1999

Axis Studies: a critical re-evaluation of the comparative study of fascism

Joseph P. Sottile
San Jose State University

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.pwhb-a8gp>
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Axis Studies: A Critical Re-evaluation of the Comparative Study
of Fascism

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Joseph P. Sottile

December, 1999

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HISTORY-

Dr. E. Bruce Reynolds

Dr. David McNeil

Dr. William McCraw

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

Axis Studies: A Critical Re-evaluation of the Comparative Study of Fascism

By Joseph P. Sottile

Since the end of World War II scholars have debated the meaning and nature of fascism, but that debate has not produced any consensus. This thesis examines the issues and theories central to the post-war historiography, the various generic models, and the political and semantic factors that have shaped the interpretation of fascism. An examination of the historiography of fascism reveals that it has been governed by the Cold War “left vs. right” political paradigm, which produced problematic interpretations and divided scholars.

In the pursuit of a more objective, less divisive interpretation of fascism, this thesis proposes a new historical paradigm for the comparative study of fascism—Axis Studies. By using the striking similarities displayed by the Axis nations—Italy, Germany, and Japan—as a fascist minimum, the key being the inclusion of Japan, “Axis Studies” provides a viable context for continued scholarship and a model for understanding fascism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The path to the end of this thesis was long and circuitous. The germ of the central idea, that Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Imperial Japan exhibited striking similarities and, thus, warranted comparison, infected me many years ago while studying modern Japanese history. Over the course of time, I became ever more convinced that the most important historical phenomenon of the twentieth century, fascism, was also the least understood. The desire to explore this topic, and to address the intersection of three seemingly different nations and cultures, kept my intellectual energies occupied for years and the process of finding an angle suitable for a Master's thesis was, at times, trying. Throughout this project, certain people played an integral part in the production of my thesis. Some ceaselessly goaded me, yet in doing so they always reassured me, never despaired of their confidence in me, and all graciously allowed me to test the upper limits of their patience. I only hope that I have made some small step toward the validation of their unending support.

First, I would like to thank Dr. E. Bruce Reynolds for his infinite patience, meticulous editing, and constant reassurance that "it will be fine." Imparted over the course of many years, Dr. Reynolds' invaluable instruction, honest criticism, and voluminous contributions to my intellectual bibliography served me well during the process of writing this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. David McNeil, who also contributed valuable annotations, and Dr. William McCraw for generously agreeing to read this thesis while they were occupied by more important responsibilities. Both

demonstrated a curiosity and interest that assisted me when, near the end of the writing process, I needed an extra incentive to complete the work.

Second, I must thank Thomas O'Neill, M.A., for showing me the importance of ideas in the course of human history and teaching me a methodology for understanding those ideas. A decade ago Tom O'Neill gave me the analytical tools and generous encouragement that has, to this day, shaped the way I conceive the world and my place in it. Most importantly, he advocated the notion that ideas *do* matter and that it is not only appropriate, but also *necessary*, to ask the "big questions." To that end, he never stopped prodding towards the completion of this thesis, always reminding me of the bigger picture beyond a Master's Degree.

Third, I would be remiss if I did not express my appreciation to Mark Oatney for listening to my endless ramblings about the historical importance and long-term implications of fascism, magnanimously withstanding digression after digression without complaint, and asking invaluable questions that forced me to consider different points of view. Moreover, Mr. Oatney reminded me time and again of the task at hand, constantly pushing me with capable hands towards the ultimate goal. Over the course of many years I have admired and been instructed by his boundless intellectual curiosity, stoic resilience, and creative prowess. I have tried to emulate these qualities throughout our long collaborative friendship.

Finally, and most importantly, I must express my undying gratitude and love to Ellen I. McDermott. She displayed a confidence in me that, when coupled with a Sisyphean endurance, provided me with a system of support that I have yet to merit.

More directly, her hours of editing, pointed critiques, and constant refinement of my style have, during the writing of this thesis and generally over the years, made my writing readable. Ellen has given me a sense of voice, style, and the objective of clarity that I did not have prior to our collaboration. Without her support and instruction I would not have written this thesis.

Joseph P. Sottile
Livermore, Ca.
August 1999

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Any serious student of fascism¹ necessarily approaches this widely studied and contentiously debated topic with a degree of trepidation. The sources, both primary and secondary, are voluminous in quantity and multifarious in perspective. Thus, the first problem posed to a student of fascism is historiographical in nature. Unlike many other topics in history, the post-World War II scholarship on fascism has failed to produce an identifiable canon. Without any real historical consensus to use as a guide or template, the historiography of fascism is like an intellectual labyrinth that invites speculation, specialization, and digression.

The proliferation of interpretations, while often obfuscating historical fascism, does provide an interesting opportunity to examine a plethora of issues including: how contemporary history is written, how political philosophies affect historical interpretation, and the process by which scholars agree upon, or attempt to revise, historical canons. Moreover, the lack of a canon, or even any agreement on basic semantics and definitions, exacerbates an academic tendency to see historical personalities and events in isolation, to demarcate tiny kingdoms of expertise, and to rely upon strict methodological analyses.²

¹ A note on usage; here a lowercase “fascism” indicates the concept generally while capitalized “Fascism” indicates Italy in particular.

² An excellent debate of the issues surrounding the semantics and politics of the term fascism appears in the American Historical Review 84, no. 2 (April 1979): 367-398. Gilbert Allardyce’s “What Fascism Is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept” is a cogent attack on the idea of “generic fascism”

These tendencies afford both the student and the scholar of fascism an occasion to forge ahead into new territory. Indeed, the process that produced the numerous volumes and various interpretations, and the historical context within which that process occurred, is the departure point for a reconsideration of historical fascism. Therefore, secondary sources are aptly elevated to the level of primary sources and are suitable for study and analysis. Elevating secondary sources to the primary source level is particularly valuable when historical events, personalities, and experiences were still fresh in the minds of those who wrote the histories and analyses that established, or attempted to alter, a canon. This is particularly so in the case of fascism because contemporary history, unlike ancient or medieval history, invites one to inject contemporary concerns into the debate. For example, while the fall of the Roman Republic *may* have some tangential significance to contemporary politics, the fall of the Weimar Republic most certainly *did* significantly influence the contemporary political environment. The problem of historical proximity and the lasting effects of wartime experiences, when coupled with the profusion of histories and analyses, add to the already formidable challenge.

The variety of the materials available reflects a broad range of disciplines involved in the study of fascism. Historians, journalists, political scientists, philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, and literary critics have all made contributions to the

and concomitant reductionism. It is followed by rebuttals from two leading scholars of fascism, Stanley Payne and Ernst Nolte, both of whom assert the viability of a "fascist minimum." Allardyce follows with a response to the rebuttals. More recently, Payne's A History of Fascism, 1914-1945 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995) and Roger Eatwell's Fascism: A History (New York: Penguin, 1997) have re-engaged the ideas of a "fascist minimum" and a generic model of fascism. The latest attempt at a generic model of fascism is Robert O. Paxton's "The Five Stages of Fascism" The Journal of Modern History 70, no. 1 (March 1998): 1-23.

endeavor, often cross-pollinating with other disciplines and methodologies. More often than not, this has also obfuscated a clear historical picture as varying definitions compete with those that preceded it and, hopefully, anticipate the challenges of those that will follow.

Additionally, the sources often reflect individual personal experiences, political proclivities, and agendas. Thus, studying fascism frequently means studying the various interpreters of fascism as intently as one examines the events and personalities of historical fascism. As such, historiographical inquiry merges with literary criticism in an attempt to find the point at which the scholar ends and the scholarship begins, if indeed the two can be separated. This need to “deconstruct” the motives, biases, and political assumptions of a given author means, however grudgingly, one must admit this minor victory for postmodernism in historical analysis.

Scholars have traditionally explained fascism by first asking what went wrong, how it could have happened, or if it could have been avoided. Often, scholars utilized a philosophy of history or a political model to explore these questions. Since the first stirrings of Fascism on the Italian peninsula nearly eighty years hence, proponents of the two philosophies of materialism, Marxism and liberal capitalism,³ diligently set about the

³ “Liberalism” and “capitalism” are often imprecisely used and often taken out of the proper historical context. There have been various permutations of these “isms” over the last two centuries, but for the purposes of this study the terms “liberalism” and “capitalism” are used as they were used during the time of the rise of fascism. Liberalism as used here refers to “classical liberalism” or nineteenth-century liberalism,” meaning right-wing parliamentary democracy, an emphasis on individual rights, and capitalist or free-market economics. Capitalism was always married with liberalism in the politics of the turn-of-the-century, and that perception lasted until the end of World War II. After the war, and particularly in the United States, “liberalism” increasingly became associated with left-wing politics and usually associated with socialism. In the Cold War era, the political lines were often simplified to free-market capitalism versus socialism, and liberalism versus communism. In Europe, however, socialism and democracy have not necessarily been considered incompatible.

task of understanding fascism according to their own theories of development. Prior to the War, Marxists tended to view fascism, both particularly and generally, as a bourgeois counter-revolution orchestrated by capital to defer the advent of socialism. Liberal historians and commentators were much less inclined to condemn the rise of fascism in Europe and usually viewed the ill effects of the regimes as by-products of a stunted democratic development. Either way, the currency of fascism made many analyses political in purpose and tone. Anti-fascism became an integral part of many explanations. This anti-fascist criticism blossomed during the War and remained the vital core of much scholarship until the end of the Sixties.⁴

It is not so surprising that anti-fascism developed into a self-contained industry. Unlike many other historical issues, fascism often evokes passion, and even anger, in those who study it. For many, the vivid horrors of World War II remain palpable and, for some, linger mercilessly. This has been one important way in which the proximity of historical fascism to the contemporary world has affected scholarship and is, perhaps, one of the most difficult historiographical obstacles to overcome.

In the years following the defeat of the Axis Powers, the ideal of dispassionate scholarship was the exception rather than the rule. Instead, anti-fascism from either the left or the right dominated the field and produced jaded, even if well researched and valuable, interpretations of the persons and events of the fascist era. In fact,

⁴ The role of anti-fascism and Marxism in the historical analysis of fascism is covered in Chapter Two. Three scholars, Ernst Nolte, Renzo DeFelice, and A. James Gregor have challenged the anti-fascist and Marxist historiographical monopolies most forcefully. Chapter Five focuses on A. James Gregor who, while not the first, is perhaps the most important of the three. He developed a fascist minimum that dispelled anti-fascism by identifying a philosophical pedigree and broke the Marxist counter-revolutionary model by inverting Marxist analysis and characterizing fascism as a Marxist heresy.

historiography often attempted to assign blame to *this* factor or *that* interested group, struggling endlessly to find the root cause of such an aberrant episode in Western Civilization. Consequently, scholars took on the task of burying any residue of the ideologies and politics associated with it. As late as 1978, A. James Gregor wrote in a review article about the impact of Renzo De Felice's radical reinterpretation of Italian Fascism:

We are still living in the backwater of the war against fascism: and the effort to treat generic fascism, or Italian Fascism, with historic detachment is certain to provoke a sense of moral outrage among a great many people.⁵

The pressures of remembrance and need for condemnation have also threatened scholars of fascism with guilt by association. Scholars who endeavor to write dispassionately about fascism risk being deemed collaborators after the fact. Worse still, they could be considered apologists or neo-fascists. These epithets are often used imprecisely and haphazardly. Frequently the use of these labels borders on slander. However, there are those who attempt to "apologize" for, justify, or even wax nostalgic about fascism. In such cases, the epithets may be warranted and, indeed, it may be necessary to delineate between scholarship and propaganda. The questions of historical distortion and neo-fascism are muddled further by the fallacious "debate" over the

⁵ A. James Gregor, review of Mussolini il Duce: gli anni del consenso, 1929-1936 (Turin: Einaudi, 1974), and Fascism: An Informal Introduction to Its Theory and Practice (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1976), by Renzo De Felice, in World Politics 30, no. 3 (April 1978): 435.

Holocaust.⁶ Thus, whatever the political purpose of the author, writing about fascism is a tricky and potentially controversial endeavor.

A mere half-century separates us from the ultimate end product of fascism—World War II. Throughout this period historians engaged in the difficult challenge of writing contemporary history have faced all of these issues. But is “contemporary history” an oxymoron?⁷ Quite obviously, writing about a recent event or a living personality is the bailiwick of journalists and political scientists, not historians.⁸ However, the gravity and magnitude of World War II attracted a host of historians along with sociologists, psychologists, and economic theorists. Within the two decades immediately after the war, the topic amassed a variety of empirical and interpretive studies.

While the proximity of historians to the events they explored necessarily altered the perspective and scope of their studies, so too did the rapidly developing Cold War.

⁶ The Holocaust is the raw nerve of fascism historiography. A cottage industry that denies that the Holocaust ever took place presents a trap door through which those concerned with historical fascism may fall. It is important to point out that the denial industry is a purely political movement pursued almost exclusively by Neo-Nazi and White Supremacist groups. To look critically and objectively at historical fascism does not, by definition, imply one is anti-Semitic or pro-fascist, just as a scholar of the Inquisition is not necessarily pro-Torquemada. Unfortunately, virulent anti-fascism has politicized the topic and one runs the risk of guilt by association.

⁷ In his introduction to the first issue of The Journal of Contemporary History, George L. Mosse makes the case for the idea of contemporary history. He writes that the “main arguments against contemporary history were...that the source material was not usually available...and that the detachment required to deal with yesterday’s events in an objective and balanced way would be lacking”(vii). He counters these arguments by pointing to the widespread availability of sources and that “the ideal of the absolute truth in historical writing has been gradually abandoned in this century” (viii). These excerpts come from a reprinting of the first issue of The Journal of Contemporary History, Walter Laqueur and George L. Mosse, eds., International Fascism, 1920-1945 (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966).

⁸ Llewellyn Woodward optimistically claimed that the contemporary historian benefits from recollection when writing about a particular subject. Woodward, “The Study of Contemporary History,” in International Fascism, 6. However, this ability to write from recollection implies journalism and perhaps blurs the line between primary and secondary sources.

The long struggle over the ideas of generic fascism, the search for a fascist minimum,⁹ and the recent movement towards a more dispassionate reading of the fascist era exemplifies this. The persistent lack of agreement and tumultuous competition among schools of interpretation were often predicated by the need to position oneself according to prevailing political realities of the “East versus West,” “Communist versus Capitalist” Cold War paradigm. The impact of recent, and often concurrent, events shortened the perspective of time so valuable to historians, and historiography increasingly intersected with a broad range of disciplinary approaches. All of these factors contributed to the muddled historical perspective. For two decades after the end of the War, it remained difficult to ascertain whether one was even reading history.

The mountain of evidence and interpretations produced over the last half-century is both a boon and a problem for the historian, who, above all, must be concerned with the problem of context. The historical context of the events covered, as well as the context within which one writes about contemporaneous or recent events, circumscribes the use of certain primary and secondary sources. Thus, much of the scholarship produced immediately after the War might come to be considered primary, rather than secondary, material. In fact, the primary and the secondary often interacted in coeval

⁹ The term “fascist minimum”, a minimum set of characteristics against which all regimes could be tested, was coined by Ernst Nolte, in Three Faces of Fascism, trans. Leila Vennewitz (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963). For Nolte, see below, pp. 11, 48-52, 57-61, 76, 81, 168-9, and passim. Stanley Payne has since taken up the task of refining the term in many articles and, most recently, in Fascism, 1914-1945. Payne’s most effective articulation of a fascist minimum is perhaps found in Fascism: Comparison and Definition (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 2-21. For Payne, see below, 48, 54-56, 59-61, 125 n., 171-2, and passim.

evolution and present scholars with a hybrid.¹⁰ This “contemporary history effect” is the sum total of the factors discussed above: the war experiences of the authors, the need to establish one’s anti-fascist credentials, the growing role of the Cold War paradigm in scholarship and the concomitant left-right political debate. The fact that most, if not all, of the first wave of scholars of fascism lived through at least a portion of the fascist era and wrote while its passions and politics still percolated, distorted their conceptual context.¹¹ This was only heightened by the onset of the Cold War as a new set of political considerations, particularly the attempt to place blame for the rise of fascism on one’s foes, established an overarching paradigm for historical studies and altered the context of the historiography.

The context, yet still challenging to ascertain, is necessarily the starting point for any reconsideration of fascism as an historical phenomenon. Also, the context is crucial to any consideration of the vast historiography to which it gave birth. That context must be geopolitical in scope, dispassionate in tone, and mindful of fascism’s lingering effects. Reconnecting the fascist era with the historical context within which it occurred requires a conceptual re-evaluation. It is a re-evaluation that began in the 1960s with the

¹⁰ An excellent example of this blurred line between primary and secondary source is William Shirer’s The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960). Shirer draws from numerous primary source materials, including his own work as a journalist during the outbreak of WWII, and writes a history that is as much an eyewitness account as it is a measured historical consideration.

¹¹ French historian Marc Bloch wrote in The Historian’s Craft, trans. By Peter Putnam (New York: Vantage Books, 1953), “When the passions of the past blend with the prejudices of the present, human reality is reduced to a picture in black and white” (140). This tendency is exacerbated when the “past” is not filtered by the distance of generations, but a reality experienced by the historian. This compounding of the basic tendency to “reduce reality to a picture of black and white” by the vested experiences of the interpreter is what I refer to as the “contemporary history effect.” It is a sad irony that Bloch wrote this observation while held in a Vichy prison after participating in the French Resistance. The history of the fascism he fought in France would be often placed within a strict black and white paradigm.

appearance of groundbreaking scholarship on the intellectual roots of fascist ideology. However, the dogmatic anti-fascism and dominant Cold War paradigms that had framed the debates over, and studies of, fascism were moored in the political consciousness of the victors of the war. Both sides of the materialist coin, liberal-capitalist and Marxist, found in their critiques of fascism an opportunity to associate the other with their common foe.

Ironically, each side attempted to place fascist ideology on the very left-right political spectrum that historical fascism had, as a so-called “Third Way,” tried so hard to repudiate. The publication of Ernst Nolte’s Three Faces of Fascism(1963)¹² opened the door for re-evaluation of fascism as a viable, fully developed ideology outside of the anti-fascist and Cold War paradigms. This was the beginning of what would amount to a tectonic shift in the study of fascism. This opening was exploited by many, but none did more in English language scholarship to shift the paradigms than A. James Gregor, a scholar who, in his own way, studied the Third Way ideology of fascism with a Third Way methodology. Gregor’s work, spanning over a decade from 1968-1980, radically changed the terms of the debate and the focus of the scholarship about fascism. As such, Gregor’s contributions and the reactions of his colleagues provides an excellent case in point to examine the prevailing currents in the historiography of fascism, the difficult effort to define generic fascism, and the monumental shift in the governing paradigms of the post-WWII period. Still, Gregor’s concept of generic fascism, developmental dictatorship, creates as many questions as it answers. Despite the best efforts of scholars

¹² Nolte. Three Faces, trans. by Vennewitz.

to establish a viable historical canon, the field still displays a striking lack of consensus over exactly what generic fascism was, or if it is even possible to postulate a fascist minimum.

This thesis argues that the historical alliance of the three nations that coalesced for battle in 1940 as the Axis provides an appropriate conceptual framework and the historical context necessary for critical re-evaluation of fascism as a generic concept. The similarities between Japan, Italy, and Germany, from their late (relative to the other dominant industrial powers) unification into nation-states (1868-1871) through World War II, are striking. Although initially constitutional monarchies, each nation eventually embraced some form of liberal democracy. While Japan and Italy retained their monarchies after World War I, a revolution in Germany forced Kaiser Wilhelm II to abdicate in 1918. However, the monarchs of Japan and Italy held little real decision-making power. Ultimately, all three nations opted for dictatorship or military rule rather than retain liberal democracy or succumb to Bolshevism.

As young nations, trapped in a Darwinian international struggle over limited resources, all three felt it necessary to obtain colonies and the wealth and prestige associated with empire. To achieve this, they sought uniformity of thought, social cohesion and, thus, national consciousness. This process of consciousness-raising occurred within a historical context shaped by Social Darwinism, socialism/communism, the crisis of liberalism, and imperialism. These forces provided a backdrop for the hard realities of the international colonial system of the Great Powers. Moreover, these three nations increasingly saw themselves as newly certified "Great Powers." Each nation acted

upon the need for international recognition and a share of the ever-shrinking resource pool of the Industrial Age by embarking upon early wars of conquest and colonization. The wars served two ideological purposes: first, to solidify domestic support in an “us vs. them” paradigm by reinforcing the notion of national pride and a right to colonial possession; second, it gave each fascist nation’s people a sense of international importance as proletarian nations struggling against the overwhelming superiority of the dominant powers: Great Britain, the United States, France and Russia.¹³ This sense of struggle against an international system that excluded Italy, Germany, and Japan from their rightful place among the Great Powers was exacerbated by the outcome of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles.¹⁴

Thus, the Axis itself was an amazing confluence of events, personalities, and circumstances. In the Axis alliance, three culturally different, historically divergent nations came together to challenge the dominant world order, a challenge that occurred within a specific historical context—the inter-war period (1917-39). Unfortunately, the

¹³ Although Russia faded as an active Great Power after the Revolution of 1917, it still was one of the Great Powers in terms of resources, materiel, and manpower. Although not really considered a Great Power, both Belgium and the Netherlands had, at the end of World War I, valuable and profitable colonial holding in Africa and Southeast Asia respectively. Perhaps further proof to the three upstarts that the colonial system was unfairly aligned against them.

¹⁴ While it has become axiomatic that the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Versailles enforced against Germany contributed to its economic, political, and social deterioration, thus setting the stage for the rise of Nazism (including Hitler’s effective use of the “sell-out” at Versailles as a propaganda wedge), the effects (both real and perceived) of Versailles upon Italy and Japan should not be minimized. F.S. Marston in The Peace Conference of 1919 (London: Oxford University Press, 1944) explores the extent to which Great Britain, the United States, and France shut Italy and Japan (both allies with territorial claims) out of the decision making process of the Supreme Council and off key committees (121). Marston writes, “Membership was of course limited to representative of the Great Powers...” and that fact often meant Japan and Italy were not involved in the “general workings” of the committees dominated by Great Britain, the United States, and France (ibid.). For a full discussion of Italy’s reaction to the Treaty see H. James Burgwyn, The Legend of the Mutilated Victory: Italy, the Great War, and the Paris Peace Conference, 1915-1919 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993).

geopolitical realities of the inter-war period and the alliance that emerged from that milieu are often lost among the semantic, methodological, and political debates that color so much of the post-war scholarship. As an alliance with specific aims and purposes, the “Axis” is an historically-based conceptual framework that attenuates the various debates over *this* kind of fascism or *that* kind of nationalism. While scholars might not be able to agree *who* was fascist or *what* fascism is, it is still remarkable and historically significant that these three nations formed an alliance in an attempt to overthrow the existing international order.

Accordingly, this thesis proposes “Axis Studies” as a theoretically expansive, yet historically accurate, alternative to the dominant Cold War and anti-fascist paradigms that have, as yet, failed to produce any significant consensus on the meaning or nature of fascism. Further, Axis Studies is a framework that encompasses all of the scholarship into a multi-disciplinary field, eschewing nugatory battles over minor refinements of disputed models and definitions.

Understanding the historiography is central to the development of this new conceptual framework for examining the character, typology, and historical phenomenon of fascism. Thus, the first section examines the post-war historiographical debates over fascism and focuses in particular on the role of semantics and politics in shaping the terms of the debates. Included are comments on significant authors, the various competing methodologies and models, and the difficult question of whether a “fascism minimum” exists.

The second section investigates A. James Gregor's work and its impact on the historiography of fascism, specifically his role in breaking the Marxist hegemony over the interpretation of fascism. Particular attention is paid to Gregor's model of developmental dictatorship to illustrate the goals, hazards, and limitations of developing strict paradigms while exploring new interpretations and opening avenues of study. Most importantly, Gregor utilized a geopolitical framework to revise modernization theory and fascist typologies into a singular pattern applicable to a variety of historical situations. While Gregor achieved a measure of success in negotiating the political and semantic pitfalls of interpreting fascism and made a significant contribution, his model is simultaneously too strict a contextual framework to account for historical events and too loosely applied to marginally related situations.

Finally, the third section reconsiders traditional historiography and the need for a broad conceptual framework, and proposes a new model for achieving a fascist minimum. The vital element of any consideration of fascism in its broadest sense must first account for the historical context within which the Axis powers rose. The lack of historical context in Gregor's concept of developmental dictatorship, which excludes both Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, is examined critically. The problem of Japanese fascism and the issues regarding the inclusion of Japan as a "fascist state" are of particular interest here. The "Japanese case" has perplexed some and not concerned others, but Japan has been largely excluded from the fascist camp. However, Japan still lurks as an historical enigma, somehow divorced from her Axis allies. Indeed, some go so far as to exclude Germany from the fascist genus. At the very least, Germany and Japan

are intuitively recognizable as “fascist states” sharing many similarities with their Italian allies.¹⁵

To bring Italy, Germany, and Japan together into an historically viable model, accounting for the context and the vast amount of post-war scholarship, requires a new framework predicated on a shifting paradigm. The necessary framework must be geopolitical, bringing into focus the remarkable convergence of three late-developing nation-states into a powerful military alliance. The model proposed is Axis Studies. The model’s goals are to further de-politicize the subject, continue moving towards a clarification of a fascist minimum, and resolve the case of Japan.

¹⁵ “Intuitively fascist” is a measure of the appearance and functions of Germany and Japan during the period in question. Both regimes were at least bound to their Italian allies by similar aims, goals, and social organization used for the purpose of achieving their ends. One is reminded of Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s definition of pornography, “I know it when I see it.” Often this seems to be the best we can do in regards to fascism. Intuitively, the “know it when I see it” definition applies easily to both Germany and Japan. Walter Laqueur, Fascism, Past, Present, Future (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), echoed Justice Stewart’s words writing, “Fascism resembles pornography in that it is difficult-perhaps impossible-to define in an operational, legally valid way, but those with experience know it when they see it (6).

PART I: Historiography, Politics, and the Search for a “Fascist
Minimum”

Chapter 2: The Politics and Semantics of Fascism

Fascism: A governmental system led by a dictator having complete power, forcibly suppressing opposition and criticism, regimenting all industry, commerce, etc., and emphasizing an aggressive nationalism and often racism.¹

Upon first glance, the above definition of fascism looks simple, straightforward, and unambiguous. Alas, this is not the case. According to Webster's definition it is not unreasonable to include Maoist China, Stalinist Russia, Milosevic's Yugoslavia, and Castro's Cuba among the extended family of twentieth century fascist states.² With a minimum of flexibility one could reach further to include Chile, Argentina, Indonesia, Vietnam, Rhodesia, Nigeria, Iraq, among others, as historically or presently fascist states. Webster's already muddled picture is obscured further when defines the word fascist as "...anyone who believes in or sympathizes with fascism..." and "...anyone who is dictatorial."³ This broad semantic brush could be used to paint anyone lacking in tact and social skills as a fascist! This imprecision accounts in part for the loose usage of the term by both scholars and the public. Usually one can rely upon the venerable and authoritative Oxford English Dictionary to unambiguously clarify etymological matters.

¹ Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (1989), s.v. "Fascism."

² As we shall see, A. James Gregor's developmental dictatorship model includes all of these leaders, save Slobodan Milosevic who emerged more recently.

³ Websters's, s.v. "Fascist."

However, it matches Webster's generality.⁴ Both fascism and the root word, *fascēs*,⁵ conspicuously appear in The New York Times Everyday Reader's Dictionary of Misunderstood, Misused, Mispronounced Words.⁶

Obviously, the imprecision that has come to characterize the use of both "fascism" and "fascist" challenges the punctilious scholar to devise a refined, precise, and universal definition before moving onto purely historical questions. As the preceding definitions of "fascist" imply, defining the terms is not simply an issue of semantics, but stretches into politics. A nearly seventy-year tradition of anti-fascism, which became standardized in post-World War II scholarship, has politicized any inquiry into the nature and meaning of fascism.⁷ A scholar attempting to define fascism, particularly generic fascism, must be mindful of the discomfort caused by certain characterizations.

The use of terms such as "revolutionary," "modernizing," "mass mobilizing," "progress," and even "ideology" in the historiography of fascism frequently incited consternation among the majority of scholars and criticism of those who dared to claim such for fascist ideology. These words are sacred cows in a Western tradition that regards

⁴ Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., s.v. "Fascism" and "Fascist." The entries vary little from *Webster's*. What it does supply, of course, are excellent etymologies of the use of the term over time. The *OED* does not, however, offer the open-ended definition of "fascist" that Webster's does, identifying both the historical Fascists associated with Fascist Italy and the broader definition of fascist as "...any person having Fascist sympathies or convictions..." or "...a person of right-wing authoritarian views."

⁵ From the Latin usage, the *fascēs* was the Roman symbol of authority—usually a bundle of sticks or rods bound around an axe.

⁶ The New York Times Everyday Reader's Dictionary of Misunderstood, Misused, Mispronounced Words (1972), s.v. "Fascism." The definition offered is a verbatim replication of *Webster's*.

⁷ Eugen Weber, "Fascism(s) and Some Harbingers," in The Journal of Modern History 54, no. 3 (September 1982): 746-765. Weber cites a two-volume University of Paris VIII account, published in 1976, of a year-long course on fascism that states, "...a study of fascism is, naturally, against fascism" (746). Weber considers to this approach to be inspired by "...late night exposure to *The Invasion of the Killer Tomatoes*" (ibid.). Of this anti-fascism Weber writes, "Fascism is [to anti-fascists] a plague from outer space, to be stamped out, not placed in human context" (ibid.).

history as the story of human progress. Ideologues on the political right and left claim these terms, and both ends of the spectrum have long considered it anathema to associate fascism with their traditions. The one point upon which both sides of philosophical materialism agree is the view that the rise of fascism represents an historical aberration and/or a systemic failure. Although intrepid scholars had challenged the orthodoxies of the left and the right by the end of the 1960s, the residues of those strongly held views of historical progress still distort fascism's appearance in the prism of history.⁸

The definition of fascism continued to devolve throughout the 1970s, as the term was often misused and misapplied. Contemporary usage of both "fascism" and "fascist" usually comes in the form of an epithet or political attack. Robert O. Paxton points to usage that borders on the ridiculous, such as Rush Limbaugh's phrase "feminazis."⁹ "Fascist" and "fascism" have entered the popular culture as politically charged, but historically imprecise, words used primarily against anyone with intensely held conservative beliefs. "Fascist pig" is the left wing response to "Commie," "Pinko," and, recently in American politics, "liberal."

⁸ Marxism is predicated on the idea that the history of man is progressive, a view intrinsically implied in the determinism that culminates in the ultimate revolution of the proletariat. The liberal-conservative (for lack of a better term) tradition has long viewed the history of man as the history of progress. Foremost among these historians were the British Whig historians of the nineteenth century who wrote with great certainty about the ever-expanding evolution of English constitutional, social, and material success. Edward Hallett Carr, What is History (New York: Vintage Books, 1961) calls this historical tradition the "cult of progress" (146). He also quotes Lord Acton who, in 1896, referred to history as a "progressive science" (147). The influence of science, positivism, and materialism on both the left and the right through the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries is enormous. Positivism, materialism, and economic determinism were three ideas reviled the most by fascist ideologues and thinkers.

⁹ Paxton, "Five Stages" The Journal of Modern History, 8.

In this context, Umberto Eco, perhaps *the* greatest living authority on semiotics, pondered the genesis of the epithet “Fascist Pig.”¹⁰ Eco wonders why not *Nazi Pig* or *Falangist Pig*?¹¹ Eco concludes that there is something all-embracing about the term “fascist” and he proposes a new term, Ur-Fascism (“Eternal Fascism”), to replace the ill-defined lexicon presently in use.¹² Towards that end, Eco develops a fourteen-point typology of “Ur-Fascism” against which to compare regimes and movements.¹³ Although it is a novel concept, Ur-Fascism eschews historical context in favor of versatility.

