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Roger Griffin, Werner Loh and
Andreas Umland, Eds.

Fascism Past and Present, West and East

An International Debate on Concepts and Cases in the Comparative Study of the Extreme Right

With an afterword by Walter Laqueur

ibidem

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Roger Griffin, Werner Loh and Andreas Umland (Eds.)

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Cover picture: The flag (in colours reminiscent of the Nazi banner) of Russia's National-Bolshevik Party, co-founded by Aleksandr Dugin in 1993.The publications and activities of the NBP, especially during its early phase in1994-1998, touch upon many of the issues discussed in this volume such as the relationship between classic and neo-fascism, new strategies of the postwar extreme right, and the nature of Dugin's ideology.

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Acknowledgements

This debate was initiated by Dr Werner Loh in 2002 who invited Prof. Roger Griffin to submit a leading article as the basis for a forum discussion on the theory of fascism and its relevance to contemporary democracy, and who contacted a wide range of German- and English-speaking experts to participate. In 2003-2004, Dr Loh took on the considerable task of preparing the ensuing interventions for publicaiton and circulating the replies over the course of two rounds of criticism and response. In 2004-2005, Dr Loh, in addition, permitted and accompanied three rounds of a secondary debate on Aleksandr Dugin between Prof. A. James Gregor and myself that had span off from the initial controversy over Griffin.

The entire discussion appeared in three issues of the volumes 15 and 16 of *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* (EWE, Deliberation Knowledge Ethics), previously *Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften: Streitforum für Erwägungskultur* (Ethics and Social Sciences: A Forum of Debate for a Deliberative Culture). This outstanding journal is published under the imprint of the Lucius & Lucius Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Stuttgart.

In 2005, Dr Wulf D. v. Lucius, kindly, gave his permission for a reprint of the debate as a book. Dr Loh provided the texts and contributors' addresses and helped securing an aggreement of all authors to a reprint.

Prof. Walter Laqueur is acknowledged for providing, on short notice, a thought-provoking afterword to the discussion.

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A.U.
Kyïv, March 2006

Instructions for the Reader

The quotations are the following:

- The main article is quoted as (Griffin ((XX))) or (Griffin (XX)).
- The response 1 and response 2 are referred to as (R 1 ((XX))) or: (R 1 (XX)); respectively (R 2 ((XX))) or: (R 2 (XX)).
- The critique 1 and the critique 2 are referred to as (Baker 1 ((XX))) or: (Baker 1 (XX)); respectively (Baker 2 ((XX))) or: (Baker 2 (XX)).
- The three rounds of the secondary debate are referred to as (Secondary Debate 1, 2 or 3 (XX)).

Abbrevations

AF	Action Française
AN	Alleanza Nationale
BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland
BUF	British Union of Fascists (and National Socialists)
CEDA	Confederatión Española de Derechas Autónomas
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CoE	Council of Europe
DAP	Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik
DISS	Duisburger Institut für Sprach- und Sozialforschung
DKP	Deutsche Kommunistische Partei
ENR	European New Right
FN	Front National
FPÖ	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs
GRECE	Groupement de Recherche et d'Études pour la Civilisation Européenne
GUD	Groupe Union Défense
GULag	Glavnoe upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei
IASL	Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur
JE	Jeune Europe
KPdSU	Kommunistische Partei der Sowjetunion
MSI	Movimento Sociale Italiano
NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands
NRW	Nordrhein-Westfalen
NS	Nationalsozialismus
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
PNF	Partito Nazionale Fascista
PPF	Parti Populaire Français
PSF	Parti Social Français
REP	Die Republikaner
RF	Russian Federation
RSI	Repubblica Sociale Italiana
SA	Sturmabteilungen

SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland
SS	Schutzstaffel
UN	United Nations
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association
UR	Unité Radicale
VS	Verfassungsschutz

Note: For the numerous abbreviations in Figure 2 on page 283, see Nicolas Lebourg „Les Nationalismes-révolutionnaires en Mouvements: Idéologies, propagandes et influences (France 1962-2002),“ thèse de doctorat, Université de Perpignan 2004.

Foreword by the Series Editor

In his 1996 survey of classic and neo-fascism, Walter Laqueur wrote that „[t]he prospects of the extreme Right in the former Soviet Union and Soviet bloc seem better than in most other parts of the world."[1] Eight years later, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Alvaro Gil-Robles, after two visits to Russia in 2004, reported to the CoE's Parliamentary Assembly: „I would like to stress again that the widespread rise in xenophobia is most alarming. Excessive nationalism and the ideologies transmitted by parties and organizations attached to the extreme right are the main causes of this state of affairs."[2] Aleksandra Radkovskaya, a psychologist at Moscow State University, in late 2005, argued that „[x]enophobia exists in many countries, but in Russia it has become a norm, a commonplace for the majority of the country."[3]

The appearance of a volume of collected essays, statements and letters on fascism in a book series on post-Soviet politics might have seemed out of place a few years ago. However, as the above statements indicate, recent Russian affairs constitute a suitable context for the publication of a discussion of the notion of generic

1 Walter Laqueur, *Fascism: Past, Present, Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 178. Already in 1993, Assen Ignatow had noted: „One of the most important and dangerous spiritual events of the post-communist period is the 'sudden' resurgence of conservative-nationalistic fundamentalism and its messianic pretensions." See his paper „Das postkommunistische Vakuum und die neuen Ideologien: Zur gegenwärtigen geistigen Situation in Rußland," *Osteuropa* 43, no. 4 (1993): 311-327, here 313. The most important early analysis of the resurgence of Russian ultranationalism after the break-up of the Soviet Union was Walter Laqueur's seminal *Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993). One of the earliest warnings against the coming threat was the same author's article „Russian Nationalism," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 5 (1992/1993), http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19921201faessay5906/walter-laqueur/russian-nationalism.html.

2 *Report by Mr Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, on his Visit to the Russian Federation 15 to 30 July 2004, 19 to 29 September 2004* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2005), 67. At about the same time, the late Thomas Parland wrote that, „[i]n post-totalitarian Russia, the ideological climate has been gravitating more and more towards right-wing conservative values coloured by Russian nationalism." See his *The Extreme Nationalist Threat in Russia: The Growing Influence of Western Rightist Ideas.* RoutledgeCurzon Contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe Series 3 (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 1.

3 As quoted in *Financial Times*, 30th December 2005.

fascism and its relation to neo-fascism. The study of contemporary mainstream (and not only fringe) politics in Russia is a setting

- where „fascism" is still a topical, and not only academic matter,
- where it is, as illustrated by numerous political and legal actions concerning the term „fascism," a concept of societal concern, and
- where the issues discussed below acquire more than a mere historical, cultural or sociological meaning.[4]

It is true that there is already a rather (too?) large number of collected works on fascism. Moreover, the below debate has already been published in three issues of *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* in 2004-2005.[5] A few years before, the same journal had published two equally stimulating controversies on Wolfgang Wippermann's theory of fascism,[6] and Ernst Nolte's philosophy of history,[7] the former of which has, in the meantime, too been reprinted as a book.[8] Already, in the late 1960s, a provocative essay by Gilbert Allardyce had triggered a series of responses reminiscent of the dispute below.[9] Not to mention the hundreds of conference papers and journal essays on fascism reprinted in dozens of more or less voluminous collections, the most important of which—the massive five-volume *Fascism* within Routledge's *Concepts of Political Science* series—has been compiled by no other than Roger Griffin, the main protagonist in the debate published here.[10]

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4 For some early indications, see Aleksandr A. Galkin, „Rossiiskii fashizm?" *Sotsiologicheskii zhurnal*, no. 2 (1994): 17-27; *idem* and Iurii Krasin, „O pravom radikalizme v rossiiskom obshchestve," *Obozrevatel'*, no. 12 (1995): 52-58; Aleksandr Yanov, *Posle El'tsina: „Veimarskaya" Rossiya* (Moscow: KRUK, 1995); Vladimir Ilyushenko, ed., *Nuzhen li Gitler Rossii? Po materialam Mezhdunarodnogo foruma „Fashizm v totalitarnom i posttotalitarnom obshchestve: ideynye osnovy, sotsial'naya baza, politicheskaya aktivnost'," Moskva, 20-22 yanvarya 1995 goda* (Moscow: PIK, 1996).

5 Vol. 15, nos. 3 & 4 (2004); vol. 16, no. 4 (2005).

6 *Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften* 11, no. 2 (2000): 289-334.

7 *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* 13, no. 1 (2002): 75-172.

8 Wolfgang Wippermann and Werner Loh, eds., *„Faschismus" – kontrovers*. Erwägungskultur in Forschung und Praxis 3 (Stuttgart: Lucius & Lucius, 2002).

