimination of socialism from a regenerated national community, led by an elite purged of 'bourgeois values' (but not the bourgeoisie). Faced with the ras' opposition, Mussolini staged his resignation in the summer of 1922. Then in November, he triumphantly returned at the inaugural congress of the Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF), which set about disciplining what had hitherto seen itself as a 'movement'. Some activists feared that this strategy would replace the 'youth and poetry' of the movement with the 'paunch, moustache and beard' of Roman politics.[22] However, the ras recognized that if they wanted power, Mussolini alone possessed necessary national leverage. Anyway, the movement continued to matter. The November deal dropped the Pacification Pact, and so long as the squads were loyal to Mussolini, they could continue their violence against socialists and national minorities.

The Fascist movement was essential to Mussolini's capture of power. The March on Rome was not a charade; it threatened to displace the police, army, and liberal political class, and Mussolini approved, for he knew that disorder was a weapon with which to blackmail the government. He came to power because he was indispensable in both parliamentary majorities and of the conflicts in town and countryside. As such, Fascism was a product of diverse constituencies, which disagreed fundamentally on the nature of their movement. It was not clear what had won in October 1922: a movement or a party?

Closer examination of the Fascist movement in the light of the concepts of social movements, combining the characteristics of Dieter Rucht and Bert Klandermans—instrumentalism, solidarity and action frames—underlines both the relative usefulness of the concept and the point that Fascism has no 'core'.[23]

[21] Richard J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini* (London: Arnold, 2002), pp. 154–166.

[22] Duggan, *Fascist Voices*, pp. 46–47.

[23] Bert Klandermans, 'The Demand and Supply of Participation: Social-Psychological Correlates of Participation in Social Movements', in David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule and

Instrumentalism

Instrumentalism is a weak point for political religions theory. It sees fascism as a response to diffuse anomie and so cannot explain why some groups were so much more inclined to join the Fascist movement than others. Neither can it understand the specific relationships between religious motifs and other priorities. And because political religions theory sees fascism as 'revolutionary', it dismisses the support of large landowners, capitalists and the authorities for fascism as tactical or instrumental and not therefore as part of the core. Social movement theory is stronger because it allows for the eclecticism of fascism.

The same activists who used religious language to express their fascism also referred to it as a bourgeois movement. One squad member boasted that fascists had forced down wages at a time when the 'peasants were dressing like me and the cowherd's daughter was more elegant than my sister'.[24] Since 1920, the fasci had carried out a reign of terror. In the Po Valley, they attacked and destroyed socialist organizations; in the Venezia Giulia, they assaulted the Slavic population, the southernmost extent of the space of conflict opened by the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. By 1922, in towns such as Ferrara, Fascists had already imposed their rule. Often, the administration, police, army, and landowners indicated the targets, provided lorries and paid for the petrol.[25] But many activists also attacked the bourgeoisie. Often that meant criticizing it only for allowing democratic values to impede the crushing of socialism, but it could also express generational, political and social conflicts. Also, the fascist desire to reincorporate workers and peasants into the nation could mean addressing their 'legitimate grievances' against capitalism.

To that end, Fascists set up labour unions to compete with Catholic and Socialist organizations, and they may have had half a million members by 1922. These unions depended on employers' complicity, but that was not all there was to them. Fascism appealed to poor sharecroppers and peasant landholders, who had initially backed the socialists, but soon resented attempts to force them to hire union labour on their farms. The

Hanspeter Kriesi (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 360–379.

[24] Duggan, *Fascist Voices*, p. 37, p. 42, p. 52.

[25] Sven Reichardt, 'Fascist Marches in Italy and Germany: Squadre and SA before the Seizure of Power', in Matthias Reiss (ed.), *The Street as Stage: Protest Marches and Public Rallies Since the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 169–193.

Fascists offered peasants and labourers selective incentives to join their own unions, promising to protect the gains won in 1919–1920 while destroying socialism. Paul Corner shows a clear sequence in Ferrara: 'violence to neutralise the socialist movement, propaganda and a carefully considered agrarian policy to initiate desertion of the [socialist] leagues and which then relied on the mechanism of the labour market in order to complete that process'. Fascism offered a relative benefit to landowners, but at the price of concessions to 'socialism' in the form of job security and land. Paradoxically, the result was to import class conflict into the Fascist movement and regime, while advantaging the powerful in this struggle even more than in democratic society.[26]

The place of women's groups in the Fascist movement was analogous. Male Fascists allied anti-feminism to treatment of women as sex objects and idealization of motherhood. Veterans were particularly resentful of female employment. Yet women still joined the movement. Some came via D'Annunzio, whose womanizing did not prevent him from promising political equality, or from Futurism, which preached the freedom of women from the domination of any single man. Other women were socialist comrades of Mussolini; a few even joined the *squadristi*, and most were more committed to gender equality than were male activists. Like trade unionists, women discovered that they were in a weaker position in the Fascist movement than in democratic society, and the cost of participation in the squads was ridicule. The January 1922 regulations for the *Fasci femminili in principle* confined women to charitable work and propaganda. Women did however have male indifference on their side, and so the unequal struggle between feminists and their opponents continued within the regime.[27]

[26] Paul Corner, *Fascism in Ferrara, 1915–1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); Frank M. Snowden, *The Fascist Revolution in Tuscany, 1919–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Frank M. Snowden, *Violence and Great Estates in the South of Italy: Apulia, 1900–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Frank M. Snowden, 'On the Social Origins of Agrarian Fascism in Italy', *European Journal of Sociology* 2 (1972), pp. 268–295.

[27] Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 30–34; Perry Willson, 'Italy', in Kevin Passmore (ed.), *Women, Gender and the Extreme Right in Europe (1919–1945)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 11–32, here pp. 12–15.

Solidarity

Incentives alone cannot explain participation in a social movement, for people may enjoy its fruits without participating. People were also attracted to Fascism by the kudos of membership in a prestigious group. In some cases, activism represented an extension of exclusive bourgeois social networks, from Ancona's *circolo cittadino*, via the largely upper-class student movement, to the charitable networks of wealthy women.[28] Also important were the veterans, with whom the Fascists systematically associated themselves. In his 1920 election campaign, Mussolini sang the anthem of the Arditi, the most prestigious veterans of all.[29] Soldiers, from generals to conscripts, resented the material difficulties of demobilization and agreed that their sacrifice had been wasted by politicians. Those too young to have served in the war shared the veterans' glory through participation in the squads, and for some of them activism provided a status that they otherwise lacked. Participation in punitive expeditions to Socialist towns and triumphal marches of heroes reinforced solidarity in a community of violence.[30]

Militarism reinforced hierarchy within the movement insofar as it preserved a chain of command reflecting the broader class structure. Most members were bourgeois, and most leaders were junior officers. But militarism also imported conflict into the movement. The army could not be relied on to obey orders and some generals plotted against the state. Moreover, war service reinforced the solidarity on which agricultural trade unionism depended, and so potentially hardened antagonism to bosses, including pro-fascist bosses.

Some of those who attended the first meeting of the Fasci swore their readiness to die for Italy over a dagger. Subsequently, the squads incorporated much of the lifestyle of soldiers and D'Annunzio's expedition—cocaine, drunken debauchery, abuse of women, brutality, histrionic speeches, and parades.[31] Political religions theory rightly stresses that demonstrations and rituals were intended to unite the movement and prefigure regenerated Italy. Moreover, Fascists believed that Le Bon had understood the need for an ideology that would bind followers to the leader. Emotional commitment was probably strongest among those who joined before the movement had won any successes. Yet emotional and

[28] Bosworth, *Mussolini*, p. 138; Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, pp. 31–32.
[29] Bosworth, *Mussolini*, p. 136.
[30] Reichardt, 'Fascist Marches', pp. 169–189.
[31] Duggan, *Fascist Voices*, pp. 22–25.

instrumental dimensions were inseparable in practice, for the power of the inner core depended on using its proximity to Mussolini. We have also seen that the breakthrough of Fascism happened quite independently of Mussolini's charismatic presence. Subsequently, Fascists rationalized their support as a response to Mussolini's qualities, and Mussolini's need to maintain his prestige consequently constrained him. It would have been hard for him to become just another Italian Prime Minister. Fascist rituals had purchase partly because they were invented within the movement: the black shirts, appeal to the fallen, the use of trucks to transport squads and the castor oil punishment. The party anthem originated with the Arditi.[32] Political religions theory cannot account for the coexistence of rituals and conflict within the fascist movement.