The increasingly colloquial usage of “fascist” and “fascism” has had a profound impact on the attempt to understand fascist ideology within its historical context. Specifically, the proximity in time to World War II, dogmatic anti-fascism, and Cold War political divisions framed the concept of fascism. These factors contributed mightily to the evolution of “fascism” and “fascist” into politically loaded terms that, rather than providing an accepted starting point for study, became a risky game of scholarly semantics. For nearly three decades after the war ended, scholars who failed to define

¹⁰ Umberto Eco, “Eternal Fascism,” *The New York Review of Books* 42, no. 11 (June 22, 1995); excerpted in *Utne Reader*, no. 72 (November-December 1995): 57-59.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.* The typology does not stray too far from the work of many other scholars and, indeed, folds most of the various concepts of generic fascism into an all-encompassing definition. Eco points out that some of the criteria contradict others, but that contradiction is part of the “fascist style.” Also, meeting only one or more of the criterion does not necessarily indicate fascism, nor does failure to meet all criteria exclude the possibility of fascism. The fourteen points are as follows: the cult of tradition, rejection of modernism, action for action’s sake, disagreement is treason, fear of difference, an appeal to a frustrated middle-class, obsession with a plot, humiliation by the ostentatious wealth and force of power displayed by enemies, life is permanent warfare, contempt for the weak, everybody is educated to become a hero, transference of will to power to sexual matters, selective populism and struggle against “rotten” parliamentary governments, and the use of Orwellian *Newspeak*.

these terms with a blatantly anti-fascist interpretation necessarily were regarded as, at best, sympathetic to fascism or, at worst, outright fascists.

As a result, scholars have had to be careful in approaching fascism with a definition or interpretation that is too politically neutral. For example, the accomplished Italian historian Renzo De Felice has been the most unfortunate victim of this kind of criticism. De Felice, author of a five-volume biography of Benito Mussolini, caused an uproar among historians of fascism when his interview with Michael Ledeen was first published in Italy in 1975.¹⁴ De Felice's thorough scholarship was unquestionably sound, but his conclusions (that Mussolini was an original political thinker of some acumen, that Mussolini built a popular consensus for the regime, and that fascism was not a disjunction with the course of modern European history) were attacked as sympathetic to fascism.¹⁵ De Felice felt the full brunt of an attack upon his anti-fascist credentials, political posture, and his fateful embrace with the Duce. The attack he experienced was based on the implication that one must be in league with fascism if not squarely against the Duce and fascism. As De Felice, along with many others, discovered, de-politicizing fascism has perhaps been the greatest challenge facing historians and scholars.

In addition to the pitfalls of appearing apologetic, postmodernism and deconstructionism have continued their steady advances into history, exacerbating issues of politics and semantics by validating the politicization of usage and standardizing the

¹⁴ The interview was published in English as Renzo De Felice, Fascism: An Informal Introduction to Its Theory and Practice (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1976).

¹⁵ For a discussion of the reaction to De Felice see Borden Painter, "Renzo De Felice and the Historiography of Italian Fascism," American Historical Review 95, no. 2 (April 1990): 394-6. Painter explains that De Felice was attacked by, among others, Robert Vivarelli for succumbing to Mussolini's "personal magnetism" and by Leo Valiani for his benign attitude toward historical fascism.

imprecision of definition. Postmodernism and deconstructionism rely upon the proposition that truth and fact are relative concepts, based primarily upon the context within which they were created and the use of such by the interpreter. Therefore, "truth" and "fact" are intrinsically interpretations of events. Gertrude Himmelfarb, a staunch critic of postmodern relativism in historical practice, writes, "...postmodernism denies not only suprahistorical truths but historical truths, truths relative to particular times and places."¹⁶

This theoretical system allows the reader of a given text to thus employ all forms of personal proclivities in interaction with the textual strategies of the author. The author becomes an advocate, willingly or otherwise, of a set of "truths" that exert political, power-based conditions on the reader. The reader is therefore a target of the forms of truth that the author intends to implant into the reader's mind. Himmelfarb writes that this "illusion" that postmodernists attempt to "expose" is the idea that "...the narratives of history are anything more than the rhetorical, literary, aesthetic creations of the historian."¹⁷ This approach opens the door to wholesale re-interpretations of anything historical, with an expressed concern for uncovering the central political motive(s) underpinning all texts, whether primary, secondary, or tertiary.

The individual most commonly associated with this historical approach, Hayden White, goes so far as to argue that written history is a form of fiction and myth.¹⁸ Thus, historical events become vulnerable to the political and semantic convolutions of each textual explorer and can never be associated with something so nebulous as "truth." An

¹⁶ Gertrude Himmelfarb, On Looking into the Abyss: Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 130.

¹⁷ Ibid., 139.

¹⁸ Peter Burke, History and Social Theory, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 103.

example of the problems this raises is the truth of the Holocaust. If all truth is fundamentally relative, it could be argued that the truth of the Holocaust, or at least the truth that it was a scourge on the face of twentieth century history, is in doubt. The context of Nazi Germany could be read as the response of a fearful public to the specter of “international Jewry” or that the Holocaust has become a historical device used for geopolitical gain by Israelis. Both of these arguments seem absurd to the average reader, but postmodernist historians have yet to effectively explain their position with regard to the historical fact of the Holocaust.¹⁹ Essentially, the terminology, the facts, and the very predicates of historical exploration refuse to be normative. This trend, while not completely without counter-currents, has solidified the type of anti-normative thinking that befuddles and obscures. It is another hurdle scholars must leap in an attempt to develop a normative, comparative definition of fascism.

Since scholarly investigations of fascism usually begin by haggling over the definition of the term fascism, the debate simultaneously concerns the history and the historiography of fascism. From the outset, scholars must define their concept of fascism and either align with, stand opposed to, or triangulate against one or more of the political undercurrents of fascism’s historiography. Some have attempted to remove themselves from the political fray and move towards the ideal of objectivity—a difficult, if not

¹⁹ See Himmelfarb, Looking into the Abyss, 143-8. She uses the Holocaust, a “hard case” in history, to explore the difficulty postmodernists have with moral absolutes that appear to be verified by the historical record. Some, like Jane Caplan, admit that postmodernism cannot square the reality of the events with the decidedly “unreal” preferences of Post-modern theory, instead contemplating the need for exceptions to the rules of postmodern interpretation. Hayden White, on the other hand, refutes Caplan’s dichotomy and asserts forcefully that in lieu of any “facts” and because “modes of emplotment” (his term for historical narratives) are essentially figurative and not literal, there are no limits on the kinds and types of stories that can be written of the Holocaust (143-4).

impossible, task.²⁰ Still, such pursuit of the objectivity ideal usually separates enduring scholarship from passing fad.

Some scholars avoid political entanglements by simply rejecting the term “fascism” in favor of something completely different, such as Gregor’s developmental dictatorship, Paul Brooker’s fraternalism,²¹ Walker Connor’s ethnonationalism,²² or Howard J. Wiarda’s corporatism.²³ They effectively utilize a semantic device to broaden their models. Paul Brooker and Walker Connor are most ambitious in their attempts to unite Italy, Germany, and Japan under the same concept while totally avoiding the idea of generic fascism. Rather, they move away from political theory and more toward sociology by utilizing Emil Durkheim’s “theory of mechanical solidarity” and “mass instinct nationalism” respectively. Wiarda remains staunchly Eurocentric, eschewing Japan altogether, but does focus on a political ideology—corporatism—that predates the rise of fascism and provides a concept relatively free from political volatility. Perhaps their

²⁰ George Mosse, Juan J. Linz, Walter Laqueur, Stanley Payne, and Roger Eatwell have all made important contributions to the historiography of fascism without participating significantly in political tussles. All have also made excellent contributions to the development of a “fascist minimum” (although Mosse’s contributions might be unintentional), tackling the semantics of fascism with historical aplomb.

²¹ Paul Brooker, The Faces of Fraternalism: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). Brooker’s term attempts to unite all three of the Axis powers into one typology, fraternalism, characterized by the social need to enforce “mechanical solidarity” (based upon Emil Durkheim’s sociological system) in an industrializing nation (2-6).

²² Walker Connor, Ethnonationalism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). Ethnonationalism is another attempt to bring Italy, Germany, and Japan under the same conceptual umbrella. Connor emphasizes the appeal to “mass instinct,” the transposition of “state” for “nation,” and the “mass devotion” that grew out of the particular type of nationalism found in these three nations (97-100). The idea of ethnonationalism is traced back to Anthony D. Smith’s earlier works, Theories of Nationalism (New York: Holmes and Meier Publications, 1983) and The Ethnic Origins of Nations (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

²³ Howard J. Wiarda, Corporatism and Comparative Politics: The Other Great “Ism” (New York: Sharpe, 1997). Wiarda takes a more historical approach in renaming fascism. He uses corporatism, a term and idea that developed in the late nineteenth century and one that was widely used by Italian thinkers, both Fascist and non-Fascist, in the beginning of the twentieth century. Wiarda does not include Japan, preferring to assert corporatism as exclusively a phenomenon found in inter-War Europe (39).

individual interests guided them away from the term “fascism.” Whether or not it is intentional, all three reduce the chance for politically based, often visceral, misunderstandings.

Politics and semantics exercise a great deal of influence on the subject. That influence affects interpretation in various ways. An excellent example is the rift in post-WWII historiography between two competing interpretations of the origins of fascism. The traditional political debate centers on whether or not fascism was a right-wing capitalist counter-revolution meant to undermine socialist/communist revolution, or if fascism was one specific type of totalitarianism within a larger typology of twentieth century totalitarianism, including Stalinist and Maoist dictatorships.²⁴ Over time the debate became ensconced in a competition between Marxists on the left and purveyors of the totalitarianism and “aborted democracy” theories on the right.²⁵ Each side attempted to paint the other with the brush of fascism. The question often centered on who would inherit an ideological association with fascism. Eventually, many scholars began debating over “left fascism” versus “right fascism,” each side promoting an implicit, if not overt,

²⁴ The historiography of totalitarianism is long and voluminous. The two most important works on the topic are Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951) and Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy (New York: Praeger, 1956).

²⁵ Over the last 25-plus years Juan Linz has elaborated on work of Karl Dietrich Bracher in proposing that fascism emerged primarily out of a post World War I crisis of parliamentary democracy. The crisis stemmed from the inability of German and Italian democracies to mitigate and coordinate competition between parties and interests. See Peter H. Merkl, “Democratic Development, Breakdowns, and Fascism,” in World Politics 34, no. 1 (October 1981): 114-123. Also see Juan Linz, “The Crisis of democracy after the First World War,” in International Fascism (London: Arnold, 1998), ed. Roger Griffin, 175-188.

Cold War political agenda.²⁶ The “left versus right” debate required exacting semantic parameters to ensure each model’s viability vis-à-vis the other.

Further, schisms also developed as scholars wrestled with the problem of fascism’s origins: the question of what went wrong? Understandably, scholars were preoccupied immediately after the war with diagnosing the “flaw” responsible for the rise of fascism and, thus, assigning blame for the ghastly horrors of the conflict. Ironically, the two victors, communism and liberal-capitalism, found themselves in a pitched battle over whom or what to blame. The question of blame was particularly difficult for the West since it so quickly rehabilitated all three Axis nations and drew them into an alliance. As the Cold War progressed, each side used semantically precise definitions to promote politically expedient aims.

In the West, the popular explanation often included the term “evil” to describe the few leaders who led their ideologically intoxicated people into the abyss. The concept of totalitarianism offered the West the opportunity to associate the new evil, international communism, with fascism. The Marxist approach had the benefit of being congruous

²⁶ See Hugh Seton-Watson, “Fascism, Right and Left,” in The Journal of Contemporary History 1, no. 1 (May 1966). Seton-Watson levied an early attack on the Marxist tendency to use fascism as a “smear word” and lamented the lack of understanding regarding fascism’s position on the political spectrum (183-5). For a well argued, circa 1960s exegesis on fascism as a right-wing movement see John Weiss, The Fascist Tradition: Radical Right-Wing Extremism in Modern Europe (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967). Weiss’ thesis is that fascism was essentially a traditionalist, conservative response to the “rapid liberalization of the social system” which threatened conservatives’ socio-economic status (ix-xi). Weiss tried to bridge the gap between Marxist and Liberal interpretations of fascism by implicating a European reactionary tradition against modernization that opposes both Marxism and Liberalism (4). A. James Gregor’s model of fascism as a Marxist heresy (beginning with The Ideology of Fascism, 1969) had successfully shifted the debate enough that, by 1981, debate raged over the definition and viability of Left-Wing fascism. See Society 18, no. 4 (May/June 1981), for a full airing of the debate with articles by, among others, S.J. Woolf, George L. Mosse, Anthony James Joes, and Gregor on the topic of Left-Wing fascism.

with the left's pre-WWII assessments. Those formerly under the yoke of fascism had thus been liberated from reactionary capital and counter-revolution, free to separate themselves from the failed ideology.

While politics and semantics often intertwine seamlessly, semantics occasionally override politics. Some scholars refuse to extend a strictly-defined fascism beyond the historical boundaries of Fascist Italy. This approach rejects the idea of generic fascism, whether as such or if it is based on new terminology, i.e. totalitarianism, developmental dictatorship, fraternalism, etc. Either way, the scholar's first task is to define terms and establish a particular perspective in a field where the various theories, models, and methodologies have changed the definition into a semantic puzzle.

Thus, any investigation of fascism must initially address a semantic question: what is fascism? Since this question remains mostly unresolved, as we shall see, a clear and precise method of wading through the numerous theorists and their theories remains a challenge in itself. Despite the lengthy expositions on methodology and exacting definitions of fascism, general disagreement on the definition and meaning of the word fascism presents the apprentice and savant with a variety of paths and trails from which to choose. The multiplicity of paths creates a second question: what is the best method or model for investigating the historiography without necessarily having to align with a particular school or interpretation? Alignment with, or opposition to, the dominant paradigms, anti-fascism and the Cold War political divide, have been basic presuppositions for many scholars. The goal here is to understand the historiography outside of the left-right paradigm.

The most obvious starting point from which to develop this methodology and/or model of fascism is to first explore the long-standing debate over the existence of a “fascist minimum.” If, indeed, a fascist minimum *is* possible, it would provide a basic definition of fascism and validate the comparative examination of fascism as a historical phenomenon. One can then begin to categorize regimes and nations according to the application of the model. Towards that end, the following discussion focuses upon the aforementioned question—what is fascism?—and the various ways scholars have answered it. Stressed are the major typologies, explanations, and “schools” of interpolation. The schisms, controversies, and semantic and political debates are also of particular interest. The questions surrounding the search for a fascist minimum focuses the debate on the genesis of fascism, exposes the roles of governing paradigms in shaping historiography, and highlights the need for a third way of viewing fascism.

Chapter 3: Toward a Fascist Minimum

As we have seen, understanding what fascism is depends as much upon the definition of the word as it does upon the historical record. The long-standing debate over the viability of a fascist minimum has created many rifts and spawned numerous models. Fifty-plus years of persistent deliberations, new models, and countless revisions underscore the continuing need for an effective, widely accepted method for defining fascism. The issues are whether or not a fascist minimum exists and if those basic characteristics and conditions form the basis of generic fascism. If so, which nations or movements warrant inclusion into the generic model? If the word “fascism” causes too much political and semantic confusion, what term should be employed to encapsulate various regimes deemed fascist? Is it possible to extrapolate from Italian Fascism an historical trend or template? These questions emerge in nearly all of the attempts to design a generic model of fascism. Conversely, the same questions form the standard with which to critique the various efforts to construct a generic model of fascism.

Considering the vast amount of attention paid to generic fascism, a thorough consideration of the various reactions for and against a fascist minimum offers insight into the different methodologies, interpretations, and definitions of historical fascism. Although these arguments often obscure the historical picture, it is possible within this basic historiographical context to sift through the politics and semantics and find an

essential consensus, or, at the very least, the skeleton of a historical canon. Moreover, the various rifts, controversies, and theories expose the roles played by governing paradigms in the writing of history.

Unfortunately, surveying the vast number of histories, analyses, and critiques of both fascism and the scholarship of fascism is an intimidating undertaking. Thankfully, insightful studies by Renzo De Felice, A. James Gregor, and Roger Eatwell make this task much easier. The number of identifiable schools, or interpretations, of fascism varies from author to author, but their categorizations give the reader a thorough and accessible summation of the vast literature. In Interpretations of Fascism, De Felice distinguishes nine interpretations, three of which are “classic,” with an additional six of various types.¹ Gregor’s Interpretations of Fascism discerns four “classic” interpretations that he folds into a grand total of six.² Eatwell’s article, “Towards a New Model of Generic Fascism”, uncovers “four schema” that subdivide into “two main subcategories” or modes of interpretation.³ The work of these three scholars provides a small sampling of what is itself a

¹ Renzo De Felice, Interpretations of Fascism, trans. Brenda Huff Everett (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977). The “classic” interpretations are covered in Chapter 2. Those interpretations include fascism as the breakdown of the Western moral tradition, the peculiar development of particular nations, and the Marxist identification of fascism as a capitalist counter-revolution. Chapters 3 and 4 explore the Catholic interpretation, the Totalitarianism School, the theory of metapolitics, and psychosocial, sociological, and socioeconomic social science models. De Felice, by many accounts, offered the most important re-evaluation of fascism, specifically Italian Fascism, and this book is a must read for students and scholars alike.

² A. James Gregor, Interpretations of Fascism (Morristown, New Jersey: General Learning Press, 1974). Gregor’s “classic” interpretations vary slightly from De Felice’s. Gregor includes two tables (20-22). The first also includes the moral crisis and the Marxist schools, but diverges from De Felice by identifying an interpretation of fascism as a result of a “psychological disability” and the “intrusion of amorphous masses into politics.” In the second table, Gregor finally settles on a total of six by including the Totalitarianism school and the economic development, or modernization, school.

³ Roger Eatwell, “Towards a New Model of Generic Fascism” Journal of Theoretical Politics 4, no. 2 (April 1992): 161-194. This relatively recent article gives an excellent overview of the theoretical challenges and shortcomings of the extant interpretations of fascism. The seven interpretations Eatwell identifies are: the incoherence of fascism (fascism as non-ideological and merely politically opportunist and

prolific field of study: the multifarious interpretations of fascism. In fact, the publication of Eatwell's article (1992) marked the beginning of a recent resurgence of academic interest in and concomitant output of general histories and models of fascism.⁴

However, the strict typological boundaries established by the aforementioned, along with numerous other studies in fascism's historiography, are at once clumsy and excruciatingly precise. For the purposes of this discussion, it is important to recognize two basic approaches to scholarly inquiry present in the debates. While politics and semantics complicate the issue of what is, or was, fascism, a broader debate involves issues of historical perspective. On one side, the strict vertical, or linear, historical view locks fascism into a distinct locus. These particularists define fascism by the one typology all scholars can agree upon, Fascist Italy. Therefore, Fascist Italy is both the minimum and maximum. Some scholars expand the typology by small gradations to encompass a few other examples, i.e. Nazi Germany and Franco's Spain (although often not even those regimes), but generally eschew broad application of a generic model of

power oriented); fascism as a Specific national form without any meaning beyond Italy; fascism as a peculiar movement found only in inter-War Europe; and fascism as a universal concept. The two subcategories are those studies "concerned with ideology and propaganda" and those studies concerned with "why it arose and in whose interests it operated" (161-172).

⁴ Robert O. Paxton's, "The Uses of Fascism," in *The New York Review of Books* 46, no. 22 (Nov. 28, 1996): 48-52, is a review of two books by major scholars, Walter Laqueur, *Fascism: Past, Present, and Future* (1996), and Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (1995), in which he identifies a changing trend, "Books about the general character of fascism, which had largely given way since the 1970s to an emphasis on what distinguished Italian Fascism from German Nazism, are appearing again" (48). Paxton was correct, in addition to Laqueur and Payne, published since then are Roger Eatwell's *Fascism: A History* (1997), Roger Griffin, ed., *International Fascism* (1998), and Mark Neocleous, *Fascism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). Paxton also contributed recently to the debate over a fascist minimum by proposing "five stages of fascism," which resolves semantic issues by offering a typology of maturation by which movements evolve into regimes. This hyper-inclusive model absorbs even latently fascist movements by identifying them as proto or embryonic fascism, see "Five Stages," *Journal of Modern History*. The long-standing emphasis on what distinguished Fascism from Nazism was also addressed recently. See Richard Bessel, ed., *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparisons and Contrasts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

fascism. As we shall see, specialists on Germany and Japan also tend to view Nazism and Imperial Japan as special cases not comparable with Italy, let alone other regimes or movements.

Many prominent scholars fall into the category of particularists. Among them, Renzo De Felice, George Mosse, Gilbert Allardyce, and Alexander De Grand stand out as strict adherents to particularistic interpretations of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Others, like Walter Laqueur, willingly place Nazism and Fascism into a broader model of fascism, but are generally unwilling to stretch the term beyond those two.⁵ However, the strict interpretation of historical fascism presents a rigorous challenge to the aspiring generalist.

Taken together, Renzo De Felice and George Mosse represent the scholarly vanguard of particularism. Each emphasizes the unique cultural, political, social, and historical features of his respective field of study. De Felice, while also waging a war against anti-fascist domination of post-war scholarship, spent many years proposing the uniqueness of Italian Fascism. He resolutely establishes his displeasure with generic models. De Felice rejects outright both the theory of totalitarianism and Marxist analyses of fascism.⁶ Totalitarianism, he states, is not an ideology as such, but merely a technique of power.⁷ De Felice's exhaustive five-volume biography of Mussolini refutes Marxist assertions that Fascism was a counter-revolutionary "praetorian guard" at the disposal of

⁵ Walter Laqueur states clearly that while he accepts the basic similarities between Fascism and Nazism, he is opposed to broad models that include nations such as Japan, Poland, Chile, or Spain. *Fascism: Past, Present, and Future*, 13-15.

⁶ De Felice, *Interpretations*, 9-12

⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-11.

capitalist interests.⁸ In fact, De Felice believes that Mussolini built an effective mass movement based on widespread support.⁹

He emphatically disputes the claim that one could extrapolate a generic model from Italian Fascism, comparing the search for a “minimum common denominator” with the “...construction of skyscrapers out of a pile of embankments.”¹⁰ De Felice takes particular exception to the tendency to unite Fascism and Nazism under the same conceptual umbrella, arguing that the erroneous coupling of these two movements ignores a basic difference. Fascism, he believes, was a revolutionary movement in full, emphasizing the creative power of the New Man, and the creative power of the state to create the New Man.¹¹ Fascism sought a transformation of the individual and society.¹²

Although Nazism’s mass mobilization gives the appearance of revolution and transformation, it focused upon the “Liberated Aryan.”¹³ Italian Fascism, in contrast, integrated elements of Modernism, Futurism for example. Nazism sought emancipation from the restrictions modernism imposed upon the historical Aryan character.¹⁴ This analysis deftly accounts for the relative lack of anti-Semitism and racism in Italy, so virulent in Germany.

⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁹ Ibid., De Felice identifies the initial, and ultimately the core support, coming from the petty bourgeoisie, but indicates that over time Fascism effectively opened up to all classes.

¹⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹¹ Ibid., 55-6.

¹² Adrian Lyttelton, ed., Italian Fascisms: From Pareto to Gentile (London: Harper and Row, 1973) agrees with De Felice’s and Mosse’s divorcing of the two fascisms. Lyttelton views the racial utopianism of Nazism as fascism “transcended” (12). However, De Felice’s emphasis is on the different focuses of the respective utopian visions, modernist New Man versus traditionalist Liberated Aryan. Lyttelton denies Italian Fascism any claim to utopianism.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 56.

De Felice's praise for his particularist colleague, George Mosse, illustrates an affinity for his methods and focus. He refers to Mosse's The Nationalization of the Masses as one of the three most important works of recent memory.¹⁵ His praise reflects a sincere agreement between the two about the uniqueness of both Fascism and Nazism. Mosse's interpretations echo those of De Felice, and vice versa. In his seminal work, The Crisis of German Ideology,¹⁶ Mosse builds a strong case for viewing Nazism as a peculiar development based specifically on German cultural, political, and social circumstances. In the introduction Mosse writes:

What differentiated the Germany of this period from other nations was a profound mood, a peculiar view of man and society which seems alien and even demonic to the Western intellect.¹⁷

He views the penetration of Volkism throughout German society, dislocations caused by rapid industrialization, and a tradition of German Romanticism as a synergistic, wholly German combination of factors.¹⁸

While Mosse recognizes that many of the ideas found in Nazism circulated around Europe, he remains steadfastly behind his *sui generis* classification of Nazi Germany.¹⁹ Like De Felice, he compares the influence of Futurism and modernism on Italian Fascism with the severe traditionalism of Nazi Germany.²⁰ Unfortunately, he fumbles over what he calls a Nietzschean "call to action" in Nazism.²¹ First, Nietzsche

¹⁵ De Felice compares the cultural impact of The Nationalization of the Masses (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975) with that of Johann Huizinga's Waning of the Middle Ages and Marc Bloch's Les Rois Thaumaturges (Ibid., 40).

¹⁶ George Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964).

¹⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹⁸ Ibid., 8-14.

¹⁹ Ibid., 315.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

was nothing else if not anti-traditionalist.²² Second, the Nietzschean “call to action” was readily apparent in the Italian mythos of the New Man.²³ Mosse, in his zeal to find the fatal flaw exclusive to German culture regards Nazism as “...a repudiation of European heritage.”²⁴ Most significantly, Mosse terms the Nazi example “New Politics,” an outgrowth of a secular political religion that responds to the German crisis of values.²⁵

De Felice and Mosse have not carried the particularist burden alone. Both Alexander De Grand and Gilbert Allardyce agree with them that distinctions between Italy and Germany make generic fascism problematic. Hence, it is, at best, foolhardy to attempt to formulate a broad generic model applicable beyond Italy and Germany. In 1982, De Grand published a study of Italian Fascism proclaiming his purpose as an “effort to set fascism in its Italian context as a movement quite distinct from German Nazism and current Third World developmental dictatorships.”²⁶ De Grand, however, implicitly acknowledges a broader fascist typology, inclusive of Germany.

²² For an excellent discussion of Nietzsche’s role in the development of German nationalism see Carol Diethe, “Nietzsche and Nationalism,” The Journal of the History of European Ideas 14, no. 2 (1992): 227-34. Diethe points out that Nietzsche made a radical break with Romanticism and German nationalism after his famous break with Richard Wagner, and that he was unabashedly disgusted by Volkism (229).

²³ Walter Adamson has written extensively on modernism and fascism, including the influence of Nietzsche. See “Modernism and Fascism: The Politics of Culture in Italy, 1903-22,” in American Historical Review 95, no. 2 (April 1990): 359-90 and “The Culture of Italian fascism and the Fascist Crisis of Modernity: The Case of *Il Selvaggio*,” in The Journal of Contemporary History 30, no. 4 (1995): 555-575. Adamson asserts that Mussolini adapted to those modernist ideas that coincided with his “anti-ideology ideology” based upon spiritual appeals and secular faith. (p. 363) Part of that adaptation was an affinity for Nietzsche’s call for the “creation of new values,” traced through D’Annunzio to Mussolini’s call for a New Man (366).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Mosse, Nationalization of the Masses, is the seminal work on this thesis. The emphasis on German Volkism as a template for mass democracy and Aryan renewal also buttress argument made by De Felice on the uniqueness of Italian Fascism.

²⁶ Alexander De Grand, Italian Fascism (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), x.

Although he is closer to the generalists than De Felice and Mosse, De Grand certainly agrees with a *sui generis* classification of Italy and Germany and attacks the idea that “developmental dictatorships” warrant association with fascism. However, after A. James Gregor had spent a decade forcing scholars to address his general model of fascism, De Grand inched ever closer to the generalists. In a comparison of Italy and Germany, made in 1995, he identified a “Fascist Style” that typified their regimes: leader driven, pseudo-utopian mass movements based on bourgeois resistance to the crisis of liberalism.²⁷ However, they were differentiated primarily by the extent to which traditional conservatives and their institutions held onto power. Italy compromised far more than Germany and, as such, was still different.

As we shall see, in 1979 Gilbert Allardyce asserted himself as one the most tenacious opponents of generic fascism, attacking the amorphous meaning and uses of the word. He, like De Grand, reacted against the growing trend to develop a widely applicable model. The idea that fascism cannot be understood as a generic phenomenon has persisted. In 1991 Roberto Vivarelli approvingly cited Allardyce who portrayed the use of language by Fascists as fundamentally deceptive.²⁸ Allardyce postulated that the deceptive nature of the rhetoric of historical Fascism colored the interpretations proposed by those concerned with establishing a generic model of fascism. Vivarelli agrees with Allardyce, thus viewing Fascism as historically locked into the context of inter-war Italian politics. The deceptions of the Fascist regime were not programmatic, but

²⁷ De Grand, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The ‘Fascist’ Style of Rule (London: Routledge, 1995), 84.

²⁸ Roberto Vivarelli, “Interpretations of the Origins of Fascism,” in The Journal of Modern History 63, no. 1 (March 1991): 29.

reflective of the Italian context.²⁹ Thus, Vivarelli proposed that the origins of Fascism could only "...be studied in situ, namely, in Italy, and they must be understood first of all within the context of Italian history."³⁰ Vivarelli's point is well taken. Most generalists would agree. Nevertheless, they would then use that as a departure point for further application of a fascist minimum, comparing and contrasting to find a broader twentieth century political-ideological phenomenon.

Perhaps this is the point of most disagreement between the two camps. The particularist position emphasizes the exceptionalism of Fascism or Nazism. In De Felice's case, he used particularism to disassociate Italy from generic fascism, therefore, undercutting the long-standing dominance of anti-fascists. De Felice presented the Italian fascist as "optimistic" about the nature of man and the ability to transform man and society.³¹ Mosse would essentially agree that this was unlike Nazi Germany's emphasis upon racial liberation and revolt against the constraints of the modern world.

De Felice does not quite agree with the argument made by other particularists, including Mosse, that fascism arises out of a cultural-political crisis of values, but he did not have the Holocaust to explain. Italian anti-Fascism, emanating from a strong Marxist tradition and a liberal anti-Fascism dating back to Benedetto Croce in the 1920s, operated, he believed, from empirically unsound foundations.³² A fundamental attract-

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Michael Ledeen, "Renzo De Felice and the Controversy over Italian Fascism," The Journal of Contemporary History 11, no. 4 (October 1976): 270.

³² See A. James Gregor, "Professor Renzo De Felice and the Fascist Phenomenon," in World Politics 30, no. 3 (April 1978): 433-49. Gregor writes that De Felice's work "...is calculated to generate considerable discomfort among academicians and the lay public" in hopes of providing the grounds for a balanced reconsideration of Fascism (436).

iveness of particularism is that it isolates fascism as an historical virus that, since stamped out, does not portend further infection.³³ It was this particularist tendency that De Felice so forcefully challenged.

On the other side, the expansive horizontal view uses historical Fascism to develop a model applicable to a wide variety of regimes and situations. For these generalists, the definition of a fascist minimum is difficult, but not impossible. Marxists, compelled by historical and economic determinism, tend towards generalism. Non-Marxist generalists come from many fields and specializations, yet all unite in a search for a fascist minimum and, therefore, a generic model.

The impetus towards a generic model clearly comes from a desire to make sense of historically complex interactions throughout the twentieth century. If fascism cannot be postulated outside of Italy, that limitation would undercut the ability of historians, political scientists, and sociologists to make comparisons. Comparative studies, particularly historical and political comparisons, provide context and identify larger processes. The comparative perspective has become more appropriate in an ever-shrinking world, the result of greater communication among nations, cross-pollination of ideas, economic competition and interdependence, and the spread of technology. In the twentieth century, non-comparative studies grow ever more problematic.

The desire to compare and contrast and to create a historical and political model that can, at least in part, explain the fascist phenomenon has made many careers. The

³³ See Geoff Eley, "What produces Fascism: Preindustrial Traditions or a Crisis of the Capitalist State?," *Politics and Society* 12, no. 1 (1983): 52-82. Eley deftly explores the "backwardness syndrome" explanation of fascism and the discontinuity with Western traditions this implies.

group of generalists and their models are too numerous to list here. The most visible and successful generalists of the last thirty years—Stanley Payne, Juan J. Linz and A. James Gregor—share a common progenitor, Ernst Nolte. Also, as Nolte's landmark book, Three Faces of Fascism, spawned three decades of re-evaluations, so too have the works of Payne, Linz, and Gregor, among others, paved the way for the most recent generation of generalists: Roger Eatwell, Roger Griffin, and Robert O. Paxton. As the search for a fascist minimum continues, the variations between interpretations and schools seem to be narrowing, although consensus and critical mass still elude mainstream scholarship.³⁴

What all generalists share is a basic agreement that fascism was, or still is, an ideology born of an identifiable tradition. While they might disagree on the forms and permutations, they unite around this fundamental postulate. Once accepted, the field is open to comparative studies of various examples, using the minimum set of characteristics to determine the presence of fascism. The idea of a fascist minimum comes directly from Ernst Nolte. He began his search for a fascist minimum in 1963, although his metapolitical theory of fascism inspired few true converts.³⁵ More important, he validated the idea that a fascist minimum was possible and established an intellectual, philosophical, and ideological genealogy of fascism in three cases: France, Italy and Germany. In so doing, he dealt with one of the most significant problems facing any generalist, the question of ideological continuity. The establishment of an ideological

³⁴ Roger Griffin's introduction to International Fascism is more hopeful about the prospects for a consensus in the near future. Griffin points to the "single line definitions" both he and Stanley Payne have proposed and the compatibility of such with Roger Eatwell and Robert O. Paxton, despite their reservations (14-5).