9 Gilbert Allardyce, „What Fascism is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept," *American Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (1979): 367-398. Roger Griffin's essay „The Primacy of Culture: The Current Growth (or Manufacture) of Consensus within Fascist Studies," *The Journal of Contemporary History* 37, no. 1 (2002): 21-43—postulating the existence of a growing scholarly consensus about the definition of fascism—also provoked controversy that anticipated many of the issues raised in the *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* debate.

10 Roger Griffin in collaboration with Matthew Feldmann, eds., *Critical Concepts in Political Science: Fascism*. 5 Vols. (London: Routledge 2004). See also Roger Griffin, ed., *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995); *idem*, ed., *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus* (London: Arnold, 1998).

If seen against such a background, adding yet another thick volume to shelves already overloaded with publications on comparative fascist studies may seem redundant. This would be wrong not only in view of the specific format of the *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* discussions distinguishing this journal's essay collections significantly from standard anthologies, and constituting a pioneering enterprise in contemporary Western humanities. As indicated, the endeavor gains also relevance in the light of recent developments in Eastern Europe. At least, within the study of Russia, researchers should still be grateful to be provided with one more update on comparative fascist studies, and to be able to follow a debate which deals prominently with some central issues in the assessment of current Russian trends, such as the question and degree of the comparability of inter-war and post-Cold War political phenomena,[11] and the significance of groupuscular and meta-political forms of ultra-nationalism in contrast to the movements and regimes that dominated European history between 1918 and 1945.

There is a second reason why such a volume appears well-placed within a German book series on Soviet affairs. The theory of totalitarianism claimed a number of important similarities between fascist and (purportedly) communist regimes—an approach that has, by now, become widely accepted by most scholars, including many in post-Soviet Russia. In Germany, furthermore, the concept of totalitarianism acquired a *political* role in as far as „anti-totalitarianism" became a founding myth of the Federal Republic of Germany, and led to the emergence of a number of laws and procedures that inhibit the freedom of expression of both extreme right- and radical left-wingers to an, in the Western context, unusually high degree.

„Totalitarianism's" special importance for German post-1945 patriotism may have been also a reason for the transformation, in West Germany, of the originally unpretentious (and, some may argue, in and as of itself empty) concept of „extremism" into a whole new, nation-wide political science sub-discipline that is called *Extremismusforschung*—extremism studies—and has its own yearbook,

11 A brief discussion of the seminal essay on this issue somewhat reminds the *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* debates. See, Stephen E. Hanson and Jeffrey S. Kopstein, „The Weimar/Russia Comparison," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 13, no. 3 (1997): 252-283; Stephen D. Shenfield, „The Weimar/Russia Comparison: Reflections on Hanson and Kopstein," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 14, no. 4 (1998): 355-368; Jeffrey S. Kopstein and Stephen E. Hanson, „Paths to Uncivil Societies and Anti-Liberal States: A Reply to Shenfield," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 14, no. 4 (1998): 369-375.

book series, specialized journal, and section within the German Political Science Associaton.[12] Within „extremism studies," the state-typological concept of totalitarianism develops into the ideology-typological notion of „political extremism" which asserts a fundamental similarity between radically ascriptive and ultra-egalitarian ideas. Right-wing rejections of the idea of democracy are seen as of the same kind as left-wing utopias about a more „just" form of society (than liberal democracy). Marxism and racism appear as, fundamentally, alike insofar as they belong to one and the same genus—„political extremism."[13]

Within this particular context, the publication of a book on fascism in a series on Soviet affairs is less of a surprise than it would have been in other national scholarly frameworks where „extremism" might be a less prominent concept. If not only the regimes and states created by those leaders claiming to be particularly patriotic or especially universalistic are similar, as the theory of totalitarianism has been asserting for more than fifty years, but also their ideas are strongly likened to each other, as the concept of political extremisms claims—then „communism" and „fascism" are two sides of one medal. Many, if not most findings that comparative fascist studies have to offer should be also relevant to the study of communism. Within „extremism studies," this should concern not only institutions created and actions undertaken by „extremists" (as the concept of totalitarianism had already suggested), but also their world views, biographies, psychology, culture, habits, etc.

A number of caveats have to be stated:

1. The main part of this debate was conducted in 2003-2004. Only A. James

12 *Jahrbuch Extremismus & Demokratie* 1-17 (1989-2006), http://www.nomos.de/; Schriftenreihe *Extremismus und Demokratie* 1-13 (2001-2005), http://www.nomos.de/; *Schriften des Hannah-Arendt-Instituts* 1-29 (1995-2006), http://www.tu-dresden.de/hait/publ_sch.htm; *Totalitarismus und Demokratie* 1-2 (2004-2005), http://www.hait.tu-dresden.de/td/; „Ad-hoc Gruppe 'Politischer Extremismus' in der DVPW," http://www.politik.uni-mainz.de/dvpw-politischer-extremismus/. See furthermore http://www.extremismus.com/.

13 Of course, there are adherents of the assumptions of German „extremism studies" as well as similar research networks outside Germany too. For instance, the European Consortium for Political Research comprises an active Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy that publishes its own newsletter and book series. See http://webhost.ua.ac.be/extremismanddemocracy/. Yet, at least on the national level, it is only in Germany that this approach has been systematically developed into an entire study and research program with a refined conceptual framework and formidable institutional infrastructure.

Gregor's and my exchange of letters, documented as a „Secondary Debate," at the end of this book lingered into 2005. Therefore, the more recent literature on comparative neo/fascism and related issues discussed below[14] as well as on Russian fascism and Aleksandr Dugin, the subject of the „Secon-

14 To name, in chronlogical order, but a few, for the various issues in the below discussion, potentially relevant English- and German-language studies which have appeared since 2004 and could thus not fully or not at all be incorporated here: François Furet and Ernst Nolte, *Fascism and Communism.* With a preface by Tsvetan Todorov. Translated by Katherine Golsan. European Horizons Series (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004); Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Angelica Fenner and Eric D. Weitz, eds., *Fascism and Neofascism: Critical Writings on the Radical Right in Europe.* Studies in European Culture and History (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Cas Mudde, *Racist Extremism in Central and Eastern Europe.* Extremism and Democracy Series (London: Routledge, 2004); Wolfgang Gessenharter and Thomas Pfeiffer, eds., *Die neue Rechte – eine Gefahr für die Demokratie?* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004); Sven Reichardt, „Was mit dem Faschismus passiert ist: Ein Literaturbericht zur internationalen Faschismusforschung seit 1990. Teil 1," *Neue Politische Literatur* 49 (2004): 385-406; Armin Nolzen and Sven Reichardt, eds., *Faschismus in Deutschland und Italien: Studien zu Transfer und Vergleich* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005); Wolfgang Wippermann, *„Auserwählte Opfer?" Shoah und Porrajmos im Vergleich: Eine Kontroverse.* Geschichtswissenschaft 2 (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2005); Leonid Luks, „Bolschewismus, Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus im Vergleich: Ein Skizze," in: Waltraud Schreiber, ed., *Der Vergleich: Eine Methode zur Förderung historischer Kompetenzen* (Neuried: ars una, 2005), 157-193, http://www1.ku-eichstaett.de/ZIMOS/Netzwerk/Dateien/BolschFaschNS.pdf; Elisabeth Carter, *The Extreme Right in Western Europe: Success or Failure?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Carlo Ruzza, *Reinventing the Italian Right: Territorial Politics, Populism and „Post-Fascism"* (Routledge, 2005); Chloé Lachauer, *Die dunkle Seite Europas: Rechtsextreme auf dem Weg zum politischen Akteur? Netzwerkbildung der Rechten in der Europäischen Union* (Marburg: Tectum, 2005); Pieter Klandermans and Nonna Mayer, eds., *Extreme Right Activists in Europe: Through the Magnifying Glass.* Extremism and Democracy Series (London: Routledge, 2005); Stefan Breuer, *Nationalismus und Faschismus: Frankreich, Italien und Deutschland im Vergleich* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005); Uwe Backes and Eckhard Jesse, *Vergleichende Extremismusforschung.* Extremismus und Demokratie 11 (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2005); *idem*, eds., *Gefährdungen der Freiheit: Extremistische Ideologien im Vergleich.* Schriften des Hannah-Arendt-Instituts 29 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), Thomas Grumke and Thomas Greven, eds., *Globalisierter Rechtsextremismus? Die extremistische Rechte in der Ära der Globalisierung* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006); Piero Ignazi, *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Roger Griffin, ed., *Fascism, Totalitarianism and Political Religion* (London: Routledge, 2006); George Michael, *The Enemy of My Enemy: The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006); Richard Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism from Nietzsche to Postmodernism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Roger Eatwell, *Fascism and the Extreme Right.* Extremism and Democracy Series (London: Routledge, 2006); Cyprian Blamires, ed., *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006).

dary Debate,"[15] is not or only partly considered here.