Frames

Political religions theory is on safer ground in relation to 'action frames'. Undeniably, many Fascists were emotionally committed to national rebirth, and the movement offered an outlet for outrage at Italy's treatment by the Allies. Through the press and speeches Fascist leaders disseminated their definition of the situation.[33] It defined the problem (national decline and disunity, class conflict), designated the guilty (the British, socialists, Slavs, bourgeoisie), and the solution (the advent to power of a new national elite drawn from the veterans and youth). Attacks on the socialists were legitimated by stories—too ubiquitous to be taken literally in every case—of socialists abusing veterans in the streets.

In practice, Fascist ideolog*ies* were complex. The aforementioned action frame was combined with many other motivations, perceptions and ideas. Like all social movements, in unprecedented crisis situations, Fascists used well-established ideas to understand the new situation. These ideas had histories, controversies and stakes of their own, and they resonated differently in the heterogeneous fascist constituency. Ideological debate within the movement represented a particular spin on old controversies about the nature of the political system, the relative importance of state and private initiative in social reform, the role of trade unions, the rights of women and much more, which were not specific to Fascism, out of which came new ideas and projects.

[32] Bosworth, *Mussolini*, p. 145.
[33] Bert Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

Likewise, we must historicize the religious language and rituals of Fascism, for they demonstrate not the correctness of Le Bon's theories or its avatars, but the *use* of crowd psychology to shape political action. Crowd psychology provided an incontrovertible (and unfalsifiable) explanation for political conflict; it taught that the mass was potentially dangerous and vulnerable to 'demagogues', but could be a force for good if led by a genuine elite. The latter must be close enough to the mass to understand the national psychology, but distant enough from the materialist and irrational crowd to provide disinterested national leadership. Besides his debt to Le Bon, Mussolini drew on Georges Sorel, Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels, all of whom owed something to crowd psychology.[34] He held that the elite must structure the mass: 'The mass is a flock of sheep until it is organized'.[35] He saw fascist marches as restoring the colourful and picturesque in the mass mind.[36]

Treating Fascism as a social movement shows that protagonists put crowd psychology to very different uses. It could justify harnessing the nationalism of the mass to the creation of a new society. Division of the world into elites and demagogues also led Fascists to overestimate the power and dangerousness of their opponents, so that gains by socialist trade unions appeared to threaten the whole social system and legitimated Fascist violence. Violence was important to Fascist practice both in the sense that the movement viewed it as a form of propaganda and because success depended on intimidation of opposing organizations (cast as anti-national demagogues) as much as on ritual adoration of the leader.

Moreover, crowd psychology did not necessarily lead in radical directions. It also taught that the elite should pursue 'realistic' policies, in conformity with the psychology of the people and the possibilities for action. Therefore, it potentially reinforced Mussolini's willingness to compromise in the interests of winning power. Similarly, while many Fascists depicted the elite as a macho warrior caste, women portrayed themselves as an elite capable of regenerating the mass through social work—a notion with a long history in Italy and elsewhere.[37] Mussolini's appointment as Prime Minister on 29 October 1922 won him many admirers outside Italy, but

[34] Robert Nye, *The Anti-Democratic Sources of Elite Theory: Pareto, Mosca, Michels* (London: Sage, 1977).

[35] Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922–1943* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 5.

[36] Reichardt, 'Fascist Marches', p. 180.

[37] Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, pp. 236–237.

it is not surprising that foreign observers of Fascism could not pin down its essence.

Transnational Fascism

In 1919, several movements emerged that looked similar to Fascism, quite independently of it. That happened because economies, religions and ideas had always transcended frontiers, and for the purpose of analysis we may take that as given. Likewise, war was a transcontinental experience; belligerents drew on a common pool of ideas and precedents, and there had been much international exchange concerning military strategy and the organization of society for war. Afterwards, unrest affected most countries in some degree. As we have seen, the movements that most resembled Fascist paramilitarism developed in defeated Germany, Austria and Hungary, in the disputed borderlands of Eastern Europe, and there were many contacts between far-right activists in these areas. Demobilized officers keen to compensate for defeat and students wishing to prove themselves in battle were prominent, and they endeavoured to kill the Jews and Bolsheviks whom they held responsible for defeat.[38] As in Italy, future activists recounted having been spurred to action by having their decorations stripped by reds, and everywhere the far-right was divided politically and socially. In Germany, a veteran claimed to have come home to 'hysterical' crowds, composed of disease-ridden 'rats'.[39]

Italy was not initially central to the diffusion and exchange of far-right ideas and practice. The Central European far-right had little interest in a country that had benefited from the peace treaties and which some saw as racially inferior. The Western far-right did not view Italy much more positively. Indeed, it was Mussolini who borrowed from the French thinkers, Le Bon and Sorel. Yet the actions of the fascist squads in ethnic conflicts on the Yugoslav border were contiguous with the Central European space of conflict described above, and as such it represented a transitional space between eastern and western Europe. The style and methods of D'Annunzio's Fiume expedition were transferred to the class conflicts of the Po Valley and then beyond. And since the Fascist movement amounted to more than just paramilitary violence there were potential convergences with a whole range of foreign movements in terms of ideology and practice.

[38] Gerwarth, 'The Central European Counter-revolution'; Gerwarth and Horne, 'Vectors of Violence', pp. 493–495.

[39] Gerwarth, 'The Central European Counter-revolution', pp. 190–191.

Fascism's success turned it into a prestigious label. By 1925, movements in no less than 45 states had designated themselves as 'fascist', encouraged also by the Italian regime's efforts to spread its ideology.[40] However, the question of imitation is complex, especially if we try to separate out perceptions of fascism as a movement according to our definition. On the Italian side, the nature of Fascism remained uncertain, all the more so imitators looked both to the Fascist movement and the regime. Major disputes continued within the Fascist regime concerning the status of trade unions and Church and the relationship of state and party. Since Fascists were not sure what fascism was, it is no surprise that foreigners, not to speak of present-day scholars, could not agree what it was either. Some observers stressed authoritarianism, and did not differentiate between the Spanish and Italian dictatorships. Moreover, dislike of the Italian regime's nationalism and imperialism stymied attempts to build a 'Fascist International', and Italian Fascism was not the only model towards which foreign movements looked. Another complicating factor was that anti-fascists from Antonio Gramsci to Ernst Bloch swallowed Fascists' claim that they had found the secret of moving the mass, and so thought that analogous techniques must be used to fight fascism.[41]

National Socialism

The Great War and November Revolution had convinced many ordinary Germans that they should be involved in national politics and provoked the emergence of a network of movements in a multi-sector mobilization. This activism was not homogeneous. Socialists were part of it but so was the explicitly bourgeois and nationalist reaction against the Revolution and Versailles Treaty. The reactionaries hesitated between nostalgia for the monarchy and the conviction that the racially defined people (*Volk*) represented the nation. Among them, the Freikorps assembled demobilized veterans to fight socialists, communists and Slavs in the borderlands and in Germany itself. In March 1920, the Pan-German Wolfgang Kapp led

[40] For a fine survey of the issues, see Arnd Bauerkämper, 'Transnational Fascism: Cross-border Relations between Regimes and Movements in Europe, 1922–1939', *East Central Europe* 2–3 (2010), pp. 214–246, here p. 216.