³⁵ De Felice, Interpretations, 25.

genealogy makes it possible to view fascism as historically congruous and, potentially, ideologically universal. Rather than the peculiarity of an historical aberration, behavioral flaw, or cultural psychosis, an intellectual genealogy allows international cross-pollination, in much the same way as the American and French Revolutions, though different in many ways, can be traced to the Enlightenment.

One group of generalists, the Marxists, never needed to grapple with the questions of historical continuity. Traditional Marxists, building on Karl Marx's critique of history and fundamental determinism, place historical phenomena within a logical dialectical structure. Of course, there is a great deal of variation on the Marxist theme, both on general theory and on the specific analysis of fascism.³⁶ In regards to fascism, some Marxists might haggle over "petty bourgeois versus bourgeois" dominance of fascism, the reaction of industrial or pre-industrial capital, or the extent to which fascist ideology penetrated the proletariat's consciousness, but the basic idea that fascism was counter-revolutionary by nature has endured. Leon Trotsky's analysis in the 1930s, although nuanced, still fell back to the "dogmatic insistence on organically identifying fascism

³⁶ Marxism has subdivided into various schools and interpretations, often with interesting results. Italy has had a tradition of anti-materialist revisions of Marx, including the work of Antonio Labriola, Antonio Gramsci, and Benedetto Croce, but that tradition may be included in the ideological development of fascism as a "Marxist heresy" as identified by A. James Gregor (see below, Chapter Five). Another example of critical re-evaluations of economic determinism came from the Frankfurt School, producing scholars such as Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and Theodor Adorno. Emblematic of their approach was a willingness to explore factors other than economic, freely utilizing Freudian, existentialist, and phenomenological ideas within a Marxists framework. See Roland N. Stromberg, European Intellectual History Since 1789, 6th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994): 234-5. Also, Lenin's insistence on the need for an elite-led revolution, bypassing the dialectically precise phase of bourgeois capitalism is another example of an unorthodox deviation from orthodox Marxism.

with the last ditch struggle of moribund capitalism.”³⁷ Michael Parenti’s analysis in 1997 differs little:

...fascism is nothing more than a final solution to the class struggle, the totalistic submergence and exploitation of democratic forces for the benefit and profit of higher financial circles.³⁸

In between these two points, Marxism produced variations on a theme, but the baseline remained constant. From Herbert Marcuse’s fascism as “a classless society within the framework of the existing class society,” to Mihaly Vajda’s fascism as a compromise between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, brokered by the petty bourgeoisie in a time of capitalist crisis, the theme remains the same.³⁹ As an absolute minimum, all Marxists emphatically argue that fascism was not revolutionary. For Marxists, the real conundrum is the apparent *revolutionary* appeal of fascism.⁴⁰

Unfortunately, the question is not quite so simple for non-Marxist generalists. While their Marxist colleagues are comfortable with historical continuity, they struggle with the implications of a fascism with deep intellectual roots. The idea of a Mussolini or Hitler emerging out of the same traditions as the great nineteenth century ideologies—liberalism and communism/socialism—makes many uncomfortable, yet Nolte’s book made it impossible to regard fascism as mere political thuggery. Many responded with a

³⁷ Robert S. Wistrich, “Leon Trotsky’s Theory of Fascism,” The Journal of Contemporary History 11, no. 4 (October 1976): 157.

³⁸ Michael Parenti, Blackshirts and Reds (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997), 17. Parenti may not be the most accomplished theorist, but this book epitomizes the type of dogmatically held notions that pervade popular conceptions of both fascism and Marxism.

³⁹ Herbert Marcuse, “The Struggle Against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State,” in Negations: Essays in Critical Theory (London: Beacon, 1968), 21, and Mihaly Vajda, Fascism as a Mass Movement (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1976), 7-9.

⁴⁰ Parenti calls fascism a “false revolution” in Blackshirts, 17. Vajda identifies fascism as “...the offspring of a situation pregnant with crisis, but not with revolution” in Fascism, 8.

more complicated theory of the intellectual roots of fascism—irrationalism. The idea that Fascist thought was merely an expedient outgrowth of nineteenth century irrationalisms, Nietzschean proto-existentialism, Bergsonian vitalism, and Sorelian anarcho-syndicalism for example, allowed a general ideology of sorts, while delineating fascism from a longer Western tradition.⁴¹ However, the ties to Nietzsche, the most often cited irrationalist culprit, are among the most overstated. Moreover, fascist ideology demonstrates significant links to Hegelian Idealism and nineteenth century neo-Idealism.

Generalists who concern themselves specifically with understanding the core of fascist ideology also understand the deep philosophical roots of fascism, which, as Nolte so indelibly established, date back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea of the General Will. Roger Eatwell, referring to the intellectual sources of fascist ideology, writes:

The result was not an irrationalist philosophy, or a "non-intellectual, even anti-intellectual" position, as many critics have argued. It was more an anti-rationalist philosophy in the sense of its hostility to liberalism and Marxism. There was nothing irrational in believing that history taught certain lessons. Nor was there anything irrational in believing that an individual, or group of dedicated individuals, might change the course of history – though clearly the possibilities of such vitalist views are open to debate.⁴²

Others, including A. James Gregor, have made irrefutable links to neo-Idealism and Hegel, particularly through the neo-Hegelian Italian philosopher and eventual official philosopher of Fascism, Giovanni Gentile.⁴³

⁴¹George Sabine and Thomas Thorson, A History of Political Theory (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 808-820. The authors of this seminal, widely used text regard fascism as the practical outgrowth of Irrationalism and that the ties to Hegelianism are tenuous and overstated. This is a common assertion by the majority of scholars of 20th Century history.

⁴² Eatwell "Towards a Generic Model of Fascism," 177.

⁴³ See Gregor, Ideology, 209-52 for a full exploration of the role Gentile played in the development of Fascist ideology. Others sources include Dante Germino, "Italian Fascism in the History of

Critical to any comparative model of fascism based on a fascist minimum is the identification of an ideology. Ideologies, rather than specific political-cultural phenomena, can spread from one situation or geopolitical locus to another, often conforming to different circumstances. A classic example is Marxism's multiple variants including Leninism, Stalinism, Maoism, and Marxist-Feminism. At the core, each of these variants shares basic Marxist principles of class-consciousness, dialectical materialism, and, with some exceptions, economic determinism. They share an internal consistency despite the particular cultural and/or sociological emphases. In contrast, the nature of fascist ideology seems rife with contradictions, opening the door to the irrationalism thesis and giving credence to the perception that fascism was not an ideology so much as a particular political-cultural response of a given polity.

These contradictions—what Stanley Payne calls the fascist negations—were identified first by Nolte: anti-Marxism, anti-liberalism, anti-conservatism, the leadership principle, a party army, and the aim of totalitarianism.⁴⁴ When taken together, certain principles of Nolte's minimum seem to cancel out others (e.g., anti-Marxism and anti-liberalism are opposite ends of the left-right political spectrum and, thus, contradictory), and the ideological content strikes one as wholly negative. The failure to identify in fascism a positive program for change undercuts the assertion that fascism was revolutionary or even ideological.

Political Thought," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 8, no. 2 (May 1964): 109-27; Emilio Gentile, "Fascism as Political Religion," *The Journal of Contemporary History* 25, no. 2 (May 1990): 229-251; and A. Robert Caponigri, "The Status of the Person in the Humanism of Giovanni Gentile," *The Journal of the History of Philosophy* 2, no. 1 (1964): 61-69.

⁴⁴ Nolte, *Die Krise des liberalen Systems und die faschistischen Bewegungen* (Munich, 1968), 385; quoted in Payne, *History of Fascism*, 5.

Building upon Nolte's negations, Payne constructs a typology that provides both an ideology and a set of goals. The ideology includes: idealism, vitalism, secularism, nationalistic authoritarianism, and the goal of imperial expansion. Further, Payne outlines a fascist style and organizational structure including: mass mobilization, militarization of politics, glorification of masculinity and youth, personal style of command, aesthetically oriented meetings, and symbols often based on historical romanticism and mysticism.⁴⁵ Payne's massive typology stands in stark contrast to Roger Griffin's single sentence definition. Griffin defines fascism as "a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism."⁴⁶

Roger Eatwell employs a device—fascism as a "spectral-syncretic ideology"—to understand fascism and its contradictions while also giving it an ideological structure.⁴⁷ Rather than breaking down fascism into constituent parts, like Payne, or providing an all-encompassing definition, like Griffin, Eatwell creates a simple model that absorbs the various ideological streams of thought that flow into fascist ideology. Eatwell utilizes spectral-syncretism to understand the "third way" thrust of fascism away from left-right conflict and toward left-right integration.

Moving away from single-sentence precision and vast typological lists, A. James Gregor's model expanded the fascist enterprise to geopolitical proportions. While Gregor's thesis is covered fully in Chapter 5, noteworthy is his emphasis on rooting fascist ideology fully in the Western tradition and promoting the revolutionary,

⁴⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁶ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991), 44.

⁴⁷ Eatwell, *Generic Fascism*, 189.

modernizing praxis of fascist ideologues. This makes Gregor the most vibrant inheritor of Nolte's intellectual history of fascism, and the immediate offspring of Barrington Moore's The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, a comparative study of Germany and Japan (and, to a lesser extent, Italy).⁴⁸ Gregor's use of aspects of totalitarianism, his model of fascism as a Marxist heresy, his emphasis upon modernization, and his expansive application of developmental dictatorship, made him a primary target for particularists. No individual did more in English language scholarship than Gregor to firmly root fascist ideology in the Western tradition; however, his extensive application of the developmental dictatorship concept makes it unattractive to most.⁴⁹

More importantly, Gregor challenged the idea that fascism was only a European phenomenon, applying his developmental dictatorship concept throughout the Third World and beyond the context of World War II. The prevailing Eurocentrism Gregor faced explains the almost unanimous lack of attention paid to Italy and Germany's Axis ally, Japan. Generalists like Payne, Griffin, Eatwell, Eugen Weber, and Nolte find common ground with particularists on one key point: fascism was only possible in Europe. Alas, Gregor ran up against an immovable ivory tower. Ironically, he never applied his model to Japan either.

This single point of agreement between the generalists and particularists should not, however, be regarded as a significant step toward rapprochement. The two schools have often collided in academic journals, debating methodology and the intersection of

⁴⁸ Barrington Moore, The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

⁴⁹ Roger Griffin agrees that Gregor's contribution to the intellectual history of fascism is invaluable. See International Fascism, 11.

politics and semantics in their scholarship. The conflict came to a head in 1979 when the conflict spilled over into the pages of The American Historical Review. At issue were the viability of a fascist minimum, the possibility of a generic model of fascism, whether or not fascism actually constitutes an ideology, and the very meaning of the word fascism.⁵⁰

Gilbert Allardyce, skeptical about the idea of “unifascism” or any general model and definition of fascism, wrote: “Unfortunately, the word fascism is here to stay; only its meaning seems to have been banned.”⁵¹ Allardyce made this statement in 1979, at a time when the proliferation of theories and interpretations was approaching a critical mass. His despair over Lloyd Eastman’s classification of Guomindang Blue Shirts as one of fascism’s “multifarious forms” led Allardyce to write:

The so-called fascist parties are too mixed, diverse, and exceptional to be collected into such a general typology. It is not enough, therefore, to replace the German and Italian prototypes with a comparative international model. Instead, it is necessary to declassify fascism altogether as a generic concept.⁵²

Allardyce’s argument against generic fascism relies on the assertion that fascism is not an ideology.⁵³ Unlike democracy, communism, or liberalism, Allardyce does not see any basic fascist political theory, philosophy, or linear intellectual tradition required to develop an ideology over time.⁵⁴ Ideology translates across geography and time to inspire movements. Without ideology—the intellectual superstructure of collective inquiry that

⁵⁰This debate over the issues surrounding a fascist minimum appeared as an *AHA Forum* in American Historical Review 84, no. 2 (April 1979): 367-398. The *Forum* begins with Gilbert Allardyce’s “What Fascism Is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept”(367-88), which is followed by comments from two leading proponents of a fascist minimum, Stanley Payne and Ernst Nolte (389-94). Allardyce then follows with a rebuttal of the criticisms levied by the aforementioned (398-406).

⁵¹ Allardyce, “What Fascism is Not,” 367.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 378.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 379-90.

provides a praxis for change—fascism cannot occur in disparate places like Guomindang China, Peron's Argentina, or Franco's Spain. Fascism, Allardyce asserts, was a particular, historical response of post-World War I Italy, and lacked the ideological superstructure to spread around Europe, much less the globe.⁵⁵

As a gauntlet thrown down in front of generalists everywhere, Allardyce's article evoked responses from two leading generalists, both proponents of a "fascist minimum," namely Ernst Nolte and Stanley Payne.⁵⁶ Nolte's response attacked Allardyce's implication that any historical interpretation is necessarily flawed and, thus, superfluous. Nolte's persuasive argument states:

...in attacking fascism as a generic concept, Allardyce either strikes merely at the slogan that once played such an important part in the political struggle and has recently reappeared, or he follows too closely the trail of the nominalists, for whom all concepts and, hence, every historical interpretation is a mere "construct" of the intellect.⁵⁷

Nolte's quarrel with "relativism run amok" and the tendency to deny difficult-to-ascertain concepts rings true nearly twenty years later. While Nolte agrees that fascism was not an ideology comparable to "the great doctrines of the nineteenth century," his great contribution to the subject, Three Faces of Fascism, reads like an intellectual genealogy. This controversy over whether or not fascism emanated from an intellectual tradition has divided historians for decades.

Stanley Payne's response is a bit more forgiving. Payne recognizes the "purely semantic debate about labels," particularly in German scholarship where Marxist analysis

⁵⁵ Ibid., 370. Allardyce writes, "...the word *fascismo* has no meaning beyond Italy."

⁵⁶ Ernst Nolte and Stanley Payne, "Comments on Allardyce," American Historical Review 84, no. 2 (April 1979): 389-94.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 393.

dominates the discussion.⁵⁸ As such, Payne admits that the concept of fascism begs deflation, but he, like Nolte, regards the idea of a comparative definition of fascism as valuable and necessary.⁵⁹ Allardyce's reply to Nolte and Payne's comments emphasizes the failure of terminology that is bogged down in semantic and, by implication, political squabbles. Allardyce writes in his reply:

When word battles continue too long, however, some earnest scholars—perhaps like those keen but uncomfortable students described by Professor Payne—are likely to try to preserve their own sanity by disowning the whole enterprise.⁶⁰

Fortunately, Allardyce's thin line between scholarship and sanity has not dissuaded all of fascism's scholars and students. Contentiously debated semantics failed to impede the search for a "fascist minimum," and the generalists still work diligently and, in recent years, prolifically.

The fundamental principle applied by generalists postulates that fascism was, and for some still is, a phenomenon extending beyond the historical confines of inter-war Italy. Of course, as with the rest of fascism's historiography, great variation occurs within the subset of generalists. The subset's unification into an ersatz school makes the categorization less cumbersome, and, hopefully, more comprehensible. Schisms occur over theories of modernization, importance of intellectual antecedents, political motivations, variance of definition, etc. However, generalists unite around the idea that the interpolation of a fascist minimum provides a basis for expounding a generic model.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 389.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Allardyce, "Reply," American Historical Review 84, no. 2 (April 1979): 398.

Despite variations on a theme, generalists unite around the presupposition that generic fascism, beyond historically strict Fascism, is identifiable. Once presupposed, the next task is to define a fascist minimum flexible enough to form into a generic model appropriate for comparative analysis. Among the vast array of typologies, some basic themes recur: Nolte's fascist negations; Payne's identification of imperialistic goals, secular mysticism, and aesthetic style of rule; Eatwell's implicit third way syncretism; and Gregor's identification of an underlying idealism. When taken with Mosse's thesis that fascism (Nazism) emerges out of a crisis of values, the fascist minimum comes into focus. Fascist ideology, at once syncretic and firmly rooted in the Western tradition, offered a mass participatory, symbolically vibrant rationale for mass mobilization to achieve collectively oriented goals. Among the most important aims of fascist ideology were the resolution of a "crisis of values," either real or perceived, an attack on ideas and institutions viewed as destructive to the collectivist spirit, and the promotion of extreme nationalism, in particular, the pursuit of imperialistic expansion.

Part II- Materialism, Models, and A. James Gregor's Third Way

Chapter 4: To the Victors Go the Spoils

There is little prospect that the near future will deliver a fully competent theory of fascism. We will have to be content with plausibilities and detailed historical accounts. The best efforts will be 'eclectic,' attempting to weave together the most defensible of plausibilities into a narrative in which we can invest confidence.¹

When A. James Gregor wrote the above in 1974, the historiography of fascism was a battleground. The battle over the efficacy of a fascist minimum continued throughout the decade and into the next, but Gregor significantly changed some of the terms and tactics of the war.² He re-focused the attention of scholars on key questions that had been essentially unchallenged by all sides since the end of World War II: "Does fascism constitute a coherent, progressive ideology and, if so, is that ideology in any way congruent with the Western intellectual tradition?" Moreover, Gregor placed fascism within the context of a revolution. He went even further by characterizing it as a modernizing revolution. Gregor went beyond the first attempts to shift the governing paradigm of the historiography of fascism; a paradigm, first and foremost, built on anti-fascism. Generally, the paradigm's foundation relied upon diagnosing the root cause of the historical scourge of fascism.

¹ Gregor, Interpretations of Fascism, 261.

² Of course, as previous chapters indicate, Gregor was not alone. Among others, Ernst Nolte, Renzo De Felice, Eugen Weber, and George Mosse contributed enormously to the critical consideration of fascism. However, in The Ideology of Fascism, published in 1969, Gregor was the first to fully re-evaluate fascism through the prisms of both modernization and revolution, finding an ideological core that did not require mass delusion, mass manipulation, or evil motives to explain the rise of fascism.

Although scholars regularly engaged the question of what caused fascism, their various answers usually produced a fundamentally negative interpretation of fascism. Some, like A.J.P. Taylor and Dennis Mack Smith, simply dismissed fascism as nothing more than a set of lies perpetrated by opportunists driven by a lust for power.³ Others, including George Mosse, Hans Kohn, and Hannah Arendt, emphasized the systemic cultural, moral, and political failures that led to fascism.⁴ Still, they contributed significantly by diagnosing what went wrong. Anti-fascism does not necessarily produce unfounded biases. The judgment of fascism as a “flaw” or an aberration in the history of a particular country, or the West as a whole, holds an obvious attraction. With the horrors of WWII ever present, viewing fascism as anything else seemed, at best, counter-intuitive and, at worst, apologetic. The attention they and others paid to the contributing factors and root causes of fascism recognized its historical importance.

³ An oft-cited quote comes from The Origins of the Second World War (London: Hamilton, 1961), in which A.J.P. Taylor wrote, “Everything about Fascism was a fraud. The social peril from which it saved Italy was a fraud; the revolution by which it seized power was a fraud; the ability and policy of Mussolini were fraudulent. Fascist rule was corrupt, incompetent, empty; Mussolini himself a vain, blundering boaster without either ideas or aims” (56). For a discussion of Taylor’s and Dennis Mack Smith’s interpretations see Stephen Corrado Azzi, “The Historiography of Fascist Foreign Policy,” in The Historical Journal 36, no. 1(1993): 187-203. Corrado Azzi is particularly critical of Dennis Mack Smith’s “one-dimensional” refutation of De Felice (194). Dennis Mack Smith published a widely read biography Mussolini: A Biography (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), perhaps in an attempt to counter “revisionist” interpretations of fascism. In his preface, he acknowledges De Felice’s “substantial” biography of Mussolini, but feels it is “...not critical enough” (xiv). “Revisionists” loosely refers to a group of scholars, including Renzo De Felice and A. James Gregor, who have produced scholarship not specifically concerned with identifying flaws and focused upon the consensus behind, ideological content of, and modernizing focus of fascism.

⁴ In particular, George Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology, Hans Kohn’s The Twentieth Century: The Challenge to the West and Its Response (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1957), and Hannah Arendt’s The Origins of Totalitarianism present three differing, but essentially congruent, explorations of various crises that led to the rise of fascism. Of course, there are many more works on the topic, but the underlying theme is one of a structural “flaw” in the culture and politics of a given nation (Germany being the most prominent in these three scholars’ studies) that allows fascism to take root.

The search for a crucial flaw or *the* contributing factor leading to the rise of fascism was not the sole property of historians. Perhaps no other topic has attracted the attention of social-psychologists and psychohistorians as has fascism. Ideas and interpretations have proliferated in the fertile field of fascist aesthetics, symbolism, and masculine emphasis. Wilhelm Reich's The Mass Psychology of Fascism⁵ and Erich Fromm's Escape from Freedom⁶ were the two most influential works in this arena. They focused upon using a Freudian interpretation of fascist society as a patient, or a "sick society."⁷ Other scholars have since expanded beyond explorations of the patriarchal character of particular societies and the psychological angst of the culture into more specific diagnoses. In the last decade, the popular psychological interpretation of fascism is as a mass sexual dysfunction.⁸

While these interpretations hold a certain attraction, they are woefully inadequate. If nothing else, fascism's geopolitical scale implies that more was at stake than simply overcoming sexual inadequacy. While simplistic psychological hypotheses add texture, they explain very little. Psychological theories do offer insights when used in conjunction with other cultural and social analyses. At the intersection of the cultural and psychological crisis theories is the idea that the crucible of fascism was the conceptual dislocation caused by Modernism.⁹ Weaving together disparate theories into a coherent

⁵ Wilhelm Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism (New York: Orgone, 1946).

⁶ Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom (New York: Avon Books, 1965).

⁷ Gregor, Interpretations of Fascism, 50.

⁸ See John Milfull, ed., The Attractions of Fascism: Social Psychology and the Aesthetics of the 'Triumph of the Right', (New York: Berg, 1990). The two articles that treat this subject directly are Silke Hesse's "Fascism and the Hypertrophy of Male Adolescence" and John Milfull's "My Sex the Revolver: Fascism as a Theater for the Compensation of Male Inadequacies".

⁹ Walter Adamson has written extensively on the crisis of Modernism. See "Modernism and Fascism: The Politics of Culture in Italy," in American Historical Review. Adamson equates Mussolini's

whole is the bailiwick of only the most accomplished scholars, and agreement on the root cause remains elusive.

One area where almost universal agreement prevails is in the Marxist camp. Marxists scholars agree that historical fascism originated out of a crisis of capitalism. Fascism, fashioned into counter-revolution by bourgeois capitalism, a reactionary petty bourgeoisie, or a configuration of capitalist interests, was designed to forestall the advent of socialism and/or communism. It is indisputable that fascism encapsulated a virulent form of anti-Bolshevism. However, the Marxist interpretation relies upon a class-oriented perspective of this anti-Bolshevism, focusing in on the struggle between elements within a society that eventually led to the victory of capital over the revolution. This interpretation relies upon strict Marxist methodology and finding causal links between fascist movements and the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, landed capital, and/or industrial capital. If nothing else, Marxist analyses have contributed their lexicon and wealth of conceptual tools found in nearly all of the scholarship. In particular, the role of the conflict between petty bourgeois and bourgeois values, ideas, and interests typifies many non-Marxist discussions of fascism.

The variations between Marxist scholars depend upon individual emphases. The amazing variety of explanations include: a petty bourgeois reaction, an alliance between

emphasis upon the rebirth of a "spiritual Italy" with the modernist search for secularized "new values" (359-60). See Gnter Berghaus, Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909-1944 (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1996) for a full discussion of the connection between art and politics in Italy. Also, George Mosse has explored the connection between Expressionism and Nazism in Germany. See "The Genesis of Fascism," Journal of Contemporary History 1, no. 1 (1966): 14-26. Mosse writes, "the idea of both fascism and expressionism share the urge to recapture the 'whole man' who seemed atomized and alienated by society, and both attempt to reassert individuality by looking inwards, towards instinct or the soul..."(15).

landed capital and industrial capital, the outgrowth of delayed industrialization, and a failure of socialists to politicize their constituents.¹⁰ However, the Marxists agree that, at its base, fascism was a brutal response to, or false resolution of, the class struggle. This conforms to basic Marxist suppositions about the role of economic determinism. Interestingly, fascist ideology also emphasized resolution of intra-societal class conflict, displayed a strong statism and collectivism, and focused on the important role of an elite-led party, thus indicating a shared ideological heritage which exposed Marxist interpretations to a great deal of criticism.¹¹ That Marxist critiques remained relatively consistent from the 1920's through the contemporary period highlights the dogmatic and deterministic tendencies inherent in much of Marxist analysis.¹²

The underlying issue for both sides of the materialist coin, liberal-capitalist and Marxist, rests specifically on one key question; was fascism a revolutionary movement?¹³ If so, historical fascism transcends the limitations placed upon it by post-war scholarship.

¹⁰ For example, Mihaly Vajda, Fascism as a Mass Movement, proposed the petty bourgeois reaction thesis, A.F.K. Organski, "Fascism and Modernization," in S.J. Woolf, ed., The Nature of Fascism (New York: Vintage, 1969) proposed the delayed industrialization thesis, and Gregory M. Luebbert, Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), blames socialist movements for not adequately engaging in "rural class conflicts."

¹¹ Griffin, ed., International Fascism. In the Introduction, Griffin writes, "It would have required a major overhaul of the Marxist scheme of history to admit that revolutionary socialism had a brand new arch-enemy to contend with other than capitalism, especially one which shared with it an essentially anti-bourgeois, revolutionary dynamic" (3).

¹² Henry A. Turner, ed., Reappraisals of Fascism (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975) wrote in his preface that Marxists were not included because they employed "scholastic reasoning" and "unsophisticated and unscrupulous use of factual data"(x-xi). While Turner displays a streak of anti-Marxism, he portended a significant decline in the amount and impact of Marxist analyses over the last twenty years.

¹³ Gregor, Ideology of Fascism, portrays fascism as a revolution. Gregor definition states that a revolution occurs "...when an entire prevailing ideological system is threatened, we speak of impending revolution"(7). For a full discussion of theories of revolutions see Jack A. Goldstone, ed., Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986). In his Introduction, Goldstone divides the various theories into three categories: natural histories, theories of political violence, and structural theories (2-7). Gregor's simple definition intersects all three on different levels.

One cannot simply view it as a cultural, political, or social disease or historical-mechanical flaw. The idea of a fascist revolution implies the possibility of a progressive, forward-thinking program for change.

The liberal-democratic, capitalist side proudly traces its heritage through revolutions: the Glorious Revolution, the American Revolution, and the French Revolution. Each one of these revolutions signifies high points in the march of human progress, the expansion of natural law, and the solidification of individual rights. Revolutions, despite the best efforts of Edmund Burke, endure as integral episodes in the liberal tradition. Indeed, the democratic-socialist tradition also claims these revolutions as incremental steps toward the advent of social democracy. For the liberal heritage, the great progressive moment that spawned these revolutions was the much-admired watershed in the Western tradition, the Enlightenment.¹⁴

On the other side, Marxist theorists either decry these false revolutions as further expansion of bourgeois capitalist interests, always at the cost of the masses of the working class, or regard Jacobinism as the forerunner of revolutionary socialism. Often, Marxists deem these as incremental steps along an historical path, particularly of industrialization and bourgeois ascendancy. Thus, revolutions were preparatory phases

¹⁴ Eugen Weber writes in Varieties of Fascism (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1964) that fascism's "collectivistic nationalism" can be traced back to the French Revolution, particularly to Robespierre and Saint-Just (19-23). Later, he states, "Fascism looks much like the Jacobinism of our time" (139). Weber's analysis was one of only a few during the 60s to make such a connection. The evolution of George Mosse's thought on the subject of fascist revolution provides a clue as to the general evolution of scholarship. In The Crisis of German Ideology, published in 1964, one of his central theses was that, in no small part, Nazism represented an anti-Jewish cultural revolution. As such, the revolution seems more reactionary than revolutionary. However, by 1979, Mosse wrote more expansively about the revolutionary praxis of fascism, terming it a "politico-cultural revolution" searching for a "third way" between liberalism and socialism.

before the true, or final, revolution of the proletariat. Marxism's historical determinism, dogmatic and monocular, inherently places economic class struggle as the central reality in human experience. Class struggle will resolve itself through a mechanical process of revolution. The word "revolution," pregnant with social consequences, promises progress just over the historical horizon.

Ironically, but not coincidentally, both liberalism and Marxism's conceptualization of "revolution" share a fundamental binding postulate. The emphasis of both has been upon the material, rather than the spiritual. Marx and Engels' economic determinism, David Hume's empiricism, Adam Smith's Invisible Hand, John Locke's idea that private property is sacrosanct, and Lenin's theory of imperialism all share a basic belief that the material concerns supercede spiritual concerns. Both, too, rely upon rationalism to explain the logical, mechanical processes of the universe that are manifested in human history.

By the end of the nineteenth century, rationalism had merged with the scientific method to create positivism, the philosophical archenemy of fascism. At the turn of the twentieth century, Hegelian Idealism, although not necessarily incongruent with rationalism, was either rejected, as in the empiricist-capitalist tradition, or it had been revised, as with Marx's reversal of Hegel's "philosophical headstand." Idealists, called neo-Hegelians by the end of the nineteenth century, worked on the philosophical margins in much of the West, but in Italy and Germany, neo-Idealism remained strong throughout the nineteenth century. In fact, the early German Idealists, Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling,

laid the philosophical groundwork for the Italian neo-Hegelians who emerged later that century, Bertrando Spaventa, Benedetto Croce, and Giovanni Gentile.

Fascism, the twentieth century stepchild of Hegelian Idealism, emphasized spirit as the active force in history. Neo-Hegelians like Giovanni Gentile, who eventually became the official philosopher of Fascism, saw in fascist ideology the first significant challenge to the hegemony of positivism and materialism in the West.¹⁵ Fascists appealed to collective spiritual vitalism as a means to overcome trivial materialism and the class conflict and social disruption it caused. The concept of fascism as a “Third Way” between the two great, nineteenth century materialist ideologies captivated those who were disillusioned with the state of the West.¹⁶

At the beginning of the twentieth century, and particularly after World War I, the materialist paradigm seemed bleak, desperate, and bankrupt. The chaotic, morally ambiguous state of the West after the war was cause for great concern. In Russia, Lenin’s Bolshevik revolution portended a great crisis of capitalism. Post-war Germany struggled through its own, although ultimately failed, socialist revolution, typified by street violence and assassination. In Italy, liberalism and socialism were blamed for the military failures of the war (despite Italy’s association with the victors), the breakdown of social order, widespread labor unrest, and strikes. Labor uprisings in the United States were

¹⁵ See Zeev Sternhell, The Birth of Fascist Ideology, trans. by David Maisel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) for a full discussion of the anti-materialist focus of fascist ideology. Sternhell explores the extent to which Italian intellectuals viewed Fascism as the initiation of an “anti-materialist revolution” that grew out of the nineteenth century anti-materialist and anti-rationalist revision of Marxism (229).

¹⁶ See Ruth Ben-Ghiat, “Fascism, Writing, and Memory: The Realist Aesthetic in Italy, 1930-1950,” in The Journal of Modern History 67, no. 3 (September 1995): 627-665. Ben-Ghiat explores the attraction of the “Third Way” idea among Italian intellectuals, the extent to which Mussolini and others promoted fascism as a Third Way ideology, and the affect of both on the intellectual enterprise.

often put down violently. Ernest Hemingway coined the now famous phrase “Lost Generation” to describe the general deflation of hope and cultural vitality in the West. Economic collapse in Weimar Germany and the eventual collapse of the late 1920s only served to heighten those feelings.

These conditions, coupled with a disillusionment with materialism and liberalism, opened the door to perhaps the most vital element of generic fascism: a strong belief in the power of collective spiritual identity to overcome great odds. An idea of such a collective spirit permeates Mussolini’s call for a society of New Men and Hitler’s Thousand-Year Reich. Meiji Japan’s emphasis on the *kokutai* ideal, a catch-all term for collective Japanese identity, was even more emphatically collectivist and spiritual than those of Japan’s eventual Axis Allies.¹⁷ During the 1920s and 1930s, *kokutai* was an oft-used nationalistic slogan and provocative symbol of a mystical collective unity and destiny binding all Japanese.¹⁸ During World War II a collective spirit ideal was expressed in Hitler’s unending belief in the German Will even in the face of pending

¹⁷ See Germaine A. Hoston, “Tenko: Marxism and the National Question in Prewar Japan,” in *Polity* 16, no. 1 (Fall 1983): 96-118, for a full discussion of the growth of non-Marxist and anti-Marxist collectivist thinking in Japan during the period.