2. The discussion is reproduced here almost exactly as it appeared in *Erwägen Wissen Ethik*. The nature of the exchange as consisting of direct responses to previous statements did not allow the editors to permit improvements or corrections by the authors in their original contributions. Such an option could have triggered a (potentially endless) chain reaction of alterations. We thus had to stick to the 2004 version.[16]
3. In connection with the latter issue, it needs to be emphasized that the 2003-2004 *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* controversy was a discussion conducted under some constraints concerning the deadlines for, and length of, the individual contributions. Except for Griffin's initial, main article, they had to be written under certain pressure—which, no doubt, the reader will sometimes feel. All participants had to make their statements relatively quickly, i.e. within

15 Mark Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Stefan Wiederkehr, „'Kontinent Evrasija' – Klassischer Eurasismus und Geopolitik in der Lesart Alexander Dugins," in: Markus Kaiser, ed., *Auf der Suche nach Eurasien: Politik, Religion und Alltagskultur zwischen Russland und Europa*. Bibliotheca Eurasica 1 (Bie1efeld: transcript, 2004), 25-138; Leonid Luks, „Eurasien aus neototalitärer Sicht – Zur Renaissance einer Ideologie im heutigen Russland," *Totalitarismus und Demokratie* 1, no. 1 (2004): 63-76; Marlène Laruelle, „The Two Faces of Contemporary Eurasianism: An Imperial Version of Russian Nationalism," *Nationalities Papers* 32, no. 1 (2004): 116-136; L.Ya. Dadiani, „Fakty i mysli o russkom fashizme: Diskurs," in: *idem* and G.M. Denisovskii, eds., *Sotsial'noe soglasie protiv pravogo ekstremizma 3-4* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo instituta sotsiologii RAN, 2005), 145-215; Vladimir Pribylovskii and Vyacheslav Likhachev, eds., *Russkoe Natsional'noe Edinstovo. V 2-kh tomakh*. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society 10 (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verl., 2005); Anastasia V. Mitrofanova, *The Politicization of Russian Orthodoxy: Actors and Ideas*. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society 13 (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verl., 2005); Leonid Luks, *Der russische „Sonderweg"? Aufsätze zur neuesten Geschichte Russlands im europäischen Kontext*. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society 16 (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verl., 2005); Marlen Laryuėl' [Marlène Laruelle], „Aleksandr Dugin, ideologicheskii posrednik," in: Aleksandr Verkhovskii, ed., *Tsena nenavisti: Natsionalizm v Rossii i protivodeistvie rasistskim prestupleniyam* (Moskva: Sova, 2005), 226-253; Aleksandr Verkhovskii, ed., *Putyami nesvobody* (Moskva: Sova, 2005); Andreas Umland, „'Negrazhdanskoe obshchestvo' v Rossii," *Forum noveishei vostochnoevropeiskoi istorii i kul'tury* 2, no. 2 (2005), http://www1.ku-eichstaett.de/ZIMOS/forum/docs/Umland%20richtig.pdf; *idem*, „'Konservativnaya revolyutsiya': imya sobstvennoe ili rodovoe ponyatie?" *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 2 (2006): 116-126.

16 This is also one of the reasons for leaving the German contributions in German language, as they were submitted originally. Some minor stylistic changes were made in all the contributions, and some sources were updated in the endnotes. The *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* contributions' formatting was slightly changed in order to secure greater uniformity. Apart from that, no changes to the initial debate were made. Only the foreword, afterword and appendix were added. The usual caveats concerning possible erroneous information or interpretation in the contributions apply.

three months or so. The contributions are thus not fully worked through journal papers, but can be thought of as interventions in a panel discussion of a paper delivered at a conference.[17]

4. The volume is, therefore, not the usual collection of extensively edited research papers, but a text that follows the aims of the *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* project as stated on the journal's WWW site.[18] The purpose of *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* is to create a forum that allows scholars to debate key issues in a field of enquiry and move towards consensus, or, at least, reformulate the original questions and issues. The purpose is thus heuristic rather than adversarial—whatever the tone of certain interventions.

The particular value of the below protracted, complex, sometimes arid, some exhilarating controversy lies in highlighting differences in scholarly approaches to classic and neo-fascism as generic phenomena, and revealing what practical repercussions the various approaches have for an evaluation of individual cases ranging from late 19th-century German ultra-nationalism to early 21st-century Russian right-wing extremism. The debate's rationale is less to present new empirical findings or theoretical approaches, but to give some major specialists in the field the opportunity to „deliberate" on them. It is the course, turns and tone of the exchange—rather than the (often already known) contents of the individual contributions—that might be the most interesting aspects of the following lively discussion.[19]

A.U.
Kyïv, March 2006

17 It should be mentioned though that, as Werner Loh has clarified to me, the debate's participants were not obliged to make their contributions and had, until a certain point, the opportunity to withdraw them. In other words, the discussants were always free to leave this debate. While the above caveat remains, the below statements can thus also not be regarded as somehow inadequate expressions of their authors' views.

18 http://iug.uni-paderborn.de/ewe/konzept.htm.

19 In an appendix, the debate is complemented with an English translation of a 1997 essay on fascism by Aleksandr Dugin. Dugin's article which became the subject of A. James Gregor's and my exchange (Secondary Debate) that span off from the discussion of Griffin. The text is both, a documentation of the point I tried to make in my critique of Gregor's evaluation of Dugin, and a peculiar additional contribution to our debate on fascism by somebody who actually subscribes (or, at least, claims to subscribe) to it.

I Main Article/Hauptartikel

Fascism's new faces (and new facelessness) in the „post-fascist" epoch

Roger Griffin

Summary: The article offers a synopsis of a theory of fascism's definitional core and its evolution in the 20th century that is fully consistent with the „new consensus" that has grown up in Anglophone fascist studies. Its main contestable features are that:

a) its methodological premise is derived from Max Weber's theory of the „ideal type" which rejects Marxist, essentialist, or metapolitical notions of the „fascist minimum;"
b) it identifies this minimum in a core ideology of national rebirth (palingenesis) that embraces a vast range of highly diverse concrete historical permutations;
c) while fully recognizing the singularity of Nazism, the application of this theory to the Third Reich categorizes it as an outstanding example of a fascist regime;
d) its application to the post-war era identifies new variants of fascism that have evolved a long way from its inter-war manifestations, notably those associated with Third Position and the New Right;
e) it postulates a major organizational transformation within post-war fascism since its extensive „groupuscularization," namely the emergence of „rhizomic" qualities.

1 Not „fascism" again! An apologetic preamble

((1)) The European New Right, so alarmed at the prospect of the comprehensive homogenization of culture in the wake of the inexorable process of globalization, should take comfort that there is no equivalent of McDonaldization in the human sciences. On the contrary, they continue to host a steady proliferation of contested definitions, methodological assumptions, conceptual frameworks, and ethical

positions in every sphere of specialism. *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* has set itself the laudable mission to provide a unique academic *Streitforum* (discussion forum) dedicated to counteracting the dangers of *excessive* „biodiversity" intrinsic to the very vitality of the humanities. This it strives to do by encouraging academics to „air" controversies and debate contentious issues head-on with a view to weeding out untenable or heuristically valueless (and hence dispensable) theories, explanatory strategies, and value-positions so that sound ones can thrive more abundantly. However, that *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* has decided once more to devote precious space to the topic „fascism" may suggest some sort of unhealthy fixation at work. After all, this is not the second but the third „bite at the cherry." Wolfgang Wippermann expounded his theory of generic fascism in 2000,[1] and the resulting book took the process of rejoinder and counter-rejoinder one cycle further.[2]

More recently Ernst Nolte, widely (though erroneously) treated as the father (or Godfather!) of comparative fascist studies, stirred up a swarm of often pointed „*Erwägungen*" (deliberations) from largely hostile critics when he used *Erwägen Wissen Ethik*'s pages to synthesize the methodological and conceptual axioms that underlay his contributions to historiography. In the process he reasserted the convictions that led him originally to locate Nazism within the phenomenon of generic fascism in *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* some four decades ago. The results of both these attempts to encourage more productive debate about the nature of Nazism and fascism suggest that it is indeed worth raising the issue once more.

((2)) *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* (like its predecessor *Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften*) deliberately sets out to go beyond a fashionable post-modern relativism by setting up a debate on an issue in such a way as to reduce the plurality of schools of thought and areas of mutual misunderstanding associated with a particular controversy. Conflicting parties are encouraged to weigh up and reflect on (*erwägen*) the various objections raised to their positions with a view to modifying their original standpoint in response to the *Hauptartikel* (main article) or the cycle of „*Repliken*" (rejoinders) it provokes.