[41] Dante L. Germino, *Antonio Gramsci: Architect of a New Politics* (Louisiana State University Press, 1990), p. 120; Mark Meyers, 'Feminizing Fascist Men: Crowd Psychology, Gender, and Sexuality in French Antifascism, 1929–1945', *French Historical Studies* 1 (2006), pp. 109–142.

the *Freikorps Marinebrigade Ehrhardt* (Erhardt Naval Brigade) into Berlin to carry out a coup. The Freikorps resembled Fascism in obvious respects. Yet they differed in lacking a syndicalist and trade-union wing, while anti-Semitism was far more important to them than it was to the Italian Fascists. In the 1920s, movements such as the Home Guard provided a refuge for former paramilitary activists, but it was also part of small-town associational networks. These groups lacked political ambitions of their own, but Nazism would draw something from them.[42]

Mussolini's appointment provoked excitement among opponents of the new Weimar Republic.[43] Subsequently, movements from the right-wing veterans' movement, the *Stalhelm* (Steel Helmet), to the Catholic Centre Party adopted elements of fascism, understood selectively and in the light of their own ideas. The Stahlhelm emphasized the compromise between the conservatives, perhaps including the monarchy, and Fascism. Some were especially impressed by Mussolini's seizure of power, for it seemed to prove that history was not on the side of 'progress', and that nationalists could compete with socialists in the streets. They also described themselves as a movement (*Bewegung*), but they also looked to the Italian regime, especially to the notion of the absolute leader of party and nation. To understand the resulting complexities, I shall return to the concepts used to understand Fascism as a social movement.

Action Frames

Fascist influence on Nazi ideology requires careful specification, for activists selectively incorporated the Italian model into an already well-established extreme-right tradition. However, defeat and revolution had discredited the older authoritarian, elitist, nationalism of the monarchy and pan-Germans. Hitherto marginal groups profited, and developed a new nationalism based on the racially defined people rather than the Kaiser, and blamed 'Judeo-Bolshevik' influence for Germany's misfortunes. The notion of an ethnic *Volk* including Alsace, Austria and Germans in Eastern Europe and the Baltic constituted a rejection both of old-style *kleindeutsch* nationalism (i.e. of Germany within its pre-1914 borders) and of the Versailles Treaty. The belief that Germany was engaged in a war

[42] Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*, pp. 85–136.

[43] Christian Goeschel, 'Italia Docet? The Relationship between Italian Fascism and Nazism revisited', *European History Quarterly* 3 (2012), pp. 480–492.

to the death against a 'Judeo-Bolshevik' enemy and that German success in the struggle for life depended on the conquest of living space in the East was already important in *völkische* groups.[44] The discredit of established nationalism may also have made Germans receptive to Mussolini's example. But when Hitler praised Fascism for its attacks on the three weapons of international Jewry—freemasons, the international press and Marxism—he interpreted Italian Fascism in his own way, in the service of his own strategies, as did his followers.[45]

Instrumentalism

Were it not for the homogenizing effect of interpretations based on anomie, the desire for charismatic leadership and/or the need for a political religion, there would be no need to rehearse the vast scholarly literature showing the variable appeal of the Nazis. Electoral studies show that the Nazi appeal was diverse, appealed relatively more to groups such as Protestant farmers who were suffering from falling prices and to the urban middle classes alarmed by loss of savings and status.[46] These groups initially embraced Nazism for complex reasons, often quite independently of any attempt by the party to mobilize them. In the 1928 elections, with little success, the party had directed socialistic propaganda at urban constituencies. However, the party had done unexpectedly well in rural areas. Schleswig-Holstein especially had witnessed a rural social movement, the *Landvolk*, which had organized tax strikes and even engaged in terrorism. Rural voters had used the Nazi message in ways not intended by the leadership. Quickly learning the lessons, the party re-designed its message and regional organizations and saturated rural areas with permanent propaganda. A social movement had unintentionally re-shaped the party.[47]

[44] Peter Longerich, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 11–15.

[45] Goeschel, 'Italia Docet?', p. 487.

[46] Richard F. Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982); Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

[47] Michel Dobry, 'Hitler, Charisma and Structure: Reflections on Historical Methodology', in António Costa Pinto, Roger Eatwell and Stein Ugelvik Larsen (eds), *Charisma and Fascism in Interwar Europe* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 19–33, here pp. 28–31.

The diversity of Nazi support imported conflict into the movement. For instance, Otto Strasser advocated the socialization of big business, while Hitler retorted that he would only 'socialise enterprises that are prejudicial to the interests of the nation'.[48] Likewise, women played a complex role in the movement. As in Italy, the ethos of the Brownshirts mixed masculinism, contempt for women and idealization of mothers. Yet Hitler's refusal to allow women to occupy positions of political responsibility enabled them to organize separately. They evoked their own version of *Lebensraum* (living space), meaning the promotion of a harmonious society modelled on the home, and they propagandized for their version of National Socialism in public meetings—not just through charity work. Tensions between male and female activists remained largely subterranean until after the seizure of power. That women usually came off second best in conflicts with men was the result of differential power resources rather than acceptance of a subordinate position in a political religion.[49]

Solidarity

Peter Merkl's study of some 500 autobiographies of pre-1933 members shows that nearly a third of them were attracted primarily by the social solidarity of the national community.[50] Sven Reichardt's micro-study of Berlin storm-troopers shows that the violence of the SA reinforced solidarity—for Goebbels, bloodshed for the party was 'cement'—bringing together friendship groups, workmates and practitioners of sports.[51] Furthermore, although from 1930, the Nazis toned anti-Semitism down, activists continued to attack Jews in the streets, and from 1931 to 1932, local groups intensified boycotts of Jewish businesses. The boycott campaign was not a mass phenomenon, but it too reinforced the solidarity of the movement.[52]

Rituals and demonstrations also mattered. The party took some of them from Italy, notably the use of flags, the Roman salute and the leader

[48] Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham (eds), *The Rise to Power 1919–1934*, Documents on Nazism, 1919–1945 (London: Cape, 1974), pp. 66–67.

[49] Matthew Stibbe, *Women in the Third Reich* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003).

[50] Peter H. Merkl, *Political Violence under the Swastika* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 12.

[51] Reichardt, 'Fascist Marches', p. 185; Sven Reichardt, 'Violence and Community: a Micro-Study on Nazi Storm Troopers', *Central European History* 2 (2013), pp. 275–297, here p. 280.

[52] Longerich, *Holocaust*, pp. 18–25.

cult.[53] However, Nazism was not a simple copy. The *Führer* cult combined the Italian example with the old conservative critique of 'leaderless democracy' which was common to several European countries, the long-standing cult of Bismarck, the idea of a people's Kaiser, and the veterans' belief in leadership combined with equality of sacrifice.[54] There was a quasi-religious dimension to these rituals. Merkl's autobiographies show that some saw Hitler, as a man who had risen from humble origins, as the only hope for Germany; others expressed their willingness to die for him. Even the worldly and egotistical Hermann Göring spoke of 'the beloved leader of the German freedom movement'.[55] A journalist encouraged readers to set up shrines to Hitler in their homes.[56]

We must beware of taking literally the Nazi's explanations of how solidarity worked, for they were derived from crowd theory and are too easily recycled in the Weberian concept of charisma or in political religions theory. The place of charismatic authority in the movement must be carefully specified, and the term must be historicized. For instance, the belief of SA leaders that they must embody the group as a whole while remaining removed from the mass was compatible with routine crowd psychology, and doubtless it shaped their subjectivity and guided their action. Blind faith in Hitler may have been strongest in those who joined the party early, before there were any successes to confirm Hitler's genius. These people were most likely to stick with Hitler to the bitter end, when facts had manifestly falsified his prophesies. Their emotional commitment may also explain why they were willing to accept radical changes of political direction, such as the alliance with the nationalist right in the 1929 campaign against the Young Plan. The many unemployed young men who joined the SA may also have been especially open to its offer of comradeship, especially as many of them had broken with their families, and had perhaps lived in SA hostels. But the SA was never characterized by the sort of solidarity about which the Nazis fantasized; many activists did have outside employment and families, and even the aforementioned unemployed

[53] Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[54] Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth'*, pp. 14–47; Sven Reichardt, *Faschistische Kampfbünde: Gewalt und Gemeinschaft im Italienischen Squadrismus und in der deutschen SA* (Köln: Böhlau, 2002).