¹⁸ Janet E. Hunter, ed., *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984): 98-9. For a more thoroughgoing explanation of *kokutai* see Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). Many nationalist agitators in the 1920s and 1930s, i.e. Kita Ikki, Nakano Seigo, and Ishiwara Kanji, would use *kokutai* liberally when speaking or writing about the collective national destiny of Japan. For specific examples of each see George M. Wilson, *Radical Nationalist in Japan: Kita Ikki, 1883-1937* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), Leslie Russell Oates, *Populist Nationalist in Prewar Japan: A biography of Nakano Seigo* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), and Mark R. Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan’s Confrontation with the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). For a more general discussion of *kokutai* and ideology see Gordon Mark Berger, *Parties Out of Power in Japan, 1931-1941* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

defeat, as well as by Japanese *kamikaze* and *kaiten* soldiers or the resistance to surrender on Saipan and Okinawa.

Certainly, one can find peculiar cultural contexts to explain these phenomena, in particular the homogeneity of the population, the history of militarism, or the amount of indoctrination by various social institutions--but simply looking at isolated cultural factors ignores the broader international context within which these examples emerged. The failure of liberal democracy and capitalism and the pressure of internationalist communism/socialism are factors all three nations experienced to varying degrees. Their responses, which included emphasizing nativist traditions for collective solidarity, stressing the spiritual nature of being, and rejecting internationalism in favor of jingoistic imperialism, reflected the geopolitical landscape of the time. In many places around the world materialism was associated with degeneration, military failure, and social upheaval. For a number of newly emerging nations seeking Great Power status, particularly in the aftermath of World War I and Versailles, a potential third way presented a desirable response.

This “third way” was indeed revolutionary. It was a revolt against the social, political, and economic chaos caused by the failure of liberal democratic and capitalist institutions. It was a revolt against the internal chaos, real or perceived, caused by Marxist and Bolshevik internationalism and economic determinism. Fascism’s revolutionary appeal was aesthetic, yet pragmatic.¹⁹ It offered a break with tradition while

¹⁹ H. Stuart Hughes, “Action as Philosophy: The Void in Italian Fascism,” The Journal of Value Inquiry 29 (1995): 367-77, asserts that Fascism was built upon a “slender and derivative tradition” that led to the elevation of “action” or violence in lieu of a substantive ideology (368).

emulating ideals of the past. It evoked Darwinian disquiet about the survival of the fittest, coupled with a sense that the international system resembled a competition between peoples and their nations.

Above all, fascist ideology rejected internationalism. This usually befuddles Marxist interpreters who fail to see that the anti-Bolshevism of fascist regimes is a rejection of an internationalism, particularly based on class, that divides the loyalty of a population. Fascism also rejects liberalism's economic internationalism, the Great Powers system, and the loyalty of capitalists to their interests at home and abroad, rather than to the nation. Both class and capital must be harnessed for the betterment of the nation.

All recently formed nation-states, Italy, Germany, and Japan, each particularistic in its own way, needed to develop cohesive national identities. Their tenuous hold on a national identity, with Italy the least unified and Japan the most, risked revolt inspired by international socialism or the disunity of atomistic liberal parliamentarianism. The post-Versailles world, competitive and uncertain, made the materialism and internationalism of both liberalism and communism/socialism extremely undesirable and even dangerous. Between the wars, the invigoration of national consciousness, the rejection of the international system, and the assertion of national power provided a path to national cohesion and Great Power status. It also overthrew the governing paradigms of materialism. The three nations of greatest interest here, Italy, Germany, and Japan revolted against the predominant materialist ideas of their day and the system that those ideas engendered and were used as its best justification. Accordingly, it is not surprising

that these three states came together in an alliance. Indeed, it was more than mere convenience that brought them together as the Axis Powers.

Once the forces representing the two sides of the materialist coin dispatched their idealist adversaries in 1945, an unprecedented period of internationalism and materialism emerged. The “third way” of fascism had failed utterly to defeat communism and capitalism, and the problem of explaining fascism fell upon a generation of survivors, former enemies, and combatants. To make the situation yet more difficult, the post-war landscape was a tense Cold War battlefield between the former materialist allies. The recriminations extended to the debate over fascism, with Marxists taking the lead in blaming capitalism for fascism. Again, they focused in the argument that fascism was an historical aberration, forestalling the inevitable socialist revolution through the vulgar thuggery of a desperate system. The response of the liberal democratic side either looked for a flaw that left democratic institutions stillborn, or lumped all brutal dictatorships together under the term totalitarianism.²⁰ Each side worked at associating fascism with their adversary by placing it on the left-right political spectrum. Ironically, the strict left-right paradigm of the Cold War was the same materialist duality that inspired fascist ideology in the first place.

Only when Ernst Nolte’s Three Faces of Fascism burst onto the scene in 1963, was an intellectual pedigree for fascism finally established. Nolte, and those who followed, including George Mosse, Zeev Sternhill, Gregor, and De Felice, began to trace

²⁰ The seminal, Cold War work on totalitarianism was Carl Friedrich’s and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski’s Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy (1956).

the roots of fascism into the nineteenth century and even further back to the Enlightenment. From Rousseau's *General Will*, through a panoply of Idealist philosophers such as Fichte, Hegel, Vico, Sorel, and Bergson, a more textured picture of fascism came into focus. The latent spiritual, anti-rationalist tradition, always present in the West, had asserted itself. In fact, it seemed that the beginning of the twentieth century, with its host of institutional crises and modernist conundrums, was the fertile field for a burgeoning revolt against positivism, materialism, and the rationalism of both liberalism and Marxism.

While Nolte's book began a reevaluation of fascism outside of the liberal-Marxist, Cold War battle over the historical spoils of war, it wasn't until the beginning of the 1970's that the door swung wide open to radically new ways of understanding fascism's historical role. A. James Gregor, working in synergy, but not in coordination, with Renzo De Felice, finally broke the Marxist hold on fascist interpretation by turning an historical mirror on twentieth century Marxist regimes. Also, Gregor and De Felice both challenged the overt anti-fascism of both sides of the political spectrum. In the process, Gregor also addressed the troubling issues of progress and revolution, issues that confounded non-Marxists. Gregor broke free of the Cold War paradigm and the left-right political spectrum, and he established fascism as a revolutionary ideology. In so doing, Gregor brought fascist studies out of period of recriminations framed by anti-fascist and Cold War paradigms.

Chapter 5: A. James Gregor, Developmental Dictatorship, and Third Way

Scholarship

Since the end of World War II, scholarly interpretations of fascism have remained firmly in the hands of philosophical materialists, both communist and liberal-capitalist. As we have seen, the materialist tendency during the Cold War was to view fascism as either a counter-revolutionary deviation or an historical aberration; both sides agreed that fascism was wholly contrary to progress. Each side's critique expanded the complexities of understanding, but also fulfilled political purposes. The Marxist interpretation blamed bourgeois liberalism and capitalism, believing fascists to be counter-revolutionary adjuncts of a retreating, desperate economic system. Marxists tended to agree upon the basic analysis, while the liberal-capitalist interpretation offered much more variation on the theme of historical aberration.

Generally, interpretations from the "right" tended to view fascism as a failure of democratic institutions to mature, an outgrowth of cultural psychosis, or the evil influence of a powerful few (or one). The fact that the Western Allies had so quickly absorbed Italy, West Germany and Japan into their geopolitical bloc complicated further the problems of war guilt, blame and, indeed, scholarly interpretation. Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski expanded the concept of totalitarianism, however, into a rebuttal of

the Marxist analyses that had aligned Fascism with the right.¹ They formulated a generic model of fascism that matched Marxist methodology's widespread applicability, comparative historical perspective, and anti-fascist focus.

However, the battle over generic fascism encompassed much more than the viability of the totalitarian thesis. This was part of a larger debate among scholars concerned with explaining the fascist phenomena. Often the debates focused on political or semantic issues as scholars haggled over concepts and models of generic fascism. The persistence of scholars searching for a generic model is, of course, admirable. The attraction of a generic model is that it allows one to place a conceptual template over any situation and test the paradigm and the case in point simultaneously. More practically, it normalizes debate around certain terms and concepts, thus allowing more particular and technical analyses of history and politics.

Further, the overarching left-right analysis constituted the basis of a Cold War paradigm that, in conjunction with anti-fascism, framed the majority of the historiography of fascism. Viewing liberal-capitalist and Marxist philosophies of history as two sides of the same coin affords the opportunity to examine a tectonic shift in the interpretation of fascism away from contemporary political concerns toward a more nuanced, historically-based perspective. The context within which fascist ideology developed emerged as a few scholars, in particular A. James Gregor, eschewed the

¹ The first complete exegesis of the totalitarianism concept came from Hannah Arendt's The Origins of Totalitarianism, first published in 1951.

dominant paradigms and forged new definitions of fascism and new models of generic fascism.

Despite the best efforts of postmodernism, labels and definitions are here to stay. Generally, the liberal-capitalists used terms like “totalitarianism” and “authoritarianism” to explain fascism as an aberration in the Western, liberal tradition, while Marxists used the terms “counter-revolution” and “anti-Bolshevism” to explain it as a capitalistic, bourgeois (or petty bourgeois, or both) reaction against the pending revolution. Ultimately, each side refused to see a philosophical continuity, recognize revolutionary credentials, or admit a modernizing scope in any variation of fascism.

The first critical deviation from the orthodoxy occurred in 1963 when Ernst Nolte offered an extensive examination of fascism’s philosophical and ideological genealogy.² This was an opening volley across the bow of dogmatic anti-fascism in scholarship. Nolte’s careful consideration of the fascist intellectual genealogy was striking in comparison to what had been a traditionally contemptuous presentation of fascist thought. The accepted view of fascism as an anti-rationalist, anti-modernist movement lead by opportunist thugs, was severely undermined by Nolte’s examination of the intellectual contributions of Georges Sorel, G.W.F. Hegel, Charles Maurras, Jean-Jacques Rousseau,

²Nolte, Three Faces. Nolte aptly explained the complexities of fascist ideology. He refuses to settle for the accepted assumption that Mussolini was not a thinker or ideologue in any sense, but merely “led by arbitrary contingencies” (151). Nolte also asserts that Mussolini was essentially a Marxist before World War I and was “...dedicated entirely to the Socialist party” (152). Thus, Nolte builds a compelling case for viewing fascism as an ideology. While he does view anti-bolshevism as a key component to generic fascism, he qualifies it by identifying a metapolitical element in fascism. Generic fascism, states Nolte, “...is at the same time resistance to practical transcendence and struggle against theoretical transcendence”(453). Fascism revolts against the practical, individual, and liberal materialism of the right and the theoretical, class-based, socialist materialism of the left. Anti-Bolshevism is not a “sum total” of generic fascism, but part of a greater anti-materialism or anti-transcendence.

Friedrich Nietzsche, and many others. Still, many of the ideas were termed “irrationalisms” and their originators remained obscure “irrationalists.” With very little exposition of the coherent ideology that bound such thinkers together, fascism paled next to the two great nineteenth century ideologies: liberalism and socialism. In the two decades after Nolte’s book was first published, however, that perception would be challenged. Perhaps no other English language author has done more to challenge traditional interpretations of fascism than A. James Gregor.

Over the course of fifteen years, Gregor articulated an interpretation of fascism that explored its ideological and philosophical pedigree, countered the traditional Marxist “counter-revolution” thesis, and eschewed simplistic anti-fascist appeals and recriminations. Gregor developed a theory of fascism that angered some, intrigued most, and enlightened all. Essentially, Gregor proposed that both Italian Fascism and generic fascism were, and are, revolutionary movements born of a Marxist heresy, that fascism was a “developmental dictatorship”³ with modernizing goals, and that Mussolini developed a “paradigmatic fascism” out of an ideological and philosophical tradition. The ideas were proposed and developed over the span of five books, including: Contemporary Radical Ideologies (1968), The Ideology of Fascism (1969), The Fascist Persuasion in Radical Politics (1974), Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship and Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism (1979).⁴ Two other books from this

³ Gregor’s use of *developmental dictatorship* comes from Franz Borkenau’s 1933 essay “*Zur Soziologie des Faschismus* (The Sociology of Fascism)” which he cites in Interpretations of Fascism, 160.

⁴ Gregor, Contemporary Radical Ideologies, (New York: Random House, 1968), The Ideology of Fascism, (New York: The Free Press, 1969), The Fascist Persuasion in Radical Politics, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship, (Princeton: Princeton

period deserve a mention including, A Survey of Marxism and Interpretations of Fascism.⁵ The former establishes some of Gregor's fundamental analyses of Marxism that contribute heavily to his theory of fascism, while the latter offers a concise overview of the various theories of fascism.⁶

Over the years, Gregor's body of work has garnered a great deal of attention and inspired both admiration and a chorus of sour notes from his peers. Caught inexorably in political and semantic debates, he was often attacked—as we shall see, quite unfairly—as an “apologist” for fascism or for being “sympathetic” to fascism, particularly Italian Fascism.⁷ In 1970, Dante Germino, a well-published author on the subject, attacked Gregor's Ideology of Fascism, referring to it as a “bad book” that unfortunately takes “...self-serving fascist propaganda...” literally while refusing to acknowledge “deep scars” left behind by the Fascist regime.⁸ A 1976 review of The Fascist Persuasion called the book “non-sense,” finding Gregor's claims that fascism was a revolutionary

University Press, 1979), Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

⁵ Gregor, A Survey of Marxism, (New York: Random House, 1965), and Interpretations.

⁶ Mentioned in earlier chapters, Interpretations is an excellent handbook for wading through much of the basic assumptions underlying most theories and models of fascism. A Survey of Marxism provides a first glimpse into Gregor's thinking on revolutionary movements and the evolutionary course of Marxist thought through Lenin and on to Soviet Russia. The evolution of Marxism would go on to be a major factor in his model of fascism as a Marxist heresy.

⁷ George Feaver, review of Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism, by Gregor, in The Canadian Journal of Political Science 14, no. 1 (March 1981): 187-9, and Paolo Farneti, review of Italian Fascism and Young Mussolini, by Gregor, in The Journal of Modern History 53, no. 3 (September 1981): 565-8, both refer to Gregor as “apologetic” and as “an apologist” respectively. William Ebenstein, review of The Ideology of Fascism, by Gregor, in The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 389 (May 1970): 152-4, accuses Gregor of harboring a “sympathetic attitude toward Fascist ideas” (153).

⁸ Dante Germino, review of, Ideology, by Gregor, in The American Political Science Review 64, no. 2 (June 1970): 614-616.

movement particularly objectionable.⁹ Carl Marzani's Marxist approach would insist that "Hitler and Mussolini were *counter*-revolutionaries, serving class interests which sought to maintain as much as possible the economic and social predominance of the former owning class."¹⁰ As we shall see, Gregor makes a compelling case to the contrary. Finally in 1981, Roland Sarti, long an opponent of Gregor's analysis of fascism, wrote a less than enthusiastic review of Gregor's final two works on fascism.¹¹ Sarti faulted Gregor's "idiosyncratic interpretation of Mussolini as a systematic and profound thinker," claimed that Gregor is "carried away by his revisionist enthusiasm...." and that Gregor had opened the door to ridiculous revisions of Mussolini as a "feminist", a "consumer advocate", and an "animal lover."¹² Obviously, Sarti is wholly opposed to any evaluation of Mussolini as a revolutionary, a thinker, or any characterization beyond "Mussolini, the opportunist thug."

The publication of each of Gregor's books presented another opportunity to view fully the knee-jerk scholarly response to any sort of "legitimizing" interpretation of fascist ideology. Gregor did not prove his anti-fascist credentials, nor did he toe the dogmatic Marxist line. Exploring the revolutionary, modernizing, and popular appeals of fascism was an intrepid enterprise during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. In his 1981 review of Gregor's final two books on fascism, James C. Hunt wrote:

The continuing debate over fascism has produced a fund of literature, but no consensus. The striking absence of consensus may indicate that we have not left the fascist era,

⁹ Carl Marzani, review of Fascist Persuasion, by Gregor, in Science and Society 40, no. 1 (Spring 1976): 100-2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹¹ Roland Sarti, review of Italian Fascism and Young Mussolini, by Gregor, in The American Historical Review 86, no. 1 (February 1981): 169-70.

¹² *Ibid.*, 170.

which many scholars in the debate fear either the recrudescence of fascism, or the sully of their respective political traditions by past alliances or present affinities with fascism.¹³

Thus, as the Eighties began, scholars still demonstrated an aversion to fascism that stood in the way of evaluations of its importance as an ideology. In recognizing this aversion, Hunt directly addresses failures on both sides of twentieth century materialist historiography. Evidently, the real or perceived fear of ideological, geopolitical, and philosophical “affinities” and “alliances” with fascism typifies the pure anti-fascism that usually pervades traditionalist critiques. Perhaps fear and dogmatism are the primary culprits—a fear of losing anti-fascist credentials and being labeled an apologist along with a theoretical dogmatism that forces phenomena into ill-fitting paradigms to validate long lost models. Gregor’s contributions to the breaking down of the barriers of fear and dogmatism are indisputable.

However, Gregor’s work is not without flaws or limitations. His broad model fails to account fully for the historical context of generic fascism. Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan are at least *intuitively* recognizable as historically fascist regimes, but they do not fit into his developmental dictatorship model.¹⁴ However, the Black Panthers, Stalinist Russia, Maoist China, Castro’s Cuba, Ho’s Vietnam, Nasser’s Egypt, and Sukarno’s

¹³ James C. Hunt, review of Italian Fascism and Young Mussolini, by Gregor, in Review of Politics 43, no. 3 (July 1981): 466-9.

¹⁴ In Gregor, Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship, the question of whether or not inter-war Japan fits into the developmental dictatorship model is never explored. Germany is placed into the totalitarian model because it had “...post-industrial problems only indirectly related to late industrialization” (326). Germany’s totalitarianism falls short of the paradigmatic fascism Gregor terms developmental dictatorship because it happens in a post-industrial state growing out of “...unusual circumstances” (Ibid.). In Fascist Persuasion, Gregor argues that Nazi Germany as “...one special historic instance of a mass-mobilizing radical movement that shared many affinities with Fascism...” (14). Again, the case of Japan is not even considered in this book.

Indonesia, among others, are all included in his broad model of generic fascism.¹⁵ He refers to these leaders and their movements, including Mussolini's Fascist Italy, as "revolutionary modernizers."¹⁶

While Gregor's model broke through the anti-fascist and Marxist barriers, his reliance on a strictly constructed model fails to deliver a historically acceptable generic fascism. Therefore, developmental dictatorship provides an opportunity to explore some of the limitations of strict models in historical analysis. Gregor, while working diligently to break free fascist ideology and, thus, the study of fascism, from the moorings of post-war anti-fascism and Marxist theoretical dogmatism, also illuminated, perhaps unintentionally, the role of models in the writing of history.

Gregor's first major book on the subject of fascism was Contemporary Radical Ideologies (1968). In this work he begins to build the foundation for his argument that fascism was, and is, a Marxist heresy. Gregor connects fascism and Marxism to a broader Hegelian tradition, simultaneously bringing the two ideologies together and rescuing fascism's philosophical pedigree. Gregor writes:

Fascism as an ideological system rests upon a normic model of man that construes the individual as a by-product of a social process, a complex of relations established in a rule-governed community. While such a model has a long philosophical heritage, its immediate progenitor was Hegel.¹⁷

His main evidence for this Hegelian connection comes from the work of Giovanni Gentile, a neo-Hegelian philosopher who would become the official philosopher of

¹⁵ Gregor, Italian Fascism, 317.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Gregor, Contemporary, 163.

fascism and the first Minister of Education in the Fascist regime. Gregor turns specifically to a critique of Marx published by Gentile in 1899. Gregor points out that Gentile agreed with Marx's dialectical system, but rejected his pure economic determinism and materialism.¹⁸ Gregor's emphasis upon Gentile's neo-Hegelianism dominates his next book, The Ideology of Fascism, published in 1969.

However, Gregor concentrated upon the basic similarities between Mussolini, Gentile and V. I. Lenin in Contemporary Radical Ideologies. Gregor refers to Mussolini, Gentile, and Lenin as essentially "Marxist revisionists" intent upon restoring important elements of Hegelianism.¹⁹ Gregor views Leninism's focus upon achieving a "classless state" through the intervention of an elite as strikingly similar to fascism's drive to fold the individual's identity into the collective identity of the nation. Gregor writes:

The functional role of elites, the development of a national socialism, the collaboration of express will of a people rather than a class, the ethical and pedagogical responsibility of the state, are all doctrinal features common to both mature Leninism and fascism. Both are anti-liberal and expressly opposed to the atomic conception of individuality. Both conceive an ultimate identity of interests to obtain between the individual and the state.²⁰

Gregor uses the connection between these two radical ideologies to explain the appearance of what he terms "paradigmatic fascism" in various other radical ideologies, including South African Apartheid and African Socialism.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid. Michael G. Smith, "Gramsci on the Mirror of Italian Fascism: Mussolini, Gentile, Spirito," Italian Quarterly Vol. 31 No. 119/120 (Winter 1999): 59-79, also provides an excellent discussion of Gentile's critique of Marx and establishes a direct link between Gentile and Antonio Gramsci. Gregor's analysis of fascism's and Marxism's deeply shared philosophical roots are echoed by Smith's assertion that "...both early Mussolinian fascism and Gramscian communism developed on the same ideological and political ground..." and that neo-Hegelianism, through the work of Gentile, constituted the basis of both revolutionary ideologies (58).

¹⁹ Gregor, Contemporary, 164.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 312.

Paradigmatic fascism differs from Leninism and socialism in its organic theory of state, the elevation of nationality and/or race, and the change in collective scope from class to nation.²² Contemporary Radical Ideologies began the process of establishing fascism's Hegelian heritage, particularly through a Marxist revision, and identifying Mussolini's paradigmatic fascism as a vital, twentieth century revolutionary ideology. It strikes directly at the Marxist view of fascism as a bourgeois counter-revolution by effectively placing Mussolini and Lenin under the same theory of totalitarianism.

Just one year later, in 1969, Gregor issued the next installment of his challenge to orthodox interpretations of fascism with the publication of The Ideology of Fascism. In this book, Giovanni Gentile takes center stage as the immediate philosophical progenitor of fascist ideology. Gentile, the academically trained neo-Hegelian, offers Gregor the opportunity to fully establish fascism's philosophical pedigree, Marxist affinities, and revolutionary credentials. Mussolini joins Gentile on center stage, but his role is as practical revolutionary, taking Marx and Gentile and formulating paradigmatic fascism into a revolutionary movement. In this way, Mussolini is fascism's corollary to communism's Lenin. Both men rely upon Marx as a fundamental building block for their revolutionary schema, while Mussolini alone also utilizes Gentile's neo-Hegelianism.²³

Additionally, Gregor retains totalitarianism as an overarching political model, but continues to expand his idea of developmental dictatorship through an emphasis on Mussolini's "paradigmatic fascism." While totalitarianism remains the "political genus,"

²² Ibid., 327.

²³ Gregor, Ideology, 351

socialism, fascism, and communism are “phenotypes” of the totalitarian genus.²⁴ Of those phenotypes, he unequivocally states that Italian fascism “...was the first, and remains perhaps the only, fully matured rationale for totalitarian systems of the twentieth century.”²⁵ Lenin, according to Gregor, constitutes a failure of Marxist theory in practice, offering “...at best, a confused and confusing rationale for the totalitarianism of Soviet and Chinese communist society.”²⁶ He points out the inconsistency of Lenin’s democratic centralism, which elevates a “minoritarian hierarchy” to power, when compared to classical Marxism’s radical anti-statism.²⁷ Only paradigmatic fascism, developed by Mussolini’s post-World War I revision of socialism into a nationalistic, collectivist, syndicalist, revolutionary mass movement, offers a coherent elitist totalitarianism.

The claim that paradigmatic fascism’s ideological power coherence is superior to that of Marxist-Leninist ideology challenges fully the traditional post-war interpretations of both right and left materialism. By establishing a viable philosophical pedigree through Giovanni Gentile, fascist ideology gains a measure of intellectual substance it is often denied. Mussolini’s role as revolutionary advocate and ideological formulator solidifies the viability of an expansive interpretation of fascism as a developmental dictatorship.

A key to this reassessment comes from another Marxist idea, the “proletarian nation.” Mussolini’s incipient socialism found nationalistic solace in the proletarian nation idea, commonly associated with the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. It seemed to

²⁴ Ibid., ix.

²⁵ Ibid., 7.

²⁶ Ibid., 8.

rescue the Marxist revolutionary tradition from individualism and materialism by expanding group consciousness from class to nation, and it offered a rationale for allegiance to the state rather than a justification for jettisoning it. Still, it had a revolutionary appeal by including the masses as *the* organic reality of the state. The ideology of fascism used Marxist ideas to conquer the alienation of liberalism while eschewing internationalism. Further, the proletarian nation idea adequately described the international situation after Versailles and thereby appealed to dissatisfied irredentists, ambitious colonialists, and the disillusioned veterans of the trenches.

Mussolini's use of "proletarian nation" also addressed other domestic issues pressing upon the young nation. Fascist ideology, while appealing to idealism and spirit, had to account for the material difficulties present in inter-war Italy. Nowhere does fascism's "third way" allure ring clearer. Gregor writes:

Mussolini had...abandoned classical Marxism and committed himself to a form of national socialism. He recognized that his revolution would inherit a backward economy. His political program was therefore predicated on this recognition. The imperative governing the tactical and strategic program of the first Fascist organization was increased national production. Italy was a "proletarian nation." Its critical problem was not overproduction and maldistribution, the central concepts of classical Marxism, but underproduction and a lack of political and economic discipline. Mussolini contended that increased national production was a function of national discipline and charged Fascist cohorts with the responsibility of infusing that sense of national purpose in the restive majority and imposing upon them the tutelary control that their conditions required.²⁸

Gregor thus makes a case for considering fascist ideology as a revolutionary Marxist heresy promoting modernization through development of a national consciousness.

²⁷ Ibid.

Fascism refocuses socialist revolutionary zeal by transposing nation with class through the concept of the proletarian nation. It also appeals to the right's nationalism and liberalism's focus upon development. It strikes a course between nineteenth century ideologies, utilizing "national purpose" rather than individual rights or class consciousness as its organizing principle.

Not surprisingly, Gregor's interpretation disturbed more than a few of his colleagues. For example, Dante Germino chided him for utilizing a "hopelessly amorphous concept of fascism" in a futile "attempt to be relevant."²⁹ Germino refused to accept that fascism, or more precisely developmental dictatorship, may be "appropriate" to partially developed or underdeveloped "national communities in a period of intense international competition for place and status."³⁰ William Ebenstein found Gregor's characterization of fascism as a modernizing force unacceptable.³¹ A few, however, regarded The Ideology of Fascism as an important departure from scholarly trends. In particular, Alfonso J. Damico recognized the importance of putting Mussolini's thought and fascist ideology into historical context, and the implication that the choice between totalitarianism and democracy is not just one of "personal taste," but rather a "public one that must be justified by reasoned arguments."³² Damico's keen observation underscores one of the historiographical issues central to the debate over fascism. If, indeed, fascism stands as a mature ideology with a revolutionary appeal, the masses cannot be mere victims of an evil cabal or counter-revolutionary plot. In fact, the masses are complicit.

²⁸ Gregor, Ideology, 354.

²⁹ Germino, review of Ideology, 615.

³⁰ Ibid, citing Gregor, Ideology, xiii.

³¹ Ebenstein, review of Ideology, 153.

participating in and consenting to the advent of fascism. This is a conceptual problem that both liberalism and Marxism have, for obvious reasons, tried to discount.

Despite the reactions of colleagues, Gregor persistently produced scholarship that expanded upon his work of the late 1960s. In 1974, he published The Fascist Persuasion in Radical Politics, essentially an updated and expanded version of Contemporary Radical Ideologies (1968). Gregor focused intently upon the direct link between Marxism and fascism, working diligently to diminish Lenin's historical role as *the* paradigmatic twentieth century radical. Rather, Gregor believes twentieth century radicalism to be the political outgrowth of fascism. Fascism, in turn, arose out of a post-World War I crisis in classical Marxism. This crisis is key to understanding the development of fascism and twentieth century radicalism. The primary problem hobbling Marxism after the war rested on Marx's—and, subsequently, Lenin's—belief that proletarian class-consciousness would develop organically and, by a seemingly natural, historical process, lead to socialist revolution. Gregor cites numerous occasions on which both Marx and Engels referred to the “inevitability” of a revolutionary proletarian consciousness, revolution as a “natural phenomenon” obeying “physical laws”, and the structural flaws of capitalism that would propel the consciousness of the proletariat obediently towards revolution.³³ Gregor writes that, “Since, as Engels insisted, politics could be ‘completely absorbed’ by economics, the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat could be conceived as an inevitable result of a natural and lawlike process.”³⁴

³² Alfonso J. Damico, review of Ideology, in The Journal of Politics 32, no. 2 (May 1970): 464-5.

³³ Gregor, Fascist Persuasion, 87-90.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 90-1

Furthermore, Marx and Engels failed to adequately address the significant role nationalism played in mobilizing masses.³⁵ Gregor states: “In effect, classical Marxism as it was received by the followers of Marx and Engels at the end of the nineteenth century was not a body of thought capable of providing clear and unequivocal guides to political action.”³⁶ By the beginning of the World War I it was apparent that a revolutionary consciousness was not organically going to overcome capitalism through a natural revolution, and that the war was an object lesson on the power of nationalism to mobilize the masses. This was the inheritance of two committed revolutionaries; Mussolini and Lenin. Gregor’s comparison of Mussolini and Lenin’s movements (a response to their Marx-inspired revolutionary radicalism) illustrates the inadequacy of the paradigm of the left-right political spectrum:

Both movements were irrepressibly elitist; both led minoritarian revolutions, and both consequently conceived violence essential to the acquisition of political power; both retained that power, once seized, by monopolizing all the effective control devices afforded by contemporary technology: arms, the educational and propaganda media, and mass organizations. The one-party state became the institutional manifestation of their revolutionary success, the exceptional leader, the *Voshd* or the *Duce*, gave expression to special relationships, understood to obtain between leaders and followers.³⁷

Indeed, with this comparison at hand, one can easily place Mussolini, Mao, Stalin, Castro, Lenin and Ho Chi Minh in the same broad category. Although all but Mussolini were declared Marxists, the truth is that all of these leaders, once solidly in power, created a “reasonable analogue of the Fascist state.”³⁸ The most binding characteristic of all, save perhaps Lenin, is the emphasis upon nationalism as a mass mobilizing rationale.

³⁵ Ibid., 140.

³⁶ Ibid., 94.

³⁷ Ibid., 86-7.

This was particularly true of Mao, Ho, and Castro; each regarding the fates of their revolutions as intimately bound the fates of their nations. That foreign powers were often involved only heightened that association. Stalin's incipient nationalism evolved in the crucible of World War II, eventually uniting Russian nationalism with his Stalinist statism.

Of course, Gregor sees all of these leaders and their regimes as emblematic of the generic fascism he calls developmental dictatorship. Marxism, extolling the advent of individual freedom, democracy and universal suffrage, and radical anti-statism (the withering away of the state under the dictatorship of the proletariat), never found a viable stage for proletarian revolutionary consciousness. By discarding class in favor of nation, the *proletarian* nation, and organizing the masses in a radically statist, revolutionary movement led by an elite, or "the party", fascism broadened the scope of Marxism and developed an ideology and program for political change. For Gregor, Mussolini's genius in organizing this conglomerate ideology from neo-Hegelianism, socialism, Marxism, and nationalism, positions him as a revolutionary template-maker who rivaled, or indeed surpassed, Lenin. Mussolini altered the debate from an internal conflict of competing classes to an international struggle of nations. His emphasis on revolt against an international system and against "plutocratic nations" further differentiated him from the internationalist Lenin.

Gregor thus identifies a host of radical, revolutionary movements, including Mao's China, Castro's Cuba, and the Black Muslims in the U.S. as inheritors of

³⁸ Ibid., 134.

Mussolini's paradigmatic fascism—developmental dictatorship. By identifying fascism as a radical, revolutionary movement, Gregor exposes problematic Marxist distortions of fascism. Rather than portraying fascism as a right-wing reaction against growing proletarian consciousness, he places so-called leftist, radical movements squarely under the aegis of fascism. This was itself a radical, revolutionary approach to interpreting fascism.