Yet in his concluding rejoinder Wipperman was prepared to make only minor concessions to objections raised by his critics, even if his tone was collaborative and conciliatory rather than combative. By contrast Nolte's privileged vantage point high up on the Olympian peaks from which he observes the grand designs of „historical existence" apparently makes it impossible for him to discern the hustle

and bustle of everyday scholarship going on far below him in the valley of empirical historiography. He thus proceeds as if oblivious of the torrent of literature concerning the nature of fascism that has been published by lesser mortals since the appearance in 1965 of the translation of *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* under the title *Three Faces of Fascism*. Certainly the tone of his two „*Repliken*" to the many substantive critiques of his general position implies that as far as he is concerned his own process of „*Erwägung*" has reached closure. In particular, he is scornfully unrepentant if his metapolitical analysis of Nazism's counter-revolutionary, dialectical, relationship to Marxism and „Jewish Bolshevism" lays him open to the charge of historical revisionism about the nature of the Third Reich.[3]

((3)) Yet, even more than the imperviousness to criticism displayed by both Wippermann and Nolte, it is the criticisms themselves, despite the impressive rigour, erudition, and political passion that many displayed, which suggest that the need to stimulate a serious debate about the term „fascism" in the German-speaking academic world is as pressing as ever.

Wippermann's plea for „fascism" to become a respectable and heuristically useful term for non-Marxist historians to use in their reconstruction of German history fell on deaf ears. There was wide consensus that the methodology by which he extracted a „real type" of fascism from Mussolini's movement and regime was suspect, and that the insistence that Fascist Italy was to be seen as the paradigm of a „racial state" was historiographically flawed. However, no German scholar was prepared to concede explicitly that in itself Wippermann's attempt to elaborate a definition of fascism as a generic term stripped of its Marxist connotations, whatever the weaknesses of his own proposed ideal type, was a potentially valuable contribution to Germany's academic and cultural life.

This is all the more unfortunate given the *impasse* in the intense national debate about the historical significance to be attributed to Nazism in German history that has gone down in history as the *Historikerstreit* (lampooned as the *Histerikerstreit* [hysterics' quarrel]), and in particular the clear inadequacy of accounting for the enormity of the Third Reich's crimes against humanity using explanatory frameworks based exclusively on idiographic, Germany-centred historical reconstruction devoid of a comparative perspective. (The handful of non-German academics involved in the debate could see this, but here Wippermann was preaching to the converted.)

((4)) It is equally revealing that the two cycles of debate over Nolte's „metapolitical" interpretation of history in the pages of *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* two years later were conducted as if Wippermann had never published a line about fascism and the highly productive comparative fascist studies industry abroad simply did not exist. As a result, though Nolte's theses were attacked on all sides, no one called him to task for the way he had simply side-stepped the fact that comparative fascist studies in the Anglophone world have moved on considerably since *Three Faces of Fascism* and entered a highly prolific phase of creativity over the last decade. The very density of the empirical reconstructions of specific aspects of international fascism now available make Nolte's metahistorical lucubrations on fascism's relationship to transcendence reminiscent of the painting *Sleep* painted by Salvador Dali in 1937 in which a huge face is suspended oneirically above the ground on crutch-like props.

Yet while some of Nolte's critics challenged his construct of a „fascist epoch" rooted in a counter-revolutionary anti-Marxism that characterized the inter-war period, none referred to more modern positions that reject the assumption that fascism can be confined to inter-war Europe (e.g. those of Stanley Payne or Roger Eatwell). Furthermore, references to G. L. Mosse's genuinely groundbreaking works on Nazism's place within the evolution of modern nationalism and political religion, some of which are available in German translation, were conspicuous by their absence. Instead it is typical of the generally antiquated tenor of the debate in Germany that the one scholar who was prepared to attack Nolte's use of the term „fascism" did so only to reassert the Comintern doctrine that equated it with the terroristic suppression of the working class movement by monopoly capitalism, a paradigm that has clearly proved to have a greater capacity for survival than the Soviet empire that spawned it.[4]

((5)) Revealingly, one of the contributors to the *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* forum on Nolte, Lars Lambrecht, explained the original notoriety of his *Faschismus in seiner Epoche* as a *succès de scandale*. He was the first non-Marxist to have no reservations about treating Nazism as a form of generic „fascism" at a time when the prevailing orthodoxy spoke „of National Socialism, of the impossibility of comparing it with similar phenomena abroad, of the German *Sonderweg*."[5] Just how stubbornly German academia has refused to move on in four decades is illustrated by the *Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften*/ *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* discussion of both Wippermann's and Nolte's thesis, which shows that Nazism is still seen by most German academics basically in the same way that Karl-Dietrich

Bracher presented it *Die deutsche Diktatur* over thirty years ago,[6] as a unique event that cannot be accommodated within any generic category other than „totalitarianism."

Sven Reichardt, who also took part in the *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* Nolte debate, is the great exception to the rule. In 2002 he published *Faschistische Kampfbünde*, an exhaustive comparison of the Nazi SA with the Fascist *squadristi* using a definition of generic fascism that is profoundly indebted to the one which will be expounded in this *Hauptartikel* under the code name „the new consensus." It is thus significant if he confirms independently that the major breakthroughs that have taken place in Anglo-American fascist studies have been „almost entirely ignored by German historiography."[7] In particular, his is the only work in German to my knowledge that reflects the shift towards analyses of fascism as an attempted „total" cultural and anthropological revolution by explicitly using this approach as the basis of the conceptual framework which he constructs for comparing the paramilitarism of the Nazi and Fascist regimes.

((6)) It could be inferred from the publication of *Faschistische Kampfbünde* that it has taken two generations for the collective trauma of the events associated with the Third Reich to fade to a point where younger scholars in Germany and Austria can begin to look at them comparatively without revisionist intent, and see them as the product of something much larger than belated nationhood. If blinkers are now falling and dogmatism waning on this issue then it is an ideal time to use *Erwägen Wissen Ethik*'s seminar space to attempt to follow up both „*Faschismus*" – *kontrovers* and the Nolte debate with the exposition of a third theory of fascism which conflicts with them both. The urgency of „striking while the iron is hot" is intensified by the paradox that, as the events of the Third Reich recede into the past, the need to address them in an academically cogent and humanistically meaningful way becomes ever more pressing. This is because a blind spot about the term „fascism" is inextricably bound up with unresolved historical traumas and painful ethical issues about how Germans and Austrians (whether part of the educated elite or not) relate to their nations' recent past. These in turn will continue to have considerable bearing on major questions of national identity and self-image, and on a host of political and social phenomena and issues which impinge on them, for many generations to come.

((7)) To take just one example, when German and Austrian professional historians and social scientists, and hence the whole educational industry that depends on

them, ignore the relevance of comparative fascist studies to illuminating „what actually happened“ in Europe between 1933 and 1945 they create a narrowly „Nazism-centred“ view of the Third Reich. This reinforces historically misleading and educationally counter-productive ideas of an Austro-German *Sonderweg* to modern nationhood that produced a national character and political culture that made it difficult for liberalism to flourish. This in turn helps create the cultural conditions in which it has become widely acceptable for ideologues of the New Right to address issues of „identity“ and „roots“ in terms that certainly by-pass Nazism, but still consciously and defiantly recycle the radical assault on liberalism mounted by the thinkers of the Conservative Revolution under Weimar that helped prepare the ground for Nazism, and in some cases (e.g. Heidegger, Jünger, Benn) directly contributed to its ethos and cultural legitimacy. This spurious respectability of extremist assaults on the hegemony of liberal values in turn makes respectable (*salonfähig*) an „organic“ concept of Europe and the place of „German culture“ within it that is fundamentally opposed to the one that inspired the Treaty of Rome. Even if not „Nazi,“ it is a world-view still viscerally hostile to the multiculturalism that is an inexorable feature of the modern world.[8]

((8)) By its nature this Hauptartikel is directed at two different (ideal-typical) audiences or scholarly constituencies. The first consists of representatives of academia from Germany and Austria (henceforth referred to by the shorthand „German academics“). For these a synoptic account of the evolution of fascism in the twentieth century as a generic phenomenon based on a definition informed by neither Marxist nor meta-historical premises still challenges many deep-seated assumptions and values, especially since it claims to illuminate important aspects of the singularity of the Third Reich which remain obscure if a comparative framework is not applied. The second constituency is made up of non-German academics, though not necessarily historians or social scientists, most of whom will find it second nature to operate with „fascism“ as a generic term with which to refer to certain forms of authoritarian or militaristic nationalism. What some among them may well find less digestible, however, is an approach that in the inter-war period places so much emphasis on cultural and social „rebirth“ and that embraces Nazism as one of its major permutations. Even those generally sympathetic to these aspects of what follows may yet harbour deep misgivings about an interpretation that attaches so much importance to the increasingly „groupuscular“ organization of the post-war extreme right, and argues that, stripped of its „external“ inter-war attributes, the term „fascism“ can be applied to exclusively ideo-

logical, supra-national, and non-charismatic political phenomena such as the Europeanist New Right.