[55] Merkl, *Political Violence under the Swastika*, pp. 539–553; Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889–1936: Hubris* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), p. 193.

[56] Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth'*, p. 39.

young men could feel rivalry towards other SA groups.[57] Many young SA men were too young to have fought in the war, and identified with the front generation also because it was a socially valuable to do so. That is not to deny the strength of the emotional commitment, only to avoid essentializing it.[58] A glance at the wider Nazi constituency confirms that emotion and instrumentalism could go together. As in Italy, the Nazi's initial advance in the countryside in the 1928 elections owed little to Hitler's charisma or tactical nous. After the elections, the party attributed these gains to Hitler's genius, which became both emotional commitment and weapon in internal struggles.

Even in the inner core of the early movement, when the NSDAP remained marginal, instrumentalization and emotion were hard to separate. The limits of Hitler's charismatic leadership provoked him to instrumentalize Mussolini's leader cult. In the mid-1920s, the *Duce*'s establishment of a dictatorship helped to convince Hitler that he might himself be Germany's *Führer*, even if publicly he still deferred to other potential leaders.[59] Indeed, one of his chief opponents, Otto Strasser, claimed that activists must obey the idea rather than the 'merely human' leader, and he was more likely to refer to National Socialism as a movement than as a party.[60] A bust of Mussolini in his Munich office legitimated Hitler's pretensions.

The Role of the Movement in the Seizure of Power

The Italian model particularly influenced the way in which the National Socialists read the tactical possibilities. Initially, Hitler was most impressed by the belief that movement had seized power, and wittingly or unwittingly he played down the importance of parliamentary manoeuvres. He commented, 'We only have to have the courage to act. Without struggle, no victory!'[61] Then, reflecting on the failure of his 1923 Munich coup, Hitler re-read Italian events and placed more emphasis on the combination of legality and violence. Moreover, Hitler consulted personally with Mussolini's envoy in Germany, Major Guiseppe Renzetti at least 39

[57] Reichardt, 'Violence and Community', pp. 286–289.

[58] Ziemann, 'Germany after the First World War', p. 93.

[59] Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth'*, p. 20–23.

[60] Otto Strasser, *Hitler and I* (Boston: Haugthon & Miflin, 1946), p. 146, cited in Noakes and Pridham, *The Rise to Power 1919–1934.*

[61] Kershaw, *Hitler*, pp. 182183.

times between 1929 and 1934. The two leaders had a common interest in attacking the Versailles Treaty, but some Nazis saw Italians as a weak race that had betrayed Germany in 1914. Renzetti consistently encouraged Hitler to ally with conservative forces, to take power legally and to join the government only as senior member.[62]

In fact, while the Nazi movement benefitted from the connivance of the judiciary, press and conservative politicians, it could not count on the police to the extent that Italian Fascists could. Consequently, Brownshirt violence was more restrained. Threats were rarely carried out and there was no attempt to destroy the left prior to a March on Berlin. Amongst other things, SA mobilizations were part of an electoral strategy, designed to demonstrate that the movement represented the nation better than the government did. Nevertheless, bourgeois opinion does seem to have approved a violent practice that respectable values forbade them to indulge in themselves.[63] Moreover, deal a deal with the conservatives brought Nazism to power. As in Italy, the conflict between National Socialists and Communists in the streets complicated the usual mechanisms of parliamentary majority formation, turned the army against the republic, and ultimately obliging the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor in order to break the parliamentary deadlock.[64]

On the night of Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, the new cabinet gathered in the Reich Chancellery to view a massive torch-lit march of SA fighters. The participation of the Stalhelm demonstrated the breadth of Hitler's coalition and confirmed the Nazis' roots in a broad social movement. Analogies with Italy were obvious to contemporaries: a journalist allegedly remarked that they were witnessing the 'March on Rome in German form'. Perhaps he knew that Renzetti was the only foreign guest invited to join the official party. During the night, attacks on socialists and communists underlined the parallel with Italy, but aggression towards persons of 'Jewish appearance' suggested something different to the Italian regime.[65]

The rise of Nazism complicated the reception of fascism, for Hitler soon eclipsed Mussolini on the international stage. One by one, movements

[62] Goeschel, 'Italia Docet?', p. 486.

[63] Bernd Weisbrod, 'The Crisis of Bourgeois Society in Interwar Germany', in Richard Bessel (ed.), *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 23–39.

[64] Reichardt, 'Fascist Marches', pp. 172–174, p. 184.

[65] Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*, pp. 139–143.

that had been allied to the Italians shifted their allegiance to Germany. Mussolini responded by redoubling promotion of fascism abroad, and rivalry continued even after Italy and Germany joined the Axis Pact. To compete with the Nazis and satisfy pro-Nazis in his own party, Mussolini adopted anti-Semitism. He also depicted Fascism as 'Latin', a strategy that would have implications for fascism internationally.[66] There is no space to trace all the ramifications of the fascism on its worldwide journey. I shall concentrate on a few illustrations.

Hungary

Paradoxically, while Hungary had been a major theatre of paramilitary conflicts in the aftermath of the war, extreme right-wing social movements were relatively weak in the 1920s. Gyula Gömbös, on the more radical wing of the White Terror, had backed the regent, Admiral Miklós Horthy. That had ensured that agrarian and business elites remained in control of a semi-authoritarian system under Prime Minister István Bethlen. Popular mobilization was restricted by the defeat of the left in 1919 and the manipulation of elections, in which the open ballot was the norm. Soon, Gömbös was disillusioned with the conservatism of the Bethlen government. His small group of followers, the remnants of the paramilitaries and secret societies with links to the army, went into opposition. Gradually, they adopted more of the characteristics of a political movement, but remained unusual for another reason. Besides admiring Mussolini, they established links with Hitler, partly through German minorities in Hungarian towns. Hungarians were attracted to National Socialism's extreme hostility to the peace treaties and by its anti-Semitism, for they held Jewish universalism responsible for undermining the ethnic Hungarian nation. This message resonated with the officer class and bureaucrats who had recently governed a great empire.

The world economic crisis permitted the revival of Gömbös's fortunes, even though there was not a great mobilization of social movements. Deals at the peak of the state mattered more. In 1932, Horthy made Gömbös Prime Minister on condition that he renounced anti-Semitism. Gömbös complied, and anyway he had long admired Mussolini. But in June 1933, he was among the first heads of state to visit Hitler, attracted by the promise of treaty revision and by German economic power. Gömbös also attempted to build a genuine power base in the form of

[66] Bauerkämper, 'Transnational Fascism', p. 234.

mass party, and secured the election of 100 favourable parliamentarians in 1935. However, the absence of a threat from left-wing social movements and the conservative grip on elections meant that his success was limited. Conservatives were alarmed by Gömbös's anti-Semitism, establishment of economic ties with Germany and placing of pro-Germans in key positions in the army and governing party. Conservatives feared that these measures would undermine ties with Italy, and thus weaken opposition to the unification of Austria and Germany. In October 1936, Gömbös died and the conservatives returned to power, but conservatives were not strong enough to reverse the pro-German alignment.