While “developmental dictatorship” as a term seems to avoid semantic discomforts by jettisoning “generic fascism” as *the* historical genus, political proclivities still abide. Carl Marzani objected contemptuously to Gregor's use of the term “revolution.”³⁹ Marzani vehemently opposed any connection between the long Western tradition of political revolutions and fascism. His position is that Hitler and Mussolini were “counter-revolutionaries” who served “class interests” intent on using these leaders to maintain political, economic, and social predominance.⁴⁰ Just who those class interests and beneficiaries were remains a point for debate. If we could ask them, one wonders whether or not President Hindenburg or King Victor Emmanuel would believe they ably manipulated Hitler or Mussolini to further the “class interests” they represented. Marzani's stance also implies that these leaders enjoyed little popular support among the

³⁹ Carl Marzani, review of Fascist Persuasion, by Gregor, in Science and Society, 100-3.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 101.

masses, only coercive power; another suspect claim.⁴¹ Marzani even takes issue with Gregor's citation of Leon Trotsky's analysis of the "fateful similarities shared by Stalinism and Fascism" by making a sadly comical reference to Trotsky's final conclusion that Stalinist Russia was ultimately a "worker's state" to be supported.⁴²

William T. Bluhm uses far more technical ideological tactics to undermine Gregor's argument.⁴³ Bluhm's main contention is that there is a basic ideological difference between fascism's extreme elitism and communism's radical egalitarianism.⁴⁴ Bluhm points to Maoist China's "equalizing results of the Cultural Revolution" and the labor requirements placed upon officials. It is true that as a result of the Red Guard's zealotry in prosecuting the Cultural Revolution many party apparachiks, functionaries, intellectuals, and so-called "Rightists" were forced into hard labor in rural communities, usually given the unenviable task of shoveling nightsoil.⁴⁵ However, this "equalizing" division of labor was only part of an "unprecedented wave of state-instigated persecution,

⁴¹ The lack of mass support is particularly suspect in light of the voluminous work of Renzo DeFelice, mentioned previously, in which he not only establishes Mussolini as a viable political thinker, but also maintains that Partito Nazionale di Fascismo enjoyed widespread support during the Twenties. The best English language work by DeFelice is Fascism: An Informal Introduction to Its Theory and Practice. De Felice's work has incited a chorus of recriminations in Italy from anti-fascists and Marxists alike. Much has been written on popular support in Nazi Germany, however three books stand out: Milton Mayer's They Thought They Were Free (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), addressed the appeal of Nazism to the "average" German through interviews with ten members of a German town; David Schoenbaum's Hitler's Social Revolution (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1966), broadens Mayer's approach by exploring the Nazis' calls for a classless society and its attraction to the German people; and finally, Daniel Jonah Goldberg's Hitler's Willing Executioners (New York: Random House, 1996), explores the great extent of anti-Semitism in interwar Germany and the popular support for Nazism.

⁴² Marzani, review of Fascist Persuasion, 101.

⁴³ William T. Bluhm, review of Fascist Persuasion, by Gregor, in The Journal of Politics 37, no. 2 (May 1975): 586-8.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 588.

⁴⁵ John King Fairbank, China: A New History, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992): 401-2. Fairbank points out that many of the Red Guards, after they "got out of hand in 1968," were eventually sent to the fields to collect the combination of human feces and urine that fertilized large portions of farmland.

torture, gang warfare, and mindless violence” that pitted friend against friend, son against father, wife against husband, and so on.⁴⁶

In fact, the widespread persecutions of anyone deemed an enemy of the revolution, and the violent means used by an ideological elite Red Guard, are not dissimilar to the “equalizing” effects found in fascist persecutions of state enemies. All who were not deemed sound, or those unwilling to betray those close to them in “struggle meetings”, were “equally” under suspicion and treated with an “equality” that struck terror in those who did not fit Mao’s conception of the proper Chinese revolutionary. In light of the human cost exacted upon the Chinese people, Bluhm’s argument and reasoning seem ill-advised. Mao’s program was more an attack on a bureaucracy he had helped to create, but had begun to lose absolute control over, than an attempt to equalize society.⁴⁷

In a more measured argument, Roland Sarti acknowledges Gregor’s rehabilitation of Mussolini as a thinker, but denies that it means anything substantial.⁴⁸ Further, Sarti denies that there was any significant mass support for Italian Fascism. H. Malcolm Macdonald, on the other hand, recognizes a powerful implication of Gregor’s thesis:

It is perhaps time that we broke out of the syndrome which views “Marxism-Leninism” as the wave of the future and Fascism as the defeated wave of the past, and objectively consider the empirical realities of the twentieth century. We may find that the “Fascist

⁴⁶Ibid., 402.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 386.

⁴⁸ Roland Sarti, review of *Fascist Persuasion*, by Gregor, in *The American Political Science Review* 71, no. 3 (September 1977): 1134-5.

Persuasion," far from having died, survives today as the operating rationale not only of the "reactionary right" but also of the "radical left."⁴⁹

Macdonald cuts to the heart of Gregor's purpose and his enduring importance in the broad historiography of fascism. Gregor's use of developmental dictatorship as a paradigm of generic fascism breaks away from dogmatic Marxist interpretations and withering liberal diagnoses. Perhaps not ironically, his analysis is itself a third way between traditional "left-right" political analyses, just as historical fascism was often used to forge a third way between the two nineteenth century materialisms.

The culmination of over a decade of Gregor's publications came in 1979 with the appearance of his final two works on the topic, Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship and Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism. Perhaps these two books represent Gregor's desire to consolidate his previous work and respond to his critics. Indeed, he covers already well-trod ground. The goal of each book is, respectively, to refine the generic fascism typology of developmental dictatorship by exploring the modernizing elements, Marxist roots, and revolutionary appeal of fascist ideology. Thus, he expands upon the early intellectual evolution of Mussolini from a revolutionary socialist to national socialist by exploring primary source materials and associating his thought with Marxists, anarcho-syndicalists (Labriola, Sorel, and Michels), and nationalists.

Because Italian Fascism and Young Mussolini largely covered previously explored territory, it is not surprising that Gregor's colleagues in political science and history often found his furtherance of a well-expounded, if not broadly embraced, thesis

⁴⁹ H. Malcolm Macdonald, review of Fascist Persuasion, by Gregor, in Social Science Quarterly

tiresome. Roland Sarti's review of both books, contained in one article, is an excellent starting point.⁵⁰ Sarti had long stood *contraposto* to Gregor's massive re-evaluation of historical fascism. Sarti exasperatingly contends that Gregor's "...interpretation might have had some historiographical value twenty years ago when traditional views of Fascism as mindless social reaction, pathological behavior or doctrinal nonsense still prevailed."⁵¹ This statement exposes some interesting issues.

Sarti seems to be admitting that traditional views of fascism were inadequate and that, although grudgingly, he accepts that Gregor has contributed to the supplanting of inadequate interpretations. Although Sarti claims that it has been "twenty years" since fascism was regarded cavalierly, Richard Collier's widely-read and often dismissive biography of Mussolini, Duce!⁵², was published in 1971. More directly, Renzo DeFelice's multi-volume biography attracted vitriolic condemnations throughout the 1970s, psychologically based interpretations of fascism continued into the 1990s,⁵³ and doctrinal Marxist interpretations subsided, but did not disappear, only after the fall of the Soviet Union.⁵⁴ As illustrated herein, Gregor's thesis continued to incite the disapproval

56, no. 1 (June 1975): 154.

⁵⁰ Sarti, review of Italian Fascism and Young Mussolini, by Gregor, in The American Historical Review, 169-70.

⁵¹ Ibid., 169.

⁵² Richard Collier, Duce! (New York: Viking Press, 1971)

⁵³ For a wide range of psychological interpretations see Milfull, ed., Attractions of Fascism, published in 1990.

⁵⁴ Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Fukuyama-like dismissals of Marxism and socialism abound, minimizing the popularity of Marxist analyses. Still, many steadfastly hold onto the doctrine and utilize the critiques born 150 years ago. For example, Michael Parenti's Blackshirts and Reds (1997) promotes traditional Marxist analyses of fascism. Parenti strongly condemns scholars "...supposedly on the democratic Left..." who erroneously "...lump fascism with communism." He singles out A. James Gregor among those, including Noam Chomsky (hardly a right-wing apologist!), who have perpetrated this error (16-17).

of Marxists through to 1980. Sarti simply overstates the extent to which fascism's revolutionary character was established in the mid-1960s.

Sarti also accuses Gregor of mishandling documentary evidence to create false impressions. Particularly, he objects to the characterization of Italy as an underdeveloped society able to serve as a model for contemporary Third World countries. He believes Italy in 1922 to be an industrial power, a claim that does not quite account for the vast economic and developmental difference between the far north and the *mezzogiorno* south.⁵⁵ While some of his criticisms are fair, Sarti's vitriolic language belies some other, perhaps personal, disagreement. Contrary to his assertions, fascism's historical and ideological characteristics have remained points of debate among scholars, typified by the continuing lack of consensus on a definition of generic fascism.

Sarti was not alone in his critique of the two final entries on developmental dictatorship. Paolo Farneti concurs with much of Sarti's critique, but focuses upon the differences between Marxism and fascism, and Mussolini's ad hoc approach to anarcho-syndicalism as the basis of his measured disapproval.⁵⁶ He, along with George Feaver⁵⁷, still felt compelled to label Gregor an "apologist" for Mussolini. However, contrary to

⁵⁵ While Charles Delzell, review of Italian Fascism and Young Mussolini, by Gregor, in The American Political Science Review 74, no. 4 (December 1980): 1114-5, acknowledges some "strengthening of Italian infrastructure" under Fascism, he believes it to be insignificant. Adrian Lyttleton also agrees with Sarti that Gregor overstates the extent to which Italy in 1914 was an "underdeveloped" or "oppressed" nation. Lyttleton, review of Young Mussolini, by Gregor, in Political Studies 29, no. 2 (June 1981): 328-9. Lyttleton fails, however, to account for the widespread *perception* that Italy was an underdeveloped and oppressed nation, a belief further popularized after WW I. Particularly in democracies, perception often serves as the functional equivalent of reality. A full explanation of the perceived status of Italy vis-à-vis the "Great Powers" is found in Burgwyn, The Legend of the Mutilated Victory.

⁵⁶ Paolo Farneti, review of Italian Fascism and Young Mussolini, by Gregor, in The Journal of Modern History, 565-8

⁵⁷ Feaver, review of Young Mussolini, 189.

Sarti's assertion that many of the debates in which Gregor engages are essentially closed, Farneti concedes that Gregor's "...revision of the standard interpretations of Fascism is bound, then, to keep the debate alive."⁵⁸

Even though Gregor's work continued to inspire criticism, Italian Fascism and Young Mussolini were not universally disparaged. James C. Hunt and Hans E. Segal both found Gregor's demolition of the horizontal, left-right political spectrum refreshing and willingly acceded to his portrayal of Mussolini as a viable, indeed important, political thinker.⁵⁹ Ironically, these two reviewers pointed out a problem with his generic model of fascism, a problem largely ignored by those concerned primarily with divorcing fascism from Marxism. Both comment on Gregor's superficial attention to Hitler and his *sui generis* classification of German National Socialism.

While Hunt and Segal are willing to place Mussolini among the host of important revolutionary leaders emerging from nineteenth century Marxism, they expose a critical flaw in Gregor's model and its application. What of the two other Axis Powers? Certainly Germany constitutes a recognizably fascist regime and movement. The case of Japanese fascism has been argued and revisited numerous times, but it is safe to say that, structural issues aside, it incorporated many ideological constituents of basic fascism. The problem of classifying the other two Axis regimes, both at least *intuitively* identifiable as fascist, presents one of the main limitations of Gregor's model of generic fascism.

⁵⁸ Farneti, review of Italian Fascism and Young Mussolini, 568.

⁵⁹ Hunt, review of Italian Fascism and Young Mussolini, by Gregor, 466-9. Hans E. Segal, review of Young Mussolini, by Gregor, in The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 449 (May 1980): 184-5.

Gregor's career as the American doyen of fascist revisionism ended abruptly in 1980. He changed his focus to economic development in Asia, contemporary Asia-Pacific security concerns, and, to a field less removed from his previous work, the historical role of Marxism and ideology in China. The fifteen year period he spent toiling over the ideology of fascism and constructing developmental dictatorship offers a fascinating opportunity to explore the roles of Marxism and anti-fascism in scholarship, fascism's intellectual and revolutionary roots, and the promise and limitation of historical models. Perhaps Gregor saw himself as a historiographical Sisyphus, forever consigned to rolling his theses up the mountain of anti-fascist, Marxist opposition to achieve any legitimization of fascist ideology. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that, after six books on the topic, A. James Gregor made his turn after 1980.

His long-standing commitment to formulating a model of generic fascism collided with the complex issues of politics and semantics that weigh upon any scholar intent upon understanding historical fascism. Gregor's tactic, to link fascism to Marxism and, thus, establish its intellectual pedigree through Mussolini, represented an effective tool for neutralizing knee-jerk anti-fascism. That is not to say that it was merely tactical. Gregor's thesis, along with the work of DeFelice in Italian and Nolte in German, inspired much reconsideration of previously held canons on the historical role and intellectual importance of fascist ideology. Unfortunately, while it charted a new course between the polemical, left-right political landscape, by 1980 his model had failed to coalesce any significant agreement about generic fascism. As we shall see, Gregor's model opened the

door to further reevaluations and began to bring to a close years of historiography colored by the very events under examination.

Developmental dictatorship also had the unintentional consequence of questioning the efficacy of models in general, particularly when historical phenomena refuse to fit neatly into distinct paradigms. The limitations of developmental dictatorship demarcate an important starting point for examining the continued search for a fascist minimum.

Part III- Developmental Dictatorship, the Search for a Fascist Minimum,
and the Case of Japan

Chapter 6: Shifting a Paradigm

Since 1946, scholars intent on establishing a typology or model of generic fascism contended with a polarized, politicized, and perplexing set of issues. Foremost among those issues were fascism's origin, its ideological credentials and genealogy, and its ideological intent. Identifying a minimum set of fascist characteristics that accounts for political and semantic considerations is key to addressing these questions. If a generic model of fascism, built on a concrete fascist minimum, can be constructed, it would offer a template for comparative studies of various regimes and movements. A generic model suggests a coherent fascist ideology not particular to an ideal type or set of circumstances that could transcend parochial cultural, social, and political characteristics.

The historiography of the post-WWII period reflects both the desire of many scholars to construct a fascist minimum or a model of generic fascism and the challenges posed by this complicated subject. Of the many challenges, the hardest to overcome was the political context within which the subject was explored. In the process of writing contemporary history, scholars were operating under the auspices of two synergistic, often seamless, paradigms: anti-fascism and the left-right political struggle of the Cold War. By and large, the interpretation of fascism conformed to the conventions of these paradigms as scholar staked out positions on the political spectrum of the day. Ironically,

by viewing fascism through the prism of their contemporary world and placing fascism along various points on the left-right spectrum they ignored the anti-materialist, “third way” intellectual roots that contributed to fascist ideology. It is also ironic that while the two paradigms have narrowed the debate, a generic model of fascism remains elusive.

Within this context the work of A. James Gregor takes on great significance. He elaborated on Ernst Nolte’s work on fascist ideology, expanded Barrington Moore’s study of comparative modernization, and worked concurrently with Renzo De Felice’s anti-fascist realism, making significant progress toward the establishment of a model of generic fascism. He did so by challenging the “left-right” and “left versus right” conventions of his day and, in so doing, simultaneously challenged both of the dominant paradigms. Alas, his developmental dictatorship model failed to unite the opinions of disparate scholars concerned with the twentieth century’s most notorious political movement. Developmental dictatorship’s failure to satisfy the historiographical need to set some defined terms for canonical debate does not, however, diminish the important role it played in opening up new vistas for the exploration of fascism.

First, developmental dictatorship called into question previously held notions about the reactionary, anti-modernizing, and anti-developmental nature of fascist movements and regimes. Barrington Moore’s important comparative study of Germany and Japan, The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, focused upon the effects of imposing a modern liberal-capitalist economic system on a semi-feudal economy without concomitant social or political revolutions.¹ He believed that ultimately the

¹ For a full discussion of his thesis see Moore, Social Origins, pp. xv, 228-313.

dictatorships that emerged in these nations amounted to an agrarian-militarist alliance. Whatever one's assessment of his conclusions, Moore correctly ascertained that the rise of fascism grew out of the need of the nations concerned to develop rapidly to compete as modern, mature industrial nation-states. Moore's typology of fascism included the "reactionary" characteristics commonly associated with fascist ideology, but he began to cast doubt upon the anti-modernizing thesis. Moreover, Moore's comparative methodology set the stage for a host of generalists intent upon constructing a model of generic fascism.²

Second, developmental dictatorship explored fully the modernizing elements of fascist ideology and, in so doing, revealed its revolutionary praxis. To do this, Gregor had to account for traditional Marxist assertions that fascism amounted to nothing more than a counter-revolutionary scheme controlled by capital. By "connecting the dots" between Marx and Mussolini, Gregor made a compelling case for categorizing fascism as a "Marxist heresy," a nationalistic variant of traditional Marxist ideology.³ As a result,

² Comparisons between Germany and Japan became unpopular among English language scholars shortly after Moore's book appeared. Most preferred to view Japan in isolation from her Axis allies. However, as early as 1933, an article comparing Germany and Japan, purposefully excluding Fascist Italy as different, appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*. Prophetically, Miriam Beard wrote, "the hope of liberals in other lands that the elements of Old and New in Japan and Germany might be fused together painlessly and gradually, yielding beautiful amalgams of ancient culture and modern civilization, must be abandoned. The clash of feudalism and modernism, which formerly delighted tourists, may easily become a combat which will shake the world." Beard, "Germany and Japan: Striking Parallels," in *New York Times Magazine* (December 17, 1933), reprinted in John Weiss, ed., *Nazis and Fascists in Europe, 1918-1945* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 187-195.

³ Gregor focused primarily on the influence of neo-Hegelianism and the leading neo-Hegelian of the period, Giovanni Gentile, on both Mussolini and Fascist ideology. In *The Ideology of Fascism* Gregor writes, "Fascism, as a social and political philosophy, was essentially the product of the genius of Giovanni Gentile"(5). Others have also made this connection. Many have since agreed with and elaborated on Gregor's focus on Gentile. See Roger Eatwell, "Towards a New Model of Generic Fascism," Emilio Gentile, "Fascism as Political Religion" *The Journal of Contemporary History* 25, no. 2 (May 1990), 229-251, and Walter Adamson, "Fascism and Culture: The Avant-Gardes and Secular Religion in the Italian Case," *The Journal of Contemporary History* 24, no. 3 (July 1989), 411-435.

Gregor, too, can be associated with those scholars of the liberal persuasion influenced by the political exigencies of the Cold War. His anti-Marxist emphasis is revealed by the fact that, early on, he drew heavily from the totalitarian thesis. The theory of totalitarianism, formulated first by Hannah Arendt and expanded by Carl Friedrich and the committed Cold Warrior Zbigniew Brzezinski, amounted to a response the Marxist thesis of fascism as a reactionary, right-wing adjunct to capitalism.⁴

Over time, Gregor's model emerged from its early reliance upon totalitarianism, staking out new, important territory, and established fascism's revolutionary praxis and ideological complexity. Despite these developments, Gregor's failure to fully account for the impact of the post-World War I crises of liberalism and capitalism remains a weakness.⁵ Nevertheless, the publication of The Ideology of Fascism, coupled with Nolte's crucial intellectual history of fascism, rendered problematic the simple dismissals of Mussolini and fascism as ideological bastards.

Third, Gregor effectively "tested the waters" of objectivity within the pool of fascist scholarship. By jumping in headfirst, he incurred the wrath of both materialist

⁴ In his Introduction, David Forgacs, ed., discusses the "blind-spots" of liberalism and Marxism, particularly Marxism's "...failure to recognize any real difference between fascist and liberal-democratic rule: the opposite error to the liberal polarization between the two which produced the totalitarianism concept." Rethinking Italian Fascism: Capitalism, Populism, and Culture (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986), 4. Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., "Fascism and Modernization," World Politics 24, no. 4 (July 1972): 547-64, noted that a general relaxation of Cold War tensions during Krushchev's tenure as leader of the Soviet Union caused various totalitarianism theories to lose their appeal (547).

⁵ Gregor does cite dissatisfaction with liberal policies, the factionalism of parliamentary institutions, and the capitalist emphasis on consumerism as contributing factors. Gregor, Ideology of Fascism, 82-4. However, he spends most of his energy critiquing Marxism and comparing Lenin and Mussolini's views of revolution. By 1979, Gregor's final, most concise formulation of his generic model, Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship, ignores the crisis of liberalism. Instead, he wrote copiously about the crisis of Marxism as the crucible out of which fascist ideology emerged. Many generalists have identified in their generic models fascism as a reaction against liberalism, but Gregor was the main proponent of the Marxist heresy thesis. Particularists have also identified a crisis of liberalism as

camps: Marxist and liberal-capitalist.⁶ Gregor's resilience in the face of a barrage of attacks validated further explorations of fascism's ideology and popular support. The success or failure of his model aside, Gregor challenged the accepted notions of scholarship regarding the evils of fascism. Gregor launched a full frontal assault on historiographical "political correctness," thereby causing much discomfort among his colleagues.

The discomfort shown by Marxists is easily understood, but the protests of non-Marxists require some explanation. As has been attested, Renzo De Felice faced enormous criticism throughout the 1970s for his "sympathetic" multi-volume, Italian language biography of Mussolini. Gregor also incurred the wrath of his colleagues for being "sympathetic," "apologetic," and unable to see past Mussolini's propagandistic charms. Simply put, anti-fascism dominated the scholarship on fascism for over four decades. Again, it is not difficult to explain why the first generation of scholars in Italy, Germany, and Japan was virulently opposed to any "legitimization" of fascism as an ideology. Unfortunately, visceral reactions and untempered negations solidified into doctrine. Gregor himself wrote in 1979:

...the conventional wisdom concerning Fascism's lack of ideological content, and the *ad hoc* nature of its political practice, has taken on the status of an all-but-incorrigible truth

key to fascism's rise. George Mosse, among others, viewed fascism as an attack against liberalism and positivism stemming from a crisis of bourgeois values. Mosse, "The Genesis of Fascism," 14.

⁶ Germino, review of *Ideology*, by Gregor, provides an example of a non-Marxist attack, referring to Gregor's "misconceived objectivity" which Germino has termed "pseudo-objective descriptivism" (615). Germino takes issue with Gregor's use of "patently ridiculous and self-serving statements" by Fascists as indicative of Fascist thinking. Perhaps Germino regards "Fascist thought" as an oxymoron. Quite appropriately, Marxists have serious reservations about the Marxist heresy thesis. In Carl Marzani's review of *Fascist Persuasion*, he contemptuously re-titles the book "Socialism as a Variant of Fascism" and opines "...how could such an intelligent man write such non-sense?" (100).

among Anglo-Americans. It may serve some purpose to hear proto-Fascist and Fascist arguments several times, if only to redress the balance.⁷

While it is easy to regard these statements as self-serving, Gregor brings up a key point. The “conventional wisdom” Gregor refers to effectively dominated English language scholarship. Ironically, the first book to comprehensively address the ideological and philosophical traditions of fascism, Nolte’s Three Faces of Fascism, was first published in German!

English language scholarship remained locked into patterns of interpretation that were used to explore all that was wrong with fascism. Perhaps this was in no small part a process of disassociation from the horrors of the War, the shared historical and intellectual pedigree of the “right,” and a rear-guard action against the attack of Marxists. As a result of the great influence Marxist theorists had on the scholarship of the twentieth century, it was nearly impossible to avoid economic determinism and class-consciousness theories in the social sciences and humanities. If liberals were to counter Marxist theory, they had to adopt the lexicon of Marxism. By adopting the lexicon of Marxism and, indeed, noting the ideological relevance of Marxism, Gregor both attacked and embraced Marxism. By establishing fascism as a result of a crisis of Marxism, while illustrating the modernizing and developmental praxes of fascist ideology, he blurred the distinct Cold War battlelines. Gregor’s model of generic fascism, always useful as a potential weapon, began the process of de-politicization.

Perhaps more than any other topic, fascism was like a hot potato each side tossed back and forth, hoping to burn a brand of guilt by association onto the hands of the

⁷ Gregor, Italian Fascism, xiv.

opponent. Gregor, above all others, recognized this conflict and worked to strike a third way outside of the two-sided political axis. By utilizing the theory of totalitarianism as a starting point and then wedding fascism and Marxism into a theory of rapid modernization, he effectively alienated both scholarly traditions. While recognizing the often-painful necessities of rapid modernization, Gregor made it possible to interpolate positive outcomes from negative structures. This was not unlike the arguments both liberals and Marxists make today when they explain the less-than-humane aspects of the Industrial Revolution and the various communist revolutions. Gregor simply brought an air of objectivity to the study of fascism and positioned it in a clearer relationship to the two materialist systems.

Additionally, developmental dictatorship brought into focus the geopolitical nature of fascist movements. Gregor understood that the virulent form of nationalism so profoundly expressed by paradigmatic fascism is, in a broad sense, a liberational nationalism. Gregor's sense of nationalism as an organizing rationale for revolution unites, among others, Mussolini, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, and Castro. Gregor also identified the importance of the proletarian nation concept in Mussolini's thinking. The geopolitical scope of the proletarian nation idea is, perhaps, one of the most important associations he made. Mussolini, and Adolf Hitler for that matter, sought to minimize class conflict by initiating a unified nation-state concept that inexorably tied together the interests of all within the nation.⁸ In a proletarian nation, the scope of the revolution expands to a

⁸ While both Mussolini and Hitler viewed themselves and their nation-state as the ultimate unification of, respectively, all Italians and Germans, their conceptions also regarded, to varying degrees, dissent as counter the national interest and, thus, open to repression. Hitler took his concept of inclusion further than did Mussolini by focusing upon race as a qualifying factor for participation in the nation-state.

Darwinian struggle of people against people, nation against nation. Fascists and Nazis, along with Japanese ideologues like Kita Ikki and Ishiwara Kanji, vilified the intra-societal conflict of class against class for undermining the health of the nation.

However, while Mao, Ho, and Castro share a sense of nationalism born, at worst, out of colonialism, and, at least, overt interference by greedy powers, Mussolini's nationalism established a paradigm *for* colonialism and expansionism. The post-World War II proletarian nations like China, Vietnam, and Cuba pursued simple sovereignty and, as a result of national liberation, modernization. On the other hand, the post-World War I proletarian nations Italy, Germany, and Japan sought the colonies, spheres of influence, and resources so obviously the birthright of any Great Power of the twentieth century. Gregor makes that very connection, but fails to see the basic difference. The post-WWII proletarians mobilized *against* the effects of colonialism rather than *for* colonial expansion, undermining his classification of the post-WWII revolutionaries as paradigmatic fascists.⁹ That Germany and Japan are excluded from paradigmatic fascism ignores the fact that all three Axis Powers were united by a common interest in subverting an international system that kept them from their due status as Great Powers. These nations organized for conflict to obtain the power, resources, and wealth that were held so guardedly by the prevailing Great Powers. The Axis Powers reached a new level

⁹ In Italian Fascism, Gregor writes about Fascist hopes at the outbreak of World War II, "The war would finally break the hold of the 'plutocratic and hegemonic powers' over the 'proletarian nations.' " Those proletarian nations—Germany, Japan, and Italy—delayed in their industrialization and confined to restricted economic space, would finally attain their merited status as economically and politically sovereign major powers" (162).

of the total war concept, organizing internally and externally with expansionism as a guiding principle.

In contrast, the liberational nationalism of Mao, Ho, and Castro did not initially seek conflict with the world system, except as a process of exemption from outside interference. Quite unlike the already independent Axis Powers, the primary tasks for Mao's China, Ho's Vietnam, and Castro's Cuba were, respectively, to throw off the yokes of multi-national imperialism, French colonialism, and American neo-imperialism and, in the process, establish a viable national sovereignty.

To the extent that all three remained underprivileged, proletarian nations in a capitalist world system, they too sought to overthrow that system. However, they were not frustrated imperialists, but abused victims of imperialism. Their aggressive maneuvers focused on spreading communist ideology to the Korean peninsula, Indochina, Africa, and Latin America, replacing capitalist internationalism with communism internationalism. Although their anti-colonial rhetoric was, arguably, often self-serving, communist campaigns frequently organized radicals and nationalists to liberate their nations from capitalism and imperialism. Conversely, Italy, Germany, and Japan intended to accumulate a larger share of the colonial wealth, competing with their imperial rivals. The Axis Powers and communist nationalist states all warrant classification as proletarian nations. Unfortunately, Gregor's use of this concept as fundamental to paradigmatic fascism fails to delineate between the post-WWI and the post-WWII varieties. The difference was that the Axis Powers wanted a greater share of the imperial spoils, while the communist nationalists simply wanted to abolish the system.

Therefore, the declassification of Germany and the omission of Japan, in spite of his emphasis upon Mussolini's proletarian nation concept, undermine the developmental dictatorship model. It is true that much of Italy lagged behind Germany and Japan in industrialization, but whether or not Fascism was first and foremost a program for modernization remains his least accepted assertion.¹⁰ Gregor correctly underscored fascism's geopolitical scope, but did not adequately define the implications of that scope. The liberational nationalism of Mao, Castro, and Ho differed from the imperialistic nationalism of Mussolini, Hitler, and Imperial Japan.

Germany and Italy, and Japan for that matter, were revolting against an *international system* that kept them proletarian nations, while Mao, Castro, and Ho were in the early phases of *liberating* their nations and establishing simple sovereignty. Post-WWII revolutionaries attempted to liberate their societies from the interference of outside, alien forces who often colluded with domestic powers. The class-based appeals worked against other nationalists and landed interests, thus providing a rationale for overthrowing the competing visions of Chiang Kai-shek, Ngo Dien Diem, and Fulgencio Bautista. Repressive tactics, capitalist affiliations, and support from foreign capitalist

¹⁰ In Italian Fascism, Gregor cites economic figures that indicate a significant increase in the level of industrial and agricultural production in Italy during the 1920s (143-6). Roland Sarti has been the most vociferous critic of the Gregor's uses of economic data. One battle in the conflict over modernization occurred in the pages of the journal World Politics during the early 1970s. Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., "Fascism and Modernization," asserted that while fascism could initiate modernizing processes, fundamentally it pursued an anti-modernist program intent on countering the effects of modernization. Gregor, "Fascism and Modernization: Some Addenda," World Politics 26, no. 3 (April 1974): 370-84, took issue with the duality of purpose and practice proposed by Turner and characterized fascism as a productivist ideology (375). Further, he criticized Turner for not allowing that generalizations are even possible in regards to fascism (384). For an excellent early discussion of the issues of modernization see C.E. Black, The Dynamics of Modernization (New York: Harper and Row, 1966). In particular, Black found a correlation between modernization and imperialism, pointing out the difficult situation faced by nations modernizing after 1900, after the colonial pie had already been cut (133-4).

powers made such nationalist leaders easy targets of Marxist ideology and class-consciousness terminology. Mao, Castro, and Ho politicized the masses for a national liberation by casting the struggle as an economic, class-based conflict.

Perhaps it is not coincidental that Marxist ideology has worked best in agrarian economies while fascist ideology has taken root in industrializing economies. When class conflict impairs liberation from a semi-feudal and/or colonial situation, Marxism becomes an effective ideological wedge. When class conflict hampers progress toward Great Power status and must be eliminated, it provides a powerful *raison d'être* for fascism. Mussolini, Hitler, and, in various ways, the leaders of Imperial Japan sought to eliminate class conflict, hence liberating the nation for a larger struggle against an international system.

It should not come as a surprise that Gregor's attempt at constructing a universal model of generic fascism falls short. Such a model remains an elusive phantom of twentieth century scholarship, but Gregor did make significant progress in undermining dogmatically held notions of fascism. Gregor's expansive, intricately supported generic model questioned the common notion that fascism was solely a European phenomenon. By expanding it to Asia and the Third World, he gave fascist ideology the universality previously denied it.¹¹

¹¹ Many scholars still continue to assert that fascism is an exclusively European phenomenon. Stanley Payne, among others, has refused to adopt an expansive model of generic fascism. In Fascism: Comparison and Definition (1980), Payne argues that fascism grew out of a particular set of circumstances found only in Europe from 1860-1914 (175). He tests his assertion against the examples of pre-WWII, semi-traditionalist Japan and oligarchic Latin American dictatorships, all of which he sees as uniquely informed by their particular cultural situations. That fascism was solely a European phenomenon is treated as a given in his recent book, A History of Fascism, 1914-1945 (1995). Payne finds fascism in places such as Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and, quite expansively, in South Africa, but is loath to include those nations not invested with European cultural and intellectual traditions (353-4). He does correctly point out, however,

Gregor's model of generic fascism also broke semantic and political logjams by utilizing a new term. Developmental dictatorship invested new meaning into paradigmatic fascism, implying that development and dictatorship are not mutually exclusive in the case of fascism. Gregor's end-run around the main battlefield of the anti-fascists was an attempt to avert predictable reactions, blatant politicization, and uncritical recriminations. Rather than rehabilitating fascism as a term, he invented a surrogate capable of expressing his reevaluation of fascist ideology.