((9)) Even if we do not inhabit an ideal world where the human sciences are free of careerist factionalism, political prejudice, and territorialism, the exposition of my „grand narrative" of fascism within *Erwägen Wissen Ethik*'s unique seminar space should still offer something worthwhile to both these audiences. „Non-German" academics have a chance to refine or reject the theses that this article contains concerning the „fascist" nature of Nazism and the evolution of post-war fascism, thereby contributing to the consolidation of the new consensus, or (as is more likely), to the articulation of the considered opposition to it already mounted within Anglophone fascist studies. Meanwhile German academics are given the unusual experience of participating in a discussion of Nazism and post-war fascism informed by a contemporary „Anglo-Saxon" perspective on the topic that places the empirical fruits of home-grown scholarship in a radically different light. Hopefully even the act of refuting this „alien" perspective will be found heuristically useful.
As for me, the invitation to provide *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* with a *Hauptartikel* based on my research as the focus of a wide ranging seminar debate is a major event in my own evolution as a theoretician and historian of fascism. It presents a unique opportunity to help move the debate about fascism and Nazism on to a point where at least there is constructive dialogue between German and non-German academics on two of the most important issues in the evolution of the West in absolute terms: a) the location of the Third Reich in modern history, and b) the assessment of the threat that the extreme right still poses to democracy now that liberal democracy has been restored. If I complained in the course of *Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften*'s Wippermann debate that I felt an „outsider" to German academia, at least I now feel I have been given the security of a temporary „*Arbeitserlaubnis*" (work permit), even if I will still have to report regularly to the authorities for the foreseeable future.

2 Fascism in the eye of the beholder

((10)) The work by Nolte that helped (and only helped) pioneer comparative fascist studies thirty years ago was *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* (translated into English as *Three Faces of Fascism*). One of its many pronouncements was

that „the era of the world wars is identical with the era of fascism."[9] Since then most works devoted to the comparative analysis of fascism (almost all produced outside Germany except for Marxist ones) have explicitly or implicitly corroborated this view, even though hardly any applied the „philosophy of history" that underpinned Nolte's interpretative scheme. In monographs, conference proceedings, and collections of essays alike devoted to reconstructing fascism's history, the post-war period has been treated perfunctorily, if at all, as little more than an anti-climactic coda to fascism's catastrophic spring-time.[10]

It is as if with the advent of democracy's Indian summer in 1945 a once raging mountain torrent had turned into a pathetic brook, or a mighty river of ideological energies swelled by numerous tributaries had shrivelled into a delta of stagnant swamps and sluggish streams devoid of revolutionary momentum. The same publications have more often than not implied that fascism was almost exclusively a European affair. Italy's most industrious archival historian of Mussolini's regime, Renzo de Felice, thus spoke for the orthodoxy of the day when he declared:

> If we are to consider fascism one of the major historical events of our time, use of the word cannot be extended to countries outside Europe, nor to any period other than that between the wars. Its roots are typically European; they are inalienably linked to the changes in European society brought about by World War I and the moral and material crisis occasioned by conversion to a mass society with new political and social institutions.[11]

((11)) It is consistent with this assumption that for the majority of political scientists the anti-democratic forces of the right most worthy of study today are no longer openly revolutionary parties and groupings. After all, they are all utterly marginalized within the party-political process, and in terms of the number of hard-core activists involved they can count on a few thousand „skin-head" racists and a few hundred disaffected middle class intellectuals in the whole of Europe, which, when compared with the half-million who belonged to the Nazi *Sturmabteilungen* on the eve of Hitler's seizure of power, is hardly a major threat to the stability of liberalism. No wonder the bulk of the research resources that might once have been channelled into monitoring fascism are now devoted to the study of a new form of party-political illiberalism, variously called neo-populism or radical right populism, which operates from deep within the party political system of a number of European countries and can claim a total electoral constituency of several million.[12] Gianfranco Fini articulated a wide-spread feeling when he described the formal transformation of the neo-Fascist *Movimento Sociale Italiano*

into the neo-populist *Alleanza Nazionale* in 1995 as the expression of the fact that in practical terms we all now live in a „post-fascist" age.

((12)) The sense of living in a post-fascist world is not shared by Marxists, of course, who ever since the first appearance of Mussolini's virulently anti-communist *squadrismo* have instinctively assumed fascism to be endemic to capitalism. No matter how much it may appear to be an autonomous force, it is for them inextricably bound up with the defensive reaction of bourgeois elites or big business to the attempts by revolutionary socialists to bring about the fundamental changes needed to assure social justice through a radical redistribution of wealth and power. According to which school or current of Marxism is carrying out the analysis, the precise sector or agency within capitalism that is the protagonist or „backer" of fascism's elaborate pseudo-revolutionary pre-emptive strike, its degree of independence from the bourgeois elements who benefit from it, and the amount of genuine support it can win within the working class varies appreciably. But for all concerned fascism is a copious taxonomic pot into which Nazi Germany, Franco's Spain, apartheid South Africa, Pinochet's Chile, Le Pen's plans for the renewal of France, and Haider's ideal Austria can be thrown without too much intellectual agonizing over definitional or taxonomic niceties.[13] For them Brecht's warning at the end of *Arturo Ui* (a Marxist allegory of the rise of Nazism) has lost none of its topicality: „*Der Schoß, der ihn gebar, ist fruchtbar noch*" (The womb that produced him is still fertile).[14]

((13)) The fact that two such conflicting perspectives can exist on the „same" subject can be explained as a consequence of the particular nature of all generic concepts within the human sciences. To go further into this phenomenon means entering a field of studies where the philosophy of the social sciences has again proliferated conflicting positions, this time concerning the complex and largely subliminal processes involved in conceptualization and modelling in the pursuit of definite, if not definitive, knowledge.[15] An instinct of self-preservation has led me to treat social scientific methodological issues, especially those of the post-structuralist variety, as a vast area of intellectual quicksand best avoided, probably because of a disturbing intuition that the solid foundations of all empirical work in my field may ultimately reveal themselves to be a comforting illusion.
For practical purposes I do not believe a century of intensive modern and post-modern speculation about these epistemological issues has significantly improved on the approach arrived at piecemeal by Max Weber over a century ago and never

elaborated into a coherent or „total“ system of hermeneutics. According to him terms such as „capitalism“ and „socialism“ are ideal types, heuristic devices created by an act of „idealizing abstraction.“ This cognitive process, which in good social scientific practice is carried out as consciously and scrupulously as possible, extracts a small group of salient features perceived as common to a particular generic phenomenon and assembles them into a definitional minimum which is at bottom a „utopia.“[16]

((14)) The result of idealizing abstraction is a conceptually pure, artificially tidy model which does not correspond exactly to any concrete manifestation of the generic phenomenon being investigated, since „in reality“ these are always inextricably mixed up with features, attributes, and surface details which are not considered definitional or are unique to that example of it. The dominant „paradigm“ of the social sciences at any one time, the hegemonic political values and academic tradition prevailing in a particular country, the political and moral values of the individual researcher all contribute to determining what common features are regarded as „salient“ or „definitional.“ There is no objective reality or objective definition of any aspect of it, and no simple correspondence between a word and what it means (what later theory would call the „signifier“ and the „signified“) since it is axiomatic to Weber’s world-view that the human mind attaches significance to an essentially absurd universe and thus literally creates value and meaning, even when attempting to understand the world objectively. The basic question to be asked about any definition of „fascism,“ therefore, is not whether it is true, but whether it is heuristically useful: what can be seen or understood about concrete human phenomena when it is applied that could not otherwise be seen, and what is obscured by it.

((15)) In his theory of „ideological morphology“ the British political scientist Michael Freeden has elaborated a „nominalist,“ and hence anti-essentialist, approach to the definition of generic ideological terms that is deeply compatible with Weberian heuristics. He distinguishes between the „ineliminable“ attributes or properties with which conventional usage endows them and those „adjacent“ and „peripheral“ to them which vary according to specific national, cultural or historical context. To cite the example he gives, „liberalism“ can be argued to contain axiomatically, and hence at its definitional core, the idea of individual, rationally defensible liberty. However, the precise relationship of such liberty to *laissez-faire* capitalism, nationalism, monarchy, the church, or the right of the state to override

individual human rights in the defence of collective liberty or the welfare of the majority (universal human rights) is infinitely negotiable and contestable. So are the ideal political institutions and policies that a state should adopt in order to guarantee liberty, which explains why democratic politics can never be fully consensual across a range of issues without there being something seriously „wrong." It is the fact that each ideology is a cluster of concepts comprising ineliminable (uncontested, definitional) with eliminable (contested, variable) ones that accounts for the way ideologies are able to evolve over time while still remaining recognizably „the same," and why so many variants of the „same" ideology can arise in different societies and historical contexts. It also explains why every concrete permutation of an ideology is simultaneously unique *and* the manifestation of the generic „ism," which may assume radical morphological transformations in its outward appearance without losing its definitional ideological core.[17]

3 The fascist minimum as an ideological core

((16)) When applied to generic fascism, the combined concepts of the „ideal type" and of „ideological morphology" have profound implications for both the traditional liberal and Marxist definitions of fascism. For one thing it means that fascism is no longer defined primarily in terms of style (e.g. spectacular politics, uniformed paramilitary forces, the pervasive use of symbols such as the Fasces and Swastika), or organizational structure (e.g. charismatic leader, single party, the corporatization of economic or cultural production, mass youth and leisure movements), but in terms of ideology. Moreover, the ideology is not seen either as essentially nihilistic or negative (anti-liberalism, anti-Marxism, resistance to transcendence etc.), or as the mystification and aestheticization of capitalist power. Instead it is reconstructed in the „positive" (but not apologetic or revisionist) terms of the fascists' own professed diagnosis of society's structural crisis and the remedies they propose to solve it, paying particular attention to the need to separate out the „ineliminable," definitional components from time- or place-specific adjacent or peripheral ones.