Paradoxically, the defeat of fascism in the state marked the beginning of fascism as a significant social movement, the absence of which had weakened Gömbös's premiership. After his death, many of Gömbös's followers turned to a new pro-Nazi Party of National Will led by Ferenc Szàlasi, which was quickly banned but re-emerged in 1938 as the Arrow Cross. The party was more genuinely a social movement than earlier far-right groups had been, possessing perhaps 100,000 members by 1940, and it was notable for its popular appeal. Urban workers were sympathetic to attacks on Jewish employers. Poor agricultural labourers in Western Hungary were attracted by promises of land reform, ultranationalism and anti-Semitism. National Socialism also appealed because many seasonal rural workers had earned high wages in Germany. Fascist groups in Hungary did not become sufficiently strong as social movements to entirely disrupt politics at the state level, but thanks to the presence in them of so many pro-Nazi officers, they did ensure that the regime became increasingly anti-Semitic. The Arrow Cross quickly declined once Hungary had entered the war, and even more so after it became clear that Germany would not win, but in the final days of the war the remaining fascists won power. Those who now occupied governing positions issued from the 'charismatic community' within the fascist leadership, but the logic of the situation in which they found themselves, the product of earlier unwise choices, meant that their actions were not entirely irrational.[67]

[67] Gabriella Ilonszki, 'Hungary: Crisis and Pseudodemocratic Compromise', in Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Jeremy Mitchell (ed.), *Conditions of Democracy in Europe, 1919–1939 Systematic Case Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 242–262; J. Erös, 'Hungary', in Stuart J. Woolf (ed.), *Fascism in Europe* (London: Methuen, 1968), pp. 118–150; Mark Pittaway, 'Hungary', in Richard Bosworth (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 380–397.

France

In Hungary, fascism initially lacked a social base. In France, in contrast, the social movement suffered from a lack of allies among the elites. In 1919, France too experienced an upsurge of activism on the part of veteran associations, bourgeois self-defence groups, women's groups, conservative white-collar and peasant unions. Often they were politicized, but moderate conservatives predominated. Unlike their German and Italian counterparts, French conservatives had for decades been excluded from power, and so they were better placed to capture hopes of renewal. The parliamentary right, as the *Bloc national*, won the elections of 1919.

The Bloc was dominated by informally organized elitist parties and civil society groups largely lined up behind them, notably the '1919 Movement' for reform of the constitution. But the creation of the *Démocratie nouvelle* (The New Democracy), however insignificant numerically it was, demonstrated that France was capable of generating something resembling Fascism quite independently of the Italian example.[68] Well before the March on Rome, conservatives explicitly evoked the lessons of Italy. Among the first to do so were the *Unions civiques*, local groups that had been formed to break a general strike of 1 May 1920, affiliated to which were nationalist, student and veterans' groups. One activist urged imitation of the methods of Italy and Spain which he saw as a 'bourgeois rebellion' against Socialist anti-patriots. However, the Unions did not envisage an autonomous political role, and allowed themselves to be directed by the government.[69]

By the time that Mussolini seized power, the Bloc's political capital had declined, for it failed to translate expectation into concrete legislation. Now, the discontented right wing of the Bloc evoked the successes of Mussolini, which they assimilated to Catholic authoritarian conservatism, often grouped with Primo de Rivera's Spanish military dictatorship. These admirers also made some concessions to Fascism as a social movement, calling for a French Mussolini to embody popular discontent

[68] Kevin Passmore, *The Right in France from the Third Republic to Vichy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 208–209.

[69] Théodore Aubert, *Une forme de défense sociale. Les Unions civiques* (Paris: Marx Texier, 1921); Maurice Moissonnier and André Boulmier, 'La bourgeoisie lyonnaise aux origines de l'Union civique de 1920?', *Cahiers d'histoire de L'institut de recherches marxistes* 4 (1980), pp. 106–131; Andreas Wirsching, 'Political Violence in France and Italy after 1918', *Journal of Modern European History* 1 (2003), pp. 60–79.

with politicians.[70] The neo-royalist *Action française* also began to liken itself to Fascism, which it claimed derived from French ideas. According to Dieter Rucht's definition Action française was not a social movement, for its leaders aspired only to mobilize disciplined elites for a coup d'état. However, it contained a syndicalist wing, led by Georges Valois, who shared Mussolini's interest in Georges Sorel, and attempted to mobilize business and workers' groups.[71]

In 1924, the electoral victory of the *Cartel des gauches* (Left Cartel) provoked fear of revolution and completed discredit of the Bloc national. There ensued a multi-sector mobilization of Catholics and veterans. Two new extreme right-wing leagues emerged, the *Jeunesses patriotes* (JP) and the *Faisceau*. The JP ambiguously combined anti-parliamentarianism with alliance with the parliamentary conservatives, while the Faisceau rejected democracy and electoralism. Both attracted large memberships, were connected to civil society groups and were social movements in our sense. They often evoked fascism, identified with the young war generation, and embraced mass politics, paramilitarism and the leader cult. The new leagues denounced not only the Bloc and its failure to regenerate the nation and fight communism, but Action française, which it saw as timidly elitist.

From an *instrumental* perspective, the Faisceau and JP advocated or created organizations designed to constitute the kernel of a future corporatist system, thus providing selective incentives to join the movement in the form of access to employment in the present. The two leagues also offered *solidarity* through participation in tightly knit organizations identified with the veterans, and used rituals and regalia that were directly inspired by Fascism. The JP refused to adopt the 'axe or the fasces of the old Roman lictors as their badge', but their shock troops were organized in 'centuries', wore a uniform of blue raincoats and berets and used the roman salute. Faisceau members wore dark blue shirts and held military-style mobilizations with grandiose *mise en scène*, borrowed as much from the Fascist regime as from Fascist movement.

[70] *La République française*, 12 October 1922. See also, *L'Indépendent* (cantons of Pont-a-Mousson, Nomeny and Thiaucourt), 13 September 1923; *Bulletin de l'ALP*, 1 January, 15 April, 1 August, 15 October 1923; *Action nationale républicaine*, 3 May 1923.

[71] Eugen Weber, *Action Française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 155–159; Joel Blatt, 'Relatives and Rivals: the Responses of Action française to Italian Fascism, 1919–1926', *European Studies Review* 3 (1981), pp. 263–292.

Ideologically these movements were heterogeneous. Both drew on diverse French traditions and networks, but combined them with Italian ideas. Pierre Taittinger, the Jeunesses patriote leader, combined Bonapartism with Catholic conservatism and influences from outside the political sphere, such as management science. The Faisceau was divided between a Catholic conservative strand that distrusted the league's social movement dimension and Georges Valois' own syndicalism.

As we have seen in Italy and Germany, none of these aspects could be separated in the cut and thrust of practical politics, as the leagues' use of the label 'fascism' reveals. They saw in Fascism a means to renew French anti-republicanism, and initially, few expressed reservations about what they saw in Italy. However, given the diversity of the extreme-right tradition, the question of labels was potentially divisive. The JP preferred the label 'France' because reference to Bonapartism, royalism, or republicanism was potentially divisive.[72] Valois, in contrast, used the fascist label. He claimed that fascism was an international force that took different forms in different countries and like AF argued that Fascism's roots were French.[73] As Valois monopolized the Fascist label, AF and even the JP dropped it. Nevertheless, the use of fascist symbols and paraphernalia, even without use of the label, was inevitably taken as a challenge to the regime. The leagues used what Bruno Goyet calls 'the grammar of the March on Rome'. Using the language of war, the Faisceau predicted the imminence of 'H-Hour', and the JP joined in their paramilitary style mobilizations.[74] They did not imitate the systematic violence of the Italians, but used paramilitary display to portray themselves as stronger and more national than the government.

These rhetorical manoeuvres did not enable the leagues to monopolize right-wing opinion, and still less to win power. Although protests against the Cartel des gauches had created a fluid situation, and the leagues had disrupted routine political calculations, they struggled to convert street power into state power. The government retreated on its religious reforms and raised veterans' pensions. The leagues enjoyed the backing of many parliamentary conservatives, but had few deputies of their own, for there

[72] *Le Drapeau*, 20 April 1924.

[73] *Le Nouveau siècle*, 28 January 1926.