Further, it was an ingenious strategy for simultaneously attacking both Marxist and anti-fascist dogmatism. Gregor is particularly successful in crippling the Marxist counter-revolutionary orthodoxy by making a compelling case for fascism's Marxist, Hegelian pedigree.¹² Particularly at the end of the 1960s, Gregor took a topic charged with semantic and political meanings, which were often used indiscriminately, and made it safe to view fascist ideology objectively.

While he opened new vistas, developmental dictatorship's main weakness, the exclusion of Germany and Japan, illustrates some of the difficulties of strictly constructed models. Models are, perhaps, a necessary evil. Scholars in the social sciences must use

that two important scholars, Nolte and De Felice, also deny the viability of expanding generic fascism beyond Europe (354). Though De Felice argues against generic fascism as concept at all, preferring to keep Nazi Germany out of the fascist category, he asserts that only Italy provides an example of fascism. For a full explanation of De Felice's declassification of Germany, see Fascism, 15. De Felice also argues, contra Payne, against any generalizations of fascist ideology, and compares his methodology to George Mosse's focus upon the peculiarities of Nazi Germany and the inappropriateness of generic fascism as a concept (40-1).

¹² Strangely enough, Gregor's early analysis of Marxism was termed "saving Marxism in spite of itself" by Bernard Morris. Morris, review of A Survey of Marxism, by Gregor, in Political Science Quarterly 31, no. 2 (June 1966): 318-320. Gregor's thesis in Survey is that while Marxist preoccupations with the Hegelian dialectic has produced institutional dysfunction, the basic social science methodology of Marxism is a valuable tool for further analysis (281-4).

models to communicate broad ideas and principles, while constantly warning against the amorphous and imprecise use of generalizations. However, in Gregor's case, his model is so strictly built, with a strong reliance upon economic development, that it is unable to be sufficiently contorted to include Germany or Japan. While, as we shall see, the case of Japan is a matter of particular scholarly debate, the exclusion of Germany is more controversial. That Gregor does not use the traditional delineation, the virulent racism of Germany versus the feigned racism of Italy, only complicates the equation. The key is Germany's industrial development. If it had already achieved an advanced level of industrialization, it should, by Gregor's model, be excluded. However, one could certainly make the case that its development had been significantly reversed after World War I by severe war reparations and economic collapse. Therefore, Germany required a new developmental program, e.g., the Autobahn, Volkswagens, and the re-ignition of Germany's military-industrial machine.

Japan, by all accounts a relative latecomer to industrialization and economic development, should also be given some re-consideration as a developmental dictatorship, at least in economic terms. The main sticking point is the fact that Japan lacked a mass-mobilizing party. Perhaps this illustrates more a failure of the model than of Japan's ability to meet its terms. The praxis of Japan's autocratic style of governance, which was encapsulated in an often ambiguous Meiji Constitution, and bureaucratic collectivism inspired a period of economic and industrial development rivaling the English Industrial Revolution. The Japanese leadership used the emperor to symbolize the guiding

collective principle, progressively organizing society and eliminating class divisions along the way.

Finally, Gregor's identification of Italian Fascism's emphasis upon "spirit versus matter" indicates a rationale that transcends economics and modernization. While it is now obvious that Mussolini was to some degree a "reformed" Marxist, that reformation must take into account the crisis of materialism found throughout the world, particularly in Europe, from the 1890s through to the end of World War I. In The Ideology of Fascism, Gregor goes to great lengths to establish the ideological influence of the neo-Hegelian philosopher Giovanni Gentile. Gentile, along with his friend Benedetto Croce, carried the flame of anti-positivism, anti-Marxism, and anti-materialism throughout the period. They were part of a vanguard of critics of economic determinism and self-appointed reformers of the Hegelian dialectic away from the material and towards the spirit and idealism.¹³ Mussolini's transformation, seen through the lens of neo-idealist philosophy, was based on a recognition that the crises of liberalism and socialism were brought on by positivism, materialism, and a concomitant lack of spiritualism. Mussolini was part of a neo-idealist revolution against an economic, deterministic interpretation of humanity.

After the Treaty of Versailles, Italy bemoaned the "Mutilated Victory," a phenomenon not dissimilar to the visceral sense shared by many Germans that they had

¹³ Michael G. Smith, "Gramsci on the Mirror of Italian Fascism: Mussolini, Gentile, Spirito," in Italian Quarterly, is, to date, the best study of the role the crisis of materialism in both Marxism and capitalism it played in proto-Fascist thought. Smith illustrates the degree to which Gentile established anti-materialist philosophical paradigms through a critique of Marx, and the effect he had on both Mussolini and Antonio Gramsci. For the crisis of Marxist ideology in Japan see Hoston, "Tenko," in Polity.

been betrayed at Versailles. In each country, the debacles were perceived as crises of national spirit. The Japanese, too, felt wronged after the Treaty of Versailles because they were left out of much of the decision making process, were dissatisfied with her territorial trophies, and were unable to get an anti-racism clause in the League of Nations charter. Japan resented the imposition of unequal treaties on Asia, European colonial domination of South and Southeast Asia, and Anglo-American racism. Most significantly, many in Japan felt that the West's stance against Japanese expansion was hypocritical, to say the least, hypocritical since the West has already acquired colonies and spheres of influence around the globe. This view was forged in the crucible of the Paris Peace Conference.¹⁴

The growing distrust of liberal parliamentary systems along with the rabid anti-Bolshevism emblematic of fascism—particularly Italian and German fascisms—were not motivated by economics *per se*. These were responses to the materialist systems' elevation of economics and class interests above the well-being and survival of the nation. Liberal capitalism and socialism/communism were internationalist, materialist.

¹⁴ Of the group of Japanese leaders who attended the Paris Peace Conference, some of the most outspoken criticism came from Konoe Fumimaro, a future prime minister (of and on between June 1937 and October 1941), leader of the New Order Movement (a political movement based on fascist-style ideology), and founder of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (with the intent of establishing a "new order" in Asia). See Miles Fletcher, "Intellectuals and Fascism in Early Showa Japan, in The Journal of Asian Studies 39, no. 1 (November 1979): 39-63. In particular, Konoe wrote as early as 1918 that the Treaty of Versailles was an "Anglo-American peace" meant to preserve the "status quo that suits their interests." Further, he believed the Anglo-American call for justice through the League of Nations and arms control to be a deceptive tactic that hides, indeed preserves, the injustice inherent in the "rampant economic imperialism that so benefits the Anglo-American powers." He cites the codification of the Monroe Doctrine of the United States into the League Covenant as an example of this faux peace. Konoe regarded the destruction of the Anglo-American status quo as an act of self-preservation for nations such as Japan and Germany, and concluded that the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference was "the end of idealism." See Oka Yoshitake, Konoe Fumimaro: A Political Biography, trans. by Okamoto Shumpei and Patricia Murray (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1983): 10-15.

and positivist by nature. These were traits that fascism rejected as weak and, indeed, parasitical. Fascism focused on fostering national spirit and idealism, creating the New Man and the Liberated Aryan, or, in the case of Japan, consolidating a *kokutai* presided over by their emperor, a descendant of the sun-goddess, Amateratsu. The fundamental idea was that social cohesion, extreme nationalism, and organizational solidarity could unite the nation for struggles of a grand scale and enable these “latecomer” nations to overcome the material disadvantages of their situation.¹⁵

Gregor’s economic emphasis is understandable. The prevailing politics of the post-WWII world was of triumphant materialism; but with East and West locked in a bitterly cold struggle over the inheritance of their cooperative victory. Gregor’s refutation of anti-fascism and Marxist dogmatism necessarily utilized the current terminology and conceptual framework. Gregor’s task, weaning English language scholarship from a myopic view of fascist ideology, required an assault on the prevailing paradigm of economic determinism in both of its variations, liberal-capitalist and communist/socialist. In so doing, he began to shift a weighty paradigm, breaking free a few of its moorings and legitimizing formerly unconventional interpretations of historical fascism.

¹⁵ The social disruptions in post-World War I Germany and Italy are widely documented. However, it may be widely assumed that the cultural cohesiveness on contemporary Japan has been the interminable fact for many centuries. In fact, the period leading up to the 1868 Meiji Restoration was one of chaos, factional fighting and, small scale civil war. See George M. Wilson, Patriots and Redeemers in Japan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) for an excellent analysis of the era. On the beginning of the Meiji Era, Wilson writes, “National goals took shape from deep-seated concerns about society’s capacity to control itself. It was not just a desire to emulate the West with its superior technology that occasioned the drive for change; it arose also from the hope of redeeming Japan from the danger of internal chaos (x).”

Chapter 7: The Case of Japan

The meaning of Japan's role in World War II, the assessment of the domestic political factors that led it into the conflagration, and the post-war implications of both have divided scholars since the end of the war. By the beginning of the Cold War, a curious division developed between scholars in Japan and those in the West. Although much attention has been given throughout the 1990s to Japan's right wing, nostalgic apologists who attempt to justify the excesses of the Imperial era, the indigenous post-WWII, Marxist-influenced scholars forged a striking unanimity around the idea that Japan was, indeed, in some significant way fascist.¹ This Marxist tradition is highly critical of Imperial Japan and the political and economic structures that produced Japanese fascism and imperialism. Conversely, from the beginning of the 1950s Western scholars of Japan (primarily American) almost uniformly rejected the notion that Japan had been fascist.² As we have seen, scholars of European fascism concur with this assessment. Indeed, the majority of the generic models explored herein refused to allow

¹ Maruyama Masao began arguing almost immediately after the end of the War that Imperial Japan was a fascist regime. For his early explanations see Maruyama Masao, "*Nippon Fashizumu no Shiso to Undo*," in the collection *Sonjo Shiso to Zettai shugi* (Tokyo University: *Toyo Bunka Kenkyujo*, *Hakujitsu Shoin*, 1948); quoted in Richard Storry, *The Double Patriots*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957): 37-8. Maruyama's most widely read work is *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963). Maruyama set the tone of the Japanese language debate for decades and his "fascism from above" thesis is still the standard by which, or against, all theories of Japanese fascism are tested.

² Gavan McCormack, "Nineteen-Thirties Japan: Fascism?", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14, no. 2 (April-June 1982): 28. McCormack's list of those English language scholars convinced of the inefficacy of the "fascist concept" in the case of Japan reads like a who's who of major scholars in the field including: George Wilson, James Crowley, Mark Peattie, Richard Smethurst, Gordon Berger, Ben-Ami Shillony, Peter Duus, and Daniel Okimoto. McCormack contrasts this list with the host of Japanese scholars who adopted or revised Maruyama's thesis, all still retaining the term fascism in some form.

that fascism was anything but a European phenomenon, thus limiting the scope of fascist ideology.

Building upon the foundation of the totalitarianism thesis, A. James Gregor attempted to expand that model to classify fascism as a mature, revolutionary ideology capable of instituting a program of modernization-*development*-through mass mobilization and institutional control. Gregor asserted for fascism a geopolitical scope that could encompass non-European political movements. Developmental dictatorship, the paradigmatic fascism established by Mussolini's Marxist heresy, states that fascist ideology became a template by which a host of Third World nations designed a scheme for rapid modernization.

Above all, Gregor emphasized in the developmental dictatorship model the economic praxis and modernizing purpose of fascist ideology. By definition, a nation with a fully developed industrial economy cannot produce a developmental dictatorship. Therefore, the industrial economy of inter-war Germany necessarily excludes National Socialism from his generic model.³ Inter-war Japan's relatively well developed industrial base, in spite of its limited resources, also fails to conform to Gregor's model. Indeed, Gregor never applies his model to Japan.

³ Although widely accepted, one wonders to what extent the post-Versailles demilitarization and economic collapse reversed the widespread pre-war industrialization Germany enjoyed. Diether Raff writes of the Weimar economy that "...it had already been severely damaged by inflation and had grown dependent on American capital by 1924," in A History of Germany, trans. by Bruce Little (Oxford, England: Berg, 1990), 255. Hitler was conscious of the economic uncertainty and used re-militarization and establishment of new industry to cut massive unemployment. It would not be difficult to argue that Germany also needed a "program of modernization" such as the developmental dictatorship model outlines.

While much of Gregor's model incites criticism, his failure to even consider Japan does not. Nazi Germany is more problematic, but Gregor's view does coincide with the views of many influential specialists. Eminent scholars like George Mosse, Renzo De Felice and Gilbert Allardyce all agree that significant differences between Italy and Germany warrant the categorical division of those two examples. Generally, though, Nazi Germany is regarded as part of, or congruent with, most generic models of fascism. The variations identified within fascism rest largely on differences of emphasis like race, anti-Semitism, and *Volkism*, rather than of structural forms such as the leader principle, use of a party organization for mass mobilization, and the use of political violence. Still, the propriety of disassociating Nazi Germany from Fascist Italy is debated in scholarly journals, but the question of whether or not Japan should be associated with its Axis allies remains largely ignored by the scholars who have studied fascism.

For the most part, the case of Japan has been the sole proprietorship of a select group of Japanese specialists. Since many scholars searching for a fascist minimum exclude Japan as a special case, not appropriate for comparison to European fascism, debate over Japanese fascism has remained largely contained within this community of Japanese-focused historians, sociologists, and political scientists.⁴ The cultural and historical differences between Japan and Europe, real and perceived, led to this

⁴ Gregory Kasza, "Fascism from Below?: A Comparative Perspective on the Japanese Right, 1931-1936," in *The Journal of Contemporary History* 19, no. 4 (October 1984): 607-29, compared the situation in Japan against Stanley Payne's complex set of characteristics (608-9). Kasza, taking a cue from Payne, divides the right-wing of 1930s Japan into four categories: violence oriented fascists, violence oriented radical rightists, non-violent conservative authoritarians, and non-violent renovationist authoritarians (625). Kasza's use of Payne's European-based model runs counter to Payne's own assessment of Japan, illustrating the degree to which Japan scholars remain sequestered from their colleagues and the difficulty of encapsulating all of the Axis Powers into a conceptual framework.

demarcation between Japan and other areas of focus. Therefore, the expansive search for a model of generic fascism, undertaken by a host of scholars from various disciplines and specialties, provided only a backdrop for the study of Imperial Japan.⁵ Thus, Japan scholars, much like Sinologists, preside over a distinct bailiwick. Non-specialists have generally respected the integrity of that academic border.

Contrary to such academic isolation, Japan's twentieth century engagement with the Western world calls into question the logic of viewing it as a special case.⁶ The absorption of various Western ideas about military structure, political institutions, scientific knowledge, and social institutions, typified Meiji Era Japan (1868-1912) and significantly influenced the subsequent decades.⁷ By the 1920s, such Western ideologies as liberalism and Marxism had undeniably impacted the new Japanese nation-state.⁸

⁵ James B. Crowley, "A New Asian Order: Some Notes on Prewar Japanese Nationalism," in Japan in Crisis, ed. Bernard S. Silberman and H.D. Harootunian (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), cites Japan's "distinctive racial-cultural hues" as the primary differentiating factors delineating Japanese nationalism vis-à-vis European fascism (271). Crowley flatly states, "Prewar Japan was not a fascist country" (270).

⁶ Hiroshi Tanaka, "Carl Schmitt and Fascism: Schmitt, Germany, and Japan," in Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies 22 (1990): 1-6, on the comparison of Japan with Europe writes, "In Japan...the impact of western political thought has been salient, particularly over the last hundred years or so, and Japan's political development can be understood from the stand point of European political ideas" (1).

⁷ Kentaro Hayashi, "Japan and Germany in the Interwar Period," in Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan, ed. James William Morley (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971), wrote, "Japanese intellectuals were very sensitive to European intellectual trends, and new ideas were rapidly introduced to Japan" (473). For a full discussion of the Meiji Era's governmental push to examine and utilize Western cultural and institutional structures and see Kenneth B. Pyle, The Making of Modern Japan (Lexington, KY: D.C. Heath and Company, 1966). In particular, Pyle explores the roles of the pro-Western intellectual, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) and an official mission of one-hundred Japanese leaders to the United States and Europe (1871-1873) in shaping the government's policies over the next four decades (83-5).

⁸ Kato Shuichi, "Taisho Democracy as the Pre-Stage for Japanese Militarism," in Japan in Crisis, illustrates the extent to which Marxism, although not an effective political movement, was adopted by intellectuals and could be substantively termed a "movement" (222-3). Hoston, "Tenko," in Polity, also explores the penetration of Marxism through Japanese intellectual culture. For an examination of the extent to which liberalism and democracy flourished in Japan see Sharon Minichiello, Retreat from Reform (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984). Minichiello found a number of reformers seeking and expansion of liberalism and democracy to cure social, political, and diplomatic ills (2-3). Of course, the Meiji Constitution was, at least in theory, a constitutional monarchy modeled on European examples.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the penetration of Western ideas into Japan, indeed throughout Asia, is striking.

In historical scholarship a similar conundrum prevails. The events of the last two centuries make the traditional East-West, or East versus West, cultural schism seem overdrawn. The student of modern Asian history knows that the much ballyhooed, late twentieth century process of globalization actually began in the last century with the Opium and Arrow Wars, unequal treaties, and colonization. In light of the late nineteenth century struggle of China and Japan to meet the challenge of the West, strict lines of demarcation often seem unwarranted. The case of “Japanese fascism” and the uncoordinated scholarly approach to it calls into question the continuation of this disjointed situation.

This unfortunate disjunction is particularly anomalous since many of the debates within the fraternity of Japan scholars mimic the debates found within the general mass of fascist scholarship. The Japanese fraternity grapples with Marxists and apologists (both real and accused), searches for *the* causal flaw, and compares Japan to other models and typologies.⁹ However, politics and semantics have had a slightly different effect upon the “fascism debates.” The division that developed between Japanese and English language scholarship is very much a reflection of the exigencies of the Cold War, but it also highlights the issues raised by the sudden alliance between a victorious power and a defeated one.

⁹ Kasza, “Fascism from Below,” Journal of Contemporary History, 607.

An examination of the cleavage between the two communities of Japan scholars provides a different angle from which to view the role of politics and semantics in post-WWII scholarship. The fact that the West retreated from the use of the term while those in Japan embraced it reflected the political needs of both. First, it is important to point out that while political exigencies usually do not supercede the practice of good research, political and semantic considerations seem unavoidable when the term fascism rears its head. Mark Peattie confronted these issues in his book about the fascinating Japanese right-wing ideologue, Ishiwara Kanji.¹⁰ In the Preface, Peattie writes:

For many years following the Japanese defeat in World War II, the most popular manner of historical judgement on Japan's turbulent decade prior to Pearl Harbor has been shaped by the "praise and blame" approach to history—a perspective from which evil forces of militarism, ultranationalism, and fascism were seen as crushing beleaguered elements of progress and democracy (liberal, socialist, or communist depending on the viewer's point of departure). Emotionally satisfying to both the victors of the war (in terms of self-gratification) and to the losers (in terms of now discredited systems and ideologies), this manner of history, although clear in the harshness of its judgement, has served to lay a blanket of vaporous stereotypes that have befogged our view of the political landscape of 1930s Japan.¹¹

Peattie accurately diagnosed the two political tendencies found in much of the scholarship concerning fascism. While he is concerned only with Japan, these same issues color both Italy's and Germany's historiography on the same period.

The Japanese, no less than their former Axis allies, faced both an historic challenge and a challenge of writing history. How would a historically proud, defeated power re-integrate its society, address the causes of the war, and cope with occupation?

¹⁰ Peattie, Ishiwara Kanji.

¹¹ Ibid., vii.

In post-war Japan, governed by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), tumultuous political and social divisions were exposed as the right and left each took turns jockeying for power. Although the left benefited initially from SCAP's policies, the conservative voices eventually rose above the din, in no small measure due to the growing role of anti-Communism and the Cold War in SCAP's decision making.¹² Ironically, the academy emerged from the initial Cold War shakeout relatively unscathed. In fact, Marxist academics, who had suffered during the 1920s and 1930s, were strengthened by Japan's defeat.¹³

Much like her former Axis allies, Japan faced the daunting task of explaining its immediate history to the Japanese people, to the victorious powers, and the world. The functional anti-fascism of Italy and Germany remained problematic in Japan, not least because the nation was still led, if only symbolically, by the Emperor Hirohito.¹⁴ Mussolini and Hitler died, and fascism's historical resonance could, with vigorous institutional and academic attacks, die with them. On the other hand, Japan's wartime national symbol, the Emperor, remained in place, literally and symbolically alive, but constitutionally impotent.

¹² For a full discussion of the left-right struggle during SCAP control of post-war Japan see J.W. Dower, Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954, (Cambridge: Harvard East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1979).

¹³ Ben-Ami Shillony, Revolt in Japan, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 215.

¹⁴ Of this post-war conundrum Ian Buruma writes, "Emperor Hirohito, the shadowy figure who changed after the war from navy uniforms to gray suits, was not personally comparable to Hitler, but his psychological role was remarkably similar. The Mitscherlichs described Hitler as 'an object on which Germans depended, to which they transferred responsibility, and he was thus an internal object.' As such, he represented and revived the ideas of omnipotence that we all cherish about ourselves from infancy. The same was true of the Japanese imperial institution, no matter who sat on the throne, a ruthless war criminal or a gentle marine biologist." The Wages of Guilt, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994): 173.

In the aftermath of Japan's surrender, the Emperor was ready to abdicate, a move that may have brought a greater sense of closure for the population, but SCAP was strongly against this for fear that it would open the door to communism.¹⁵ It is true that Japanese communist leaders often called for the Emperor's abdication and even for trying him as a war criminal, but there also is a long, Confucian tradition of leaders taking responsibility for failure by resigning.¹⁶ In retrospect, Gen. MacArthur's and Secretary of State Dean Acheson's concerns over the looming "communist menace" belies the war crimes rhetoric and SCAP policies of the immediate post-war period that had fanned the flames of war guilt within Japan.

SCAP's initially convoluted approach to both the left and the right is typified by the "Reverse Course" (1947-53). This was a period in which SCAP's immediate post-war "progressive" changes in labor policy and promotion of socialists, communists, and left-wing intellectuals gave way to the black-listing of leftists, purges of communists, a sudden rehabilitation of certain rightists (particularly those close to Yoshida Shigeru), alteration of previous labor policy, and concurrent promotion of corporate interests.¹⁷ The Reverse Course, along with the decision to retain the Emperor, made the problems associated with placing blame, identifying culprits, and explaining causes within the post-

¹⁵ John W. Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999): 328-9. Dower notes that, in fact, the Emperor was counseled by close advisors that abdication of the throne was the proper response to the surrender, thus assuming responsibility for the defeat. However, Gen. MacArthur and Secretary of State Dean Acheson were convinced that abdication would embolden both Japanese communists and the Soviets.

¹⁶ Stephen S. Large, Emperor Hirohito and Showa Japan: A Political Biography, (London: Routledge, 1992): 132-5.

¹⁷ See Dower, Embracing Defeat, 270-72. Dower points out that as the Japanese Communist Party and labor activists became ever more visible and emboldened by the election of JCP members to the Diet, the "Reverse Course" became increasingly more attractive to anti-communist elements within SCAP.

war context, indeed within the Cold War context, no less challenging for the Japanese than it was for Italians or Germans.

In fact, the challenge may have been greater for Japan since it was unclear exactly what kind of political phenomenon Imperial Japan had been, nor was it clear who had controlled it.¹⁸ For the Marxist-influenced scholars who were the least likely to have been associated with the pre-war order, fascism and anti-fascism offered, both politically and semantically, excellent models for explaining the causes of the War in the Pacific and a method for breaking with the past. Over time, however, their victorious foes assaulted the idea that Imperial Japan had been fascist and, within the prism of the Cold War, the picture of Japanese fascism would be obscured.

After Japan's surrender the left-wing intellectuals who had spent the previous two decades defying their government, eluding persecution, or hiding behind tacit cooperation emerged as a vocal, ethically empowered force within the academy. With Marxists firmly entrenched in Japanese academia, they had a relatively unobstructed opportunity to interpret the Imperial era. Of the assessments current during that period, the idea that Imperial Japan was fascist is not surprising. Marxist ideology offers an acute diagnosis of the socio-economic conditions that lead to political repression, imperialism, and social injustice.

¹⁸ In Buruma's, Wages of Guilt, he explored the tricky problem of war guilt in post-war Japan. On the issue of who or what to blame he wrote, "In Japan there was no Nazi Party to vote for, and the emperor never ran for election. The emperor didn't go away, nor was he demonized--except in very few circles. By changing from his military uniform into a businessman's suit after the defeat in 1945, and by escaping blame in the Tokyo trial, he became, quite literally, a symbol of his nation. His innocence was the innocence of the Japanese people; like their emperor, they had never been told what was going on. All they had ever wanted was peace. They had been tricked into going to war" (259).

In Japan, Maruyama Masao, a relatively moderate Marxist, became the leading advocate of the Japanese fascism thesis.¹⁹ Maruyama was one of the leading intellectuals of the post-war period who is regarded as the progenitor of modern political science in Japan.²⁰ Within Japanese Marxism, Maruyama's position eschewed radicalism and pure economic determinism in favor of a neo-idealistic reform of Marx's materialism.²¹ His neo-idealism, rejection of pure economic determinism, and his absolute insistence on the sacrosanctity of individual autonomy in society and politics spawned what came to be known as the "Modernist" school.²² It was a concept that was often attacked by traditional and radical Marxists as "elitist,"²³ a fact that illustrates the differences of opinion and methodology among Japanese leftist thinkers.²⁴

Nevertheless, Maruyama's theory of Japanese fascism greatly influenced the scholarship of his time and provides an excellent case in point against which to compare

¹⁹ For a full discussion of the Marxist influence in Japanese academia see Germaine Hoston, Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). In Chapter 9, Hoston explores the post-war debate between differing Marxist factions over the type and voracity of Japanese fascism and the difficulties of trying to explain Imperial Japan in the Cold War paradigm (261-3). Factions aside, Marxists of all stripes tended to agree that some form of fascism developed in Imperial Japan. The debates and schisms grew out of variations of interpretations, i.e. a crisis of monopoly capitalism, a reactionary bourgeois revolt. As such, Maruyama Masao provides an excellent starting point for understanding the Japanese historiography of the period. For a full discussion of Maruyama's intellectual evolution and influence in Japan see Rikki Kersten, Democracy in Postwar Japan: Maruyama Masao and the Search for Autonomy, (London: Routledge, 1996).

²⁰ Kersten, Democracy in Japan, 8.

²¹ Ibid., Kersten highlights Maruyama's desire to reform Marxism in favor of its idealist roots as a significant aspect of his overall theme of establishing a political-philosophical rationale for a societal shift away from radical communitarianism toward individual autonomy. Maruyama believed this was the key to establishing a post-war socio-political order that finally buried the pre-war fascism of the Imperial era (96-105).

²² Ibid., 117.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Andrew E. Barshay, in State and Intellectual in Imperial Japan, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), writes that the variation within post-war Japanese Marxism has been used by some as an example of the relative weakness of Marxism. However, he points out that despite the split between the modernist and historical materialist schools, Marxism *did* have a significant influence upon the politics and scholarship of the period (232-5).

his counterparts in the West. His thesis relies upon a Marxist principle and the idea that Japan represents a special case, or variant, of generic fascism. Maruyama notes that Japan failed to have a bourgeois revolution and thus differed from its Axis partners. The failure of bourgeois socio-political ascendancy, coupled with rapid modernization, stunted Japan's overall political development. Therefore, Japanese fascism had an essentially authoritarian structure already in place, one that was transformed into an emperor-system or military-bureaucratic form of fascism.²⁵

This stunted political structure offered a framework that eventually united "semi-feudal" bureaucratic power, "senior retainers," monopoly capital, and the fascistic political parties, and in doing so initiated full-fledged Japanese fascism.²⁶ When fascist revolutionaries from below failed to mobilize the masses, the authoritarian power structure adopted the fascist ideology of their critics and began a period of "fascism from above." He divides this process into three distinct periods of development: the "preparatory period", from 1919 to the Manchurian Incident; the "period of maturity", 1931-1936; and the "consummation period," 1936-1945.²⁷

Further, Japan's special status reflected the substantial structural differences between European and Japanese situations, including the failure of a significant mass movement to develop in Japan, the lack of a charismatic leader, and the constitutional continuity of the political structure. These basic differences from Italian Fascism and

²⁵ For a full discussion, see Maruyama, Thought and Behavior, 25-83.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 26-7.

German National Socialism provided ample cause to regard Japan as a “special case.”²⁸ Maruyama dealt with these anomalies by proposing that Japanese fascism was “fascism from above,” later referred to as bureaucratic fascism. In his model, the ideology and programs of “fascism from below,” an amorphous conglomerate group of right-wing dissenters of the late 1920s and early 1930s, were adopted by the ruling institutional structures shortly after the government crushed the movements, culminating with the February 26, 1936 Incident and the execution of Kita Ikki.²⁹ Maruyama, much like other Marxist interpreters, asserts that the failure of a charismatic leader to foment a revolutionary movement to overturn institutions does not necessarily indicate a non-fascist phenomenon. Two non-Marxist English language scholars, Richard Storry and Robert Scalapino, reflecting views popular in the immediate post-war period, agreed with the idea that Japan constituted a fascist regime, believing that the ruling structure effectively adopted the insurgent ideologies of nationalists and disgruntled soldiers.³⁰

Within Maruyama’s typology, “fascism from above” is merely one type of fascism found in the particular circumstances of pre-war Japan. If so, this indicates that

²⁸ These basic differences are also the main reason many English language scholars refuse to utilize fascism as a generic concept in the case of Japan. See Peter Duus and Daniel I. Okimoto, “Fascism and the History of Pre-War Japan: The Failure of a Concept,” in The Journal of Asian Studies 39, no. 1 (November 1979): 65-76; Miles Fletcher, “Intellectuals and Fascism in Early Showa Japan,” The Journal of Asian Studies 39, no. 1 (November 1979): 39-63; and Fletcher, The Search for a New Order: Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

²⁹ For the best study of the intersection between Kita Ikki and the February 26 uprising see George M. Wilson, Radical Nationalist in Japan: Kita Ikki, 1883-1937 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969). See also Shillony, Revolt in Japan.

³⁰ Heinz Lubasz, ed., Fascism: Three Major Regimes (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1973): 133-144. Lubasz includes articles by Storry and Scalapino along with excerpts from Kita Ikki, General Araki, Konoe Fumimaro, and Maruyama Masao. Despite the implications of the book’s title, Lubasz did include an article by John King Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M. Craig, Japan: Fascist or Militarist?, that argues that Japan was significantly different from Germany and was, at worst, a militarist regime, not a fascist regime.

peculiar types of fascism emerge within a larger category of fascism. This idea occurs throughout models of generic fascism. Stanley Payne, among others, allows for variation within the typology; an explicit recognition that ideas affect societies differently. However, this has not led Payne or his colleagues to thus explain the case of Japan as a variant of fascism. Yet for a Marxist-influenced scholar like Maruyama this variation allows one to categorize Japan with her Axis allies. Non-Marxists such as Storry and Scalapino also asserted a Japanese fascism thesis before the more positive, Cold War revision of Japan's pre-war development, known as the Modernization School, was established as a challenge to this idea.