((17)) However, for decades the state of fascist studies would have made Freeden's analysis well-nigh impossible to apply to generic fascism, because precisely what was lacking was any conventional wisdom embedded in common

sense usage of the term about what constituted the „ineliminable“ cluster of concepts at its (non-essentialist) core. Despite a handful of attempts to establish its definitional constituents that combined deep comparative historiographical knowledge of the subject with a high degree of conceptual sophistication,[18] there was a conspicuous lack of scholarly consensus over what constituted „the fascist minimum,“ a phrase popularized by Ernst Nolte. Some scholars[19] expressed serious doubts whether there was such an entity as „generic fascism“ to define in the first place. Others, particularly within German-speaking academia, argued that Nazism's eugenic racism and the euthanasia campaign it led to, combined with a policy of physically eliminating racial enemies that led to the systematic persecution and mass murder of millions, was simply unique, and too exeptional to be located within a generic category.

Both of these positions suggest a naivety about the epistemological and ontological status of generic concepts most regrettable among professional intellectuals, since a) every generic entity is a utopian heuristic construct, not a real „thing,“ and b) every historically singularity is by definition unique no matter how many generic terms can be applied to it. Other common positions that implied considerable naivety were ones that dismissed fascism's ideology as too irrational or nihilistic to be part of the „fascist minimum,“[20] or generalized about its generic traits by creating a blend of Fascism and Nazism.[21]

4 The emergence of a „new consensus'

((18)) Throughout the post-war era the sorry state of fascist studies rendered the term „fascism“ almost unusable to serious „idiographic“ historians of extreme right-wing phenomena for practical heuristic and forensic purposes. In particular both Italian and German non-Marxist historians of Fascism and Nazism respectively have, with very few exceptions, avoided the generic term altogether. In doing so they deprive themselves of the comparative perspectives on the Mussolini and Hitler regimes and their relationship to other manifestations of ultra-nationalism in the West. Such a comparative perspective is needed to throw into relief the way phenomena normally treated as symptoms of dysfunctions in the process of nation-building peculiar to Italy and Germany were actually part of patterns woven into the fabric of European history.

However, over the last decade there has emerged a growing explicit (theoretically formulated) or tacit (pragmatic) acceptance by Anglophone academics working in

the field that fascism's ineliminable core is made up of the vision of a regenerated political culture and national community brought about in a post-liberal age.[22] Inevitably, such a consensus can never be total and there are academics working in fascist studies who continue to apply a different ideal type of fascism, some of whom express deep scepticism about the very existence of an area of convergence on the centrality to fascism of an ultra-nationalist myth of rebirth.[23] The most cited version of the consensus applied by academics who are sympathetic to it is the highly synthetic formula that I used to encapsulate my own ideal type: „Fascism is a political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism."[24]

((19)) The utopian nature of definitions formed through a process of idealizing abstraction may imply to those still sceptical about the whole enterprise of searching for a „fascist minimum" that they have a fragile anchorage in empirical reality. It is important to stress, therefore, that the myth of Italy's imminent „palingenesis" (rebirth) can be *objectively* documented by a close study of primary sources as constituting both a central theme of all the copious texts that expressed Fascist ideology, and the main point of convergence between the many currents of thought and species of political project that formed a loose alliance first within the Fascist movement, and then within the Fascist regime. The myth of national rebirth is also documentable as the main common denominator not only between the Fascist regime and a handful of movements that in history have called themselves fascist, notably the *Faisceau*, The British Union of Fascists, and the post-war *Faisceaux Nationaux Européens*, but a far greater number of revolutionary nationalist groups such as the *Falange*, the Romanian Iron Guard, and the *NSDAP* that rarely if at all applied the term to themselves.

Its discriminating value as a definitional ideal type is that *revolutionary* aspirations involving the attempted palingenesis of the nation's entire political culture are demonstrably missing in the core ideology of a number of regimes and movements commonly associated with fascism, such as Franco's Spain, Pinochet's Chile, or Le Pen's *Front National*. Moreover, some corroboration of the heuristic value of this „minimum" is given by the fact that on the rare occasion when ideologues of the extreme right have offered a definition of fascism it has corresponded to this ideal type,[25] even when it is used as a pejorative term which demarcates „true" revolutionary nationalism from „perverted" forms which, for example, retain capitalism.[26] It is also consistent with the latest scholarship on totalitarianism and its stress on the transformation of political culture rather than the institutional

apparatus of repression.[27]

((20)) To clear up another wide-spread misunderstanding about the nature of the „fascist minimum" as it is increasingly widely perceived, it is worth citing the reservations voiced by the (excellent) British historian, Martin Blinkhorn. In the „author's reply" to an electronic review which praised the scepticism he expressed about the new consensus in his *Fascism and the Right in Europe 1919-1945*, he admits to being „increasingly impatient with the whole 'generic fascism' grail quest." He goes onto state his relationship to the new consensus somewhat pointedly: „I claim the right to say: 'I am not part of it; therefore it does not exist.'"[28]
Yet precisely what follows from a Weberian approach is that the fascist minimum of „ineliminable" properties is not some sort of elusive but (at least for the pure of heart) objectively existing essence to be found at the end of a search, something which would indeed smack more of romantic legend than humanistic science. As an ideal type it resembles rather an industrial diamond in being an entirely „man-made" product, a deliberate cognitive act which takes place *at the beginning* of an empirical investigation in the human sciences. If the more methodologically self-aware scholars working in this field are concerned to refine the way they conceptualize and „problematize" fascism, it is not because of some perverse neo-Platonic (or political science) belief in the primacy of ideas and essences over facts and empirical reality, but for mundane, strictly heuristic purposes. For unless key concepts central to any research project are clarified at the outset, the cogency of the resulting analysis will be impaired, to the detriment of any value it might have for other scholars.

((21)) Blinkhorn's decision to „opt out" of the new consensus and hence demonstrate its non-existence also points to considerable confusion, since it has never been suggested that the agreement between academics on the fascist minimum has ever been more than emergent or partial. After all, this is true of consensus between experts over any highly contested area of academic investigation in the human (and natural) sciences. In any case its function is not to put and end to debate, but to allow other aspects of the „problematic" to be contested. Without this continuous process of generating shifting areas of convergence and divergence academic knowledge and scientific understanding could never progress and the controversies it generates could never „move on."
The final irony is that the definition of fascism which Blinkhorn actually applies in his survey of inter-war and war-time Europe specifies that at the core of its „ideas

and myths“ lies the „belief in a national and/or racial revolution embodying rebirth from an existing condition of subjection, decadence or ‘degeneracy’“ leading to the „creation of ... a ‘new fascist man.’“[29] This is fully consistent with, and actually deeply indebted to, the major expressions of the new consensus about which he has earlier expressed such deep scepticism.
However, though he tacitly adopts the new consensus, the section on the book in which he refers to fascism after 1945 indicates that he has not inferred from it the radical change of perspective that it brings about when applied to the post-war era (the main subject of this article). As a result he duplicates the standard historical view of it when he depicts the gamut of the post-war extreme right as stretching from highly conspicuous, significant parties such as the Italian Social Movement (*Movimento Sociale Italiano: MSI*), which at times make impressive inroads into the legitimate space of democratic politics, to a zone which „seethes“ with a „profusion of *groupuscules* far too numerous to mention—and mostly too tiny to be worth mentioning,“ some of them „psychotically violent.“[30]

((22)) Once the full implications of seeing fascism’s definitional core as a belief in „national and/or racial revolution“ are grasped, the question of fascism’s evolution after 1945 changes radically. In particular the issue of how fascism „naturally“ manifests itself as a political and historical entity takes on a dimension that could not be perceived on the basis of ideal types constructed exclusively through a study of the extreme right in inter-war Europe, such as Ernst Nolte’s „metapolitical“ definition,[31] James Gregor’s „developmental dictatorship“ model,[32] Zeev Sternhell’s concept of a fusion of anti-Marxist socialism and tribal nationalism which made it „neither right, nor left,“[33] or Wolfgang Wippermann’s „real type“ based on Italian Fascism.[34] The key to this reassessment lies in the realization of just how historically contingent the Fascist and Nazi forms of fascism were, even if it was these that still exert such a powerful influence on the historical memory and imagination.