[74] Bruno Goyet, 'La "Marche sur Rome " : Version originale sous-titrée. la réception du Fascisme en France dans les années 20', in Michel Dobry (ed.), *Le mythe de l'allergie française du fascisme* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003), p. 100ff.

had been no elections. In any case the strength of anti-parliamentarianism made the leagues reluctant to participate in elections.[75] Consequently, it was easier in France than in Italy to form parliamentary coalitions. In 1926, the centre-left Radical-Socialist Party switched support to the right, permitting the establishment of a new government that defused the crisis. The Faisceau quickly declined, while the JP survived only because it transferred its activist energy to regeneration of the parliamentary right.

In the 1930s, the leagues reappeared. On 6 February 1934, Action française, the JP and a new league, the *Croix de feu* (Cross of fire), demonstrated against the allegedly corrupt government on the Place de la Concorde in Paris. Again, a fluid situation developed as the initiative passed to the streets. The army, police and judiciary proved reluctant to defend the government, which resigned. Again the leagues proved unable to profit from their victory. A parliamentary national unity government under Gaston Doumergue took over, with token representation in the cabinet to 'cover' the leagues.

Certainly, it proved harder for parliamentarians to master events, for there followed years of confrontation between left and right in the streets, while divisions in parliament meant that the government could not implement promised reforms. The Doumergue government was discredited, leaving space for the most untainted league, the Croix de feu. The latter developed a complex network of specialist organizations, integrated into a broad social movement, and in terms of membership it soon became the largest political organization France had ever seen. It expanded even more from 1936, when, thanks to dissolution ordered by a left-wing government, it reformed as a political party, the Parti social français (PSF).[76]

Whether the Croix de feu was fascist remains controversial, for the answer depends entirely upon definition. It resembled Fascism and Nazism in some respects, but not others. Some members regarded themselves as fascist, notably in Montpellier, where royalists had long admired Mussolini.[77] Most rejected the fascist label and denied any affinity at all with Nazism, which it saw as an extreme form of Pan-German expansion-

[75] Michel Dobry, 'France: an Ambiguous Survival', in Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Jeremy Mitchell (eds), *Conditions of Democracy in Europe, 1919–1939 Systematic Case Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp. 157–183.

[76] Brian Jenkins, 'The Six Fevrier 1934 and the "Survival" of the French Republic', *French History* 3 (2006), pp. 333–351; Passmore, *The Right in France*, pp. 292–297.

[77] Philippe Secondy, *La Persistance Du Midi Blanc. L'Hérault (1789–1962)* (Perpignan: Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 2006), pp. 237–238.

ism. Moreover, 'fascism' had become just one more reference point in the divided far right, and so as one of its leaders put it, it determined to avoid proclaiming itself 'Bonapartist, royalist, republican or fascist, and never pronounce these words that sow discord'.[78]

Nevertheless, the Croix de feu showed much interest in the Nazi and Fascist regimes (and others), which it understood in the light of French radical-right traditions (which actually were not exclusively French) and of its own priorities. Above all, the movement was open to the notion of a 'Latin' alliance with Italy and Spain. Turning to the instrumentalist dimension of the league as a social movement, debates within the Croix de feu and PSF concerning the rights of unions (syndicates) in the proposed corporatist state were part of an international exchange dating back decades, but which now had concrete realizations in Italy to discuss. Croix de feu sympathizers were among the many that visited Italy to investigate its corporatist system. Usually, they preferred Guiseppe Bottai's syndicalism and distrusted Alfredo Roccca's statist corporatism.[79] Ironically, they invoked Italian radicals to legitimate a syndicalist programme that was considered conservative in France (and by French scholars of fascism).

The Croix de feu figured in the international circulation of ideas, notably in its debt to crowd psychology. It claimed to unite its members in the 'mystique Croix de feu', that is behind a mobilizing myth that united the mass behind a regenerated veteran elite.[80] In this sense, the Croix de feu sought to create a political religion, for it assigned sacred status to its objective, borrowed the paraphernalia of traditional religion and subsumed Catholicism into the mystique.[81] To propagate the mystique, La Rocque urged the repetition of a few 'master ideas', thus revealing the assumption that mass action was non-reflective.[82] But if the Croix de feu leadership saw itself as a male elite leading a feminized mass, female activists reworked the same categories to buttress their own claim to elite status. They claimed to be technicians possessed of a vocation for social work that was unique to women and thus to be perfectly placed to propagate

[78] Didier Leschi, 'L'étrange cas La Rocque', in Michel Dobry (ed.), *Le Mythe de L'allergie Française Du Fascisme*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003), pp. 155–194.

[79] *La Petite Gironde*, 27 October 1935.

[80] *La Petite Gironde*, 27 October 1935.

[81] Gentile, *The Sacralisation of Politics*; François de La Rocque, *Service Public* (Paris: Grasset, 1934), p. 19.

[82] La Rocque, *Service Public*, pp. 14–19; *Le Flambeau*, 1 April 1934; AN 451, 5 February 1934.

the Croix de Feu mystique in the mass. Their social conception of politics set them against male activists.[83]

Turning to solidarity, Croix de feu members wore armbands, not uniforms, and the Roman salute was only used unofficially. They identified with the veterans rather than with foreign fascist movements, and association with this prestigious group was important for women too, some of whom invoked service as war nurses. However, the league's structure and paramilitary methods closely resembled those of the Faisceau. In response to secret orders, members travelled in columns of motor vehicles to locations revealed en route—sometimes to left-wing strongholds. Although violence often ensued, the purpose was more one of display and threat and to reinforce the solidarity of the movement. There was none of the systematic destruction of socialist movements that the Italian Fascists engaged in. But inevitably the practice provoked fears that the league was inspired by fascism, and we can safely assume that its leaders knowingly took that risk.[84] With hindsight, we know that Croix de feu mobilizations were remarkably similar to those in Germany, in that they were symbolic instruments meant to demonstrate the movement's fitness for office, and threats were rarely carried out.[85]

The Croix de feu proved unable to emulate the National Socialists in winning power. La Rocque privately recognized that in a large Western country, a movement could not 'rely exclusively on a romantic coup de force to get into power'. He added that 'despite the extreme nature of their doctrines, neither Mussolini nor Hitler made that mistake'; Hitler especially owed his success to elections. In Germany, La Rocque said, proportional representation and repeated dissolutions favoured Hitler, but that did not 'make the precedent any the less impressive'. In France, he argued, the problem was that while the mass of the population was accustomed to democracy, 'many members [of the Croix de feu] feel a real repugnance for elections', and they joined us because 'they no longer believed in universal suffrage'. Caught between these two stools, La Rocque resolved to give secret support to the best candidates of other parties in the coming elections. However, when the league became a party in 1936, most of

[83] Kevin Passmore, '"Planting the Rricolor in the Citadels of Communism": Women's Social Service in the Croix de Feu and Parti social français', *Journal of Modern History* 4 (1999), pp. 814–851, here p. 820.

[84] Kevin Passmore, 'Boy-scouting for Grown-ups? Paramilitarism in the Croix de Feu and PSF', *French Historical Studies* 2 (1995), pp. 527–557.

[85] Reichardt, 'Fascist Marches', pp. 175–176, pp. 177–179, pp. 181–182.

those deputies refused to join.[86] Like its 1920s precursors, neither the Croix de feu nor the PSF could convert their power as movements into leverage in parliament. In this, the movement was quite typical of admirers of fascism elsewhere in Europe, with the partial exception of the short-lived Gyula Gömbös government in Hungary (1932–1936). Elsewhere in Europe, fascist movements depended either on German invasion or, in the case of Spain, on a military rising.

Fascism Outside Europe

Definitions of generic fascism take Europe as exemplary, and ask whether or not movements outside Europe match them. Not surprisingly, historians of non-European states object that this method implies the transmission from advanced to backward regions on which modernization theory assumes. If transnational approaches emphasize diffusion, they risk reproducing the same error, but they are acceptable if they allow for selective appropriation (and for transfer in the other direction). For non-European admirers, Fascism and Nazism seemed to provide a model for the regeneration of nations, but they potentially rejected fascism where it favoured its own ethnic minorities abroad and harboured imperialist and racist designs. Only in Palestine did Nazi anti-Semitism have some appeal. Moreover, fascism was not the only reference for non-European nationalists.