Most importantly, Maruyama established a semantically flexible concept of Japanese fascism able to take on different characteristics, including bureaucratic fascism, fascism from above, or Emperor-system fascism.³¹ While Maruyama had a profound effect on scholarship in Japan by providing a useful model for explaining Imperial Japan's fascist associations and affinities, he had little long-term success convincing most

³¹ George Macklin Wilson, "A New Look at the Problem of Japanese Fascism," in Comparative Studies in Society and History 10, no. 4 (July 1968): 401-412, identifies two other Japanese scholars, Ishida Takeshi and Hata Ikuhiko, who propose these permutations of Japanese fascism. English language scholars willing to entertain the idea of Japanese fascism also utilize these permutations. See Herbert Bix, "Rethinking 'Emperor-System Fascism': Ruptures and Continuities in Modern Japanese History," in The Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 14, no. 2 (April-June 1982): 2-19.

of his Western colleagues.³² Indeed, Maruyama even faced criticism from a Western Marxist historian, Gavan McCormack, who cited his undialectical analysis of the interaction between “fascism from below” and “fascism from above,” his cloudy definitions of fascist characteristics, and his imprecise categorization of petty bourgeois pseudo-intellectuals, various tradesmen, and low level bureaucrats into the same social strata.³³ However, the strongest challenge to the Japanese fascism thesis did not come from other Marxists or Japanese critics, but rather from across the Pacific.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, several factors encouraged the burgeoning community of non-Marxist American scholars of Japan to reject Maruyama’s theory. To start with, American scholars did not experience the police state tactics often used by the Imperial government to persecute intellectual enemies and, thus, did not share Maruyama’s principled anti-fascism. Additionally, the traditional particularism of Asian scholars, almost certainly influenced by a tradition of Western orientalism³⁴ and their own personal absorption in study of Japanese culture, held firmly to the view that Japan’s uniqueness made it a special case. As such, Imperial Japan was not comparable with European models of fascism and they rejected Maruyama’s suggestion that “Japanese

³² Ibid., Wilson stated that “...there should be no need to qualify fascism in Japan as something distinctly different” (406). Gregory Kasza, “Fascism from Below,” in The Journal of Contemporary History, prefers Stanley Payne’s precise typology to Maruyama’s amorphous concepts (606-7). Peter Duus and Daniel I. Okimoto, “Fascism and the History of Pre-War Japan: The Failure of a Concept,” in The Journal of Asian Studies 39, no. 1 (November 1979): 65-76, believe that Maruyama simply refuses to admit the obvious conceptual progression his scholarship leads to, that Japan is “so dissimilar that it is meaningless to speak of Japan...as fascist” (66). Miles Fletcher, “Intellectuals and fascism in Early Showa Japan,” in the same issue of The Journal of Asian Studies, uses the failed ideological appeals of three Japanese philosophers who were fascists to illustrate the ultimate failure of fascism as a movement, let alone as a governmental system (39-63).

³³ McCormack, “Nineteen-Thirties Japan,” in Bulletin, 29.

³⁴ Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978) is the seminal critical analysis of the long Western cultural tradition of regarding the East as exotic, feminine, and fundamentally different.

fascism” was essentially variation of fascism. George M. Wilson found the early emphasis on comparing pre-war Japan to European models misguided, preferring to compare Japan to other non-Western examples in Asia and Africa.³⁵ Wilson proposed an idea strangely similar to developmental dictatorship, that Japan was a forerunner of late modernization throughout the Third World.³⁶ Although he may not have accepted Wilson’s modernization thesis, Mark Peattie did explicitly agree with him that fascism is not a conceptually viable model for understanding pre-war Japan.³⁷

While orientalism and the uniqueness of the Japanese case account for some of the new disassociation of Japanese with her Axis allies and the unwillingness to concede that Imperial Japan as a fascist regime, yet another factor played a crucial role in the English language historiography of the period in question. The wholesale rejection of the term fascism, despite the best efforts of Maruyama to create a malleable typology, reflected the exigencies of a powerful and profound paradigm: the left-right conflict of the Cold War. Moreover, the other dominant paradigm of the historiography of fascism, anti-fascism, never came into play among English language scholarship, because the Marxists were only real anti-fascists in pre-war Japan.

Although the Tokyo War Crimes Trial focused blame on a group of “conspirators,” the desire to assign blame to a host of fascist characters or demagogic leaders never occupied a central role as it did in the historiography of Italy and Germany. The question of blame was more problematic in Japan. In the wake of the Reverse

³⁵ Wilson, “A New Look,” in Comparative Studies, 409.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Peattie, Ishiwara Kanji, 254.

Course, the retention of the Emperor, and the coming of the Cold War the rehabilitated pre-war bureaucrats and politicians became integral parts of the Occupation strategy. As a result of the change in SCAP's policies the history of Imperial Japan was politicized and exposed a rift between Japanese and Western scholars.

This rift was exposed by what has come to be known as the "Modernization School." The intellectual father of the Modernization School was Edwin O. Reischauer, a one-time Ambassador to Japan and long-time scholar of Japanese history.³⁸ The "Modernization theory" proposed by Reischauer and taken up by a host of other Western scholars attempted to undercut the Marxist analyses so popular among Japanese scholars. In short, the underlying idea was to link economic output, growth, and technological advances with capitalism without explicitly using the term capitalism.³⁹ The process of "modernization" is characterized as one of great progress, dating from the late Tokugawa period up to the beginning of WWII.⁴⁰ It specifically aimed at countering the influential work of Canadian diplomat and Marxist historian E.H. Norman. Norman's assessment of the Late Tokugawa period and subsequent Meiji Restoration rejected the common *sui generis* classification of Japan, and he regarded the transition from the former to the latter as a preservation of the oppressive autocracy.⁴¹ Up to and throughout the Occupation, Norman was, both in Japan and in the West, one the most influential Western historians

³⁸ E. H. Norman, The Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writing of E.H. Norman, ed. John W. Dower (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975). In his Introduction, Dower singles out Reischauer's stated goal of developing a "counter-model to radicalism" that would explain to the Japanese a capitalist-based theory of development (45-6).

³⁹ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 10-11.

of Japan.⁴² He popularized a Marxist analysis of the Meiji Restoration that regarded it as an incomplete revolution that preserved aspects of the feudal structure.⁴³ This analysis provided a logical explanation for the political problems of 1930s Japan.

In response, Reischauer had taken the Japanese uniqueness idea as the foundation for an anti-Marxist theory of development. Because Asia's persistent feudalism differed so significantly from industrialized Europe, which fit European development so well into a Marxist analysis, the study of Asian history could, as John W. Dower states, "contribute to a new and counter-Marxist theory of development."⁴⁴ In yet another twist, the infamous "loss of China" to communism forced Reischauer to alter his argument, thus removing feudalistic China and emphasizing the need to propagate an ideology of development in Japan that would lead Japan into the "right system."⁴⁵

Reischauer's influence on his fellow Western scholars was as strong and lasting as it was ideological. In an initial response to Reischauer's efforts, Marius Jansen sought to promote a "more positive" view of the last century of Japanese history.⁴⁶ He avoided politically loaded terms like "autocracy" or "absolutism", de-emphasized Japan's role in the war by explaining the 1930s as a "detour" along the path to modernization, and focused intensely on the vast technological change initiated by Japan's contact with the West.⁴⁷ Robert M. Spaulding's analysis, written in the early 1980s, epitomized both the

⁴² Ibid., 33.

⁴³ Ibid., 19-20

⁴⁴ Ibid., 45.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 55.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 57

crux of modernization theory and its persistence over the years.⁴⁸ Spaulding refers to Japan during the 1930s as a “unique” period of “ultranationalism”(not “fascism”) in which the “vagueness of State Shinto” offered an ideological rationale for any policy the government might adopt.⁴⁹ This flaw in the political system produced the pseudo-imperialist actions in Manchuria(1931) and beyond. He argues that this was quite unlike the “partly defensive” wars prior to the 1930s—with China(1894-5) and Russia(1904-5)—in which Japan was not “asserting a claim to hegemony but imitating her European competitors in a age of imperialism.”⁵⁰

Further, Spaulding asserts that Japan’s military campaigns in China were spurred by a perceived duty to rescue China from itself, Japan’s fear of communism, and its sense of Asian pride.⁵¹ Spaulding concludes by pointing to the post-WWII success of democracy and capitalism in Japan, its pacifism (although he points out that the aggressive stance of the 1930s is “irrelevant in today’s greatly altered world”), and its preservation of traditional values as further proof that the ultranationalism of the 1930s was an “aberration.”⁵² Throughout, Spaulding relentlessly compared the progress of Japan with the “totalitarian” tendencies of Maoist China, thus drawing a clear distinction between the two models of development.

⁴⁸ Robert M. Spaulding, “Detour Through a Dark Valley,” in Japan Examined, eds. Harry Wray and Hillary Conroy (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1983): 252-7.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 252-3.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 252.

⁵¹ Ibid., Spaulding identifies “five lines of Japanese thought” that led it into a conflict with China including: geographical proximity to China, the injurious effects of China’s mismanagement of its resources on *both* Japan and China, the Japanese duty to develop and govern all of Asia, a desire to secure “Asia of the Asians” by pushing out Westerners, and a China-focused anti-communism (254-5).

⁵² Ibid., 256-7.

When the modernization theory first reached Japan in the 1950s it was not readily embraced by Japanese academics. American academics, however, went on the offensive in advocating a new interpretation of Imperial Japan. Ronald Dore, among others, attacked those Japanese scholars unwilling to adopt modernization theory as “backwards” and clinging to ideas of the past.⁵³ Indeed, over time some Japanese scholars began to adopt modernization theory as a model for understanding the history of modern Japan, but many like Maruyama continued to reject it as a tacit approval of the pre-war order and its excesses, and ultimately a threat to future political progress.⁵⁴ For twenty years after the appearance of the Modernization School, progressive historians assailed, often futilely, what was known as the “Reischauer Line” and its rosy portrayal of the Meiji Restoration as “peaceful, pragmatic, and a nonrevolutionary revolution from above.”⁵⁵

Maruyama Masao viewed these developments with a critical eye, ever wary of the possibility that the pre-war order would be resurrected and the issue of responsibility for the war would fade as the Reverse Course re-instituted much of the very system that the victorious Allies had supposedly smashed.⁵⁶ Maruyama regarded Cold War anti-reform agenda as the preservation of the pre-war system, which only convinced him further that Japan’s brand of fascism was dynamic and able to adapt to changing circumstances.⁵⁷ Essentially, the Modernization School developed into an historiographical adjunct to the Cold War policies that shaped post-war Japan, particularly after the coming of the Korean

⁵³ Norman, Origins, ed. Dower, 55.

⁵⁴ J. Victor Koschmann, “Intellectuals and Politics,” in Postwar Japan as History, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993): 413.

⁵⁵ Carol Gluck, “The Past in the Present,” in Postwar Japan, ed. Gordon, 80.

⁵⁶ Kersten, Democracy in Japan, 133.

War.⁵⁸ The political program of the Reverse Course lowered an ivory curtain between Japan's left-wing academics and their Western counterparts. Ironically, the theme of Maruyama's theory of Japanese fascism—that Japanese history was unique—would be popular among Western scholars even though ultimately his formulation of fascism failed to create any significant consensus.⁵⁹

To their credit, most English language scholars have consistently approached the problem of Japanese fascism armed with the parameters established by their colleagues in the field of generic fascism. The peculiarity of the Japanese case brought them into agreement with one of the only fundamental agreements found in nearly all models of generic fascism: that Japan should not be compared to her Axis allies.⁶⁰ Interestingly, scholars of pre-war Japan tend to examine Japan's relationship with its Axis allies (particularly the influence of Italy and Germany on Japan) more closely than scholars focused on Italy, Germany, or generic fascism. An examination of the indexes of many works concerning the rise of fascism, both generally or nation-specific, yielded a surprising result. The vast majority of works on European fascism do not have even a single reference to "the Axis," nor do they mention the Tripartite Pact.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Ibid., 155.

⁵⁸ In his widely read survey of modern Japanese history, Reischauer treats this period somewhat differently, viewing the so-called Reverse Course as a natural change in SCAP's policymaking as they had completed what they had set out to do during the initial phase of the Occupation. Edwin O. Reischauer, The Japanese (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977): 111.

⁵⁹ Norman, Origins of the Modern Japanese State, ed. Dower, 83.

⁶⁰ Carol Gluck points out in "The Past in the Present," in Postwar Japan, that the idea of a "deviant modernity" that became popular in post-war Germany as an explanation for the "disastrous divergence from the West" never challenged the Modernization School. This was despite the fact that "the two countries had not only fascism, aggression, and defeat in common but also the temporal proximity of their modernization and its perceived denouement in war" (80).

The association of Japan with Italy and Germany does suffer from some basic problems: the lack of a Japanese fascist-style party; the absence of a Japanese charismatic leader; and the overall constitutional continuity of pre-war Japan. These are all very important arguments against Japanese fascism. However, there are also many examples of similarities among the three Axis powers. The same crises, the same longing for Great Power status, the drive to imperialism, and the same spiritual collectivism is found in all three nations. Obviously, something brought these three nations together. It is easy to claim it was merely convenience, but that is a superficial assessment applicable to all military, political, or economic alliances. Japan was militaristic, experienced a period of mass mobilization and social coordination (certainly for war and empire, if nothing else) led by an elite, propagated an idealized national consciousness, and aligned itself with two nations of similar orientation. The degree of continuity Japan shared with its Axis partners implies a need for a conceptual framework that accounts for this phenomenon. While the differences are clear, the similarities are striking. Understanding the commonalities may provide a key to understand the history of all three of the Axis powers.

Faced with a complex Cold War paradigm and the difficult problems of war guilt, Western scholars have embraced Japan as different to avoid painting it with the ugly word fascism. Paul Brooker avoided the semantic pitfalls of bringing Japan into the same model of fascism as Italy and Germany by employing Gregor's tactic in creating an

⁶¹ This examination included all of the books used herein, with a startling twenty-nine books lacking an index reference to the Axis. The discussion of fascism in journals reflects a similar lack of attention paid to the meaning of the Axis as an historical phenomenon.

entirely different term, Fraternalism.⁶² Another popular term for the period in question is Japanism.⁶³ Conversely, many Japanese scholars willingly identify Imperial Japan as fascist, perhaps to delineate pre-war Japan from post-war Japan. If Japan was in some way fascist and if that fascism has been overcome, overthrown, and discarded, post-war Japan is, therefore, different from pre-war Japan. If not, then what significant differences are there between pre and post-war Japan? Like Italy and Germany, by embracing a form of anti-fascism, the war guilt of the era could be assuaged through a total rejection of a failed ideology. This was the crux of Maruyama's theory of Japanese fascism, but his attempt was frozen in the glacial movements of the Cold War. Still, to this day, the question of Japan's war guilt hangs over parts of Asia.

The infamous Rape of Nanking, the torture and biological experimentation conducted by Unit 731, the experiences of POWs (particularly British POWs), and the experiences of Korean comfort women, imply a level of brutality and "evil" often associated with European fascism.⁶⁴ Who or what to blame was the problem. Consequently, Japan, which became an ally so quickly and completely after the war, had

⁶² Paul Brooker, The Faces of Fraternalism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). Brooker's thesis centers on a sociological interpretation of the militarism and nationalism of Italy, Germany, and Japan. Essentially, Brooker argues that these three nations dealt with the social dislocations of industrialization by developing what Emil Durkheim called mechanical solidarity, the institutional creation of "sacred fraternal belief systems," intended to resolve the conflict between individual liberty and social cohesion.

⁶³ Among others, Gordon Mark Berger, Parties Out of Power in Japan, 1931-1941 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), terms the radical right-wing as Japanists (75); and Leslie Russell Oates, Populist Nationalism, uses the terms Japanism and ultranationalism.

⁶⁴ This is but one of the ironies that typify the Occupation and conversion of Japan into a staunch ally of American democracy. When Japan was the last remaining Axis power standing, Gen. George Marshall stated in a War Department film *On To Tokyo* that Japanese "barbarism" during the war "exceeded that of Nazi Germany," even though the horrors of the concentration camps had been widely known. See Dower, Embracing Defeat, 213-4.

to undergo a psychological change of immense proportions. So, too, did West Germany and Italy.

In the crucible of the Cold War, three former enemies of Western Civilization and democracy quickly became the steadfast allies of their conquerors. The turnabout, coupled with a palpable loss of sovereignty under a newly instituted American protectorate, demanded a stern rejection of the immediate past. Generations had to turn their backs on the years of socialization that had guided them through great imperial successes and bleak wartime tribulations. The military might that destroyed Dresden and Hiroshima became, almost overnight, a security blanket against the new evil-communism. The difficulties of embracing the bitter realities of defeat, assigning blame for excesses at home and abroad, and, perhaps tangentially, defining generic fascism should be hardest for those most closely associated to it. Yet, in the case of Japan, those who lived through it were most willing to embrace it. Perhaps they looked once again to their former Axis allies to find a mechanism or a model for exorcising the demons of the past. As in Italy and Germany, Japanese Marxists and anti-fascists led the way.

Chapter 8: Conundrums, Conclusions, and the Axis Paradigm

If the historiography of fascism could be summed up in a single word, that word would be “unresolved.” So many issues remain open to debate, engaged by a considerable number of schools and interpretations from various disciplines and sub-disciplines, that any serious examination of the vast scholarship can leave one breathless and befuddled. In a seemingly endless process, the central questions of what historical fascism *was* and what the rise of fascism *means*, continue to inspire new models.

The historiography that grew out of the pursuit of answers to those questions is, itself, an important avenue for further study. Unlike the study of many other historical phenomena, examinations of fascism exposed a host of issues: the viability of “contemporary history,” the role of politics in the writing of history, the inherent imprecision of semantic arguments, the efficacy of historical models, and the dogmatic use of a philosophy of history. Moreover, each of these issues underscores the difficulties faced in reaching a consensus in the immediate aftermath of globally significant, thus geopolitical, events and the role paradigms play in establishing conventions by which history is written.

The continuing lack of a broad conceptual framework that accounts for variations while preserving the historical context impedes scholars’ ability to undertake comparative studies of interrelated personalities, nations, and events. The absence or dissolution of broad conceptual agreement invites intense specialization and disconnects the lines of

conversation between those concerned with the same subject. Those lines of communication are further impaired when variations of interpretation are institutionalized into full-fledged schools. The cycle is perpetuated as each "school" adopts political and semantic fetishes that become ever more difficult to transcend, thus building the walls of division even higher. Eventually, dogmatism reigns over a confederation of tiny kingdoms, each engaged in an undeclared war (although sometimes engaged unabashedly) with their neighbors.

While, at first, this description of a postmodern landscape may seem melodramatic and, perhaps, overdrawn, the writing of history over the last fifty years has evolved (or devolved, depending on one's perspective) into a loose confederation of distinct specialties. As the recent decline in popularity of diplomatic history exemplifies, losing a battle with another specialty frequently produces unfortunate consequences. These battles can be dismissed as the result of fads, momentary fashions that capture the fancy of scholars hungry for the prestige of employing newfound expertise, or inspired by the opportunity to break new ground. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, the historian's primary task is to understand events with a measure of objectivity, and to collate disparate data and conflicting viewpoints into a coherent, historically congruent analysis. Comprehensive histories, overarching theses, and generalizations have been pushed to the fringe by specialization. Specialization has, in the meantime, made incredible contributions by filling gaps in knowledge throughout the historical corpus. The real challenge is to marry the two through a mechanism that produces consensus.

The increasing popularity of specialization in history, indeed in all of the social sciences, mimics a similar phenomenon in another sector of the academic world, the so-called "hard" sciences. In the sciences, the original delineations between biologists, physicists, geologists, and chemists have, over the last hundred years, broken down into smaller and smaller subspecies. Often geneticists working with mitochondrial DNA have no idea what entomologists working with ants or biochemists involved in fertility research think about ecological issues. It is a problem that the renowned biologist Edward O. Wilson addressed in his book Consilience.¹ Lack of coordination and interdisciplinary communication often leads to the obfuscation of important issues, unintentionally causing like-minded scholars to work at cross-purposes.²

The analogy between science and social science stretches beyond a mere resemblance of nomenclature. History, still perhaps balancing on a theoretical cusp between the humanities and the social sciences, has, much like psychology, sociology, and demography, been incontrovertibly affected by the nineteenth century penetration of the sciences into all aspects of human endeavor. One need look no further than the 150-year persistence of Marxist analysis to find evidence of scientific methodology in history.

¹ Edward O. Wilson, Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge (New York: Knopf, 1998). Wilson's central thesis is that slowly, but quite surely, science is working towards a re-unification of the various specialties, bringing together a critical mass of knowledge that will open countless new vistas for humankind. The driving force, says Wilson, is the growing recognition across disciplines that all things are ultimately definable at the subatomic level.

² See Paul R. and Anne H. Ehrlich, Betrayal of Science and Reason (Covelo, California: Shearwater Books, 1996), for examples of the negative consequences that emerge from an uncoordinated effort by scientists of various disciplines. In this case, the Ehrlichs lament the inability of a vast community of scientists to make a concerted effort to educate the general population about various environmental crises. In the vacuum created by an absence of inter-disciplinary coordination, other interested parties have been able to lead the debate away from a core of scientific findings that most scientists actually agree upon. The affect of specialization has been to keep scientists disconnected from one another and unaware of issues in other disciplines.

While it may be doubtful that Marxist analyses indeed warrant a comparison to the scientific method, one need not question the scientific roots of Karl Marx's interpretation of history.³

Indeed, since the late eighteenth century, economics, the dismal science, has influenced history like no other discipline, save biology. Beginning with the publication of Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations (1776), and on through the works of Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo, political economy became *the* scientific interpretation of human history. By the middle of the nineteenth century contrarian thinkers like Robert Owen, Karl Marx, Charles Fourier, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill had mounted a powerful challenge to political economy and contributed the ideology of socialism. Each had adopted scientific terminology and methodologies, as had their political economist counterparts, in an effort to clarify the course of human history. By the time Charles Darwin published Origin of Species (1859), history had already been widely regarded as a function of scientific knowledge. However, the theory of evolution expanded that notion, flavoring historical studies with the biological determinism that would dominate

³ R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of History (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1956) traced the development of historical rationalism from Hegel through to Marx, who married economics with Hegel's rationalism to create a scientifically oriented philosophy of history (122-4). Collingwood also explores the impact of positivism on the writing of history, which implored historians to find facts and minute details and then ascertain the laws by which those facts came into being (126-8). Auguste Comte led the charge of positivism into the field of history, regarding it more as natural science than prosaic art (128). By the end of the century, both Marx's historical materialism and positivism's effect on history were enhanced by the increasingly influential theory of evolution. About the synergistic affects of these nineteenth century ideas Collingwood writes, "The effect of this discovery [evolution] was to vastly increase the prestige of historical thought. Hitherto the relation between historical and scientific thought...had been antagonistic. History demanded for itself a subject-matter essentially progressive: science, one essentially static. With Darwin, the scientific point of view capitulated to the historical, and now both agreed in conceiving their subject-matter as progressive. Evolution could now be used as a generic term covering both historical progress and natural progress. The victory of evolution in scientific circles meant that the positivistic reduction of history to nature was qualified by a partial reduction of nature to history" (129).

the next 100 years. Some like Herbert Spencer applied the newly current theory to whole populations of people (the so-called races) and nations. Social Darwinism became a ready-made explanation and rationale for the historical dominance of one people over another. Biological determinism and economic determinism dominated history and the writing of history. Economics and biology have worked simultaneously to effect a historiographical paradigm shift and shape the historical enterprise in the latter half of the nineteenth and throughout the twentieth centuries, making it nearly impossible to write history without referring to these two scientific interlopers. As a result, science and history have become so inexorably intertwined that it is rare that one find history classified as anything but a sub-discipline of social science.

The role of science in the writing of history and the explosion of specialization within the discipline are no small matters. Although at first the comparison contorts traditionally divided segments of scholarship, the similarities between the evolution of both offers a key insight into the historiographical questions at hand. A major paradigm shift in the interpretation of fascism began in the mid-1960s with the publishing of Ernst Nolte's Three Faces of Fascism. By 1969, A. James Gregor had offered a fully re-evaluated concept of historical fascism and fascist ideology, which challenged the dominant notions about the sources and meaning of a painful and recent episode in world history. As such, Gregor accelerated a process, indeed dislodged from its cracked moorings a well-constructed paradigm of fascist studies built first and foremost upon political anti-fascism.

Gregor was not the first, nor the last, to push the paradigm away from its post-war foundations, but he created a model that radically altered the conceptual framework and made it nearly impossible to engage the subject without engaging his thesis on some level. Since publishing his last book on the subject, Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship, in 1979, the scholarship's overall trend away from both Marxist and liberal-capitalist anti-fascism accelerated. While most have disagreed with the terms of his model, many have continued the process of defining a paradigmatic fascism that takes account of its intellectual, ideological roots, revolutionary praxis, and underlying idealism. After five decades, both the liberal-capitalist anti-fascist paradigm and dogmatic Marxism (itself inherently anti-fascist), finally stand as relics of a previous era. Of course, one should be wary of misplaced nostalgia or uncritical apologias. Scholars must exile self-serving neo-Nazis and the blatantly frivolous arguments of those who deny the Holocaust to the furthest fringes of any debate. However, the monumental shift in the historiography of fascism over the last three decades has opened the way for more objective analyses of both historical fascism and the vast scholarship that followed WWII.

An excellent concept for understanding paradigm shifts comes from Thomas S. Kuhn's groundbreaking work, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.⁴ Although Kuhn, originally trained as a physicist, does not address the writing of history per se, he does address the way in which the history of science evolved and how it was perceived

⁴ Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

historically. Nonetheless, his theory of scientific revolutions posits a model for understanding how the historical discipline and the historiography of fascism have evolved over the last one-and-a-half centuries. In particular, the structure of the change in the historiography of fascism provides an excellent case in point for the writing of history generally, despite the unusually contentious debates it has inspired. Although it is arguable whether or not the change has been *revolutionary*, the shift over the last three decades has certainly been significant.

Kuhn's basic model of revolutionary change in science explored how changes in governing paradigms, the fundamental concepts about the universal order of things, occur and then affect scientific inquiry. Kuhn argued that science is not the accumulation of truths and theories from neutral facts, but rather that science is a social activity reflective of governing world-views. Scientists often work diligently to solve puzzles, fill in gaps in knowledge, and construct congruent theories, but this pursuit of "normal science" depends upon a set of assumptions about the order of things. Kuhn asserts that major changes in science, *revolutionary* changes, occur when a new paradigm is chosen out of a presupposition of rationality, not because of the inevitability of that rationality. Revolutions are often inspired by crises in knowledge; problems emerge in the traditional practice of science that cannot be resolved by the existing governing paradigm. The ability to predict outcomes based on new paradigms usually leads to the triumph of new over old.

Kuhn's essential idea is that the structure of scientific inquiry is not entirely rational and, therefore, scientific knowledge is not somehow reflective of a knowledge

wholly outside of the social, human context. Revolutionary change occurs when governing paradigms are challenged by new ideas that do not conform to prevailing assumptions. At the point of revolution, a new governing paradigm is assumed, and “normal science” resumes within that new paradigm. In the field of history, we can observe similar changes. The widespread reliance upon a governing paradigm—e.g., Marxism, feminism, or psychohistory—reflects the interaction between the pursuit of history and the interaction of historians with society. In fact, writing history is a social activity. Over the last one-and-a-half centuries, particularly since the revolutionary effect of Hegel’s philosophy of history, history has operated under various paradigms: history as progress and positivism, dialectical materialism, Marxist feminism, free-market materialism, etc.⁵

Within the last decade, the historical enterprise has seen one of the most influential governing paradigms—Marxism—overturned. In no small part, the waning of Marxism reflects the social and geopolitical exigencies of writing history. The crisis came not from the ineffectual nature of Marxist analysis, but from the failure of the governing paradigm to predict social and political outcomes. These, like the wobble of distant stars to astronomers and the sub-atomic actions of quarks to physicists, are the data that matter most to historians, political scientists, and to social science as a whole. The latest attempt to promote a governing paradigm, triumphalist capitalism, signifies yet

⁵ For an excellent discussion of the various theories and models that have proliferated over the last one-and-a-half centuries see Peter Burke, History and Social Theory (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). Burke refers to the communication between historians and sociologists as “a dialogue of the deaf” in which each side ignores the other, unwilling to see the mutual interest each shares and the possibility of freeing the other from their parochialism (2-3).

another shift in world-view that sets the terms for the conduct of “normal history.”⁶ The mechanism described by Kuhn is, itself, the triumph of a particular paradigm: Post-modern relativism. However, the mechanism proposes a comprehensible motive for change, one mimicked by the governing paradigms of history.

Kuhn’s structural analysis explains much of the process of change in the historiography of fascism. The immediate post-war scholarship on fascism reflected a governing paradigm built on social and political realities. Pervasive anti-fascism, the dominance of Marxism, the refutation of fascist ideology, and the rejection of its historical roots in the Western tradition, all reflected a paradigm of victory and the need to sever ties to the past. The Cold War accelerated this process, with both sides of victorious materialism branding each other with the fascist label. The explanations of fascism elucidated the governing rationale of both systems, each characterizing the other as somehow connected to fascism in deed and ideology, and each characterizing itself as embodying *the* triumph over fascism.

The problem was harder to resolve in “the West,” where Italy, Germany, and Japan were transformed almost overnight into steadfast bastions of liberalism and capitalism. Perhaps for this reason Marxism assumed the upper hand in identifying fascism as a “Rightist” ideology. By the mid-1950s, the Right shot back with the theory of totalitarianism and its comparison of Stalin with Hitler and Mussolini. For both, the

⁶ Francis Fukuyama’s, The End of History and the Last Man (New York: Avon Books, 1992), is a well argued treatise on the post-Cold War victory of free-market, liberal democracy. Although his optimism is often measured by his suspicion of relativism, Fukuyama asserts a belief that human progress and history are culminating with the triumph of liberalism. Thus, the historical paradigm he proposes postulates the end of the previous struggles within materialism and the triumph of classical liberal ideas.

general governing paradigm demanded that fascism be associated with reactionary, anti-progressive forces, fundamentally non-revolutionary in praxis, anti-modern in purpose, and wholly contradictory to the idea that history is progress.

As we have seen, Ernst Nolte opened the door by uncovering fascism's long philosophical tradition. By the late 1960s, the paradigm came under attack, and A. James Gregor began a decade-long assault on the accepted notions for understanding the history of fascism. Developmental dictatorship countered Marxism, established fascism's revolutionary praxis, and, in so doing, undermined simplistic anti-fascism. Despite the efforts of those still conducting normal history, Gregor continued to refine developmental dictatorship, arguing further that fascism's radicalism was *the* influential political movement of the twentieth century. Renzo De Felice's massive, multi-volume biography of Mussolini furthered the disruption of the dominant paradigm. Gregor, though, had the biggest impact upon Anglo-American scholars.

Whether one agrees with his conclusions or not, Gregor proposed a concept of fascism totally outside of the traditional paradigm. He owes much to Barrington Moore, Nolte, and even George Mosse, but Gregor ventured much further. His model created an entirely new interpretation of fascism and he attacked the idea that radicalism was solely the bailiwick of the Left, that revolutionary progress could not be found in fascist ideology, and that fascism ran afoul of modernization. Roger Griffin believes that Gregor's contributions to a "new consensus" are significant, but that "idiosyncrasies" make his model ineffectual for general research, a point on which we agree.⁷

⁷ Griffin, ed., International Fascism, 14-5.

Griffin displays a great deal of optimism about the development of fascist historiography over the last one-and-a-half decades, citing the work of Stanley Panye, Roger Eatwell, and Robert O. Paxton as examples. The reason for this movement is clear. No longer does one need to prove anti-fascist credentials, either from the Left or the Right, by incriminating all ideas associated with fascism. Griffin writes, "...contributors to fascist studies are finally in a position to treat fascism like any other political ideology rather than as a 'special case' in which its negations or the apparatus and style of exercising power when it is implemented become paramount."⁸ Griffin is less convincing when it comes to proposing the structure of the new paradigm. He points to the horizon, a consensus that fascism constituted a viable, fully recognizable ideology, but does not speculate on the implications of this new vista. Really, Griffin's "consensus" merely verifies that studying fascism long meant operating within the Cold War paradigm, a paradigm that governed the globe for nearly fifty years. Historical conundrums about fascism remain ever present. The search for a fascist minimum moves ever forward.

If we look back to Kuhn, one of the important aspects of shifting paradigms rests on the ability of some of those pursuing "normal science," or for our purposes "normal history," to presuppose previously unaccounted-for dynamics within a given set of assumptions, in order to make "discoveries." To be sure, the 1960s were a period of "discovery" in fascist historiography. Once the presupposition of fascism's coherent ideology emerged, scholars like Gregor marched through the opening, formulating new models and theories. Unfortunately, Gregor, De Felice, and Payne, among others, rely on

⁸ Ibid., 15.

strict models and lists of characteristics that either exclude regimes clearly related to Fascist Italy (i.e. Nazi Germany) or refuse to allow that fascism could be anything but a European phenomenon.