5 Fascism’s inherently protean quality

((23)) From the two variants of the „new consensus“ already cited (Griffin/Blinkhorn) it is clear that the core cluster of definitional concepts with which fascism is increasingly being identified by scholars contains room for an extremely wide range of specific ideological contents and policies. Both „national“

and „racial“ are intrinsically multivalent terms that can vary considerably in meaning according to which particular nation or nation-state is examined and which theory of race is applied. Even „rebirth“ can be interpreted in an ultra-conservative and hence restorationist sense as well as in a far more futuristic sense which signals a definitive break with the past. There should be no surprise, then, if each fascism, be it Spanish Falangism, the Hungarian Arrow Cross or Italian Fascism itself, contain highly idiosyncratic features, such as the central role of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the ideology and ethos of the Iron Guard.

However, it should be equally clear to anyone who has studied Nazism how applicable this definition of generic fascism is to it. Nazism was a form of ultra-nationalism deeply imbued with notions of imperialism, anti-Semitism, Aryan supremacy, racial hygiene and eugenics that gave it a highly idiosyncratic contents in terms of ideologies and policies. It systematically strove for the renewal and regeneration of the national community in every sphere, the political, military, social, cultural, aesthetic and even the economic one (though achieved by adapting capitalism rather than abolishing it). Britain's greatest expert on Nazism, Sir Ian Kershaw, has never found it heuristically useful to apply the term to his research into the Third Reich. Yet even he is prepared to state in his evaluation of rival definitions of fascism that „Griffin's emphasis on 'palingenetic ultra-nationalism'—extreme populist nationalism focused upon national 'rebirth' and the eradication of presumed national decadence—as the core of fascist ideology, *self-evidently* embraces Nazism.“[35] It is consistent with this core that one of the central themes of his magnificent biography of Adolf Hitler is that the *Führer*'s ability to embody national longings for rebirth was the key to his „charisma.“[36] As for the Nazi programmes of ethnic cleansing which culminated in applying Fordist principles to mass murder, a frequently overlooked fact is that they were driven by the myth of renewal, of racial „*Wiedergeburt*“ (rebirth). The statement by a member of the Swiss Red Cross who visited Auschwitz in 1944 thus resonates with deeper layers of meaning:

> These people were proud of their work. They were convinced of being engaged in an act of purification. They called Auschwitz the anus of Europe. Europe had to be cleansed. They were responsible for the purification of Europe. If you cannot get your head round that you will understand nothing at all.[37]

((24)) It is also because of the conceptual fuzziness at the ideological core of fascism that once any of its permutations becomes a mass movement, it naturally brings together many different and sometimes deeply conflicting concepts of

nation, race, and rebirth. Fascism hosted a welter of schemes for a new Italy that contained inherent tensions and contradictions that Mussolini never attempted to resolve. Nazism, though more centralized and intolerant of „heterodoxies," was far from homogeneous ideologically, as a detailed comparison of the visions of national rebirth promoted by leading Nazis such as Gregor Strasser, Arthur Rosenberg, Heinrich Himmler, Albert Speer, and Walter Darré would demonstrate.

Moreover, it should be stressed that the ineliminable core itself does not prescribe or imply any particular organizational or institutional form or style of politics, both of which will be largely determined by the precise historical situation in which the attempt to bring about national palingenesis is carried out. In short, fascism has a protean quality to generate myriad permutations of the vision of national rebirth, and is intrinsically factious and fractious. It also can assume a number of different external organizational forms. Once fascism is seen in this way, the focus of historical explanations of the strength or weakness of specific variants of it in inter-war Europe naturally shift away from the deep-seated pathological cultural traditions or paths to nationhood of individual nations. Instead they begin to investigate more closely the medium-term systemic factors and short-term socio-political factors that determine whether fascism forms into a cohesive movement or remains fragmented.

((25)) Similarly, attempts to trace fascism's overall development as a historical force informed by this approach cease to concentrate on attempts to emulate the Fascist and Nazi parties. Instead attention moves to considering how its external form (style/organization) and central policies mutate in order to adapt to changing historical circumstances. Recast in terms of „ideological morphology" this means that reconstructing the history of fascism involves distinguishing as clearly as possible between the definitional features of fascism and its adjacent or peripheral ones, and then tracing how in different circumstances it sheds some non-definitional features and loses others as it adapts to different external forces. Thus the leader cult, the spectacular politics, corporatism, the ethos of militarism, the youth movement can be treated as „phenomenal" rather than „noumenal," as long as the „noumen" here is understood to be an ideal-typical construct rather than fascism's „thing-in-itself."

It is all too easy for adjacent concepts to be smuggled into the definitional core even by methodologically self-conscious theorists. Thus Stanley Payne introduces the *Führerprinzip* and militarism into his one-sentence definition,[38] both of which were products of the historical conditions of inter-war Europe rather than „essen-

tially“ fascist. My own original definition in *The Nature of Fascism* included „populism,“ which needs considerable qualification once fascism ceases to behave as a mass movement in the post-war era. The discursive version of the definition in the same chapter also refers to the fascist belief in *imminent* national rebirth, which, as I now realize, certainly does not apply to those for whom the defeat of the Axis powers means that they now find themselves in an indefinite „interregnum“ waiting for the Godot of a sudden reversal (*Umschlag*) of the meta-historical situation of which there is no sign as yet on the horizon.[39] In each case an „adjacent“ property of fascism has been subliminally identified with the ineliminable core, unwittingly corrupting the purity of the „timeless“ (but anti-essentialist) ideal type with ephemeral, contingent properties.

((26)) It follows that the key to understanding the evolution of fascism in the post-war era is to be alive to the way the myth of national rebirth can produce new adjacent properties in terms of ideological contents. Equally it can assume organizational forms radically different from its inter-war manifestations, even if they may be unrecognizable as attributes of fascism to those convinced that its revival means the reappearance of a movement-party which sets out to emulate the *NSDAP*. As Pierre-André Taguieff reminds us:

> Neither „fascism“ or „racism“ will do us the favour of returning in such a way that we can recognize them easily. If vigilance was only a game of recognizing something already well-known, then it would only be a question of remembering. Vigilance would be reduced to a social game using reminiscence and identification by recognition, a consoling illusion of an immobile history peopled with events which accord to our expectations or our fears.[40]

((27)) It becomes easier to recognize fascism’s new guises once it has been understood why in the inter-war period it took the form it did.[41] The profound structural crisis which each Europeanized country underwent was a unique blend of a number of factors: the *fin-de-siècle* loss of faith in rationalism and progress, the impact both material and social of the First World War, the Russian Revolution and the rise of revolutionary communism, the consequences of the crisis of capitalism and the Great Depression, the rise of the masses and the resulting tensions within both conservative authoritarianism and elitist liberalism. In both Italy and Germany the structural crisis of liberalism, though configured extremely differently, were profound enough to allow the forces of the revolutionary, anti-conservative right to coalesce into a new type of formation, the „armed party.“

It was thus because they were children of their age that both the *PNF* and the *NSDAP* combined a paramilitary uniformed elite with a mass electoral base headed by a charismatic leader who had the qualities of a political statesman and military leader. Both were intended to be the vehicle for the creation of a mass movement of national renewal that would enable the parliamentary system to be overthrown on the basis of a charismatic dictatorship. The critical mass of populist energies generated by and contained within both parties meant that they were able to embrace a vast range of activities and functions, from ideological elaboration and propaganda carried out by a small elite to mass participation in party-related events and projects in every sphere of society, from the violent actions of paramilitary cadre formations to mass leisure and youth organizations.
Both parties therefore became the protagonists and animators of a vast programme of cultural production, the most conspicuous of which took the form of „spectacular" or „aesthetic" displays of the revolutionary energies that were being unleashed and coordinated by the movement/regime. It was thus the parties that became the basis for the transformation of both Fascism and Nazism into elaborate, all-pervasive „political religions."

((28)) The totalitarian movements represented by the *PNF* and the *NSDAP* and the totalitarian regimes that they underpinned became the role model for all revolutionary nationalists in the inter-war period and synonymous with totalitarian, mass-based revolutionary nationalism itself. This became known as „fascism" after the first such movement to achieve power, namely Mussolini's *fascismo*. However, it was only in Italy and Germany that the structural crisis of liberal society was profound enough to generate a genuinely charismatic form of populist politics, one which was not confined to the hard core of movement activists, but involved the particular type of consensus generated by a „palingenetic political community," thereby creating the basis for a fascist regime.[42] The others that sought to emulate the *PNF/NSDAP* (e.g. the British Union of Fascists, *Falange*, Iron Guard, Arrow Cross) never even approached the point where they created a genuinely revolutionary critical mass as a populist force, even if some achieved a small electoral following.