Some Indian nationalists saw fascism as a precedent for and reinforcement of the independence movement. For instance, the radical Indian nationalist, Subhas Chandra Bose, made several visits to Italy and Germany in the 1930s, and was initially attracted to Fascism as a strong form of nationalism, the heir of the *Risorgimento*. In 1926 claimed that Italy would realize a new synthesis of fascism and communism. Under pressure from anti-fascists in Congress he drew back from that position, not least because Hitler justified British rule in India on racial grounds. Bose looked instead to the socialist authoritarianism of Kemal Atatürk. But he never gave up hope that Britain's enemies would help India achieve independence. In 1941 he escaped to Berlin (with the help of the USSR), where he helped to form an Indian Legion recruited from POWs, before transferring his hopes to the Indian National Army, formed from Japan's POWs.[87]

[86] Archives nationales, Fonds François de La Rocque, 193, 2 January 1936.

[87] Leonard A. Gordon, *Brothers against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose* (Calcutta: Rupa, 2008).

In China, the Blueshirt movement (*Lanyishe*) had greater similarities to Fascism and Nazism, or at least to some strands of them, but the social movement dimension was weak. The Blueshirts originated as part of a patriotic movement that wished the government to resist more strongly the Japanese invaders. Very quickly, they were absorbed into the governing Kuomintang Party. They became one of several groups linked to a secret military freemasonry (the *Lizingshe*) that had been formed in 1932 as a vehicle for the return to power of Chiang Kai-shek, who had recently resigned as head of the Kuomintang government. Some members had attended military schools in Italy and Germany, and the movement was formed at a time when Hitler's advent to power had provoked much interest in fascism. Some activists described themselves as fascists, and some copied the paramilitarism and ritual of European movements. Other members criticized pro-fascists for 'misunderstanding' the purpose of the Blueshirts, and some disliked the Nazis' Aryan supremacism. Historians cannot settle these rival claims to authenticity; one can only say that the Blueshirts read (or misread) fascism selectively, as means to regenerate the Kuomintang and the Chinese nation, just as it had supposedly saved Italy and Germany. This fascism meant totalitarian control, economic planning and unconditional loyalty to the Chiang Kai-shek, who was likened to Mussolini, but also to Stalin. Indeed, fascism was not the only reference point—in July 1933, Chiang identified China with the three developing nations of Germany, Italy and Turkey, in which the people allegedly worked together with the army to create a new nation. This authoritarian fascism was combined with Confucian ideas of community hierarchy, filial piety and duty. The Blueshirts founded the New Life Movement (NLM) to transmit appropriate manners to the masses (such as washing and not spitting), again combining Confucianism with the supposed orderliness of the Japanese and Germans. In sum, the movement possessed some of the characteristics of social movements, there was little independent or oppositional activism.[88]

The Brazilian *Ação Integralista Brasileira* (AIB) had more in common with fascism than the Chinese movements did, and it was a social movement in Dieter Rucht's sense, for it was one element of a network of

[88] Lloyd E. Eastman, 'Fascism in Kuomintang China: The Blue Shirts', *The China Quarterly* 49 (1972), pp. 1–31; Frederic Wakeman, 'A Revisionist View of the Nanjing Decade: Confucian Fascism', *The China Quarterly* 150 (1997), pp. 395–432; Federica Ferlanti, 'The New Life Movement in Jiangxi Province, 1934–1938', *Modern Asian Studies* 5 (2010), pp. 961–1000.

groups that sought to bring about a 'change of society'. The Revolution of 1930 had put an end to the Old Republic, an oligarchic regime based on limited franchise and dominated by coffee growers, and established a provisional regime under Getúlio Vargas. Some elements of the revolutionary coalition were the 'outs' of the old order, including regionalists from Brazil's powerful provinces, and army backing was essential to the success of the rebellion. But the Revolution also witnessed something new—a social movement based on middle-class groups in the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and some rural areas, linked loosely to young military officers (the Tenentes—lieutenants). The middle-class groups were involved in professional groups, churches and associations of German and Italian immigrants. The revolutionaries all opposed corruption and wanted regeneration, but did not agree what that meant.

In different ways, the revolutionaries all took something from Fascism and/or Nazism. Brazilian nationalists saw fascism as the model for a strong nation, and saw assimilation of immigrants as essential to national power. But Italians and especially Germans, who were numerous in southern farming areas and in the city of São Paulo, wanted to preserve their languages and cultures. From the mid-1930s, both the Fascist and National Socialist regimes increasingly took an interest in these emigrants, competing with each other for influence in the AIB. The Nazis encouraged Germans to consider themselves 'Germans abroad' rather than Brazilians.[89]

The social question also divided the revolutionaries. The revolution had been made in the name of 'the people', but it provoked the rise of communism and independent trade unions. Paternalist liberals opposed any concessions to the workers, but some Tenentes favoured social reform in the name of universal justice. Another Tenentes spokesman wished the middle-class to lead the people—hitherto, they said, the middle class had been crushed by oligarchs who were able to exploit the 'fickle multitude'. Consequently, they rejected the liberals' demand for a constitution and free elections.[90]

By the mid-1930s the revolutionary coalition was divided between extreme left and right, both of which competed with Vargas to lead 'the

[89] Frank D. McCann, 'Vargas and the Destruction of the Brazilian Integralista and Nazi Parties', *The Americas* 1 (1969), pp.15–28; Ricardo Silva Seitenfus, 'Ideology and Diplomacy: Italian Fascism and Brazil (1935–1938)', *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 3 (1984), pp. 503–534.

[90] Brian Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 136–137.

people'. Some middle-class people backed the National Liberation Alliance (ANL), formed in March 1935. The ANL was an anti-fascist popular front movement, which by May 35, possessed 1600 branches. It called for cancelation of foreign debts, rights for trade unions, and breaking up the latifundia. By the end of the year it was under communist control, but initially it had been moderate and envisaged middle-class leadership of the people, and in that sense at least it resembled the AIB, even though it dismissed the latter as fascist.

In the AIB it is hard to disentangle Catholicism, nationalism, Tenentismo, Fascism and Nazism. The AIB condemned politicians, capitalism and communism; activists wore green shirts, engaged in street violence and staged mass rallies. It was part of a network of courts, clinics, dispensaries, schools, women's groups and commercial enterprises, and won some support from German associations, but more joined the National Socialist Party itself.[91] The AIB defined itself in classic crowd psychology terms. It was a moral elite, ethically superior to corrupt, cosmopolitan capitalism. It was better qualified to lead the people, which was incapable of governing itself and vulnerable to the dark mirage of communism, but which might serve as a source of the ideal. The AIB's mystical and ethical view of the nation resembled a political religion, but it was harnessed to quite specific interests.[92]

Vargas tried to steer clear of the extremes and established a compromise constitution. In late 1935, backed by a vote of special powers in Congress and by the Integralista in the streets, his government stamped out the communist movement. Since the constitution forbade Vargas to stand for a second term, the Integralistas expected either that their leader, Plínio Salgado, would win the presidential election, or that they would provide the core of a Vargas dictatorship. In the event, Vargas assumed dictatorial powers in 1937. Soon after, he suppressed the AIB, and on 10/11 May 1938, easily snuffed out an attempted rising. In April 1938 he outlawed the National Socialist Party in Brazil. The left depicted Vargas's New State as fascist, and it did indeed have much in common with the statist, nationalist and Catholic elements of Fascism. But the Vargas regime had sup-

[91] Owensby, *Intimate Ironies*, pp. 130–158.

[92] Owensby, *Intimate Ironies*, pp. 138–139. Le Bon's *La psychologie des foules* had been translated into Portuguese in 1941, but doubtless analogous categories were circulating in the Portuguese language well before that.

pressed the mass party, and with it the social movement dimension of fascism.