Interestingly, most theories of generic fascism and studies on the rise of fascism exhibit a blind spot in regard to the *meaning* of the Axis Alliance. Gregor's model elucidates this conundrum. His discussion of developmental dictatorship excludes Nazi Germany, embraces Fascist Italy, Communist China, Communist Cuba, African socialism, and Communist Vietnam, but never once considers Imperial Japan. Similarly, De Felice and, until recently, George Mosse categorized Italy and Germany respectively as *sui generis*. Payne also refuses to include Japan, or any non-European nation, in his fifteen-nation categorization of various types of authoritarian nationalism.⁹

Gregor, though, produced a model able to embrace non-European forms of fascism. He recognized the geopolitical scope of the ideology. He recognized that fascism did not simply flare up in a couple of isolated cases, but that the ideology affected the globe, from Guomindang China to the American Black Panther Party. Gregor's problem is that by loosening the definition, he stretches it beyond the limits of its historical context. Perhaps fascist ideology affected post-WWII political movements and radicalism, but nowhere did it have the currency, nor the potent ability, to make war and unite a people the way it did in with three Axis partners. The Axis Alliance, its

⁹ Payne, History of Fascism, 15. Published in 1995, this configuration revises a previously published version of the same table in Fascism: Comparison and Definition (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), that included Japan and Mexico. Although he tacitly approved of including non-European nations in 1980, the approval did not constitute an admission that fascism stretched beyond Europe, but merely that fascist-like movements appeared in these two cases.

importance as yet underestimated, remains a largely unexplored framework through which to seek a new understanding of the twentieth century.

Some have looked at this curious, immensely powerful alliance of three seemingly dissimilar nations, Italy, Germany, and Japan, to find a fascist minimum of sorts. Politics and semantics exerted their usual influence, keeping most from using the term “fascist” to describe these three nations. Only Heinz Lubasz dared to bring all three under the umbrella of “fascism.”¹⁰ Others preferred to create new terminology, thus expanding the possibility of avoiding the conundrums of the day. Paul Brooker’s fraternalism, Howard Wiarda’s corporatism, and Walker Connor’s ethnonationalism, engage the similarities between these three nations and offer fully-developed models and explanations for the basic ideological affinities and historical phenomena they shared.

These scholars understood the amazing similarities of circumstance and purpose that bound the Axis. While it is axiomatic that military alliances tend to be marriages of convenience and Machiavellian in their conception and execution, that axiom does not adequately explain the Axis. True, the leaders of Italy, Germany, and Japan saw an alliance as a mechanism by which they could gain land, resources, and power. However, the context of their convergence implies something more complex, an important rationale behind the affinities and goals they shared. The Axis itself may, therefore, be the best mechanism and historical model for understanding generic fascism within its historical context. The model of generic fascism proposed here is “Axis Studies.”

¹⁰ Lubasz, ed., Fascism: Three Major Regimes.

Generic fascism, the kind that united the Axis powers, was essentially a revolutionary movement motivated by international conflict. Thus, it is geopolitical in nature and praxis. Its nature is extreme nationalism. Its praxis is extreme anti-internationalism. Within this geopolitical context, it is the case that the former motivated the latter. Also within this context, fascist ideology attempted to recapture Hegel from Marx, rejecting pure materialism in favor of neo-idealism and the collective spirit of the nation. This intersection explains many of the subtle similarities between revolutionary fascism and revolutionary socialism that Gregor spent so much energy exploring. Both drew from Hegel's dialectic and the socialist tradition of collectivism. Fascism simply changed the focus of the revolutionary ideal by replacing national, or even biological, consciousness, with class consciousness. Fascism rejected economic man for the ideal, spiritual man and/or the biological unity of the individual with the nation or race.

Mussolini is at the intersection of the two strains of collectivism, nationalism and socialism. By cross-pollinating fascism with the idea of proletarian struggle, Mussolini expanded the concept of the proletarian nation and integrated it into fascist ideology.¹¹ The struggle of proletarian nations, like Italy, Germany, and Japan, against an international alliance of bourgeois nations, provided a class-neutral organizing principle.¹² His focus on "proletarian nation" rather than "proletarian individual"

¹¹ Antonio Gramsci's work is also important to this idea of proletarian nation, but Mussolini and Giovanni Gentile mingled with it in the same intellectual milieu as did Gramsci. It was Mussolini who built the nationalistic version of this idea. See Smith, "Gramsci in the Mirror," in Italian Quarterly.

¹² The idea that Japan was a "proletarian nation" was popularized in Japan by the pseudo-fascist ideologue Kita Ikki. Richard Storry, "The Rise of Japanese Fascism," excerpted in Fascism: Three Major Regimes, ed. by Lubasz, 134.

provided a rationale for mass mobilization, whether for party participation, cultural unity, or for total war.

Coming home from World War I, defeated or disgruntled veterans were unlikely to tolerate revolutionaries preaching the virtues of internationalism, although some did join the communist ranks. Yet, the feeling that the blood spilled during the war was in vain or, more perniciously, that both the war and the ensuing peace were part of some cruel betrayal fed the flames of nationalism in the “proletarian nations.” World War I and the its settlement at Versailles illustrated to Italy, Germany, and Japan that their aspirations for Great Power status and commensurate colonial interests were to remain unrequited.¹³

Thus, the Axis Alliance itself offers an historical model expansive enough to include variations, set within a definitive historical context, and reflective of the geopolitical scope of fascist ideology. Moreover, while it allows one to identify a fascist minimum—an ideological core shared by all three nations—Axis Studies minimizes the effect of both politics and semantics. Politically, all can agree on the historical significance of the alliance whatever their position on the left-right spectrum. Semantically, “Fascist Italy,” “Nazi Germany,” and “Imperial Japan,” form the basic

¹³ Mussolini’s tone was unabashedly imperialistic. In his entry to the *Enciclopedia Italiana* (1933), co-written with Giovanni Gentile, Mussolini states that the nation “...leads men from primitive tribal life to that highest expression of human power which is empire.” Mussolini, The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism, trans. Jane Soames (New York: Gordon Press, 1976), 22. The imperial aspiration of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan need no explanation. It is important, however, to note that from the end of World War I to the last days of his reign, Mussolini professed the absolute necessity of imperial aspirations. In generic fascism, the redemptive power of conquest is central. Adolf Hitler’s call for a abolition of the Treaty of Versailles and the absolute need for Germany to engage in imperial expansion dates back to the early 1920s. See Alan Bullock, Hitler and Stalin (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 141-3. Japan’s military adventures in East Asia—the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), and the occupation of Manchuria (beginning in 1931)—indicate a similar disposition towards imperialism.

terminology without any pressing need to squeeze one or all of the nations into ill-fitting definitions. Notwithstanding, scholars within a broad field of Axis Studies, ever mindful of the contextual limitations of historical fact, could use different terms to highlight variations within the general category. Similarly, concepts like fraternalism, ethnonationalism, or corporatism are easily encapsulated as political sub-species of the larger category or general definitions of all three.

The key principle overriding all interpretations must be the unifying minimum associated with all three nations. However, the minimum must also be applicable to other similar regimes and movements. The definition cannot simply disregard other examples. It can, consequently, draw a clearer distinction between fascist and fascist-like regimes. For example, Chiang Kai-shek's China or Francisco Franco's Spain, while they exhibited some similarities to the generic fascism of the Axis, do not warrant inclusion in the model, a fact that would please the vast majority of scholars. In China, General Chiang and the Guomindang broke with the communists (1927) and then engaged in a "right versus left" political struggle for control of a chaotic warlord-dominated political landscape. In Spain, General Franco's fascist-like movement actually amounted to a military takeover in cooperation with landed interests.¹⁴ Both of these regimes were anti-communist, but lacked a basic anti-internationalism that also aligned them against liberal-

¹⁴ F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism*, 2nd ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980): 194-5. Carsten refers to General Franco as "a conservative of the old school" and the "movement" he led amounted to a military junta that attempted to restore order to a fractured political environment (201-2). Stanley Payne, an expert on the Spanish Falange and Franco's regime, believes that the "civic breakdown" and subsequent civil war "cloud the issue" of Spanish fascism. See Payne, "A Retrodictive Theory of Fascism," in *International Fascism*, ed. Griffin, 228. Spain, unlike the Axis powers, was not a have-not nation shut out of colonialism, but a fading colonial power rapidly losing control of its domestic political structure. More than Italy, Germany, and Japan, the Spanish example is representative of a *reactionary*, not *revolutionary*, political movement by those threatened with by the possible the loss of power.

capitalism. Neither Franco nor Chiang were fundamentally in search of a “third way” to end the “left versus right” ideological struggle. Rather, they were part of the traditional left-right political competition.

Further, each nation was engaged in a civil, intra-societal conflict within the context of a declining power. Their “fascists” did not embrace the proletarian nation consciousness, forged by the experience of being shut out of the colonial system, that so invigorated their Axis cousins. Perhaps these differences explain, in part, Franco’s Spain neutrality during World War II. These essential differences would also preclude Gregor’s inclusion of Mao’s China, Ho’s Vietnam, and Castro’s Cuba which, while sharing a revolutionary zeal and some ideological roots with the Axis powers, lacked the imperial impulse and anti-materialist idealism so critical to the Axis Powers’ nationalism. Their focus was also an intra-societal “left versus right” struggle for political dominance.

Axis Studies admits that while Italy, Germany, and Japan shared basic political similarities, each also displayed variations from the others. However, all three united around a common goal. Any minimum should, by definition, focus on the extent and degree of the commonalties shared. In the case of the Axis, the very fact that these three nations converged in spite of their obvious cultural and historical differences is *the* most fascinating fact. The exploration of the historical context within which these three nations found themselves on the same side, fighting against common enemies, and propagating similar ideals, would clarify the fascist minimum that typifies each.

The rationale for “Axis Studies” revolves around the idea that despite very different histories, from the point of unification (1868-71) through to the beginning of

World War II. Italy, Germany, and Japan converged into a powerful geopolitical alliance that challenged the dominant world system. Each evolved according to inherent cultural differences, much like the evolution of indigenously-based communist regimes in Russia, China, Vietnam, and Yugoslavia. The latter were all communist, but each displayed variations. The Warsaw Pact and the NATO Alliance are also excellent examples of this kind of broad model, one that includes variations according to inherent cultural and historical differences, but permits useful comparative analysis. If the requirement for similarities is a set of absolutes, comparative studies must be abandoned.

As we have seen, many of these differences including the extreme racism and militarism of Germany, the failure of a mass party in Japan's embryonic political culture, and the relatively racially neutral stance of Fascist Italy, have complicated the search for a fascist minimum. All of these traits can be explained by the cultural traditions of each nation. Germany's anti-Semitism stretches back to the time of the Reformation and Martin Luther, if not further.¹⁵ Japan's feudalism (for lack of a better term) persisted until the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and as a result the emergent party political system proved only nominally viable.¹⁶ Lastly, Italy's long history is one of racial and ethnic diversity.

¹⁵ In the early 1540s, Luther lobbied the rulers of Saxony for the rapid deportation of Jews, wanting them to be sent "to their own land." Steven Ozment, Protestants: The Birth of a Revolution, (New York: Doubleday Books, 1991): 137. Earlier, Ozment had noted Luther's desire to see the Jews expelled from German lands, but qualified by stating that Luther also had unfounded hopes that Jews could be converted. See Ozment, The Age of Reform, 1250-1550, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980): 435. Of course, European anti-Semitism has a long historical pedigree that stretches back to the Late Roman Empire, but during the era of the Reformation it was often associated with an embryonic German nationalism. For a full discussion of the connection between the Reformation and modern German history see William Montgomery McGovern, From Luther to Hitler: The History of Fascist-Nazi Political Philosophy, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1941).

with strict divisions of dialect and ethnicity from region to region. Italy's political particularism was not too dissimilar from that of Germany and Japan prior to their unification. Italy was extremely particularist, with "Italian-ness" vague and a common language seemingly impossible to achieve.¹⁶ Germany's particularism was more political than cultural, but it, too, submitted to a process of cultural homogenization under the rule of Prussia. Japan was at the other extreme. Japan's unification was largely political, uniting a fractured Tokugawa state structure after a civil war. Ultimately, the two most powerful regions or provinces, Choshu and Satsuma, called *han*, unified the nation politically in the name of the Emperor Meiji. All three differed, but display striking similarities. Further, despite their variations, all three nations unified almost simultaneously under the auspices of a constitutional monarchy, led by the most militaristic region of the nation.

The historical context of their alignment bespeaks the same type of similarities of previous examples. At their inceptions, all three nations needed to build a national consciousness, produce a political culture, and brace for competition with other nations. After unification, each nation engaged in wars with their neighbors and abroad in an attempt to secure territory, resources, and prestige. Throughout the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, the so-called Great Powers were at the apex

¹⁶ For a well-documented study of the development of political parties in Japan from the Meiji Restoration through to the period of "Taisho Democracy," see Peter Duus, Party Rivalry and Political Change in Taisho Japan, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968). Duus argues that despite the remarkable growth of two political parties, the *Seiyukai* and the *Doshikai* (which would become the *Kenseikai*) the political structure was dominated by a ruling oligarchy and the political parties lacked a strong ideology or rationale for governance.

¹⁷ Martin Clark, Modern Italy, 1871-1982 (London: Longman, 1984), writes that at the time of unification in 1871, nearly 99% of the population of the new nation spoke regional dialects rather than what

of their colonial strength in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Their successes provided an object lesson to the future Axis powers. The culmination of World War I was the crucible within which Italy, Germany, and Japan began their renewed drive to Great Power status. By the time they signed the Tripartite Pact in 1940, all three had completed an evolutionary process that made them natural allies against common enemies.

The geopolitical landscape is, however, only part of the larger context. At the end of the nineteenth century, competition among nations became increasingly profound, heightened by the global impact of the theory of evolution and Social Darwinism. The impact of Social Darwinism should not be underestimated. The fact is that Italy, Germany, and Japan unified at a time when Social Darwinism was evolving into a *raison d'être* for American expansionism and British imperialism.¹⁸ Herbert Spencer, an often-misinterpreted proponent of Social Darwinism, was read the world over.¹⁹ The long-term implications of survival of the fittest in international competition were an acceleration of

has developed into contemporary Italian. This fundamental language barrier differentiates Italy from Germany and Japan, where the particularism was more political.

¹⁸ George Brown Tindall, American: A Narrative History, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988), writes that "the ideas of Darwin and Spencer were quickly popularized in America" (837). Lawrence James, The Rise and Fall of the British Empire (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), points out that Social Darwinism was in vogue in Britain by the end of the 1860s and that it was taken to mean that the Anglo-Saxon race's empire must be a natural expression of evolutionary genius (205). About the long term effect of Social Darwinism James writes, "notions of racial superiority blended with arguments for imperial unity to produce an ideology for the new imperialism" (ibid).

¹⁹ In Japan, Herbert Spencer was read by leading Meiji intellectuals like Fukuzawa Yukichi and Tokutomi Soho. W.G. Beasley, The Rise of Modern Japan (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 98. Spencer's ideas permeated the fascist ideology that would emerge much later, but his ideas took hold early on. David Wiltshire, The Social and Political Thought of Herbert Spencer (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1978), 255. Ironically, Wiltshire points out that Spencer's "...account of the operation of the survival of the fittest applied internationally helped to justify the policies [imperialism] he attacked" (ibid). Wiltshire believes that while Spencer "...would have abhorred fascism..." his idea of "...society as a coherent organism and his popularization of the ethics of struggle contributed substantially to its rationale" (ibid). In Germany, Ernst Haeckel popularized Social Darwinism, sowing the seeds of imperialism and an organic idealism so pervasive in Nazism. See Daniel Gasman, The Scientific Origins of National Socialism (New York: American Elsevier Inc., 1971). Haeckel believed that the truth of Social Darwinism necessitated that Germany initiate a program of colonial expansion to ensure survival (126-8).

colonialism, the growth of racially oriented nationalism, and the view that conflict was a natural process. The Darwinian paradigm that gripped the world shook Italy, Germany, and Japan, and Social Darwinism would become a driving force behind fascism.²⁰

In addition, the turn of the century was a period in which the philosophical and political struggles between materialism and idealism, between liberalism and socialism, and between “economic man” and “spiritual man” (crises often termed “Western Crises” despite the spread of global culture to Asia, particularly Japan and China) escalated.²¹ World War I distracted the globe from these crises, plunging Europe into a horrific period of destruction and mayhem. The disfigured landscape of the world at war’s end and the shortsighted solutions of the Treaty of Versailles re-ignited the flames of crises, particularly in the three nations that would eventually become the Axis. Although Italy and Japan positioned themselves to reap the benefits of victory, their claims were largely ignored, with their delegations often shut out of the decision-making process, and their Great Power aspirations muted.

Prior to the war, Italy’s military successes had been minor compared those of Japan and Germany. Despite Liberal Italy’s endless attempts to gain colonies and maneuver like a Great Power, Italy captured few resources in the Libyan War and on the

²⁰ David E. Ingersoll and Richard K. Matthews, eds., The Philosophical Roots of Modern Ideology: Liberalism, Communism, Fascism (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1986), 238.

²¹ George Mosse, among others, has written extensively on the crisis of values at the end of the nineteenth century. Mosse writes, “Fascism originates out of an attack on positivism and liberalism at the end of the 19th Century, “ and, “the phenomena of mass man were accompanied by a feeling that the bourgeois age had culminated in conformity while those personal relationships upon which bourgeois morality and security were built had dissolved into nothingness;” in “Genesis of Fascism,” Journal of Contemporary History, 14-5.

Horn of Africa. Italy remained a minor player despite its great aspirations.²² When Italy positioned itself during World War I with the eventual victors, the perception was that it would finally receive its just due as a Great Power and, despite being a “latecomer nation,” and opportunity to finally make real colonial gains.²³ However, as James Burgwyn put it, Italy “found that the choice pickings [colonies in Africa and Asia] had already been allocated among the other Great Powers.”²⁴ In the Treaty of Versailles territories in the Balkans and Africa promised to Italy in the Treaty of London (1915) were not allocated as agreed, and France and Britain gobbled up Germany’s African colonial possessions.²⁵

This, coupled with the fact that the Italian delegation was often left out of key negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference, explains much of the foreign policy of the Fascist era in post-War Italy.²⁶ Mussolini practiced the “politics of vengeance” against the Allies with “credibility and public approbation.”²⁷ On Mussolini’s effective propagandizing of Italy’s experience during World War I into an eventual alliance with Germany, Burgwyn writes:

²² For a full discussion see R.J.B Bosworth, Italy, the Least of the Great Powers (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Bosworth compares Italy’s foreign policy in the liberal era to that of a small Balkan state or a colony rather than a full fledged Great Power.

²³ Burgwyn, Legend of the Mutilated Victory, 8.

²⁴ Ibid. The pickings were indeed slim. See Thomas Pakenham, The Scramble for Africa (New York: Avon Books, 1991), for both an excellent narrative of nineteenth century colonialism in Africa and, in particular, detailed maps of the divided continent. By 1912, The British and the French held the lion’s share of the resource rich areas of Africa, while Italy and Germany were left with difficult to exploit regions. Italy suffered the worst colonies, a slice of coastline and the Libyan Desert in the Mediterranean and a sliver of the Horn of Africa. Germany could look to its east from German East Africa and see the richest part of central Africa held by tiny Belgium, to the north to see diamond rich British holdings, and to the south for a look at more British and some Portuguese territories (670). This does not even account for the landscape of Asia which was dominated by the British, French, and Dutch.

²⁵ Ibid., 288.

²⁶ Marston, Peace Conference, 121.

²⁷ Burgwyn, Legend of the Mutilated Victory, 320.

Aligning with the losers of the Great War, Mussolini introduced into Italian policy a strong German orientation, which Italy used throughout the 1920s to challenge, however ineffectively, the European status quo. [Mussolini's] ...collaboration with Hitler [was] to overthrow the balance of power in the illusory hope of becoming an equal partner in a Fascist-dominated Europe.²⁸

In the immediate aftermath of Italy's World War I debacle, the government came under fire from both the right and the left. Out of a milieu of disillusionment, humiliation, and the re-invigoration of the pre-War cultural crises, Italy tumbled down a path towards fascism.

Italy's experiences and the overall conduct of the Paris Peace Conference must have been an object lesson for members of the Japanese delegation, some of whom came home dissatisfied and with a sense that the international system was rigged.²⁹ Although Japan's humiliation was not as deep as Italy's, nor was Japan subjected to the economically devastating terms forced on Germany, the young island nation-state found that it, too, had been rebuked at the conference table and the experience left a bitter taste in the mouths of those who would speak forcefully about the need for Japan to brace for international struggle. Referring to a group of activists who were vocal critics throughout the 1920s, Sharon Minichiello writes:

At Versailles, so it seemed, Japan had been humiliated with the rejection of its proposed racial equality clause, and the Anglo-American powers had succeeded in maintaining the status quo that buttressed their interest. Like Nagai Ryutaro, Kita Ikki, Nakano Seigo, and others who had been present at the proceedings, Suzuki Umeshiro lashed out at Japan's ruling bureaucracy as those responsible for the country's diplomatic weakness.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., 320-1.

²⁹ See above, p. 130, for additional discussion of Japanese reactions to the Paris Peace Conference.

³⁰ Minichiello, Retreat from Reform, 1.

James William Morley agrees with this characterization in a comparison of Germany and Japan:

...both nations suffered from a feeling of frustration. Germany, of course, was humiliated by the Treaty of Versailles, which became the keynote in German politics throughout the interwar period. Japan, too, felt a sense of frustration, induced by the refusal of her fellow victors to recognize racial equality in the preamble of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and by their insistence at the Washington Conference that Japan evacuate Shantung.³¹

It is possible to overestimate the impact of the rejection of the racial equality clause, but it is likely that its importance has been underestimated.

Japan was sensitive to racial ideas, particularly to the racism of the British in Asia and the racism suffered by Japanese living in the United States, particularly in California.³² A century of unequal treaties in Asia, colonial expansion by European powers and the capture of the Philippines by an ever more powerful United States most certainly convinced the Japanese that the “White Man’s Burden” of the British and Manifest Destiny of the Americans were threats to Japan’s long-term survival. In fact, Nagai Ryutaro wrote in 1919 from the Paris Peace Conference that Japan was “threatened by two worlds,” the Anglo-Saxon alliance bent on dominating the world’s culture, and bolshevism’s internationalist socialism.³³ Nagai believed, as did many others, that these “two worlds” could destroy unique Japanese culture.³⁴ This view is more than vaguely similar to the cultural Volkism of Nazi Germany, or the New Man culture of Fascist Italy.

³¹ Morley, *Dilemmas of Growth*, 473.

³² The racial tensions between America and Japan have a long history. Prior to WWI, the tension came to a head when the San Francisco School Board segregated Asian students from the general population. This led to the infamous “Gentleman’s Agreement” of 1907 that curtailed Japanese immigration to the United States. See, Tindall, *America*, 931.

Advocates of these ideas viewed their position as one of struggle for collective survival in a hostile, Darwinian world. As such, Japan's, like Italy and Germany, post-Versailles orientation "was projected against global trends."³⁵ Japan, like Germany, was regarded as a "have-not nation."³⁶ Over time all three came to see themselves as have-not nations. These embittered proletarian nations were increasingly on common ground.

Germany, of course, went from a pre-war trajectory toward Great Power status, only to be dealt a bitter, painfully exacted defeat from what was seemingly a sound stalemate. The collapse of the German economy and the Weimar Republic are well documented, and the deleterious effects of the terms of Versailles are often cited as contributory to the rise of Nazism. What usually eludes scholars is the extent to which Italy and Japan felt a similar collective humiliation and the natural affinity they shared with Germany because of it.³⁷ The intensity of the disappointments suffered by each nation correlates quite well with the eventual intensity of their fascism and militarism.

All three nations embraced Mussolini's particular formulation of the proletarian nation, viewing themselves as victims of an international system run solely for the benefit of the plutocratic nations. The post-Versailles world system limited the pursuit of colonies and riches so voraciously exploited throughout the Age of Imperialism. The end

³³ Minichiello, Retreat from Reform, 50-1.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ James Crowley, "A New Asian Order: Some Notes on Prewar Japanese Nationalism," in Japan in Crisis, Silberman and Harootunian, eds., 273.

³⁶ Ibid., 273.

³⁷ Ian Buruma sees similar mindset in both German and Japan which he terms "romantic nationalism." Of the inter-war similarities he writes, "Like Germany, Japan—as represented by its intellectuals and politicians—often felt the need to compensate for a feeling of national inferiority by turning to romantic nationalism. Fichte's theories of organic nationalism were imported to bolster Japanese self-esteem, even as Japan was Westernizing itself to catch up with Western might. Spengler's ideas on the

of the war froze the colonial system and thwarted colonial desires of Italy, Germany and Japan.

Beginning immediately after the War, and lasting through the 1920s in Japan and Germany, all three nations experienced, to varying degrees, political and economic crises that called into question the efficacy of liberal democracy and the concomitant instability threatened to thrust socialists and communists into political power. Even Japan experienced a series of strikes and socialist activity in the 1920s. The crisis of liberalism and the threat of bolshevism imperiled the tenuous grip each nation had on national solidarity. Throughout the period in question Italy, Germany, and Japan struggled against internationalism and class divisions in attempt to build a collectivist nationalism.³⁸ This key issue regularly confuses scholars. Generic fascism espouses a virulent anti-bolshevism and anti-communism, but it is based on an over-arching anti-internationalism. The problem presented by communism is that it divides nations into competing classes, emasculating the national collectivity. Liberalism and capitalism, too, divide the national among economic interests.

The overarching anti-internationalism displayed by Italy, Germany, and Japan explains fascism's simultaneous anti-liberalism and anti-bolshevism. To see the desire to

decline of the West were comforting when Japan felt excluded by the Western Powers in the 1920s and 1930s." Wages of Guilt, 34-5.

³⁸ Mussolini, the reformed socialist, and Hitler the National Socialist, were obviously aligned against an internationalism and the social divisions and political divisions caused by bolshevism and liberalism. Bolshevism threatened to rip the nation apart along class division, and liberal parliamentarianism was, for them, a weak, divided and bankrupt political system. In Japan, however, the same pressures existed. In Revolt in Japan, Ben-Ami Shillony writes, "Japanese conservatives abhorred communism, because it negated *kokutai*, the national polity, according to which the nation was one family with the Emperor at its head," and "...right-wing radicals objected to both the capitalist system and its left-wing opponents...their aim was to restore *kokutai* on a popular basis (5)."

preserve, indeed to build, the collective spirit and identity of the nation when liberalism and bolshevism threaten to fracture it, look no further than Fascist Italy's New Man and his task of building a New Rome, Nazi Germany's Volkism and spiritual Aryanism, and Japan's promotion of *kokutai* and State Shinto.³⁹ True, Germany and Japan's collectivist ideologies were more blatantly racial than Italy's amorphous ethnic-historical concept, but Italy's diverse population made racial propaganda very difficult.⁴⁰ However, Fascist Italy did not shy away from grandiose claims about the spirit of its people and the collectivist rationale that bound their fates together. Like so many other examples, the essence of the idea must conform to the limitation of the particular situation, with moderate Italy on one end and racially extreme Germany on the other.

The idea of "Axis Studies" attempts to take the vast amount of data, the various interpretations, and the work of various sub-disciplines and unite them into a coherent structure. While not comparable to the monumental governing historical paradigms of the last one and a half centuries, liberal-capitalism and Marxism, the development of Axis

³⁹ Ian Buruma, in *Wages of Guilt*, points out that not only did Japan absorb ideas from Europe, particularly Germany, but that Japan had an impact on National Socialist thinking. On his exploration of Japan's proto-fascist intellectual roots he writes, "I began to notice how the same German names cropped up in their [Japanese ideologues] often oblique and florid prose: Spengler, Herder, Fichte, even Wagner. The more Japanese romantics went on about the essence of Japaneseness, the more they sounded like German metaphysicians" (7-8). Further, he identifies a less reported admiration of Japanese ideology within Germany: "In Hitler's Germany, Japan was admired for having achieved, instinctively, what German Nazism aspired to. In the words of Albrecht Furst von Urach, a Nazi propagandist, Japanese emperor worship was 'the most unique fusion in the world of state form, state consciousness, and religious fanaticism.' Fanaticism was, of course, a positive word in the Nazi lexicon. Reading Nazi books on Japan, one might think that German propagandists wished to instill in the German people, through propaganda, a culture like the one that was handed down to the Japanese people by their ancient gods" (34-5).

⁴⁰ For a full discussion of the role of racial thinking and, specifically, anti-Semitism in Fascist Italy, see Gene Bernardini, "The Origins and Development of Racial Anti-Semitism in Fascist Italy," *The Journal of Modern History* 49, no. 3 (September 1977): 431-53. Bernardini differentiates between the ideologically-based anti-Semitism of Fascist Italy and the racial-biological anti-Semitism so prevalent in Nazi Germany.

Studies would complete the smaller scale paradigm shift that started in the 1960s with Ernst Nolte and A. James Gregor. As the World War II generation passes and the Cold War fades into memory, the time has come to finally re-evaluate fascism, sort through the scholarship, re-conceptualize the historiography, and explore why fascism occurred and how scholarship has tried to explain it. The historical context of the Axis provides an expansive field of study capable of uniting various disciplines and sub-disciplines.

Unlike rigid models, Axis Studies embraces variations without making the core historical facts incomprehensible. Gregor's developmental dictatorship blurred historical context to alter paradigmatic fascism into a caricature of itself. De Felice's historical dogmatism denied that fascist ideology could spread, pollinating fertile fields abroad. Obviously, the situation cries out for a third way between strict contextual explanations and loose comparative applications. Utilizing the Axis as a conceptual framework establishes a fascist minimum based on the similarities between the three nations, while acknowledging the particular circumstances of each. The characteristics outlined here, the Axis fascist minimum, do not differ significantly from those found in most other models.

The main difference is the inclusion of Japan. Japan, almost universally left out of generic models of fascism, must be included to make any sense of the era and the fascist phenomenon. Quite simply, Imperial Japan exhibits many of the same characteristics as its Axis allies. Imperial Japan, to preserve itself in a Darwinian competition among nations, participated in a revolution against an international system imbued with a desire to achieve Great Power status. Like Italy and Germany, Japan organized its population for conquest by pursuing a policy of spiritual collectivism. Although Japan did not produce

a viable fascist party, the structure of the government and, by the end of the 1920s, the fractured, explosive, and often violent political environment integrated ideological fascism into the power structure. True, a dictator was central to Italian and German fascism, but Japan had in the Emperor a powerful, living national symbol, that most, if not all, could identify with. This situation afforded little opportunity for the emergence of a charismatic leader, which in any case was a rarity in the history of Japan. In Japan, the ruling structure freely used the Emperor as a symbol of national unity. "Japan," says Anthony James Joes, "was fascist before the word was invented."⁴¹ Joes' exuberance belies the historical context proposed herein, but it is hard to argue with his sense that Japan was, at least, well structured to evolve organically into a fascist regime.

Axis Studies, therefore, would address the need to forge ahead with a new paradigm, pushing further the evolution of current historiography. The "Axis" moors the paradigm in a historically identifiable context. It is the locus where the vertical, linear history of the century and the horizontal, comparative application of the ideology intersect. The employment of such a paradigm would enable scholars to begin to answer the questions and resolve the crises so destructively and tragically engaged by twentieth century fascism: the consequences of colonialism, the future of eugenics and genetic engineering, the potential power of nationalism, and the future of philosophical materialism.

⁴¹ Anthony James Joes, Fascism in the Contemporary World: Ideology Evolution, Resurgence, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978): 155.

Even more importantly, understanding the historical confluence of events and the roots of fascist ideology could inspire wholesale re-evaluations of the major events of the century. Was World War II, in fact, the century's great race war? Was it the War to end the British Empire? Or was it symptomatic of a crisis of philosophical materialism, the so-called crisis of values? Understanding the amazing confluence of events, personalities, and ideologies that culminated in the Axis Alliance and World War II may open up new vistas for further exploration.

The ill-fated attempt by the Axis Powers to overthrow the dominant paradigm of their time may provide clues and portend the future of the next great convulsion. If nothing quite so grandiose is in the offing, however, perhaps Axis Studies could bring one thing to the historiography of fascism—unity. The unification of the various models, interpretations, schools, and methodologies under the umbrella of an interdisciplinary paradigm such as Axis Studies might eventually resolve the conundrums and diminish the political and semantic arguments that have typified the historiography of fascism. Most importantly, the Axis Studies model achieves this unity without sacrificing the historical context from which fascist ideology emerged, nor does it ignore the geopolitical consequences it produced. By finally considering the fascist phenomenon within its historical context, and beyond the fading paradigms of anti-fascism and the Cold War, the historiographical ideal of objectivity, if never fully attainable, is certainly more realistic.

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