((29)) The image of fascism as the most dynamic and most successful anti-communist force of the age also had a major impact on authoritarian conservatism. The apparently impressive modernizing achievements of Mussolini's Italy in the social, technological, and cultural spheres, Franco's eventual success in overcom-

ing the combined forces of the Left thanks to Fascist and Nazi intervention, the seemingly irresistible rise of Hitler's Germany to become a major world political and military power, combined to shape the popular connotations of „fascism" in the 1930s. It could easily seem to its converts as if it represented a new ideology born of the modern age which was the only hope for the salvation of civilization now that the age of political liberalism and of secular humanism was drawing to such a dramatic and sudden close. As a result, conservative regimes that wanted to hold out against the challenge of liberalism, socialism, and communism readily adopted some of the trappings of fascism in order to seem modern, legitimate and in harmony with the new democratic forces of the age.[43]

6 The death of the slime mould

((30)) It emerges from the above analysis that the external form adopted by fascism in the inter-war period was determined by a profound multi-factorial and generalized sense-making crisis. This allowed revolutionary populist energies to be generated that associated the term fascist in the popular and academic mind with charismatic and paramilitary mass-movements pursuing nationalist goals. On closer inspection, however, the only „successful" fascist movement-regimes (Fascism and Nazism) were coalitions and alliances, sometimes loose to the point of factional conflict, between a large number of diversified ultra-nationalist projects and visions, and different aspects of state, cadre and mass socio-political energy forged into superficial cohesion because of the powerful populist energies released by the seismic structural upheavals which the Westernized world was undergoing at the time.[44]

I am aware of the fact that biological metaphors are rightly suspect within the social sciences. They are all too easily perverted to political ends, especially in the hands of right-wing ideologues and rhetoricians, because when social processes and organizational structures are modelled on the dynamic processes found within nature it lends spurious („scientistic") corroborations to racist myths of elites, breeding, and cleansing which can have horrifically real human consequences as the basis of state policies. It should be understood that the two biological metaphors I am about to use in this article to help conceptualize the contrasting organizational structure of inter-war and post-war fascism are strictly heuristic devices. They are used in the same spirit of demystification and exploration that led the postmodernists Deleuze and Guatteri, hardly open to charges of right-wing affilia-

tions, to use the dyadic images of „tree“ and „rhizome“ in their interpretations of modern social processes on which I draw so extensively.
With this caveat in mind I would like to suggest that that even the most successful fascist mass movements in the inter-war period were far from achieving the genuinely organic, tree-like (arboreal) unity that all political demagogues dream of leading into a new dawn. Instead, as far as analogies with the natural world are concerned their internal structure is illuminated the remarkable phenomenon called the „slime mould“ (*myxomycota*).[45] This is a slug-like entity that forms from countless single cells in the conditions of extreme damp found, for example, in abandoned English country cottages. Though it has no central nervous system, it has the mysterious property of forming into a brainless, eyeless super-organism that somehow moves purposefully like a mollusc animated by a single consciousness (it can even negotiate mazes in search of food!). Once the conditions „dry out“ and its habitat disappears the slime-mould disintegrates back into the countless cells that composed it and endowed it with the capacity to generate such a powerful illusion of centrally coordinated organic life.

((31)) The metaphorical relevance of the slime mould to the change that occurred in fascism’s external manifestation between the inter-war and post-war period should be self-evident. It was only the extreme conditions of inter-war Europe’s political culture that allowed the disparate aspects of the extreme right to coalesce in the party-political equivalent of the slime mould, and even then only in certain countries. The most gigantic political *myxomycota* of all, the *NSDAP*, achieved such a high degree of internal cohesion that for most victims and helpless observers at the time it seemed to behave just like the fully integrated product of unified will and perfect *Gleichschaltung* claimed in the slogan „*Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer*“ (One People, One Empire, One Leader), no matter how chaotic and polycentric it proves to have been with hindsight.
In the post-war period the habitat in which fascism has had to survive has been radically altered. For one thing the systemic crisis of liberal democracy and the capitalist West which probably reached its height in the autumn of 1941 on the eve of Stalingrad, gave way in 1945 to a triumphalist sense of the economic, technological, military, and moral superiority of the „Free World“ over both fascism and communism, empirically vindicated for many by the eventual collapse of the Soviet Empire in the late 1980s. In particular, the acute economic instability of capitalism was replaced by unprecedented growth and prosperity for the average inhabitants of the First World. Equally important, fascism became indissociable

for the majority of Western citizens from war, destruction, genocide and moral evil, its rhetoric of national renewal glory thoroughly discredited. The draining away of fascism's mythic power and mass mobilizing potential has been reinforced by a general rejection of imperialism, militarism, and ultra-nationalism, the dwindling of the power of the nation-state, and a considerable growth of cosmopolitanism and informal contacts between different Europeanized cultures in the age of mass travel.

((32)) One effect of this radical transformation in the political culture in which fascism now has to operate is that the ethnocentrism and xenophobia that in the inter-war period would have found an outlet in overtly anti-liberal forms of conservatism and revolutionary nationalism are now more likely to express themselves in „right-wing populism" as an integral part of the party-political system. In structural terms political racism has thus had to drop the revolutionary agenda within which it was subsumed during the inter-war „crisis of civilization." Even though fuelled by such threats to a mythic sense of identity as multi-culturalism, mass-immigration, the European Union, American cultural imperialism and globalization, the evaporation of this sense of crisis means that it has generally renounced anti-systemic forms of politics to produce instead an illiberal form of democratic politics, that can also be called „exclusionary populism"[46] or „ethnocratic liberalism."[47] In party-political terms the whole post-war era has indeed become „post-fascist."

7 New faces of fascism

((33)) The inter-war period provided the ideal habitat for fascism to manifest itself as a charismatic mass movement and for its revolutionary power to seem sufficiently impressive in Italy and Germany for its external trappings to be copied by anti-revolutionary authoritarian regimes. This meant that the international fascist right operated within discrete national party-political organizations in which all its various components coalesced, making it relatively easy for conventional historians trained in the reconstruction of macro-political phenomena to trace its development, whether they used generic terms such as „totalitarian" or „fascist" or not. Certainly they had no cause to delve into post-structuralist theories of reality. However, the loss of that habitat and the transformation of the historical situation as a result of the Allied victory over two Axis powers dedicated to the realization

of goals based on fascism has forced fascism to adapt its ideological content and adopt a number of new survival strategies. These have not only radically changed its ideological content, but brought about a major mutation in the way it can manifest itself outwardly as an anti-systemic political force.

((34)) One of the more conspicuous of these changes is that, though some forms of revolutionary nationalism (i.e. fascism) still promote a narrowly chauvinistic form of ultra-nationalism, the dominant forms of fascism now see the struggle for national or ethnic rebirth in an international and supra-national context, an aspect of fascism that in the inter-war period was comparatively underdeveloped.[48] Thus Nazism has been adopted throughout the Westernized world as the role model for the fight for Aryan or White supremacy producing what can been called „Universal Nazism." Within Europe most national fascisms see their local struggle as part of a campaign for a new Europe, one far removed from the vision of Eurolandia. Third Positionism, meanwhile, especially in its more outspokenly anti-capitalist, National Bolshevik forms, campaigns for a radical new world order in which the dominance of the USA's economic, cultural, and military imperialism has been ended. It looks forward to an entirely new economic system and international community and its struggle against the present system fosters a sense of solidarity with non-aligned countries such as Libya, the Palestinians, and even Iraq and Yugoslavia when they are „victims of US imperialist aggression."

((35)) The second change is a pervasive metapoliticization of fascism. Many formations have vacated party-political space and even abandoned the arena of activist struggle altogether, choosing to dedicate theselves to the battle for minds. The most clear expression of this development can be seen in the New Right, that grew out of the recognition which dawned in French neo-fascist circles in the 1960s of the need for a radical change of „discourse" with which to regain the credibility for revolutionary forms of anti-liberal nationalism that had been destroyed by the Second World War and its aftermath. Taking the concept of „cultural hegemony" to heart resulted in a „right-wing Gramscism" that aimed to undermine the intellectual legitimacy of liberalism by attacking such aspects of actual existing liberal democracy as materialism, individualism, the universality of human rights, egalitarianism, and multi-culturalism. They did so not on the basis of an aggressive ultra-nationalism and axiomatic racial superiority, but in the name of a Europe restored to the (essentially mythic) homogeneity of its component primordial cultures by the application of a „differentialist" ideal which seeks