Like most of the admirers of fascism, the AIB failed to win power, and failed to convert its strength as a social movement into political leverage. The AIB had been inspired by the German and Italian example of combining street agitation with electoralism. However, access to political power depended ultimately on winning the presidency, and while the AIB initially thought victory in the scheduled election to be possible, Salgado soon withdrew from the campaign, doubtless aware that in the unlikely event of victory, Vargas would launch a coup. Perhaps in keeping with the unspoken rules of Brazilian politics, the AIB had focussed on regional legislatures, so had no leverage in Congress either. When Vargas carried out his coup, the AIB hoped to become a regime party. But for the new dictator, the AIB's links (real and imagined) to the Fascist and Nazi regimes made it a dangerous rival and an obstacle to his desire for US support. When the AIB attempted to seize power, it found that it had few friends in high places.

As for the Italian and German governments, they were torn between backing the AIB in order to counter each other within the movement and American influence in Brazil, and fear of alienating the Vargas government. In the end, the Germans held aloof from the AIB's attempted coup. The Italian ambassador urged the AIB to act and accused it of too great a respect for democracy, but his government overruled him. Ironically, Vargas and the press blamed the Germans, not the Italians, for the AIB's attempted coup. The government banned the use of foreign languages in schools, churches and even in public, but enforced the law only against the Germans, partly because the Fascists' emphasis of Latin solidarity had some purchase.[93] The establishment of the Vargas regime and suppression of the ANL and AIB dissipated the middle-class movement, permitting Vargas to redefine the people around the working class and to embrace a policy of social reform.[94]

[93] McCann, 'Vargas and the Destruction of the Brazilian Integralista', pp. 28–34; Seitenfus, 'Ideology and Diplomacy', p. 529.

[94] Owensby, *Intimate Ironies*, pp. 157–158.

Conclusion

The organizations considered above, or at least elements of them, conform to Dieter Rucht's definitions of a social movement. They sought to reorder society and/or resist fundamental change, in diverse and contested ways—from destruction of the left to the re-making relations between men and women. They were part of a network of networks, in that they emerged from, and competed with others to capture, a politically nebulous upsurge of collective activity, whether in the wake of the Great War, following the Japanese invasion of China or the Brazilian Revolution of 1930. They possessed a group identity, even if they disagreed on what that identity was or interpreted it differently, and they defined themselves against enemies, if not necessarily the same ones. Members joined for instrumental reasons, which often set them against other members.

In one way or another all the movements in question looked to Italian Fascism and later Nazism as a model. They admired Fascism as an example of the regeneration or actualization of a decadent or oppressed nation; they copied specific family and social programmes, and they used Mussolini's leader cult as a weapon in intra-movement conflicts. Particularly relevant is that all the organizations that I have considered (with the exception of the Indian Nationalists) meditated the Italian success in converting an anti-political street movement into a party and a regime, through the combination of agitation in the streets and political manoeuvring, while applying the lessons in different ways. Thus, the organizations that I have considered were entangled, both with fascism and as social movements, on a transnational scale.

That does not mean that they essentially *were* fascist or social movements, only that our definitions reveal particular aspects. In the case of fascism, social movements always had political ambitions, and in respects not highlighted here they acted as political parties. By the same token there was in practice no absolute distinction between movement and regime, for the practices of the movement could be detected in regimes, in spite of the purges of the Blackshirts and murder of leading Brownshirts in 1926 and 1934 respectively. In Italy, the victims of purges were described as 'anti-fascists', revealing again the importance of following definitions in action. In spite of the purges, in Italy, the violence of ex-squad members remained essential to the practice of the regime, as officials, prison guards and as soldiers in Ethiopia and in the civil war that followed Mussolini's

fall. Doubtless the same could be said of Germany, but of course there were many other logics at play in both regimes.[95]

Further Reading

Studies of fascism as a category have not especially emphasized its social movement dimension, because their primary objective is to develop an abstract theory of the origins and development of fascism, and/or because they consider social movements to be primarily left wing. Nevertheless, some of these theories do share certain assumptions with older social movements theory, notably in the assumption that fascism is a response to rapid change, anomie, and the search for a messianic ideology. This theory is present in Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991). Studies of Fascism as a political religion make similar assumptions, notably Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralisation of Politics: Definitions, Interpretations and Reflections on the Question of Secular Religion and Totalitarianism* (London: Frank Cass, 2000). The most useful empirical work to use political religion theory to study fascism as a social movement is Christopher Duggan, *Fascist Voices: An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Michel Dobry has advanced the most important critique of the strain-breakdown approach to social movements, as applied to fascism, but little of his work is available in English. Some of his ideas may be found in Michel Dobry, 'France: An Ambiguous Survival', in Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Jeremy Mitchell (eds), *Conditions of Democracy in Europe, 1919–1939. Systematic Case Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 157–183 and in Kevin Passmore, *Fascism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn, 2014).

Of studies that have approached Fascism and Nazism from a more explicitly social movement perspective. Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998) remains essential. Alf Lüdkte, *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Princeton University Press, 1995) presents in English some of key essays considering popular support for Nazism. Benjamin Ziemann, 'Germany after the First World

[95] Matteo Millan, 'The Institutionalisation of Squadrismo: Disciplining Paramilitary Violence in the Italian Fascist Dictatorship', *Contemporary European History* 4 (2013), pp. 551–573.

War—A Violent Society? Results and Implications of Recent Research on Weimar Germany', *Journal of Modern European History* 1 (2003), pp. 80–86, takes issue with the view of post-war Germany as 'brutalized'.

An enormous number of local studies of Fascism and Nazism that had been published since the 1960s, and some of the older examples remain useful. While these studies often treated fascism as reactionary, they rooted it in local conditions and more or less popular mobilizations. The best local studies on Italy are, Paul Corner, *Fascism in Ferrara, 1915–1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); Frank M. *Snowden*, *The Fascist Revolution in Tuscany, 1919–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Frank M. Snowden, *Violence and Great Estates in the South of Italy: Apulia, 1900–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). On Germany, see the classic, William Sheridan Allen. *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, 1922–1945* (New York: Echo Point Books & Media, revised edn 2014, first published 1966); Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann, *Nazism in Central Germany: The Brownshirts in 'Red Saxony'* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 1999). Local studies inform Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (London: Allen Lane, 2003) and Roderick Stackelberg, *The Routledge Companion to Nazi Germany* (London: Routledge, 2007), summarizes recent research on Nazism.

For fascism outside Europe, the most interesting book from a social movement perspective is Stein Ugelvik Larsen (ed.), *Fascism Outside Europe: The European Impulse Against Domestic Conditions in the Diffusion of Global Fascism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

Women's history provides important insights into fascism as a social movement. Two classics are Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Kevin Passmore (ed.), *Women, Gender and the Extreme Right in Europe (1919–1945)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), includes chapters on the role of women in far right movements in most European countries.

Some of the most interesting recent works on fascism focus on its culture of violence. The best work is Sven Richardt's comparing Italy and Germany. The following are available in English: Sven Reichardt, 'Fascist Marches in Italy and Germany: Squadre and SA before the Seizure of Power', in Matthias Reiss (ed.), *The Street as Stage: Protest Marches and Public Rallies Since the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University

Press, 2007), pp. 169–193; Sven Reichardt, 'Violence and Community: A Micro-Study on Nazi Storm Troopers', *Central European History* 2 (2013), pp. 275–297; Sven Reichardt, 'Violence, Body, Politics: Paradoxes in Interwar Germany', in Chris Millington and Kevin Passmore (eds), *Political Violence and Democracy in Interwar Europe, 1918–1940* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015).

Other works are more explicitly transnational in focus. For instance, Robert Gerwarth, 'The Central European Counter-Revolution: Paramilitary Violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary after the Great War', *Past & Present* 1 (2008), pp. 175–209, defines a space of violence in Germany and Hungary; Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, 'Vectors of Violence: Paramilitarism in Europe after the Great War, 1917–1923', *The Journal of Modern History* 3 (2011), pp. 489–512.